THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS (610-641)

Crisis and Confrontation

Gerrit J. Reinink & Bernard H. Stolte (eds.)

PEETERS

The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation

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Crisis and Confrontation

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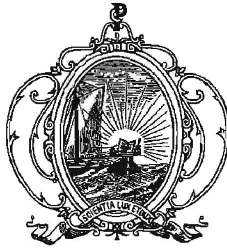
Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte



PEETERS

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1999, the local Research School Rudolf Agricola and the local members of the national Netherlands Research School for Medieval Studies succeeded in obtaining a grant for a stimulating bonus incentive programme entitled *Cultural Change. Dynamics and Diagnosis*. Supported by the faculties of Arts, Philosophy and Theology and financed by the Board of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, the *Cultural Change* programme constitutes an excellent opportunity to promote multidisciplinary approaches of phenomena typical in transformation processes in the fields of politics, literature and history, philosophy and theology. In order to enhance cohesion, three crucial 'moments' in European history were selected: 1) Late Antiquity to Early Middle Ages (ca. 200-ca. 600), 2) Late Medieval to Early Modern (ca. 1450-ca. 1650) and 3) the 'Long Nineteenth Century' (1789-ca. 1918). Four international conferences and some twenty workshops are planned for the period 2000-2004.

This volume, the second in the series *Groningen Studies in Cultural Change*, offers the papers presented at the workshop held in April 2001 and organised by Jan Willem Drijvers, Gerrit Reinink and Bernard Stolte. The thirteen papers have been written by scholars from such varying disciplines as theology, oriental languages, cultural and social history and law, and they present a stimulating view and interpretation of the main events of Heraclius' reign which, when confronted with internal and external pressions, witnessed crucial changes.

We thank the Board of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen for the financial support it gave to the *Cultural Change* programme; this is the first programme uniting several faculties and two research schools in a unique project based on a multidisciplinary approach to subjects in the field of the humanities.

Last but not least, we would like to thank Marijke Wubbolts for her assistance in organising the workshop and Nella Gosman-Scholtens for preparing the texts for publication.

Martin Gosman
General Editor

INTRODUCTION

Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte

This volume contains the papers which were presented during the workshop *The Reign of Heraclius: Crisis and Confrontation*, which took place from 19 to 21 April 2001 at the University of Groningen. The central theme of the workshop was the question whether, and if so, in which way and to which extent, the drastic political changes which the Byzantine empire experienced in the first decades of the seventh century affected the policies of the emperor Heraclius (610-641) and induced significant new social and cultural developments in the empire. This question has a special importance, since – to quote John Haldon – 'historians are still influenced by the idea that the reign of Heraclius marks the beginnings of something qualitatively different from what went before'.

When Heraclius in 610 overturned the rule of the usurper Phocas (602-610), the Byzantine empire found itself in a deep crisis as a result of social and economic problems, internal strife and the standing threat on the part of external enemies (the Slavs and Avars on the Balkans and the Persians on the eastern frontier). During the first years of Heraclius' reign the empire's external political conditions deteriorated even more. The weakening of the Byzantine military potential finally resulted in the submission of nearly the whole Byzantine east to the Persians. By 620 the Persian shah Khusrau II, who had started his offensives against Byzantium in 603, could boast that he had extended Persian power into what once constituted the Achaemenid empire.

The Byzantine counter-offensive, conducted by the emperor himself, started in 622, but it was not until 628 that Persian power was broken. However, during the 630s, still before Heraclius could firmly re-establish Byzantine hegemony in the recovered eastern territories, a new disaster fell upon the empire. When Heraclius died in 641, the greater part of the empire's eastern provinces and the territories of its archenemy Persia had fallen into the hands of the Muslim Arabs. For ever.

Contemporary sources testify that these sweeping political changes deeply affected the inhabitants of the empire, not least, of course, the provincial populations of the east which were subjected to new overlords. When the Persian power collapsed from 628 onwards, a whole generation in the east had grown up under Sasanian rule. The older generations had seen

the existing socio-religious order being challenged by a new pagan authority. Monophysite Christians could put their hopes on a pagan ruler who did not suppress their confession or persecute them, as some Byzantine emperors had done in the past, but who, on the contrary, fostered and consolidated their position in society. Chalcedonians, members of the Byzantine state-church, had to fear for the reverse, since they could be suspected of being loyal to the emperor. Jews could hope for new times, since the detested Roman authority had been eliminated in the eastern parts of the empire by a non-Christian power.

Did the rapidly changing historical conditions as well as the political and military vicissitudes of the empire during Heraclius' reign cause real 'changes' in society, in its administrative, political, military and ecclesiastical structures and institutions? An did they affect imperial ideology and propaganda, and the range of ideas concerning the empire and the emperor which circulated in the different religious communities of the empire? These questions are dealt with in the contributions in this volume. They are discussed in a wider socio-cultural context by John Haldon and within the framework of the results and views of Heraclius-research in modern scholarship by Wolfram Brandes. Attention is paid to the relevant Armenian and Syriac historiographical sources in the contributions by James Howard-Johnston and John Watt. Christian and Jewish reactions to contemporary political events in the religious context are discussed by Gerrit Reinink and Wout van Bekkum, whereas Lawrence Conrad sheds more light on the importance of Arab-islamic sources and traditions. Imperial ideology and propaganda are the main topics in the contributions of Mary Whitby and Jan Willem Drijvers, and developments in Byzantine law during Heraclius' reign are discussed in Bernard Stolte's paper. The contributions by Peter Hatlie and Jan van Ginkel deal with the importance of Heraclius' reign for the history of Byzantine monasticism and with the emperor's representation in contemporary hagiographical sources. Frank Trombley, finally, discusses military affairs and warfare in connection with Heraclius' campaigns against the Persians and the Arabs.

Some other questions – for example, about Heraclius' role in ecclesiastical politics and in doctrinal affairs such as the propagation of monenergism, later monotheletism – have received only marginal attention or have been left untouched, while they are also relevant to the present discussion. Nonetheless, the present papers will surely contribute to further discussion concerning the presumed 'cultural changes' in Heraclius' reign. The application of 'cultural change' to imperial policy and social and cultural phenomena in Heraclius' days exposes the problematic nature of this concept. Much of that what some would like to classify as social and cultural change, is in fact the result of long-term processes, which manifested

or accelerated under the pressure of particular political and social developments during Heraclius' reign.

After 628 Heraclius still had to face an extremely problematic situation. Though the former boundaries between the Byzantine and the Persian empires had been restored, imperial control in the territories which for many years had been occupied by the Persians was far from being firmly re-established. Another serious consequence of the Persian occupation was the fact that it had deepened and widened the gulf between the different religious communities in the empire, particularly between the Monophysites and the Chalcedonians, between the Christians as a whole and the Jews. The empire appeared to be further away from religious unity than ever before. Several measures and actions taken by the emperor, after 628, may have been intended to promote and corroborate the politico-religious ideology of 'one emperor, one empire, one religion (Christianity), one Christological confession (monenergism/monotheletism)'. Surely, Heraclius was not the inventor of this ideology, but the successive crises in which the Byzantine empire found itself during Heraclius' reign significantly increased the moment of this ideology in the first years after the defeat of the Persians, when the emperor had reached the pinnacle of his fame.

'Cultural change' was not the most salient feature of Heraclius' reign. If we were to give a general characterisation, the concepts of 'crisis' and 'confrontation' seem to be more appropriate. And crises and confrontations were not confined to the dangerous assaults and incursions of the external enemies of the empire and the military responses and campaigns of an emperor who, for the greater part of his reign, was involved in the organisation and command of his armies. Moreover, the unstable economically weakened and religiously divided position of the state itself intensified the crisis from the inside. Here the confrontation concerned fellow-citizens: Christians from both the Chalcedonian and the Monophysite camps, who more and more opposed the emperor's pursuit of theological compromise and ecclesiastical unification; and Jews, whose anti-Roman sentiments were fanned by the Persian occupation and the Islamic conquests, and who were – or were supposed to be – hostile and disloyal to the empire. Imperial policy seems to have responded to these difficulties by taking measures and actions, which as a rule followed beaten roads and stereotypical methods. Heraclius was not the first Byzantine emperor who tried to reconcile the doctrinal controversies between the Christian communities by presenting a Christological formula that should be acceptable to all. Neither was he the first emperor who took coercive actions against the Jews. 'New' was the fact that Heraclius, supported by the Church, personally lead his troops in a 'holy war' against pagan enemies who tried to wipe the Christian empire out of existence. Also 'new' were the emperor's definition and application

of measures meant to restore the ideological unity of the empire. The doctrines of monenergism and monotheletism and the general edict concerning the forced baptism of the Jews are perfect examples of his policy. If we want to typify as 'change' these and several other developments and phenomena in Heraclius' reign, then the years of Heraclius' emperorship may be considered a period in which the Late Roman Empire experienced not only sweeping political changes, but also a number of social and cultural changes, which, together, mark the transition of the world of Late Antiquity to that of the early Middle Ages in Byzantium and the Middle East.

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THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

A CONTEXT FOR CHANGE?

John Haldon

From many perspectives the reign of the emperor Heraclius appears to stand at the end of one age and the dawn of another. The great imperial edifice of Justinian was on the point of collapse; and by the middle of the seventh century the empire would be reduced to a mere rump of its former extent. Modern historians, however hard they have tried, remain under the spell of the Byzantine myth of the hero-emperor, flawed yet magnificent in his gargantuan struggle, first with the Sassanid Persian state, then, tragically unsuccessfully – betrayed by his own subordinates, by pettiness and short-sighted ambition – in his struggle with the forces of Islam. Heraclius' reign saw religious conflicts, the Persian war, the loss and recovery of the relic of the True Cross, the Arab invasions and conquests, and what turned out to be the definitive loss of Egypt and the provinces of the Middle East. And although it is no longer fashionable, historians are still influenced by the idea that the reign of Heraclius marks the beginnings of something qualitatively different from what went before. Changing emphases and changing research programmes and priorities have led to a questioning of many of the older assumptions, however, and the papers in this volume testify to the very considerable shifts in emphasis in recent years.

For in spite of the traditional view, it can in fact be shown that during his reign Heraclius worked to maintain or restore, with few exceptions, the administrative, political and military structures he had inherited, so that we are justified in asking the question, if and when change did occur, was it deliberate or incidental, planned or reactive? In this paper I will try to establish an overview of Heraclius' reign in which it can be understood in the context of much longer-term changes and developments in both society and economy, on the one hand, and in the apparatuses of the state, on the other. The changes and transformations which took place, both in broadly cultural as well as in more specifically institutional-administrative terms, can thus better be situated in the historical context which generated them, and we can the better distinguish what, if anything, was the emperor Heraclius' real contribution.

The reign of Heraclius began in civil war. Although successful in his deposition of the tyrant Phocas, the fighting between the supporters of the new régime at Constantinople and those who remained loyal to Phocas continued for at least two more years. Among Phocas' supporters were two of the empire's leading military commanders, Bonosos and Domentziolos, both related in different ways to the former emperor, and both evidently competent and successful officers; while popular support for the deposed ruler seems still to have been strong in many quarters. The basis for this popularity is not clear, and since he had made himself especially hated in Constantinople, among large elements of the ordinary population of the city as well as the social elite, historians have tended on the whole to generalise from this and accept the later, Byzantine, version, which portrayed Phocas as a particularly evil ruler. We might recall, for example, the dream reported in the Questions and Answers of Anastasios of Sinai, in which an abbot asks God whether all tyrants or rulers are chosen by divine will. The answer is in the affirmative. The abbot then asks, 'why, Lord, did you appoint the wicked tyrant Phocas?' 'Because', came the answer, 'I could find no one worse'. The point of the story is to connect human actions with divine will and retribution, but it also sums up the popular conception of Phocas' reign, a conception which was clearly by no means universally held in the provinces of the East in the period 610-612.[1]

Be that as it may, Heraclius came to power in the midst of a serious political and military situation. While the Danube frontier was, nominally at least, still firmly held (although the same cannot be said of much of the hinterland, esp. in the northern and central Balkan region), the Persians had mounted a series of damaging raids into both Asia Minor and the provinces of Syria. In his first two years, however, he had to devote his energies to defeating the military opposition to his rule, with centres of opposition in both Syria and Cappadocia.[2] In fact, the military situation worsened, for although the Persians were expelled from Caesarea in Cappadocia in 611, imperial thrusts against Persian armies in Syria and Armenia failed, and after significant defeats in 613 the Persians were once more entering the Asia Minor regions with little or no reported opposition. Damascus was taken and garrisoned and in 614 Jerusalem fell – the church of the Holy Sepulchre was destroyed and the relic of the Cross taken off to the Persian

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[1] For a review of Phocas' reign and the political situation of the empire, see Stratos, *Byzantium*, I: *602-634*, pp. 48-91; Olster, *The Politics*. For Anastasius, see Gretser, *Anastasius Sinaites*, 16/*65 (col. 476B-477A) (* refers to the number of the original collection as reconstituted by Richard, 'Les véritables "Questions et réponses"', no. 64, and App. iv-v. A new edition is in preparation by J. Munitiz).

[2] See Kaegi, 'New Evidence'.

king's capital at Ctesiphon. Shortly afterwards Persian forces occupied Tarsos and the Cilician plain, and at the same time Persian thrusts into Armenia drove Byzantine forces westwards. In 615 Persian troops marched across Asia Minor, and in the following year reached the Bosphoros. The imperial armies had not lost all cohesion, however. Troops under the *magister militum* for Armenia were still active in central and eastern Anatolia, units of the praesental armies and the forces under the *magister militum per Orientem* were operating in Cilicia and Isauria, and troops from Africa and Egypt were still functioning under the command of Heraclius' cousin Niketas in Syria and in Egypt. Yet they were unable to prevent the Persian occupation of Syria and Palestine and then, from 618, of Egypt – the last a major blow to the empire's economy and, more particularly, to the provisioning of Constantinople itself.[3]

The situation in the northern and western provinces was hardly better. Although the evidence from archaeology suggests that the situation in the Balkans did not greatly worsen between 602 and 610, the civil strife and the withdrawal of probably substantial numbers of troops from the Danube front which followed resulted in a collapse of Roman defences. An initial period of Slavic incursions and some settlement in the Balkans between the later 570s and about 600 seems to have been slowed down following the relative success of Maurice's counter-offensive of the 590s. But after ca. 609-610 a second wave commenced, a movement which now saw the appearance in Greece and the Peloponnese of permanent settlements. At the same time, the danger posed by the Turkic Avars increased, as they assumed leadership of a confederation of peoples and began to establish diplomatic relations with the Persian court (although the initiative probably came from Ctesiphon). The danger from such joint action was clear when in 615-616 armies from both sides threatened Constantinople, or when in 619 Heraclius was ambushed and nearly captured en route to parley with the Avar Khagan.

Heraclius himself came near to abandoning the struggle – in 618 he proposed to leave Constantinople and transfer his capital to the west, but popular protest meant that he gave up this plan. Instead, he decided upon an ambitious and carefully-planned counter-attack, a plan which involved effectively abandoning the capital for an unspecified period, trusting that he could outwit and outfight his Persian foes in campaign and on the battlefield.

The story of his brilliant campaigns of 622-628 has been told elsewhere, and most recently – and in considerable detail, although not yet pub-

[3] For a summary with sources and literature, see Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 42-44.

lished – by James Howard-Johnston.[4] At the end of the wars, in 627-629, and after the arranged withdrawal of the Persian armies from the eastern provinces and Egypt, Heraclius seemed to have achieved what would have been thought impossible only a few years beforehand. Not only had Persia been defeated militarily and its warmongering Great King Khusru II defeated and then assassinated, but the Roman empire had imposed a treaty upon the Persian government which rendered it in effect a puppet kingdom. With the True Cross restored to Jerusalem, Heraclius could begin the process of 'normalisation'. But what did this mean in real terms?

This brings us now to the broader context referred to in the title of this paper. For of course, Heraclius' activities were not restricted to the field of military campaigns, court politics and international diplomacy, nor again to the restoration of important symbols of imperial authority and divine power to the empire's control – whether the True Cross itself or the holy city of Jerusalem, for example. On the contrary, when we read the sources for the period and look at all the evidence – documentary, sigillographic, numismatic, archaeological – it is clear that important developments were occurring throughout his reign which had little to do with the hand of the emperor, but which in their turn seem to have been the stimulus to certain imperial policies in several spheres – political-ideological, religious, fiscal, administrative and military.

Let me first of all corroborate a point made above, namely that Heraclius attempted, as far as we can tell from the evidence available, to restore the traditional provincial and military administrative arrangements in the territories recovered from the Persians after 628. Thus *Magistri militum* continue to function throughout his reign and into that of Constans II (641-668) – *magistri militum per Thracias*, *per Orientem* (for 638) and *per Africam*, as well as a probable *magister militum per Armeniam* (or an officer of similar standing) (for the 650s) are mentioned in the sources. Many other officers of the traditional establishment are mentioned in the sources, too. The *praefectus Augustalis* (*Augoustalios*) in Egypt, for example, was still in charge of that province at the time of its conquest by the Arabs, and his *duces* still commanded the provincial garrison and field forces: a *Dux Arcadiae* and another *dux*, possibly of the Thebaid, are mentioned. For the same period, we hear of another *dux* and his soldiers who guarded the former *magister officiorum* Theodore during his imprisonment for complicity in a plot against Heraclius. Theophanes transmits a story about local troops under their *vicarius* in Palestine III in 629; and the contemporary *Doctrina* of Jacob the recently baptised mentions the defeat of

[4] But see Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns'.

the commander of Palestine III, Sergios the *dux* and *candidatus*, at the hands of Muslim raiders in 634.[5]

But changes did take place, perhaps in some cases in spite of the emperor's intentions. We already know that important changes in the structure of the praesental field armies had taken place, changes which began during the reign of Maurice and reflected the demands of that time.[6] By the same token, it is certain that Heraclius, under the pressure of the government's fiscal situation, instigated a reorganisation of the imperial mints, concentrating the production of gold at Constantinople and cutting back on the number of mints producing the bronze coinage. This probably had to do with the recovery of the provinces taken by the Persians and with a desire to increase central control over bullion.[7] And this was in its turn in the context of the effects of revenue losses on the central government during the Persian wars, on the one hand, and a tendency evident already before Heraclius' reign towards a somewhat more centralised oversight over imperial finances. Although I have suggested that the restoration of imperial authority over these provinces was accompanied by a restoration of the traditional administrative arrangements, there is some slight evidence that some modifications were introduced, especially in the provinces of Palestine I and II, connected very probably with the imposition of greater controls over the Jewish populations of the region, concentrated in Palestine II.[8]

In fiscal administration, again, the difficult situation in which the government found itself in the period from ca. 610 until the late 620s seems to have given rise to some attempts to increase the incidence of taxation, although the situation very probably varied considerably from region to region. Wolfram Brandes has recently noted, for example, evidence for what may be the reintroduction in Egypt of a *collatio lustralis*, a *chrysargyron*, presumably directly associated with the government's straitened financial situation.[9] And finally, in Church affairs – and leaving aside for the moment Heraclius' attempts with the patriarch Sergios to construct a solution to the tension between the Monophysite and Dyothelite populations of the empire – the emperor intervened directly in the management of the Great Church at Constantinople. He imposed drastic reductions on its clergy and its expenditure, a symptom perhaps of a general tightening of the purse-strings during his first 15 or so years in power. In itself, however, this was

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[5] See the evidence assembled in Haldon, 'Administrative Continuities'.
[6] See Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, p. 176ff.
[7] See Hendy, *Studies*, pp. 414-420.
[8] Haldon, 'Seventh-Century Continuities'.
[9] Brandes and Haldon, 'Towns, Tax and Transformation', pp. 160-161.

not an innovation – both Justinian and Tiberius Constantine had intervened in such matters in their time.

All the changes I have noted so far seem to have taken place during the period up to about 630. Indeed, if we stand back for a moment and look at Heraclius' reign in the longer term, the changes which took place in his reign seem to fall into two categories – those of the period of ca. 610-628, when he was dealing with a crisis in government finances, military administration and the empire's very existence; and those which reflect longer-term structural shifts in the way the empire worked.

Many of the changes which become apparent in the way the empire worked in the later seventh century – in particular, in fiscal management and in the so-called 'theme system' (which, I would argue, was neither thematic nor a system) – used to be attributed to Heraclius' reign, partly on the strength of comments in the *De Thematibus* of Constantine VII, written probably in the 930s or 940s, to the effect that the *thema* of Armeniakon took that name from the time of Heraclius and the period thereafter, or that it was from this time that the empire's provinces began to be divided up into *themata*.[10] Similar considerations apply to the fate of urban centres which, following the debate inaugurated by a paper of Alexander Kazhdan's in the 1950s, and the results of archaeological investigations published by Clive Foss, were thought to have suffered a catastrophic collapse as a result of the Persian wars in the period ca. 610-626.[11] In both cases, the situation appears both much more complex, regionally varied, and long term.[12]

Let us take financial arrangements first, for, as we have already seen, there is no solid evidence to suggest substantial and deliberate changes in either strategic or tactical organisation in the period up to the 640s and 650s. An indicator of change is reflected in the developing role of the palatine official known as the *sacellarius*. *Sacellarius* was a title used of any official who functioned as a treasurer for a particular individual or institution – in the Church, for example, or in a provincial administrative bureau. But the palatine department of the *sacellum* belonged to the *sacrum cubiculum*, the sacred bedchamber, and had since the fifth century functioned as a personal treasury for the emperors – at least, the first reference to a *sacellarius* in this position is for the reign of Zeno.[13] Closeness to the emperors naturally gave such persons a great deal of influence, and the

[10] See, for example, Pertusi, *Costantino Porfirogenito*, p. 63.
[11] See the discussion in Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens*, with all the earlier literature.
[12] The *themata* and related issues in Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 208-251; *idem*, 'Military Service'. For towns, see Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens*; *idem*, 'Byzantine Towns'; Dunn, 'The Transformation'.
[13] Müller and Müller, *Fragmenta*, V, pp. 27-38, frg. 214.4.

evidence from the sixth century suggests that this gradually increased so that *sacellarii* might often be given other positions as well as purely fiscal roles. *Sacellarii* are on several occasions given military commands or entrusted with specific missions in respect of military finances, and their importance is interestingly reflected in the fact that pope Gregory the Great claimed to be acting as an imperial *sacellarius* when he paid the expenses of the local troops in Italy in 595. Through the reigns of Maurice, Phocas and Heraclius, *sacellarii* appear in key roles and clearly functioned as close confidants of the emperors.[14] Under Justinian II in the 680s, and because of this close relationship, the *sakellarios*, together with the *logothetês tou genikou*, are seen as the two leading henchmen of the emperor himself, and were clearly also the chief financial officers of state; and under Leo III it is made clear in the introduction to the *Ecloga* of 741 that the *sakellion* was to pay high-ranking officials entrusted with judicial authority directly, to avoid the dangers of corruption.[15] As the position of *sacellarius* became ever more central to the emperor's personal rule, so the department of the *sacellum*, or *sakellion*, grows in its importance, and by the eighth century seems to have had a supervisory authority of some sort over other fiscal departments. It should be emphasised, however, that this development was symptomatic of a gradual shift in central financial and political management which began already in the second half of the sixth century. Indeed, it remains unclear as to when the *sakellarios* himself became a key figure, more important than other high-ranking palatine officials. Proximity to and familiarity with the emperor, and thus personality and background clearly played an important role in determining who wielded the greatest influence at the imperial court.

Indeed, other branches of the imperial bedchamber, including the *sacrum cubiculum*, appear to become more prominent over this period. The very marked increase in the award and prominence of the title *koubikoularios*, for example, the increased use of and higher value attached to the position as well as the title of *spatharios*, and the prominence of officers with the position of *spatharios* during the second half of the seventh century in particular attests to this. And it is not insignificant that the majority of seals of *sakellarioi* at this period bear also the title of *koubikoularios*, emphasising their close dependence on the key aspect of the imperial household.[16] Other sub-departments of the sacred bedchamber similarly seem to

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[14] I have summarised the evidence in my study, *Byzantium* (p. 184).

[15] For the *sakellarios* under Justinian II, see De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia* (p. 367.15-30; 369.26-30); English translation by Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 513, 515); for 741, see Burgmann, *Ecloga*, proem. 166.103-9.

[16] See Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, p. 182ff., for *spatharioi* and *koubikoularioi*; and the sigillographic and other evidence cited in *idem*, *Byzantium*, pp. 185-186.

grow in significance at this time – the official in charge of the imperial table, the *epi tês trapezês*, played a key role in imperial policy during the reigns of both Constans II and Constantine IV.

The process of increasing centralisation of control over key aspects of the state's finances within the central departments of the imperial household which this evidence may be seen to reflect is especially clear by the second half of the seventh century, but there is little doubt that it began before the reign of Heraclius. Kaplan has already noted, for example, a similar tendency in the administration of the imperial *patrimonium* and the estates which were managed through it.[17] And it suggests a general trend which predates the reign of Heraclius and which reflects structural changes in the central government and the administration of resources, changes the stimulus to which is no longer clear, but which can at least in part be associated with the fiscal exigencies of warfare on several fronts as well as worries about revenue levels in the period from the 560s onwards. The legislation of Tiberius Constantine in particular highlights some of these worries, and the actions of Maurice, as well as his reputation as a miserly ruler, would tend to confirm the suspicion.[18] By the same token, there seems to be a tendency to break up some of the larger departments in the bureau of the Praetorian Prefect of the East at Constantinople, with the appearance of officials entitled *logothetai* in the reign of Phocas and Heraclius, bearing very high rank – evidence that subordinate scrinia of large departments are probably increasing in status and independence at this time. Over the same period, and in association with the declining importance of the *sacrae largitiones* in particular which is detectable in the sources, these fiscal sub-departments of the prefecture seem to become increasingly the focus of all the state's major fiscal activities, at the expense of both the *sacrae largitiones* and the *res privata*. The last clear reference to a *comes sacrarum largitionum* is for the year 605; and the increased prominence of imperial *sacellarii* at this time may reflect their supervisory role over these areas of the state's administration, formerly under the praetorian prefect, now ever more closely under direct imperial direction. Or at least, that is the impression the sources give. New work in this area may show a somewhat more complex picture.[19]

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[17] Kaplan, 'Quelques aspects', p. 92.

[18] For example, Tiberius Constantine acted to remit taxes after a series of failed harvests and the devastation caused by warfare in several regions of the empire: see *Novella* 163 in: Schöll and Kroll, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, III: *Novellae*; also in Zepos and Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, Coll. 1, nov. XII; papyrus evidence corroborates the form the rebates of tax payments took, see P. Oxy. 1907 (Grenfell, Hunt *et al.*, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*) The stories of Maurice's parsimony are well-known and do not need to be repeated here.

[19] *Logothetai*: Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*, pp. 694.8 (602/3), 721 (626) (English

Looked at from this perspective, therefore, and placed in their longer-term context, Heraclius' actions no longer seem so dramatic. Of course, some of his policies were necessitated by the exigencies of the moment – the sequestration of church plate, for example.[20] On the other hand, the centralisation of minting arrangements no longer seems quite so out of the ordinary. And it becomes even less extraordinary when we bear in mind that imperial legislation and other evidence throughout the sixth century shows that the diocesan level of fiscal administration had been slowly downgraded. Importantly, it was through the dioceses that the *sacrae largitiones* chiefly operated, one of the three pillars of late Roman fiscal administration (along with the praetorian prefecture and the *res privata*), and responsible for the management of bullion and mints.[21] Yet by the time of Justinian the affairs of the *largitiones* in the provinces were largely dealt with by praefectural or similar officials seconded from the capital. In other words, the provinces and the prefectures were increasingly the focus of fiscal arrangements, and this long-term shift in the way the palace managed the state's fiscal affairs must be understood as the background to any changes that took place in Heraclius' reign. Sometime in the period between the early seventh century and the first half of the ninth century, the prefecture seems to have absorbed all the functions of the *largitiones* into its fiscal bureaux, and largely into what was referred to as its general bank, responsible for the major items of taxation, including the land tax, functions which were represented by three sets of activities: bullion, mines and minting, cash taxes and revenues, especially those derived from certain municipal lands; and the revenues from controlled goods traded within the empire and across its borders, administered by the *comites commerciorum*.[22] The evidence is not good, but the trend it displays suggests that most of these changes happened during the seventh century, and probably in the period from Phocas to Constans II, and that it was such shifts in balance which brought the *sacellarius* and his supervisory role to prominence. In matters of fiscal management, at least, it is thus possible to detect a greater focus on the de-

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translation by Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*). *Comes sacrarum largitionum*: *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 696, and De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 297 (English translation by Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, p. 426).

[20] The emperor raised loans from the endowments of charitable Church institutions, and then – with the agreement of the patriarch Sergius – had silver and gold utensils from the churches of the capital melted down. See Van Dieten, *Geschichte*, p. 10ff. and De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, pp. 302.34-303.3. Cf. the discussion in Hendy, *Studies*, p. 495.

[21] The problem is discussed in detail in Hendy, 'On the Administrative Basis'.

[22] For references to the literature and sources for these changes, see Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 175ff. and 188ff.

partments of the imperial bedchamber; while the increasing prominence of officials associated with this part of the imperial household – *spatharioi* and *koubikoularioi* in particular – underlines the trend. The events of Heraclius' reign merely speeded up the pace of the development, adding momentum and possibly opening new directions for development, to which I shall return in a moment.

As far as developments in urban life across the empire are concerned, we are faced by an extremely complex and regionally diverse picture. The north and central Balkans, for example, offer a very different urban landscape from Syria and Palestine, on the one hand, and from western Asia Minor, for example, on the other hand. In the Balkans, the economic and political situation which had evolved from the middle of the third century had affected the urban landscape dramatically, leading both to the development of new types of defended settlement in which military and administrative functions could be based, to the disappearance or abandonment of many less well-defended intermediate settlement types, and to the flight of populations from areas most frequently targeted or threatened by invaders. Sites which were suitable for the administrative, cultural and economic needs of their localities often underwent dramatic transformation, however, rather than abandonment – work in Macedonia and northern Greece has revealed a number of such settlements – Amphipolis, for example, at the mouth of the Strymon, which by the sixth century had lost any resemblance to the traditional Greco-Roman *polis*, being transformed into a fortress covering a much smaller area in which civil and military as well as ecclesiastical functions dominated. It has been argued, convincingly I think, that the development of settlement types in this region from the fourth century on, and in some cases from the third century, includes a range of functionally-specific defended sites which were built probably under military auspices. Examples include sites such as Stobi or Caricin Grad, in the case of larger settlements, and a large number of much smaller sites in Serbia, Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria.[23] And the point has also been made that, while the number of urban settlements of 'city' type declines drastically, by as much as 50% in many regions, from the third century on, this in itself should not be associated with a move away from urbanism as such, merely a move to a different type of urban settlement as a response to new pressures and the need to meet new demands, militarily and administratively.

More importantly for our interests, there is some slight but important evidence that the pattern of such fortified centres was introduced into Asia

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[23] Summarised with literature in the survey of Dunn, 'The Transformation', pp. 64-66 and 75-76 with accompanying literature; *idem*, 'From *Polis* to *Kastron*'.

Minor at some time during the seventh century, and beginning possibly during Heraclius' reign. Similarities in architectural features and the use of space between some of the Balkan sites that have been identified as representative of these new models, and certain Asia Minor settlements – Ankara and Theologos near Ephesus, for example – can be shown to possess characteristics in common with Caricin Grad or Markovi Kuli near Skopje. As we have noted, the state – in the form of the army and civil administration – had been promoting the development for more than two centuries before the Avaro-Slav invasions of the region in the middle and later sixth century of modest fortified centres which could respond to its needs, and which over time came also to meet the requirements of local elites and the Church. Such centres emerged by a process of competitive selection, better suited to an environment in which traditional urban centres with sophisticated amenities, civic facilities and substantial populations became increasingly difficult to sustain. And while those of the period up to the early seventh century in the Balkans might achieve formal recognition as *poleis*, this was in itself irrelevant to the government and its perceived needs. It would seem a reasonable conclusion, and one which is beginning to be borne out by more careful surveys of the Anatolian context, that such settlements would be equally advantaged in the situation generated by, first, the Persian wars of the period 602-626 and, later, by the Arab invasions and the constant raiding which affected the whole region to a greater or lesser extent.

But by the same token, it needs to be stressed that this process of urban-functional transformation, reflecting military and fiscal administrative concerns, has a longer history than the dramatic and in some cases catastrophic effects of warfare and political-economic change which occurred in the sixth- and seventh-century Balkan and Anatolian contexts, even if it was not dissimilar conditions at an earlier period which played a key role in its origin.[24] A similar picture emerges from a more considered appreciation of the development of settlement types in late Roman and Byzantine Italy.[25] And while the archaeological record tells us a great deal about shifts in demographic patterns as well as patterns of exchange and production, there were also a series of parallel and closely connected developments in the social structure of towns, including the well-established transfor-mations which affected the curial class and urban élites.

Did the emperor Heraclius play a role in this process? The short answer is that we do not know, although two fortified settlements which may fit in quite readily with the pattern of development described so far, and which

[24] See Dunn, 'From *Polis* to *Kastron*', p. 404ff.
[25] Brown and Christie, 'Was there a Byzantine Model?'

can be associated with his campaigns of the period 622-628, were named after him – Herakleioupolis, formerly Pedachthoe, in the region of Bathys Ryax (mod. Beduhtun), and Herakleia, mod. Sürmene (anc. Sourmaina), where remains of a small fortress and military encampment which appear to date from this period can be seen.[26] But this was a reflection of contemporary assumptions and practice, rather than evidence of any deliberate change in imperial policy.

We should differentiate, therefore, between the longer-term trends in urban development which stretch back into the third century, and the short-term effects on major, more exposed urban sites, of the dislocation and warfare in both the Balkans and Asia Minor in the sixth and especially the seventh century. But as an aspect of the latter, the events of Heraclius' reign must have impacted upon the speed, intensity and direction of change, affecting the Asia Minor context and inflecting the transformations which were already under way in particular ways.

One example of this I have already noted, namely, the probable introduction into the provincial military arrangements of Palestine of some new structures aimed at containing or controlling the Jewish populations of Palestine II and the central Jordan region. Another example is provided from fiscal administration. I have already noted that the functions and departmental remits of the *largitiones* were probably absorbed by the general bank of the praetorian prefecture by the early seventh century – certainly by the later ninth century the provincial treasuries and the *kommerkiarioi* are under the direct authority of the logothete of the general bank.[27] When did this change take place?

An important indication is presented by the evidence for a change in the role of the *commerciarii*. As we have seen, they were originally under the *sacrae largitiones*, but by the middle of the sixth century were operating under the auspices of the Praetorian prefecture. Their duty seems to have been to supervise the production and sale of silk, which was a government monopoly, and other luxury items.[28] The seals of some high-ranking officials of this department survive for the sixth century, for example.[29] Their

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[26] See Brown, Bryer and Winfield, 'Cities of Heraclius', pp. 16-30.

[27] Cf. *Kletorologion of Philotheos* in: Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, pp. 113.29; 33.

[28] For the early history of the position, see Oikonomides, 'Silk Trade', although his view that even in the seventh and eight centuries *kommerkiarioi* were still principally occupied with the production and sale of silk, together with certain other commodities, has been shown to be flawed. See Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 232ff.; Muthesius, 'From Seed to Samite'; Jacobi, *Die Wirtschaftsgeographie*, pp. 51-53; cf. also Dewdney, *Turkey*, pp. 135-136.

[29] The earliest seal mentioning an *apothêkê*, or warehouse, is for Diomedes and

importance seems to grow after the reign of Heraclius, however, particularly during the reign of Constans II, and they are thereafter, and until the eighth century (early 730s), described as 'general *kommerkiarioi*', associated with warehouses representing one or more provinces, and given the highest ranks in the imperial system.[30] Symptomatic of their importance is the fact that they might also hold the position of imperial *sakellarios*, illustrating their centrality in imperial fiscal matters.[31]

The sudden increase in the importance of these officials seems to be a result of their being given responsibility for military supplies, esp. grain for the armies. Whether they also supplied weapons is not known, although possible. Either way, this enhanced role may date from the wars of Heraclius' reign, and illustrates the ways in which an already evolving institution took on a new direction in the situation in which the empire found itself from the time of the Persian wars and afterwards.[32] The evolving role of *kommerkiarioi* and their warehouses was accompanied by other changes – a census seems to have been carried out late in Heraclius' reign, which may indicate some government-led fiscal changes. A centralisation of fiscal administration below the level of the prefecture, or at least a closer supervision of tax collection, may be reflected in the appearance of a seal of a certain Theodore, *megaloprepestatos illoustrios* and *dioikêtês* of all [the provinces of the east] – although this latter reading is uncertain – dated to the years between 614 and 631. But the dating is problematic, since all the

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Diogenes, entitled *endoxotatoi kommerkiarioi apothêkês Tyrou*, i.e. they were attached to, or responsible for, an imperial warehouse at Tyr (see Oikonomides, *Dated Byzantine Lead Seals*, p. 23ff. no. 6; = Cheynet, Morrisson and Seibt, *Sceaux byzantins*, no. 144, dated to 574-578). Cf. also the seal of Diomedes, *endoxotatos apo eparchôn kai kommerkiarios apothêkês Tyrou* (Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 214 (1), with older literature).

[30] The earliest seal for the reign of Heraclius was taken to be that of Theodoros, *apohypatôn* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the *apothêkê* of Cyprus (dated to 629-632), the first mention of a *genikos kommerkiarios* of an *apothêkê*: see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 132 (= Oikonomides, *Dated Byzantine Lead Seals*, p. 26, no. 10; = Cheynet, Morrisson and Seibt, *Sceaux byzantins*, no. 138). The next seal, originally dated 654-659, is of another Theodoros (Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* no. 136; = Oikonomides, *Dated Byzantine Lead Seals*, p. 28ff. no. 14, and the first mention of an *apothêkê* of Asia Minor. However, the latter, and probably the former also, appear to be modern forgeries, and so can no longer play a role in the discussion. See Morrisson, 'Numismatique', pp. 20-22. Some 300 seals for these officials survive for the seventh-ninth century.

[31] Morrisson and Seibt, 'Sceaux'.

[32] See discussion in Brandes and Haldon, 'Towns, Tax and Transformation', pp. 163-168, with all the earlier literature; and in general, Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung* (I am greatly indebted to the author for permitting me to consult the thesis before publication); also Dunn, 'The Kommerkiarios'.

other, similar (and genuine) seals occur for the period after 650, and suggest that, while in the period from the end of the reign of Heraclius until the early years of the eighth century the resource-extracting machinery of the government was placed under a stricter central control, Heraclius himself employed the established and traditional mechanisms and structures. No evidence of any fundamental and deliberate shift can be found.[33]

If we take all these separate developments together, a pattern of sorts can be discerned, albeit dimly. Firstly, in state administration, we have the increasing prominence of officials intimately connected with the imperial household and especially the department of the *cubiculum*, detectable from the late sixth or early seventh century – the *sacellarius* is especially obvious. Then we have the long-term reduction in relevance of the department of the *largitiones* and the transfer of most of its key functions – probably – to the prefecture. In Heraclius' reign itself we have the centralisation and simplification of the minting system, the appearance of what look like centrally-appointed fiscal managers – the *dioikêtai* of the provinces – and, towards the end of the reign, the sudden increase in numbers, prominence and functional authority of general *kommerkiarioi*, now working within the framework of the prefecture and clearly associated with a good deal more than just luxury trade or exchange. On the military side, we can observe what may be the beginnings of the later Opsikion army in the merging of the two praesental field armies, and a series of ongoing changes in tactical administration.

Secondly, we have the long-term developments in urban life and the effects upon these gradual changes of dramatic events such as the warfare in Asia Minor in the period 611-626, and then again after the 640s.

Thirdly, a series of changes which I have not yet mentioned, which affected attitudes and perceptions at the centre, can also be detected. These changes have all been discussed at length elsewhere.[34] They involved, on the one hand, what has been dubbed a 'liturgification' of court ceremony, a heightened emphasis on the divine source of imperial authority, and a greater focus on Constantinople as the legitimate – and legitimating – seat of empire. Heraclius' reign and his achievement in defeating the Persians were reflected in a number of changes which, while clearly a response to the immediate past, can nevertheless be seen as a part of this set of wider

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[33] For the census, see Sathas, *Theodoros Skutariotes*, p. 110, 5-8. See also Kaegi, 'Reflections', p. 270ff.; Brandes and Haldon, 'Towns, Tax and Transformation', p. 162. The evidence for the fate of the praefectural fiscal administration is presented and discussed in Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 196ff.

[34] Cf Cameron, Averil, 'Images of Authority'; *eadem*, 'The Theotokos'; Haldon, 'Ideology'.

changes: the adoption of the title *basileus* in 629, for example, with its possible eschatological and Old Testament inspiration and symbolism, as well as a re-assessment of the place of the Jews in the overall scheme of things, aspects of which we can read more about in this volume. Similarly, the use of the Hagia Sophia for coronation ceremonial, for example, can first be dated to the first year after Heraclius, when the infant Constans II was crowned co-emperor in the ambo. Although these are relatively minor developments, they nevertheless form part of this broader context. On the other hand, changes in the pattern of literary production, with new emphases and new themes coming to the fore, seem to become more explicit during the reign of Heraclius. From the perspective of imperial ideology, the poems of George of Pisidia mark an important stage in this process, at least in certain respects, and the drawing out from the existing panoply of Christian ideological material of a set of new emphases and messages associated in particular with the Cross, complementing the already developing cult of the Virgin, enhanced these changes. And in the field of imperial legislation, it is worth noting that Heraclius appears to have been the last emperor until the empress Eirene to issue *novellae constitu-tiones* addressing major aspects of government and secular administration, reflecting, I have argued elsewhere, not a loss of evidence, but rather a shift in the way emperors responded to change and to contemporary perceptions of state and law.

Conclusion

In this respect, the later sixth and first half of the seventh century witness the beginnings of a number of important cultural shifts, in attitudes and perceptions, which were to become more clearly expressed only several decades later, involving what I have referred to elsewhere as a form of 'cultural introversion', especially in respect of attitudes to religious and ideological heterogeneity and to outsiders and 'otherness' in general. New ways of defining 'Roman' begin to evolve, ways which were only finally to become part of the mainstream 'Byzantine' identity during the ninth century. In this respect, in consequence, the period 610-641 witnessed a series of important cultural shifts, even if the emperor Heraclius can no longer be made responsible for them.[35]

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[35] See especially the collected papers in Cameron, Averil and Conrad, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* I, and in particular Cameron, Averil, 'New themes'; Whitby, Michael, 'Greek Historical Writing'; Haldon, 'The Works of Anastasius of Sinai'.

In all these ways, therefore, the reign of Heraclius is undoubtedly a watershed, because it was during those years that several of the longer-term developments I have noted received an added impetus as a result of more immediate changes in context and environment, while the changes themselves in turn created the conditions for the sort of response which both society and government could offer to the dramatic events of the times. Heraclius was, in this light, neither innovator nor reactionary. Rather, he was a product of his own times, responding with the cultural knowledge and administrative know-how at his disposal, constrained by circumstances yet in a position to make certain executive decisions which clearly affected the ways in which events would unfold. But regardless of his own contribution, we may say with absolute certainty that the years of his long and eventful reign certainly constituted 'a context for change'.

HERACLIUS BETWEEN RESTORATION AND REFORM

SOME REMARKS ON RECENT RESEARCH

Wolfram Brandes

Es zeigt *Heraclius* der Klugheit grosse Macht/
Wodurch ein ErtzTyrann ward in die Grufft gebracht.[1]

It is not the purpose of this article to present a complete survey of the scholarly bibliography of the history of Heraclius (610-641). This would result in a very long list of titles not very appealing to most readers.[2]

The long reign of Heraclius (610-641) marks one of the most important turning-points in Byzantine history. His time saw the end of Antiquity. The collapse of the most important institutions of the late Roman Empire, especially the praetorian prefecture, occurred during his reign. Which institutions replaced them is still a moot point. It is not easy to recognise the administrative structures of the first half of the seventh century, mainly because of the very scanty sources of administrative history. Perhaps there were types of transitional structures which our sources make little mention of.[3]

Heraclius won the greatest victory in late Roman history. The empire of the Sassanian Persians, which had been the main enemy for more than four

[1] *Die listige Rache oder Der tapfre Heraclius.* Translated from the Italian by Johann Christian Hallmann (Breszlau 1684); see Spellerberg, *Johann Christian Hallmann*, III/2, pp. 569-659, especially p. 574. On Hallmann, see also Schmidt, *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, pp. 444-447. It is the German translation of the *HERACLIO Melodrama* (music by Pietro Andrea Ziani; text by Niccolò Beregani [*Da Rappresentarsi nel Theatro Grimano di SS. Gio. e Paolo*, 1671]). Pierre Corneille also wrote a play on Heraclius. This is not the place to study the afterlife of Heraclius in modern literature. For a general view, see Pertusi, 'Ta dramata'.

[2] The relevant literature since 1891 can be found in the bibliography of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. The older works of a general importance are named in Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, p. 77ff.; Stratos, *Byzantium*; Treadgold, *A History*, pp. 905-907 and pp. 932-935; Schreiner, *Byzanz*, p. 175ff.; Ditten, Köpstein, Rochow and Winkelmann, *Byzanz*; Haldon, *Byzantium*; Herrin, *The Formation*, p. 191ff.; Schreiner, 'Herakleios', pp. 2140-2141; Van Dieten, 'Herakleios', pp. 146-148; Capizzi, 'Herakleios', p. 1429 (insufficient). Grumel, *Les regestes* and Dölger, *Regesten* are still important but in many respects out of date.

[3] On these problems see Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung*.

centuries, suffered an unprecedented defeat. Six years later, however, the expansion of the Islamic Arabs began, destroying all the new achievements already during Heraclius' lifetime. The Eastern Roman Empire lost its eastern provinces to the Arabs; the greater part of the Balkans peninsula became the possession of various Slavic tribes and the Avars. In Italy the Lombards occupied large territories. Only North Africa,[4] Sicily and Southern Italy[5] and especially Asia Minor were retained by the empire.

In the year 641 the social and economic situation could only be described as catastrophic. The process of de-urbanisation had reached a climax, so that outside Constantinople only very few cities survived. The normal late antique *polis* had become a small *kastron* or disappeared completely. The old senatorial aristocracy also disappeared. The rich ruling classes of the cities vanished and so did the social basis for late antique culture.[6] Only the state remained – and, of course, its capital Constantinople, but Byzantium had a hard time surviving.

After 628, when the Persians had been defeated and, shortly afterwards, the Holy Cross came back to Jerusalem, Heraclius' success reached its culmination. Together with the patriarch Sergius he tried to introduce a new christological dogma, which was to end the division of Christianity within the empire into very hostile groups: Monophysites and so-called Orthodox. He failed and produced a long-lasting conflict with Rome and the Byzantine enemies of the newly-created dogma of one energy and one will in Christ.[7]

His personal life was also not without some dramatic elements. In 612 his wife Eudokia died.[8] Some years later he married his niece Martina,[9] against all canonical rules. But there was no conflict with the Church. The patriarch Sergius protested and then organised the marriage ceremony. According to Nicephorus, who lived towards the end of the eighth century (on his source one can only speculate),[10] the emperor was physically and mentally exhausted at the end of his life, after the defeats against the Arabs,[11] a long established view which has recently been disputed.[12]

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[4] See now Christides, *Byzantine Libya* with the older literature (pp. 89-103); Goodchild, *Libyan Studies*; Cameron, Averil, 'Byzantine Africa'; *eadem*, 'The Byzantine Reconquest'.
[5] On Sicily and Italy, see notes 39-42.
[6] See notes 114-116.
[7] See notes 25-26.
[8] Most recently Speck, 'L'Augusta'; Zuckerman, 'La petite Augusta'.
[9] On Martina, see now also Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp. 61-72, 255-257 (with the older literature) and, in a broader context, James, *Empresses*.
[10] See Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier*, p. 31ff., 39ff. and *passim*.
[11] According to Mango, *Nikephoros*, p. 72 (chapt. XXIV).
[12] Lilie, 'Araber und Themen', p. 435 with note 37. However, see the interesting article

During Heraclius' reign a remarkable shift in cultural orientation took place. The last historian to write history in the late antique manner, Theophylaktos Simokates, worked at his court. In the patriarch's court one finds the most important (anonymous) historian for more than a century and a half, the author of the *Chronicon Paschale*. George of Pisidia brought the late antique tradition of panegyrical writing to its conclusion. The Greek language, which had already begun to play a more and more important role in the administration of the State during the sixth century, now became absolutely dominant. Latin almost completely disappeared.[13] Only the special vocabulary of military Latin commands and *termini technici* survived.

Heraclius was the first Byzantine emperor who used the Greek title *basileus*, the significance of which is still under discussion.[14] After Irfan Shahîd, who recognised the influence of the Persian royal titulature, and Evangelos Chrysos, who argued against this, Otto Kresten, in a still unpublished article, detects here a complicated mixture of Old-Testament elements of a David ideology,[15] eschatological elements and especially a connection with the triumphal return of the Holy Cross in 628. Although Kresten as well as Paul Speck take 628 to be the date,[16] the majority of byzantinists prefers the year 630. One thing is clear: the discussion is not yet over.[17]

All these historical developments and facts have been objects of research for many centuries. It is impossible to describe all the works on the many topics relevant to the Heraclian era. Heraclius has attracted only three biographers: L. Drapeyron (1869),[18] Angelo Pernice (1905; still useful),[19] and Andreas N. Stratos in the first and second volume of his *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*.[20] Walter Kaegi has written a book on Heraclius, which will

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by Laskaratos *et al.*, 'The first Case'.

[13] Dagron, 'Aux origines'; Oikonomides, 'Administrative Language'.

[14] Shahîd, 'The Iranian Factor'; *idem*, 'On the Titulature'; Chrysos, 'The Title *basileus*'.

[15] Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius'; Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios', esp. pp. 93-104; Trilling, 'Myth and Metaphor'; *idem*, 'The Soul'; Wander, 'The Cyprus Plates'; Stichel, 'Scenes'.

[16] Kresten, 'Herakleios', p. 178ff.; *idem*, 'Oktateuch-Probleme', esp. p. 504 note 13; *idem*, 'Parerga zur Ikonographie', p. 193 note 38 (see also note 102); Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier*, pp. 328-378.

[17] Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, p. 293ff. and 306 (*restitutio crucis* on the 21st of March 630); Mango, 'Deux études', pp. 105-118 (Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix); *idem*, 'The Temple Mount'. See also the different accounts by Grumel, 'La réposition'; Frolow, 'La vraie croix'; Schmitt, 'Untersuchungen', p. 203ff.; Klein, 'Niketas und das wahre Kreuz'; Van Esbroeck, 'Hélène à Edessa'.

[18] Drapeyron, *L'empereur Héraclius* (non vidi).

[19] Pernice, *L'imperatore Eraclio*.

[20] Stratos, *Byzantium*. This work has to be used with caution. Stratos' works all too

appear shortly. After his many studies of the first half of the seventh century,[21] and especially after his book on *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest*,[22] one may expect a good survey of the history of Heraclius. For the Arab conquest of Jerusalem and Palestine, Moshe Gil's *History of Palestine* is very useful.[23]

The third volume of the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* by John Martindale has stimulated historical research of the period before 641.[24] However, a study of the ecclesiastical prosopography of that period remains still a desideratum. The biographies of the protagonists involved in the monenergistic and monothelete controversies can be found in a new book by Friedhelm Winkelmann.[25] Many aspects of these topics have been studied by Rudolf Riedinger.[26]

Of course, Heraclius and his reign play a prominent role in John Haldon's *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, a book, which in many respects (especially for the administrative, military and civil history) has been the standard work for more than ten years already.[27] This book is also a reliable guide to economic and social history, which is pictured against a broader historical background because some tendencies have to be seen in the context of developments originating in the sixth century, for example, the disappearance of the ruling elites of late Roman cities and of urban culture outside Constantinople, with all its consequences for cultural history in general as well as for administration and taxation and the structure of the State. After more than ten years of research, sparked of by Haldon's book and some important new insights into the development of civil administration,[28] a revised version of this important

often lack the necessary critical approach. See Winkelmann, Köpstein and Ditten, 'Zu einigen Problemen'.

[21] Kaegi, 'Initial Byzantine Reactions'; *idem*, 'New Evidence'; *idem*, 'Notes'; *idem*, 'The First Arab Expedition'; *idem*, *Byzantine Military Unrest*; *idem*, 'Two Studies'; *idem*, 'Late Roman Continuity'; *idem*, 'Heraklios'; *idem*, 'The Frontier'; *idem*, 'The Strategy'; *idem*, 'Variable Rates'; *idem*, 'Changes'; *idem*, 'Observations'; *idem*, 'Reflections'; *idem*, 'Byzantine Logistics'. See also his *Army, Society and Religion*.

[22] Kaegi, *Byzantium*.

[23] Gil, *A History*, p. 51ff. (on the date, in Arabic sources between 636 and 638), p. 58 (Tripolis, ca. 645), p. 59 (Caesarea, c. 640), p. 60 (Askalon, 644). Of special interest is Busse, 'ᶜOmār b. al-Haṭṭāb', with arguments for redating the conquest of Jerusalem to the year 635 (esp. p. 113).

[24] Martindale, *The Prosopography*. For Italy, see now Cosentino, *Prosopografia*.

[25] Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit*, with full bibliography; *idem*, *Die östlichen Kirchen*, p. 106ff.; still important are the older works by Caspar, *Geschichte*, as well as by Van Dieten, *Geschichte*, and Beck, *Geschichte*.

[26] See now his collected studies: Riedinger, *Kleine Schriften*.

[27] Haldon, *Byzantium*.

[28] Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung*.

book would be very welcome to all historians of Byzantium. Other books by Haldon are still essential to those who wish to understand the history of the seventh century. His *Recruitment and conscription* (1979), *Byzantine Praetorians* (1984), *Warfare, State and Society* (1999) should be mentioned here, and the very useful and very long article, 'Military Service, Military Lands, and the Status of Soldiers' (1993)[29] – still the best presentation of the development of the *themata* and the *stratiotika ktemata*.

In the proceedings of a conference on *The Dark Centuries of Byzantium (7th-9th centuries)* at Athens (May, 1999) one can find several articles that are relevant to the study of the time of Heraclius.[30]

After Heraclius' reign, and even during his last years, the social and political structure of the much-reduced Byzantine Empire – mainly Asia Minor – differed drastically from the conditions during the first years of the seventh century, although great variations in time and space occurred.[31] About 640/650, the Eastern Roman Empire had become a territorially reduced Byzantine Empire with a great capital and a countryside with villages and *kastra*[32] in permanent danger of Arabic incursions and assaults.[33]

Important are, of course, the well-known books by Walter Kaegi on the beginning of the Islamic Conquest[34] as well as those by Fred Donner[35] on the same theme, but written from the point of view of the Arabist. Kaegi, however, tries to unite the Byzantine and Arabic perspectives.

These very important books (and some others which will be mentioned later) introduced new insights to the history of the first half of the seventh century. But the reception of this research beyond the small circle of experts of Byzantine history is a great problem. In Germany the handbook of Georg Ostrogorsky is still dominant.[36] The book has its qualities, but its part on Heraclius is completely out of date. Ostrogorsky created an impressive picture of the developments during Heraclius' reign, which seems to be very logical and convincing. All the important changes distinguishing the late antique Eastern Roman Empire from the Middle Byzantine period (such as the central bureaucracy of civil administration, etc.) were, to a greater or lesser extent, attributed to Heraclius. Dozens of books and articles have been written by byzantinists to correct Ostrogorsky's views. However, it will be many years before all fun-

[29] Haldon, *Recruitment*; *idem*, *Byzantine Praetorians*; *idem*, 'Military Service'; *idem*, *Warfare* and *State*. See also his contribution to this volume.
[30] Koutoura-Galaki, *The Dark Centuries*.
[31] Whittow, 'Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City'.
[32] Brandes and Haldon, 'Towns'; Brandes, *Die Städte*; *idem*, 'Kastron' and 'Stadt'.
[33] Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion*.
[34] Kaegi, *Byzantium*.
[35] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest*.
[36] Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, esp. p. 77ff.

damental corrections of Ostrogorsky's historical constructs will have been generally recognised. These dark spots of generally accepted manuals – representative of the research of the past – are a handicap for further research.

According to the sources which have survived, the history of Heraclius' long reign can be divided into two parts. Up to c. 628/629 there are relatively good Greek sources. For the subsequent period the work of the historian becomes much more difficult. The *Chronicon Paschale* ends with the year 628.

The Roman *Liber pontificalis*[37] remains one of the most important sources for the relations with the West during the first half of the seventh century, but on Heraclius there is little information.[38] For the relations with the Lombards in Italy the book of K.P. Chrestou is very useful.[39] The history of the exarchate of Ravenna, as well as other aspects of its culture, economy, arts, etc., are treated in the very well-documented *Storia di Ravenna.*[40] Our information a-bout Sicily in the time of Heraclius is very scanty.[41] The coup d'etat in 619 by one Eleutherius has been studied by Peter Classen.[42]

The *Chronicon Paschale*, one of the most important sources of the reign of Heraclius up to 628/629, has been translated and very skillfully provided with comments by Mary and Michael Whitby.[43] The *History of Theophylaktos Simokates* has been translated and studied extensively by David Frendo, Michael Whitby, Peter Schreiner, Paul Speck and Therèse Olajos.[44] Especially the poems of George of Pisidia are still an important object of research, not

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[37] Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* I, pp. 317-330. An English translation: Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs.*

[38] On the *Liber pontificalis* in the seventh century, see the important studies by Noble, 'A New Look'; *idem*, 'Literacy'.

[39] Chrestou, *Byzanz*, esp. p. 190ff. But the older studies by Hartmann, Bertolini, Bognetti etc. are still important.

[40] See Ferluga, in: Carile, *Storia di Ravenna*, p. 361ff. and the other chapters in II/1 and II/2, with a complete bibliography.

[41] But see Cracco Ruggini in: *Storia della Sicilia* III, pp. 3-96; Von Falkenhausen, 'Il monachesimo greco in Sicilia' on the growing influence of Greeks fleeing from the Persians and Arabs; see also Cavallo, 'Theodore of Tarsus', p. 63. Not very useful is Ensslin, 'Zur Verwaltung Siziliens'. The actual structures of the imperial administration remain unknown. A good overview is presented by Cosentino, 'Lineamenti'.

[42] Classen, 'Der erste Römerzug'.

[43] Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*; see also Oikonomidès, 'The Correspondence', pp. 269-281; of special importance are the observations on the text of the *Paschal Chronicle* by Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier* (index on p. 524).

[44] Frendo, 'History'; *idem*, 'Religion'; Whitby, Michael, *The Emperor Maurice*; Schreiner, *Theophylaktos Simokates*; Speck, 'Eine Gedächtnisfeier'; Olajos, *Les sources*. See also Baldwin, Kazhdan and Talbot, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, pp. 1900-1901.

least by Mary Whitby[45] and others.[46] There is also a new edition of his poems with an Italian translation, a short commentary and a good bibliography, by Luigi Tartaglia.[47]

Sophronius (634-638: patriarch of Jerusalem) has been identified with the author, of the same name, of the *Anacreontica*.[48] He struggled against monenergism and monothelism during the first period of the monothelete controversy. His *Epistula synodica* to the patriarch Sergius of Constantinople has survived in the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.[49] Of some importance is also his Christmas sermon of 634, when the Arabs had already occupied Bethlehem.[50] The monograph of Christoph von Schönborn presents a good analysis of Sophronius' life and works.[51] Sophronius' *Miracula ss. Cyri et Iohannis* are accessible in the new edition by Fernández Marcos.[52]

The works of Theodore the Synkellos deserve a new edition. The edition of the *Homilia de obsidione Constantinopolitana* (BHG 1061; CPG 7936) by Leo Sternbach is indeed still useful; it was reprinted in 1975.[53] However, a new edition as well as an analysis of the other homily (*Inventio et depositio vestis in Blachernis*; BHG 1058; CPG 7936) from 619 are still desiderata. The old editions by Combefis of 1648 and Chrisanf Loparev of 1895 (only the second part) are insufficient, according to modern standards.[54]

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[45] Whitby, Mary, 'A New Image'; *eadem*, 'The Devil'; *eadem*, 'Defender' as well as her article in this volume.

[46] Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios'; Olster, 'The Date'; *idem*, *Roman Defeat*, pp. 51-71; Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement'; Speck, *Zufälliges* (cf. Van Dieten, 'Zum "Bellum Avaricum"'); Speck, 'Die Interpretation'; Gigante, 'Sulla concezione bizantina'; Nissen, 'Historisches Epos'; Speck, 'Ohne Anfang'; Gonnelli, 'Le parole'; Gahbauer, 'Georg der Pisidier'.

[47] Tartaglia, *Carmi*. But only the text of the Hexaemeron is presented in a new edition (by Gonnelli), the other texts came from the editions by Sternbach and Pertusi.

[48] Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica*; Donner, *Die anakreontischen Gedichte*; Nissen, 'Sophronios-Studien'; *idem*, *Die byzantinischen Anakreonten*; Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, p. 226ff.

[49] Riedinger, *Concilium*, pp. 410,13-494,9. See also CPG 7635-7681, 9416-9442b (still unpublished: CPG 7679-7681). His letter to Arcadius of Cyprus written in Syriac has survived. See Albert and Von Schönborn, *Lettre*.

[50] Usener, 'Die Weihnachtspredigt'.

[51] Von Schönborn, *Sophrone*; Chadwick, 'John Moschus'; Speck, 'Sophronios'; Cavallo, 'Theodore', p. 61. See the bibliography in Röwekamp, 'Sophronius'.

[52] Marcos, *Los Thaumata*, pp. 243-400: *Miracula ss. Cyri et Iohannis* (CPG 7646; BHG 477-470i).

[53] Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, pp. 297-334. Cf. also Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* I, p. 294ff.; Windau, 'Theodor Syncellus'.

[54] Combefis, *Historia*, pp. 751-788; Loparev, 'Staroe svidetelstvo' (but see Vasil'evskij, 'Avary'); an English translation in Cameron, Averil, 'The Virgin's Robe', with important notes; Wenger, *L'assomption*, p. 111ff.; Baynes, 'The Finding'; Wort-

Of special interest is the recent research into the sources for the last ten years of the Heraclius' reign, the time when the Islamic Arabs began their expansion. Here the question of the oriental source (or sources) of the *Chronographia* of Theophanes (or better: George the Syncellus) and of the *Historia syntomos* of the patriarch Nicephorus have attracted a lot of attention. In the introduction to his very useful translation of Theophanes' work (together with Roger Scott),[55] Cyril Mango has has tried to provide a survey of the state of research, but much more work remains to be done. Paul Speck,[56] Larry Conrad,[57] David Olster,[58] Igor Čičurov,[59] Ann Proudfoot[60] or Ilse Rochow,[61] each with their special interests and methods, have published many studies of the question.[62] Of special interest is the information in two Visigothic chronicles. Their sources have to be seen in connection with the oriental source(s) used by Theophanes.[63] In spite of the progress made, the discussion of the relevant sources used by Theophanes for the history of the seventh century is not ended yet.[64] The Greek *Narratio de rebus Armeniae* reports some events in the relation between the Armenian Church and the Byzantine Church.[65]

The *History of John of Nikiu* with its very difficult textual tradition is only accessible in the old translations by R.H. Charles (1916) and by M.H. Zotenberg (1883) differing on some important points.[66] Much of our information about the Arab conquest of Egypt comes from these works.[67] A new critical

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ley, 'The Oration'.

[55] Mango, Scott and Greatrex, *The Chronicle* (but see also the review by Brandes).

[56] Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier* (see also the review by Brandes); Speck, 'Der "zweite" Theophanes'.

[57] Conrad, 'Theophanes'; *idem*, 'The Conquest'.

[58] Olster, 'Syriac Sources'.

[59] Čičurov, 'Mesto "Chronografia"'; *idem*, *Vizantijskie istoriografičeskie*.

[60] Proudfoot, 'The Sources'.

[61] Rochow, *Byzanz*; *eadem*, 'Chronographie', esp. p. 193ff.; *eadem*, 'Zu einigen chronologischen Irrtümern'.

[62] See Felber, 'Theophanes'; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, p. 271ff.; Yannopoulos, *Thesaurus Theophanis Confessoris*, pp. xxvii-lxi; *idem*, 'Les vicissitudes'.

[63] Gil, *Corpus*, pp. 7-14; Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* II, pp. 334-358. See Dubler, 'Sobre la crónica'; Rochow, 'Bemerkungen', esp. pp. 194-196.

[64] Not very helpful for understanding the character of Theophanes' *Chronographia* is Kazhdan, *A History*, pp. 205-218.

[65] Garitte, *La Narratio*, pp. 278-350 on the church union with the Armenian patriarch Ezr in the city of Karin.

[66] Charles, *The Chronicle*; Zotenberg, *Chronique de Jean*.

[67] Kaegi, 'Egypt'; Winkelmann, 'Ägypten'; Butler, *The Arab Conquest* (with bibliographic additions by P.M. Fraser); Carile, 'Giovanni di Nikius'. On the Persian occupation of Egypt see Altheim-Stiehl, 'Wurde Alexandreia im Juni 619 n. Chr. durch die Perser erobert?'; *eadem*, 'The Sassanians'; Fraser, 'The Arab Conquest'.

translation and an extensive commentary are desiderata. Of some interest are also the Egyptian papyri from the time of Heraclius.[68]

Among the Armenian sources[69] the seventh-century *History of Heraclius* by Sebeos (or Pseudo-Sebeos) has attracted growing attention.[70] The latest translation by Thomson – published with a very useful commentary by James Howard-Johnston – appeared in 1999.[71]

Some hagiographical works[72] from the first half of the seventh century are important sources of social and political history. The many *Vitae* of John Eleemon, patriarch of Alexandreia (610-619), are good sources of ecclesiastical and social history.[73] It is not impossible that an earlier version of the *Legend of Theophilos of Adana* was written during Heraclius' time. The text which has been printed stems from a later period.[74] Of the *Martyrdom of the Sixty Martyrs of Jerusalem* only a Latin version survives.[75]

Some years ago Bernard Flusin published the extant texts of Anastasius the Persian with an important study of historical facts and developments in Heraclius' time.[76] Virgil Crisafulli and John Nesbitt published the old text of the *Miracula Artemii* (the edition of Papadopulos-Kerameus dates from 1909) with an English translation and some notes. Of special interest is the 'supplementary essay' by John Haldon.[77] Paul Lemerle's 1979-1980 edition and commentary of the *Miracula Demetrii* (BHG 499-523) are a great advance on

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[68] Kaegi ('Egypt', p. 39) presents a list of important papyri (in addition to Frazer in the second edition of Butler's *Arab Conquest of Egypt* [see note 67]). See now the useful service of the Papyrological Institute of the University of Heidelberg which presents all known papyri, also in a chronological order (http://aquila.papy.uni-heidelberg.de).

[69] On editions, translations and secondary literature, see Thomson, *A Bibliography*. On the Georgian sources, see Bíró,'Georgian Sources', and Van Esbroeck, 'Une chronique'. Cf. Kazhdan, *History*, p. 246.

[70] Older translations: Macler, *Histoire d'Héraclius*; Bedrosian, *Sebeos' History*; Gugerotti, *Sebêos, Storia*.

[71] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*. On Sebeos and the later Armenian historical tradition, see James Howard-Johnston's contribution to this volume.

[72] See also the articles by Jan van Ginkel and by Peter Hatlie in this volume.

[73] Gelzer, *Leontius*; Delehaye, 'Une vie inédite'; Festugière, *Léontios de Néapolis*; cf. Déroche, *Études*; Skeb, 'Leontius von Neapolis', pp. 347-348 and 395.

[74] Radermacher, *Griechische Quellen*; Kazhdan, *History*, p. 24.

[75] Delehaye, 'Passio', pp. 289-307; Huxley, 'The Sixty Martyrs'; Kazhdan, *History*, p. 26.

[76] Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, I, pp. 39-91. See also Usener, *Acta martyris*, pp. 1-12, and Papadopulos-Kerameus, *Analekta* IV, pp. 126-148, 538; *PG* 114, cols. 773-812; Speck, 'Das Martyrion', pp. 177-266.

[77] Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles*, with the essay 'The Miracles' by Haldon; cf. Mango, 'On the History'; Kazhdan, *History*, pp. 27-35 (with more literature); Speck, 'Eid'.

the studies of the Slavs as well as on the history of Thessalonike.[78] After the edition of the *Life of Theodore of Sykeon* by André-Jean Festugière,[79] published 30 years ago, this very important text, greatly relevant to Heraclius' early years, was studied intensively by, among others, Walter Kaegi and Stephen Mitchell.[80]

In 1991 Vincent Déroche published a new edition of the *Doctrina Iacobi*, a text important not only for Jewish history, but also for the role of the circus factions in the first half of the seventh century.[81]

The West-Syriac sources are now available in Andrew Palmer's translation.[82] The shorter and the longer versions of the annals of Eutychius (Said ibn Batriq) are accessible in the translations by Michel Breydy and Bartolomeo Pirone.[83] Therefore, we no longer have to depend on the old translation by Pocock from 1658. This will undoubtedly have consequences for the interpretation of Byzantine prosopography.[84]

The historical work of at-Tabari has also attracted translators.[85] But the old (and very erudite) translation by Theodore Nöldeke still remains im-

[78] Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils*; but see Speck, 'De miraculis Sancti Demetrii'; *idem*, 'Nochmals zu den Miracula', with important observations on the history of the text and with some corrections to Lemerle's interpretation; Koder, 'Anmerkungen'.

[79] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*.

[80] Kaegi, 'New Evidence', pp. 308-330; *idem*, 'Notes', pp. 61-70; *idem*, 'Two Studies', pp. 87-113; *idem*, 'Late Roman Continuity', pp. 53-61; Mitchell, *Anatolia*; Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, pp. 17-49; Baker, 'Theodore of Sykeon'; Speck, 'Wunderheilige'; Rosenqvist, 'Asia Minor'; *idem*, *Studien*.

[81] Déroche, 'Doctrina Jacobi'. See below note 167; Speck, 'Die Doctrina Iacobi'. On the activities of the so-called circus factions, the standard-work remains Alan Cameron's *Circus Factions*; see also Janssens, 'Les Bleues et les Vertes', and Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, p. 142ff.

[82] Palmer, *The Seventh Century*; see Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*; shorter chronicles: Latin transl. in Guidi, *Chronica Minora* I, pp. 13-32; the chronicle of 1234: Chabot, *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon*; Chabot, *Chronica Minora* II; Brooks, Guidi and Chabot, *Chronica Minora*, III; Scher, *Histoire nestorienne*; Chabot, *Chronicon miscellaneum*, partly translated in: Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles* (pp. 13-23). See also Palmer, 'Une chronique syriaque', pp. 31-46; Chabot, *Historia subeiectionis Syriae*; German transl. by Nöldeke, 'Beiträge', esp. pp. 76-82. Chabot, *La Chronique*. On the Syriac sources, see esp. Brock, 'Syriac Sources'. See also Hoyland, 'Arabic'. On the *Anonymus Guidi* (the *Khuzistan chronicle*), see the article by John Watt in this volume.

[83] Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk*; Pirone, *Eutichio*.

[84] Cf. Brandes, 'Die melkitischen Patriarchen'.

[85] In the new translation (forthcoming) in the *Bibliotheca Persica* (Yar-Shater) of the *SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies* the following volumes have already appeared from the *History of al-Tabari*: Bosworth, *The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*; Fishbein, *The Victory*; Poonawala, *The Last Years*; Donner, *The Conquest*; Blankinship, *The Challenge*; *idem*, *The Battle*; Juynboll, *The Conquest*.

portant.[86] For the fictitious letter(s) of Heraclius to Mohammad, which play an important role in the Arabic tradition, one should consult Stephan Leder's comprehensive study.[87] The report of Strategius on the conquest of Jerusalem by the Persian troops in 614 has only survived in Georgian and Arabic.[88] So, for the study of the relevant sources it is possible to present a positive summary. Of course, much work remains to be done. For example, a new edition of the story of the Antiphonetes-Icon of the Chalkoprateia-Church (the edition by Combefis from 1648 is obsolete) is urgently needed.[89]

During recent years Byzantine sigillography has become one of the most important sources for the administrative history of the seventh century. For a period in which legislation played no major role and from which no systematically written documents on administration have survived (if ever there were any such documents), seals have to be used as primary sources. However, here the problem of forgeries is very serious. Especially seals of *(genikoi) kommerkiarioi* with their images of emperors, as well as many texts, have become objects of forgery. Needless to say this has had a great impact on research. To note only one example: a seal of a *apo hypaton kai genikos kommerkiarios apothekes Kyprou* Theodore, normally dated to 629-632, played an important role in the discussion of the emergence of the system of the *apothekai* of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi*. Oikonomides, Hendy and Haldon have considered it proof of the introduction of these important administrative structures by Heraclius. However, it is a forgery.[90] Consequently, there is no link whatsoever between Heraclius and the *apothekai* of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi*, functions which were, in fact, introduced by Constans II more than 10 years after Heraclius' death. A reform of the state finances can not be proven with the help of the seals of *kommerkiarioi*.[91]

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[86] Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, a very erudite book which is still important.

[87] Leder, 'Herakleios', pp. 1-42; El-Cheikh, 'Muhammad' (non vidi); Pouzet, 'Le Hadith d'Héraclius'.

[88] Garitte, *Expugnationis Hierosolymae*; *idem*, *La prise*; partial English translation by Conybeare, 'Antiochus Strategicus'. Cf. Speck, 'Die Predigt', pp. 37-129. The letter of Patriarch Zacharias, incorporated into the account of Strategius has survived also in Greek (CPG 7825, 7846 [1]; *PG* 86/2, 3228-3233 – reprint of the edition by Combefis in 1655; cf. for the later Greek text *De Persica captivitate opusculum*, cols. 3236-3268; CPG 7846 [2] – cf. Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, p. 135ff. See for the *Opusculum de Persica captivitate*, *PG* 86/2, 3219-3268; Milik, 'La topographie', pp. 127-189 on the topographical data (cf. Flusin, *Saint Anastase* II, p. 131ff.).

[89] Combefis, *Historia* pp. 612-644 (BHG 797); cf. Nelson and Starr, 'The Legend'; Magdalino, 'Constantinopolitana'.

[90] Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung*, Appendix I, nr. 20.

[91] So, for instance, Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 196; the problem is discussed in detail in Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung*, chapt. III.2.3.

The seals of Heraclius have been studied in their historical context by Cécile Morrisson.[92] New inscriptions have been found and published,[93] but, as far as I can see, they have not changed our basic knowledge of the subject.[94]

It seems that the last flourishing time of a 'Hellenic' culture in the style of late Antiquity occurred in Constantinople during Heraclius' reign. The existence of an imperial university at Constantinople is hypothetical and seems to be little more than a historical phantom.[95] Of course, there were schools, but there are no traces of imperial or patriarchal universities.[96] There were, however, some scholars in Constantinople, including Stephen of Alexandria (or Athens).[97] Also, a certain Tychicos was active at Trebizond, if we can believe the (Armenian) autobiography of Ananias of Shirak.[98]

In later centuries Heraclius, the emperor who returned the Holy Cross to Jerusalem, became the subject of paintings and other kinds of artistic expressions.[99] The claim that the famous Josua-Rotulus (Cod. Vat. Pal. gr. 431) was based on an exemplar from the time of Heraclius has been disputed by Otto Kresten.[100]

Heraclius occupies an important place in the history of the Church, because of his responsibility for the monenergistic and monothelete controversies, together with the patriarch Sergius. After 628, it seemed possible to put a stop to the quarrels with the Monophysites in the eastern provinces. At

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[92] Morrisson, 'Du consul à l'empereur'.

[93] See for Asia Minor, Grégoire, *Recueil des inscriptions* and the volumes in the series *Inschriften griechischer Städte Kleinasiens* (Bonn); with the help of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, the *Bulletin épigraphique* in the *Revue des études grecques* and the bibliography of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* new editions and literature can be found. Relevant to the time of Heraclius are the articles by Sodini, 'Les inscriptions'; Zuckerman, 'Épitaphe', or Mango and Mango, 'Inscriptions'.

[94] Frank Trombley has studied extensively the inscriptions from the late sixth and early seventh centuries (see his 'War and Society' as well as his 'Mediterranean Sea Culture').

[95] So Cavallo, 'Theodore of Tarsus', p. 56; but see especially Speck, *Die Kaiserliche Universität*, p. 65ff. and note 52; p. 76ff. with note 7; *idem*, review of Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme*.

[96] Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*, p. 95ff.

[97] See esp. Wolska-Conus, 'Stéphanos d'Athènes'; still useful is Usener, 'De Stephano Alexandrino'; Beck, 'Bildung', esp. p. 72ff.; Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*. p. 87ff.; Cavallo, 'Theodore of Tarsus', p. 55 distinguishes between Stephen of Alexandria and Stephen of Athens – citing Wolska-Conus who said the opposite!

[98] See Lemerle, 'Notes'; Abgarian, 'Remarques', and Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*, p. 90ff.

[99] See e.g. Kühnel, 'Kreuzfahrerideologie'; Thierry, 'Héraclius'.

[100] Kresten, 'Parerga zur Ikonographie'; *idem*, 'Oktateuchprobleme' (against, for example, Mango, 'The Date', esp. p. 126; Schapiro, 'The Place', esp. p. 66; Lowden, *Byzantine Octateuchs*, p. 118).

first, the introduction of the monenergetic and later of the monothelite formula seemed successful, and the same can be said about the negotiations with the Syrian Nestorians and the Egyptian Monophysites during the 630s. However, the Arab conquest destroyed all hopes of a unification of the Church. The Monophysites were no longer an internal political problem. All these problems as well as the relevant sources have been studied by Friedhelm Winkelmann in his latest book, mentioned above.[101] In a wider context Gilbert Dagron has described the time of Heraclius and the monothelete controversy in the fourth volume of the *Histoire du christianisme*.[102]

Of the many problems concerning this imperial heresy, only one can be mentioned here. Already in the seventh century the medieval Byzantine sources show a tendency to exonerate Heraclius. The emperor is presented as an innocent victim of the patriarch Sergius and his successor Pyrrhus. Maximus the Confessor reported during his trial in 655 that, towards the end of his life, Heraclius wrote to Pope John IV that the *Ekthesis* was the work of the patriarch Sergius and that he himself was not in favour of monothelism.[103] In 1996 Alexakis published a text (which he thought to be the *editio princeps* – in fact, the text had already been published in 1987), supposedly confirming this.[104] This is not the place to analyse this text and Maximus' statements.[105] It is difficult to believe, because the text shows the tendency to free the emperor from the accusation of being a heretic. When Heraclius died, the religious questions remained unsolved.

Igor Cicurov published a curious 'Letter of the emperor Heraclius to his son',[106] which in fact presents the text of the second *exhortatio* of Basil I to his son Leo.[107] Not only should the document be placed in the context of late ninth-century imperial propaganda, but it also underlines the importance of the 'Heraclius-tradition' in Byzantium. The famous letters of Pope Honorius in which he agreed to the doctrine of monergism,[108] actually gained importance

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[101] See note 25.

[102] Dagron, 'L'Église'; still important are Van Dieten, *Geschichte*; Caspar, *Geschichte* and Frend, *The Rise*, esp. p. 335ff.

[103] *Relatio motionis*, in: *PG* 90, 125A13-B6; see the new edition by Allen and Neil, *Scripta saeculi VII*, p. 41 (ll. 370-377).

[104] Alexakis, 'Before the Lateran Council'; but see Rizou-Couroupos, 'Un nouveau fragment'.

[105] See Brandes, '"Juristische" Krisenbewältigung', p. 203 with note 399, and Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit*, p. 96ff. (no. 68). The problem has to be seen in connection with the letters of Emperor Constantine III and Pope John IV of 641. See Schacht, 'Der Briefwechsel' and Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit* (no. 69), ignored by Alexakis.

[106] Čičurov, 'Neizvestnaja redakcija'.

[107] *PG* 107, cols. 57-60.

[108] Riedinger, *Concilium*, pp. 548,1-558,8 (gr.), 549,4-559,5 (lat.) and 620,23, 622,1-

in the nineteenth century, before and after the first Vaticanum in 1870, which introduced the principle of *infallibilitas* in dogmatical matters.[109] Other problems of religious development have also been studied intensively, in particular the famous *acheiropoieta*.[110]

The Persian wars have received much attention. Ernst Gerland, Norman Baynes, Nikos Oikonomides, Andreas Stratos, Paul Speck, Walter Kaegi,[111] James Howard-Johnston[112] and others have studied different aspects of the Persian wars. Some chronological questions, for example the date of the first Persian campaign (623 or 624), are still being discussed. The events during the siege of Constantinople by the Avars and Persians in 626 have been studied by F. Barišić (1954) and by James Howard-Johnston (1995).[113]

The effects of the wars against the Persians and, subsequently, those against the Arabs had severe consequences: already in the sixth century there was a decline of the cities of the Eastern Roman Empire, a process which resulted in a de-urbanisation of Asia Minor (and also the Balkans). Clive Foss saw the Persian wars as the end of Antiquity,[114] but his interpretation has been disputed by, among others, James Russell.[115] However, the de-urbanisation remains an important factor in seventh-century Byzantine history; it had an enormous impact on the administrative structures of the state.[116] Some shipwrecks from the time of Heraclius (for instance, the famous wreck from Yassi

10-624,20 (gr.), 621,20-21, 623,1-9, 623,11-625,19 (lat.); CPG 9375 and 9377; Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit*, p. 79ff., 83 (no. 44, 47); see Kreuzer, *Die Honoriusfrage*.

[109] On this question, see the very good study by Kreuzer, *Die Honoriusfrage*.

[110] Cameron, Averil, 'Images of Authority'; *eadem*, 'The Virgin's Robe', pp. 52-56; *eadem*, *Continuity and Change*; Baynes, 'The Supernatural Defenders'.

[111] Gerland, 'Die persischen Feldzüge'; Baynes, 'The First Campaign'; Oikonomides, 'A Chronological Note'; Stratos, 'La première campagne'; Shahîd, 'Sigillography'. The seal published by Seibt (*Die byzantinische Bleisiegel*, I, no. 129, p. 262) shows the participation of Ghassanide *foederati* in the wars against the Islamic Arabs till 640/641.

[112] Howard-Johnston, 'The official History'; *idem*, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns'; Shahîd, 'Sigillography'.

[113] Barišić, 'Le siège de Constantinople'; Howard-Johnston, 'The Siege of Constantinople'. See Speck, *Zufälliges*; on the Avars and their relations to Byzantium, see the extremely useful book by Pohl, *Die Awaren*; also Lilie, 'Bisanzio'. See the article by Frank Trombley in this volume.

[114] Foss, 'The Persians'; *idem*, 'The Fall of Sardis'; *idem*, 'Archaeology'; *idem*, *Cities* and *History*. Important is his article 'Syria in Transition'. See alos Dunn, 'Heraclius' "Reconstruction of Cities"'.

[115] Russell, 'Transformations'; *idem*, 'The Persian Invasion'; Dunn, 'Heraclius' "Reconstruction of Cities".

[116] Brandes and Haldon, 'Towns', pp. 141-172; Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung*.

Ada[117]) have been studied by under-water archaeologists. They offer interesting new information on trade, technology etc.[118]

Much attention has been paid to the expansion of the Arabs and Byzantine failures to resist Arab incursions. There is an abundance of literature which can not be presented here. The above-mentioned books by Kaegi and Donner on the Byzantine-Arabic wars during the last years of Heraclius[119] are specifically devoted to this question. However, one should not forget the still useful books by Leone Caetani, Julius Wellhausen, Michael Jan de Goeje.[120]

During the first half of the seventh century the Byzantine state, administration and social structure underwent drastic changes.[121] Much has been written about the introduction of the theme system which dominated Byzantine administrative history from the seventh to the eleventh centuries. According to a famous statement of Constantine Porphyrogennetus in his *De thematibus*, the themes were introduced by Heraclius and his successors.[122] This fact as well as the appearance of the word *thema* in the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, in the part concerning Heraclius,[123] form the basis for the theory that Heraclius invented the themes. More than a hundred years ago Alfred Rambaud and Albert Voigt,[124] and especially the Russians Fedor Uspenskij and Julian Kulakovskij, connected the *stratiotika ktemata*, known from the legislation of the Macedonian dynasty, with the creation of the themes, seeing in the 'soldier's land' the social side of the theme structure. Historians such as Ernst Stein, Charles Diehl, Heinrich Gelzer and, most influential, Georg Ostrogorsky, had great

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[117] Bass, *Yassi Ada.*

[118] See the catalogue by Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*; also Trombley, 'Mediterranean Sea Culture', p. 135ff.

[119] See notes 22 and 35.

[120] Caetani, *Annali*; Wellhausen, 'Die Kämpfe'; *idem*, 'Prolegomena'; *idem*, *Das arabische Reich*; De Goeje, *Mémoire*; Noth, 'Die literarische überlieferten Verträge'. See the bibliography in Nagel, *Die islamische Welt*, p. 227ff.; Bakhit, *Proceedings* and Canivet and Rey-Coquais, *La Syrie*; see also Cameron, Averil and Conrad, *The Byzantine and the Early Islamic Near East*; Cameron, Averil, *States.*

[121] See esp. Haldon, *Byzantium*; *idem*, 'Military Service'; Karayannopulos, *Die Entstehung*; *idem*, 'Über die vermeintliche Reformtätigkeit'; Lemerle, 'Quelques remarques'; most problems of the history of the civil administration are treated in Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung.*

[122] Especially Pertusi, *Costantino Porfirogenito*, p. 63 (ll. 3-5). See also p. 60 (ll. 20-25), where Heraclius is called the emperor who introduced the themes. Cf. Pratsch, 'Untersuchungen', esp. p. 65ff.

[123] See De Boor, *Theophanis chronographia*, p. 300 (l. 6) and esp. p. 303 (l. 10ff.); Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier*, pp. 61-68 and 90-96; Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, p. 80 (note 1) and the 'Nachträge' on p. XXIX; Oikonomidès, 'Les premières mentions'. On the meaning of *strateia* in this context, see Lilie, Review of Haldon, *Recruitment*; *idem*, 'Araber und Themen', p. 433.

[124] Rambaud, *L'Empire grec*, p. 213; Voigt, *Basile Ier*, p. 339.

difficulties explaining how, after more than twenty years of continuous defeats inflicted by the Persians, which created some very dangerous situations (for instance, the occupation of the Eastern provinces by the Persians), the Byzantine Empire could in one great war, in 628, put an end to the conflict and present the triumph as a real historical victory.

This may explain the theory that it was precisely the thematic system that brought victory in 628 and that it was Heraclius himself who was responsible for its creation. However, Agostino Pertusi and Johannes Karayannopulos, and, later, Ralph Lilie and John Haldon have shown that the theory is erroneous and that it is contradicted by the evidence provided by contemporary sources. Therefore it is no longer necessary to insist on the role of the themes. Heraclius' reign is only important for the question of the development of the theme systeme in the subsequent period when the economic, demographic, political and military conditions forced Constans II, Constantine IV and Justinian II to introduce and to develop the themes. The assumption that the Opsikion theme already existed in the time of Heraclius is to be discarded as a misinterpretation of the sources.[125] The conclusion has to be that the great reforms of the seventh century – like the introduction of the themes – were initiated by Heraclius' successors.

With the exception of Irfan Shahîd,[126] nobody regards Heraclius as the inventor of the theme system any longer. Shahîd believes that the Arabic *Ajnâd*-System of administration is based on Byzantine proto-thematic structures created after 628 and before the Islamic conquest. John Haldon and Ralph Lilie,[127] as well as Johannes Koder, have shown that Shahîd's arguments are not convincing.[128]

Legal sources from the time of Heraclius are scanty. Only four of Heraclius' Novels have come to us,[129] mainly because of their relevance to Church matters. No doubt, there must have been more. The compilation of the so-called *Nomokanon in 14 Titles* took place during Heraclius' reign.[130] The *Ekthesis* of 638, standing in a longer tradition of imperial legislation about the creed (Basiliskos, Zenon, Justinian, Justin II), survived only in the acts of the

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125 Brandes, 'Philippos *ho stratelates*'.

126 Shahîd, 'The Iranian Factor'; *idem*, 'Heraclius'; *idem*, 'Heraclius... Further Observations'; *idem*, 'Heraclius ... Revisited'; in an older article Oikonomidès ('Les premières mentions'), pp. 1-8, saw Heraclius as creator of the themes.

127 Haldon, 'Seventh-Centuries Continuities' and Lilie, 'Araber'.

128 Koder, 'Zur Bedeutungsentwicklung'.

129 Konidaris, 'Die Novellen'; cf. also Troianos, *Oi peges*, p. 101. See the contribution of Bernard Stolte to this volume.

130 Van der Wal, 'Wer war der "Enantiophanes"?', esp. p. 127, note 11; but cf. Konidares, 'Die Novellen', p. 94, note 161.

Lateran Council of 649 (like the *Typos* of 648 by Constans II) but not in legal manuscripts.[131]

What is left? Was Heraclius really a reformer? The best-known reform is that of the monetary system, which is well studied. Especially Michael Hendy in his *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy*[132] and Wolfgang Hahn in the third volume of his *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*[133] have undertaken important research into this topic. The great catalogues of Byzantine coins by Philip Grierson and Cécile Morrisson[134] have to be mentioned as well. Grierson considered the closure of the mints of Catania, Thessalonike, Nikomedeia, Cyzicus, Antioch and possibly the one in Constantia as a reform of the system.[135] But it was, I guess, primarily a sign of the catastrophic economic, monetary and financial situation and, perhaps, also of a trend to barter economy. The decline of copper currency is a sign of this tendency.[136] The introduction of the silver *miliaresia*, studied by Panayotis Yannopulos in a heavily-criticised book,[137] has to be seen as a means of financing the armies in the war against the Persians.[138] During Heraclius' reign the praetorian prefecture of the East disappeared. Unfortunately, it is impossible to describe this process in full detail. However, it seems logical that the later structures of the Byzantine civil administration (especially the *logothesia*) developed many years after Heraclius' reign.[139] The role of the Senate has been studied by Hans-Georg Beck.[140]

Conversely, there are signs of some restorative administrative policies during the few years between the Persian victory and the Arab invasion. As John Haldon has shown, *duces limitis* were now introduced like in the sixth century to guard the eastern frontiers.[141] New insights into the developments of the 'dark' years 628-633 can be found in a recent study by Oliver Schmitt.[142]

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[131] See Brandes, '"Juristische" Krisenbewältigung', pp. 142-144.
[132] Hendy, *Studies*; *idem*, 'On the Administrative Basis'.
[133] Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini.*
[134] Grierson, *Catalogue*; *idem*, 'Dated Solidi'; *idem*, 'The Isaurian Coins'; Morrisson, *Catalogue*, p. 258.
[135] Hendy, *Studies*, p. 477ff.
[136] *Ibidem*, p. 498.
[137] Yannopoulos, *L'Hexagramme* – a book not well received by specialists.
[138] On numismatics see Russell, 'The Persian Invasions', esp. p. 51ff. (good bibliography); Morrisson, 'La monnaie'; recent literature collected by Morrisson, in *A Survey*; Speck, 'War Bronze ein knappes Metall?'. See the articles by Oeconomides and Drossoyianni, 'A Hoard' and by Rösch, 'Der Aufstand', where the numismatic evidence has been connected with historical developments.
[139] Cf. Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung.*
[140] Beck, *Senat*, esp. p. 56ff.
[141] Haldon, 'Seventh-Centuries Continuities'.
[142] See Schmitt, 'Untersuchungen'.

According to the papyrological evidence from the time after 629 there are no signs of any reforms. Two papyri from this period confirm the existence of a tax called *chrysargyron*, the late antique *collatio lustralis*.[143] Heraclius must have reintroduced this tax – possibly only in Egypt? – which was very important in Late Antiquity but was abolished in 498 by Anastasius.

Some years ago Walter Kaegi found in the history of Theodoros Skutariotes (twelfth century) the important information that during the last years of Heraclius' reign, the *sacellarius* Philagrios organised an *apografe*, a census. Possibly after 629, Heraclius ordered this census in order to get exact information about the status of the population (as an object of taxation) and to start a restoration of the structures of the State. The value of this information has been doubted, however, without reason.[144]

During Heraclius' reign the process of infiltration and settlement of Slavs reached its peak. I have no intention whatsoever to revive the old discussion about the importance of the Slavs for Byzantine demography and economy or of the emergence of the Serbian State, which, according to *De administrando imperio* of Constantine VII, was the result of permission granted by Heraclius himself.[145] In this context the *Nomos Georgikos* plays an important role.[146] Recently, Andreas Schminck dated it to the very end of the ninth century. He has some good arguments which have not yet been published in an adequate way.[147] I hope he will present his arguments in due course. Hans Ditten[148] has collected all the source material and exploited the extensive literature on the population transfer between the European and Asian parts of the Empire. On the cultural development of the Slavs (during the seventh century) Alexander Avenarius has recently published a stimulating book.[149]

The war against the Persians, who had stolen the Holy Cross, practically had the character of a crusade.[150] In 1991 the 'Holy War' was the subject of a dissertation by Athena Kólia-Dermitzake.[151] She has collected much material, but has neglected to take into account the eschatological dimensions of

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143 MacCoull, 'BM 1079, CPR IX 44, and the Chrysargyron'; cf. Brandes and Haldon, 'Town, Tax and Transformation', p. 160ff.

144 Sathas, *Theodoros Skutariotes*, p. 110; see Kaegi, 'Reflections', p. 270ff.; *idem*, *Byzantium*, pp. 256-258; on the doubts of Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios', p. 102ff., but see Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung*, chapt. VI.4.2).

145 Lilie, 'Kaiser Herakleios'.

146 See Köpstein, 'Die Agrarverhältnisse'. There is a new critical edition of the *Nomos Georgikos* (Lipšic, Piotrovskaja and Medvedev, *Vizantijskij zemledel'českij zakon*).

147 Schminck, 'Probleme'.

148 Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen*.

149 Avenarius, *Die byzantinische Kultur*.

150 On the ideology of the Cross, see the article by Jan Willem Drijvers in this volume.

151 Kolia-Dermitzake, *Ho byzantinos "hieros polemos"*, esp. p. 167ff.

Heraclius' wars and his way of ruling the empire. His alliance with the Chazars and the attack they launched together against the Persians through the Caucasus reminded many contemporaries of the fate of Gog and Magog, who, according to the legend, were excluded from the *oikumene* and locked behind the Caucasian Gates by Alexander the Great.[152] The role of Heraclius in the Syriac *Legend of Alexander the Great*, composed c. 629/630 in Northern Mesopotamia[153] where he was seen as some kind of an *Alexandros Neos*, as well as the importance of these ideas have been studied by Gerrit Reinink, especially in connection with the Pseudo-Methodius Apocalypse and other apocalyptic texts,[154] which were so important for Byzantine thought in the period following Heraclius' reign. The Syriac apocalyptic *memra* of Pseudo-Ephraem reflects the anti-monophysite policy of Heraclius after 628 and was composed after c. 640.[155] A Syriac metrical homily ascribed to Jacob of Sarug († 521), the so-called *Alexanderlied* – composed between 629 and 636 – used the Legend of Alexander the Great. The text is an important source of eschatological thinking in the seventh century.[156] The general crisis of this time produced many apocalyptic views of the world. Theophylactus Simokates did not fail to report this in book V of his history.[157] One should not exclude the possibility that the commentary of the canonical apocalypse by Andrew of Caesarea, which bears some relation to contemporary history, dates from the time of Heraclius.[158]

Both the feast of the *exaltatio Santae Crucis* (Sept. 14.) and the need for more information about its origins generated a curious story in the Latin West,

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[152] On Gog and Magog in the Middle Byzantine apocalyptic literature, see Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 185-192.

[153] Budge, *The History of Alexander*, pp. 255-275 (text) and 144-161 (translation).

[154] See especially Reinink, 'Die Entstehung'; on the relations between the Alexander Legend and the *Alexanderlied*, see Reinink in the introduction to his translation (*Das syrische Alexanderlied*, pp. 1-15); Brandes, 'Anastasios', esp. p. 37ff. and 50; Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse*, pp. xxxiv, xxxvii-xxxviii, and *passim*. See also some eschatological elements in the *Doctrina Iacobi* chapt. III,8,26-34.38.42; chapt. III,9,1-8 (pp. 165/167, 169 ed. Déroche).

[155] Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones*, pp. 79-94 (transl.); cf. Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, pp. 111-129; Reinink, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, pp. xxxiv xxxvii-xxxviii, and *passim*; *idem*, 'Pseudo-Ephraems "Rede über das Ende"' (with the older literature). According to Reinink ('Pseudo-Methodius', p. 319) written between 642 and 680-683.

[156] Reinink, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, pp. 1-15; *idem*, 'Alexander der Große'.

[157] De Boor, *Theophylacti Simocattae historiae*, p. 216 (l. 21), p. 217 (l. 6); Brandes, 'Anastasios', p. 47ff. See also Reinink in this volume.

[158] Schmid, *Studien*; Brandes, 'Anastasios', pp. 36, 48ff. (here the older literature). The possible dating to the time of Heraclius is my personal suggestion. I hope to publish an article with the arguments soon.

curious indeed in the eyes of byzantinists. It appears for the first time in manuscripts from the late eighth century.[159] Stephan Borgehammar is preparing an edition of this text.[160] One has to suppose a totally unknown Eastern source. Beginning with the discovery of the Cross by Helena, Constantine the Great's mother, the story continues with the capture of the Holy Cross by Chosroes and the description of the war between the Persians and the Romans (= Byzantines) culminating in a duel between Heraclius and Chosroes on a bridge over the river Danube. Heraclius overcomes the Persian king. The next part of the story tells how the emperor Heraclius returns the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. Fully adorned with crown and *ornamentis imperialibus decoratus*, the emperor finds the gates of Jerusalem closed. An angel announces to him that since Jesus Christ had entered the Holy City without any imperial ornamentation whatsoever Heraclius also has to abandon all signs of his imperial status. The emperor complies and takes off his imperial clothes, crown and shoes. He then puts the Cross on his shoulders, and sees the gate opening by itself. This (Latin) story has no known Greek or Latin sources.[161] The art historian Restle[162] believes this story to have been inspired by Georgios Pisides. This statement seems to be impossible. The story of Heraclius and the Cross was of great importance in Western medieval literature. The list of Western sources (especially those dating from the period of the Crusades)[163] is extremely long. A version of the legend found its way into the *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine. The story had also some influence on the crusaders' mind-set. When, in 1099, Godfrey of Bouillon entered Jerusalem barefoot, he followed the example of Heraclius as mentioned in the legend.[164] It is hardly surprising that Heraclius plays an important role in Western medieval and renaissance art. Most famous is the cycle of mural paintings by Piero della Francesca (ca. 1460) in the church of San Francesco at Arezzo.[165]

Of special interest is the role and status of the Jews in Heraclius' time as well as the emperor's supposedly anti-Jewish policy. Jewish writings from the

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[159] And not – as believed – Hrabanus Maurus († 856). Cf. his *Reversio sanctae atque gloriosissimae crucis domini Jesu Christi* See, for instance Kottje, 'Hrabanus Maurus', p. 176ff. The text printed among the homilies of Hrabanus is not by his hand.

[160] I wish to thank Stephan Borgehammar (Uppsala), who kindly sent me his unpublished edition.

[161] See Frolow, *La relique*, p. 190. Some elements, however, can be found in the *History* of Pseudo-Fredegar (especially book IV,64) from the late seventh century. The author must have had access to an oriental source. Cf. Rotter, *Abendland*, p. 145ff.

[162] Restle, 'Konstantins- und Herakleiosbilder'.

[163] See Kretzenbacher, *Kreuzholzlegenden*; Menzel, 'Gottfried von Bouillon'; Ohly, *Sage und Legende*, p. 183.

[164] Esp. Menzel, 'Gottfried von Bouillon'; Baert, 'Exaltatio crucis'.

[165] Van Os, 'Heraklius'; Büttner, 'Piero della Francescas Konstantinsschlacht'.

first half of the seventh century (for instance, the *Apocalypse of Zerubbabel*)[166] have attracted great interest in the last years. The problem of the Jews reappears in the literature owing to the research of Vincent Déroche and Gilbert Dagron. Déroche has produced some important articles and editions of relevant texts, including the well-known *Doctrina Jacobi*.[167] On the other hand, Paul Speck, working on the sources of the icon worship, has tried to demonstrate that most of these texts, especially the anti-Jewish writings by Stephanos of Bostra, Leontios of Neapolis, Georgios of Cyprus and also the *Doctrina Jacobi*, were heavily interpolated documents and did not contain exclusively information about icons.[168] In this case Speck's opinion differs fundamentally from that of Vincent Déroche or of Hans Georg Thümmel.[169]

In 1994 David Olster published an interesting book on the role of the Jews in the literature of the seventh century.[170] His idea that the Jews became a literary construct just to make them responsible for the defeats of the first half of the seventh century is really stimulating. However, his work contains some mistakes and erroneous interpretations – for instance, the invention of a 'Christian-Roman racism' and does not speak of a religious anti-Judaism. On the problems in this book as well as on the general difficulties encountered by the Jews in the Byzantine state, Averil Cameron published an interesting

[166] See also the article by Wout van Bekkum in this volume. The relevant studies by Israel Lévi († 1939) are now collected in Lévi, *Le ravissement*; Marmorstein, 'Les signes du Messie'; Bamberger, 'A Messianic Document'. See some relevant texts (in German translation) in Wünsche, *Aus Israels Lehrhallen* I, pp. 81-121 (Wajoscha-Midrasch); II, pp. 56-80 (Daniel-Midrasch), pp. 33-38 (Elias-Apokal.), pp. 81-88 (Das Buch Zerubabel); III, pp. 107-125 (Zeichen des Messias), pp. 146-154 and 154-169 (Die Mysterien des R. Simᶜon ben Jochai sowie Gebet des R. Simᶜon ben Jochai). See also Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 202ff. and 207ff. On the meaning of 'Armi-lius', see Berger, 'Three Typological Themes'; Speck, 'The Apocalypse of Zerubbabel' – against the interpretation of Dagron and Déroche ('Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 27ff., 41ff.); Wheeler, 'Imaging the Sasanian Capture'; Dan, 'Armilus'.

[167] Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 17-46: Dagron, 'Introduction historique'; pp. 47-229: Déroche, 'Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati'; pp. 230-247: Dagron, 'Commentaire I'; pp. 248-273: Déroche, 'Commentaire II'); Déroche, 'L'authenticité'; *idem*, 'La polémique anti-judaïque'; *idem*, 'Polémique anti-judaïque et émergence de l'Islam'.

[168] According to Speck, '*GRAFAIS E GLYFAIS*'; *idem*, 'Anthologia Palatina'; *idem*, 'Schweinefleisch und Bilderkult; *idem*, 'Adversus Iudaeos – pro imaginibus'. On Leontius and his hagiographical writings (Life of John Eleemon [see note 73]; Life of Symeon of Edessa), see Mango, 'A Byzantine Hagiographer'; Rydén, *Bemerkungen*. See also Déroche, 'Polémique anti-judaïque'.

[169] Thümmel, *Die Frühgeschichte*; Déroche, 'L'authenticité'; *idem*, 'L'apologie' and *Études*.

[170] Olster, *Roman Defeat*.

article in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (1966).[171] Of course, the role of the Jews during the wars with Persians and Arabs had been studied in the older standard works and in some articles by Joshua Starr,[172] Andrew Sharf[173] and others (for instance, by Stefan Leder).[174] The role of the Jews during the rise of Islam has been studied by Robert W. Thomson.[175]

Eutychius of Alexandria (tenth century)[176] presents us with more information concerning the presence of Jews in Palestine.[177] This is not the place to present either all details of current discussions or the controversy between Déroche and Speck. Both scholars seem to have good arguments. Déroche bases his arguments on manuscripts containing the relevant texts, which are rather late – as is normally the case in Byzantium. Conversely, Speck deconstructs the texts with the help of sophisticated methods deriving from philological and literary traditions. The argumentation is not always easy to follow (and this particularly goes for Speck's approach), but there is no reason to ignore the research of these scholars. Extremely difficult, indeed, is the interpretation of a letter of Maximus Confessor.[178] At present, I can only say that Speck's analysis of this letter by Maximus is convincing from a philological point of view and is supported by the manuscript tradition. The link between the report on forced baptism and eschatology, established by Maximus, is so primitive that it seems hardly possible to believe that a theologian of his status wrote this.[179] In reality, the passage in question is a later interpolation. But is this enough to ban forced baptism to the realm of fiction? Western sources

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[171] Cameron, Averil, 'Byzantines and Jews.

[172] Starr, *The Jews*; *idem*, 'Byzantine Jewry'; *idem*, 'Le mouvement messianique'.

[173] Sharf, 'Byzantine Jewry; *idem*, *Byzantine Jewry*, p. 47ff.

[174] Leder, 'The Attitude'. In contrast to what had been said in its title, the book by Rabello (*Giustiniano, Ebrei e Samaritani*, see the index at p. 929, s.v. 'Eraclio imperatore') also treats the time of Heraclius and presents a very useful survey of the relevant sources (also of later Hebrew sources) and literature.

[175] Thomson, 'Muhammad'; *idem*, 'Armenian Variations'; *idem*, 'The Historical Compilation', esp. p. 174ff.

[176] Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat, *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*; Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk*; *idem*, *Études*. The very old translation *Contextio gemmarum sive Eutychii Alexandrini Annales. Illustr. Joanne Seldeno, interprete Edwardo Pocockio* (Oxford, 1658) = *PG* 111, 889-1156 is now replaced by Pirone, *Eutichio*. On the problematic evidence of Eutychius for the history of Byzantium in the seventh century, see Brandes, 'Die melkitischen Patriarchen', pp. 37-57.

[177] See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 442ff.

[178] Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit*, p. 58ff. (no. 21); CPG 7699. Seen as authentic by, for instance by Larchet and Ponsoye, *Saint Maxime*, p. 43ff. following Starr, 'St. Maximos'; Devreesse, 'La fin inédite d'une lettre', and the authority of Gilbert Dagron ('Introduction historique', p. 30ff.; see note 169). See Epifanovič, *Materialy*, p. 84.

[179] On Maximus' concept of eschatology, see Blowers, 'Realized Eschatology'.

(especially Fredegar[180]) provide many attestations of anti-Jewish activities by Heraclius. We can only say that the Greek tradition is corrupt, late and full of interpolations. However, there must be some truth in it. There may have been some anti-Jewish policy, but did this also lead to forced baptisms in the whole realm, or was this only the case in Carthage? Was it possible?[181] We should not confuse anti-Jewish manifestations (possibly by Heraclius himself) with legal and administrative consequences. Let us hope that the new edition of Maximus' letters by B. Markesinis will shed some light here.

On the subject of building activities there is not much to say. The extension of the Blachernae walls after 628,[182] the renovation of an unspecified bath and possibly the renovation of the church of the Pêgê are known from different sources. The restoration of the palace hall, the Magnaura, after 628 (Anth. Pal. IX, 655) can be seen in connection with the great victory over the Persians.[183] According to Mango it is possible that Heraclius himself set up the Salomonic throne in this hall,[184] but there are no contemporary sources to confirm this hypothesis.[185]

I could continue and give a long list of the names and works relevant to one or more aspects of the history of Heraclius. Much research has been done and undoubtedly there will be much more work in the next years. Whether that work will be absorbed outside the circle of byzantinists is another matter. A rapid glimpse at the Internet, where students and colleagues from neighbouring fields of research can find relevant information, shows that the research of the last years are rather meagre. There are some encyclopaedia in which one can read that it was Heraclius who created the themes. The same can be said about the internet version of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In the articles 'Heraclius' or 'thema' the theory of Ostrogorsky on the creation of the theme-system by Heraclius is still very much alive and dominates the discussions. In the new edition of the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, which is very influential in Germany, one may still read that it was Heraclius who reformed the army and the administration by introducing the theme system (1995).[186] Let us hope that in 20, 30 or

[180] Cf. Rotter, *Abendland*, p. 145ff.
[181] See Rouche, 'Les baptêmes forcés'. Against the assumption of a forced baptism in the entire empire, see Speck, 'Maximos der Bekenner', pp. 441-467; Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy*, p. 39; Stemberger, 'Zwangstaufen'.
[182] Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, pp. 265, 285.
[183] *Ibidem*, p. 118.
[184] Brett, 'The Automata'.
[185] Mango, *Studies* (addenda, p. 4).
[186] Capizzi, 'Herakleios' (see note 2), p. 1429 or actually Winter and dignas, *Rom und das Perserreich*, p. 67.

40 years the results of present research will have found their way into common knowledge.

ARMENIAN HISTORIANS OF HERACLIUS

AN EXAMINATION OF THE AIMS, SOURCES AND WORKING-METHODS OF SEBEOS AND MOVSES DASKHURANTSI

James Howard-Johnston

Warfare was the *leitmotiv* of Heraclius' reign. The heady years when military concerns loosened their grip on Roman policy planners were all too few, cramped as they were between the final victorious campaign which brought about the downfall of the great *Shahan shah* Khusro II (24th February 628) and the first decisive thrust of the Muslim *umma* into southern Palestine in 634. Almost all the actions of Heraclius' regime must be placed in their proper context, that of an imperial state at war, in shock at the disasters which came upon it and striving to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. Reforms to inherited government institutions embodied lessons painfully learned in the course of the long Persian war. The cult of saints was both boosted and rechannelled, as all available resources, ideological as well as material, were harnessed to the war effort. The immediate post-war drive to bring about a historic reconciliation of all three main Christian confessions, Nestorian, Chalcedonian and Monophysite, should be viewed as a determined attempt to reaffirm the religious, cultural and political unity of the battered empire. But it is war proper, military operations and ancillary diplomacy and propaganda, which dominated the reign and dominate the pages of the scanty sources dealing with East Roman affairs that have survived to our day.[1]

The modern historian of the early seventh-century Near East is sometimes tempted, like his ancient counterpart, to see the hand of God at work. The sources may be few and, on the whole, laconic, but just enough material has survived to enable us to reconstruct a continuous and intelligible history of events. The two Armenian texts discussed in this paper, both of uncertain authorship and hard to ascribe to a particular sponsoring milieu, make a vital contribution to knowledge and understanding of international relations in the Near East in the first half of the seventh century. Both view the Roman-Persian war of 603-628 mainly from the Persian side,

[1] Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns'; Haldon, *Byzantium*, chapt. 5-6; Averil Cameron, 'Images of Authority'; Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*.

their versions of events thus acting as a foil to the full accounts presented by Roman and Byzantine texts. Both have much to say about the Arab conquests (limited, in the case of Movses, to Sasanian lands). In addition, Sebeos provides the only connected account of the first, pre-Heraclian phase of the Persian war (603-610), as well as invaluable material on the acute crisis in Christian-Jewish relations which precipitated the Persians' intervention in Jerusalem in 614. Movses fills in an otherwise gaping hole by telling the story of the involvement of the Turkish empire, the great nomad power of the north, in the third phase (622-28). Finally there are other snippets of information in Sebeos which cast light on Heraclius' religious policy, the grave defeats inflicted by the Arabs in the last years of his reign and the domestic political crisis which they engendered.[2]

This Armenian contribution is greatly to be prized. Absence of similar material for the period 484-572 (for which the Roman sources are so voluminous) makes it much harder to piece together the Sasanian background to international events and to reach a balanced view of the great power struggle, especially in Transcaucasia, in the reigns of Justinian and Khusro I. Without Sebeos and Movses, the historian would be hard put to reconstruct a continuous, coherent narrative of events for Heraclius' Persian war, let alone interpret them properly. Their contribution would almost match that of the principal Byzantine sources, but for the presence among the latter of the *Chronicon Paschale*, a contemporary selection of material extracted in the main from official documents, and the poems of George of Pisidia which enable us to breathe something of the atmosphere of the time.[3] It far exceeds that of the extant Syrian sources, both west and east.[4] For the wider history of the seventh century, whether our gaze is directed well beyond the confines of the East Roman empire or into the middle decades when the raw power of Islam changed the face of the Near East, Sebeos and Movses are the most important of extant non-Muslim sources. They supply a body of solid, chronologically articulated material with which to start the long and complex process of sifting the voluminous historical traditions generated within early Islamic communities.[5]

Rather less needs to be said of Sebeos, of whom Robert Thomson and I have already published a general appraisal, than of Movses Daskhurantsi,

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[2] Sebeos: ed. Abgaryan, *Patmutiwn Sebeosi*; translation by Thomson, *The Armenian History*; Movses: ed. Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*; translation by Dowsett, *The History*.

[3] Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*; translation Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*. Pertusi, *Giorgio* (see Mary Whitby's contribution in this volume).

[4] See John Watt's contribution in this volume.

[5] Humphreys, *Islamic History*, pp. 69-91.

whose *History of Albania* only reached its final form towards the end of the tenth century but has embedded within it a well-written text covering much of the seventh century in considerable detail. A fair amount of delicate probing is required to isolate and evaluate this text, which I shall designate the *682 History* (the year 682 being its terminal date). It has evoked differing responses in previous commentators, who have been inclined to chop it up into two or more component parts.

Sebeos and the author of the *682 History* have much in common. Neither author introduces himself properly to his readers. Sebeos is merely the conventional, though erroneous, attribution of an anonymous history originally covering the period 572-655 while the author of the text covering the years 624-682, which is lodged in the *History of Albania*, has left few clues as to his identity or the milieu in which he was working. Both, though, wrote at times of gathering crisis in the new Islamic empire, Sebeos on the eve of the outbreak of the first civil war (on the causes of which he throws much new light), the 682 historian just before or just after the start of the second civil war. Both give vent to eschatological apprehensions, which were probably widespread at the time. Both wrote history on the grand scale, with horizons which reached out into central Asia, the heartlands of the Caliphate and (in the case of Sebeos) the eastern Mediterranean. Finally both were admirably restrained editors of the sources which came into their hands, refraining from tampering with their substance, content to act as conduits for the materials which they selected for transmission to future generations *via* their texts.

J.-P. Mahé and Thomson have demonstrated that the anonymous Armenian history of 572-655 (to which some updating *scholia* were added in 661) is not the *History of Heraclius* quoted occasionally by later writers and that its author was not the Sebeos who features in several medieval lists of Armenian historians.[6] What looks like an authorial preface (p. 72) gives it a double title, *Chronographia* and *Royal History*, thereby indicating that it is a chronologically ordered account of events and centres on a royal court, that of the Sasanian rulers of Persia. Its scope is then defined more precisely as a history of one particular shah, Khusro II, and of the destruction which he wrought during and after his lifetime – 'the story of the destructive and ruinous Khosrov, cursed by God'. Both in its structure and its subject-matter the history which follows corresponds to the titles and definition given in this passage. It has a chronological armature, composed mainly of Sasanian regnal years. It divides its story up into three sections, each pertinent to its main theme: the first opens with a long account of the

[6] Mahé, 'Critical Remarks'; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, pp. xxxiii-xxxviii.

circumstances of Khusro's installation on the Sasanian throne with Roman military backing and then details the fateful consequences for Armenia of the resulting decade of Roman-Persian amity; the second deals with the rest of Khusro's reign and the long and ultimately ruinous war which he initiated against the Romans (or, to quote the preface, the 'raid over the world by the Sasanian brigand Apruez Khosrov, who consumed with fire the whole inner [land], disturbing the sea and the dry land, to bring destruction on the whole earth'); the third and longest section deals with the Arab conquests and the growing crisis at the time of writing, which are presented in the preface as the disastrous consequences of Khusro's reign. The author allows his own feelings to well up in the preface, as also in three later editorial interjections: he describes the coming of Islam in apocalyptic terms – 'the wrath evoked from on high and the anger flaming up below (....) like the whirlwind they [those of the south] arose and burst out to destroy everything within, to raze mountains and hills, to rend the plains, to crush in pieces the stones and rocks beneath the heels of their horses and trampling hooves'.[7]

Our anonymous history may therefore fairly be called the *History of Khosrov*. That such indeed was its original title is suggested by the appearance of the name Khosrov in an itemised list (made close to 1675) of the contents of the earliest surviving manuscript copied at Bitlis in 1672.[8] Khosrov should not be taken to be the author, but the principal subject of our text. What, then, can be learned of the author? First of all, it is plain that he was at work in the 650s, since news comes in thicker and faster up to the point, not long after the last recorded event (datable to late spring or early summer 655) when he broke off writing. The glint of hope in the conclusion which he penned then (pp. 176-177) proves that it was written well before Muawiya began to prevail in the civil war: he apologises for mistakes in the arrangement of his material, picks up the apocalyptic theme developed in the preface and two other previous passages of editorial comment, and, with the aid of a short *florilegium* of Old Testament quotations, predicts the imminent destruction of Islam. The *scholia* which he added six or so years later report relatively drily the actual turn of events after 655. In the second place, there are several indications that he was a churchman – his access to documents probably only available in the archives of the catholicosate, his inclusion of a full defence of the Armenian church's Monophysite doctrinal

[7] Abgaryan, *Patmutiwn Sebeosi*, p. 72. Later passages of comment at pp. 141-142, 161-162, 176-177.

[8] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, pp. xxxi-xxxii and note 10.

stance,[9] above all an easy familiarity with the Bible evident in his readiness to resort to biblical phraseology, allusions and quotations, especially in the third section which involved more composition on his part.[10] Finally, as Thomson has already observed, the description of the Emperor Constans' visit to Dvin late in 653 has the hallmarks of an eyewitness account, and, to judge by the detail and vividness with which it records the emperor's private conversation with an unnamed bishop who had avoided taking communion with the Chalcedonians, the eyewitness may well have been that recalcitrant bishop. Emotional involvement would also explain why, for once, the author's mask of impassivity slipped and he introduced some sharp criticism of the Catholicos Nerses for restoring communion with the Chalcedonian church on that occasion (he had long 'kept the bitter poison hidden in his heart' and now 'perverted the true faith of St. Gregory' and 'muddied the pure and clean and crystalline waters of the springs...').[11]

The *History of Khosrov*, as is made plain in the preface, is not narrowly focussed on the internal politics of Armenia, whether competition between rival aristocratic families for power and influence in the localities or often bitter wrangling over doctrine in the church. From the start Armenia is placed, as it should be, in the wider context of the Iranian world which had shaped its culture and dominated its politics for most of classical antiquity. It may be remarkable for the breadth of its coverage, but it has precedents in the Armenian historical tradition. Both the anonymous *Epic Histories*, composed in the 470s and covering much of the fourth century, and its continuation focussing on the two great Armenian rebellions of the fifth century, which was written by a contemporary and participant in the second of them (Lazar Parpetsi), have a similar broad sweep and a similar Iranian cast.[12] The anonymous author (whom I shall continue to call Sebeos for convenience) pushed out his horizons to west and to south as well, so as to embrace the East Roman empire and the young Islamic state. He had no choice, if he was to make sense of the history of his own time, when Iranian power shrank away and Armenia, along with the rest of Transcaucasia, was pulled alternatively into the orbits of Byzantium and the caliphate.

Tim Greenwood suggests that eschatological apprehension may have encouraged Sebeos to look outward in this way.[13] I doubt, though, that it exercised an overriding influence. Sebeos takes care to prevent his own

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[9] Abgaryan, *Patmutiwn Sebeosi*, pp. 148-161; Thomson, 'The Defence'.
[10] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, pp. xlix-l.
[11] Sebeos, pp. 166-168; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, p. xxxix.
[12] Garsoïan, *The Epic Histories*; Thomson, *The History*.
[13] Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 12-15, 51-54.

views from seeping into the substance of his text. This makes it *prima facie* unlikely that he would have allowed the fear (tinged with hope), which he expresses in four isolated passages of editorial comment, to determine its coverage. There is also one feature of his text which rules this out, its neglect of the north, the realm of Gog and Magog, identified in a second passage of editorial comment (pp. 141-142) as the third of Daniel's beasts. There is an indication early on (discussed below) that Sebeos had access to a source dealing with the Turks (related perhaps to that used by the *682 History*). It is all the more significant then that he chooses to write them out of his history of Heraclius' Persian war, only mentioning them incidentally (pp. 101-104) in his account of the last phase of the distinguished career of Smbat Bagratuni, one of the two heroes of the first part of his history. In reality, Gog and Magog, in the form of the Turkish empire, did play a central part in the breakdown of the late antique world order, when they intervened on the Roman side in the 620s and, by seizing Caucasian Albania and threatening Iran from close at hand, dealt a fatal blow to Khusro II's regime.[14] Historiographical habit and the extraordinary scope of the Arab conquests between them explain why Sebeos' primary concern was with international relations on the grand scale and their impact on Armenia. His was a very different world from that of his eighth- and ninth-century successors, who, at a time when Armenia was being forced in on itself, would take an increasingly narrow view of its recent and remote past.

Sebeos does not delve into the complex internal politics of Armenia. One of the most remarkable features of his work is its even-handed treatment of the leading magnate families of his time. It rises above faction and locality. Members of five notable families – the Mamikoneans, the Bagratunis, the Vahewunis, the Khorkorunis and the Rshtunis – are allowed to play leading roles.[15] All get a good press, even Teodoros Rshtuni, in spite of Sebeos' disapproval of his formal submission to Muawiya in 653 (described as 'a pact with death', in a second passage [p. 164] where he allows his own feelings to intrude on the substance of his history). By directing attention at Armenia's relations with the wider world and spotlighting the achievements of individuals (culminating often in honours received from foreign courts) regardless of family, Sebeos emphasises the shared interests of Armenians, overlays the endemic fractiousness of their segmented social order, and implicitly exhorts his contemporaries to form a common front against Islam. A similar concern to avoid divisiveness explains the extraordinary absence of polemic in the notices which he includes about ecclesiastical affairs. He records dispassionately several

[14] Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns'.
[15] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, II, pp. 333-336.

episodes which severely weakened the position of Monophysites in Armenia: he notes briefly the splitting of the catholicosate in the 590s between two holders, a Chalcedonian (Jovhan) and a Monophysite (Movses), breathing not a word of criticism against the Chalcedonian; he is equally temperate about the Catholicos Ezr who restored communion with the Chalcedonian church in 632, merely omitting to mention the church council which authorised the move; he even has complimentary epithets for the contemporary Catholicos Nerses, for all his pro-Chalcedonian machinations.[16] There is thus a tacit message in the *History of Khosrov*, but it is political, not eschatological.

It is now time to turn to the complex task of unravelling the *History of Khosrov*. What sources were drawn on? How was it put together? Thomson and I have already conducted a provisional survey, in the course of which we identified a great diversity of material. This ranges from documents, authentic, transcribed *verbatim*, incorporated whole (a letter of Modestus, *locum tenens* for the exiled Patriarch Zacharias of Jerusalem, to the Armenian Catholicos Komitas, Komitas' reply, and much of the statement of faith issued by the 649 Council of Dvin) to a somewhat romanticised and encomiastic biography of Smbat Bagratuni, a distinguished general who served Khusro II loyally until his death in 616/7. Previously I was inclined to separate out two other types of material, a list of Persian governors of Armenia (broken up into four pieces in the text) and what looks like a set of communiqués or resumés of communiqués about Persian operations in Armenia between 603 and 611. Now, persuaded by Greenwood, I would prefer to connect them, taking the military reports to be longer than usual notices about the deeds of successive office-holders. As for the third section of the text, it is rather harder to distinguish its constituent parts, but they can be sorted into four categories on the basis of subject-matter and viewpoint while occasional dislocations in the presentation can be explained most satisfactorily as resulting from awkward juxtapositions of material from these different categories. It is thus possible to make sense of Sebeos' contemporary history if he is viewed as combining chunks of material quarried from four sources, probably written (information being conveyed more efficiently in writing than in speech), those which I have dubbed the Palestine, Persian, Dvin and Rshtuni Sources.[17]

To advance further, we need to examine Sebeos' provisional table of contents more closely (pp. 65-66). A detailed account of Heraclius' Persian

[16]Abgaryan, *Patmutiwn Sebeosi*, pp. 91, 129, 131-132, 139, 144, 147-148, 166-167, 174-175.

[17] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, pp. liv-lviii, lxiii, lxv-lxx; Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 29-31.

campaigns and their victorious conclusion (broken down into nineteen episodes) is framed by general outlines, under a few heads, of Sasanian and Roman history beforehand and of the Arab conquests subsequently. The disparity between the central and outer components is striking and probably to be explained by differences in the sources to hand at the time when Sebeos embarked on his project and sketched out this plan. It may be postulated that at this early stage he had three principal sources which differed markedly in character: (1) a version of Sasanian dynastic history from Peroz's accession (459) to the 630s – hence the presence in the text of material on the fall of Hormizd, the flight and restoration of Khusro II, as also on his deposition, which is parallelled in later, extant derivatives of the Persian *Khwadaynamag* ('Book of Lords') – onto which has been grafted Armenian material (on three great rebellions) and some notices about Roman history; (2) a full narrative of the Roman counteroffensives in the 620s which eventually undercut all of Khusro's successes – this appears to be based ultimately on official Roman and Persian sources and thus to differ both in standpoint and in grain of coverage from the preceding *Khwadaynamag*-based material; (3) information on the first and most dramatic phase of the Arab conquests (to 642). These, I submit, were the materials from which Sebeos began to piece together his history, supplementing them with extracts from other sources as he came across them in the course of writing. These additional sources include documents which he probably found in the archives of the catholicosate in Dvin, commissioned biographies of notable individuals, hagiographical snippets, an invaluable contemporary account (the Dvin Source) of the involvement of leading Armenians in Byzantine court politics *etc*. Greenwood, I should add, doubts whether it was Sebeos who combined the material summarised in the provisional table of contents, taking it rather to be a pre-existing amalgam, composed in Armenia and largely based on the *Khwadaynamag*, which Sebeos took over, fleshed out with supplementary material and extended from 642 to 655.[18]

Sebeos handled the variegated material which he extracted from his sources in workmanlike fashion. Sometimes chronology dictated its arrangement, sometimes causal and other connections led him to follow a story (such as Smbat Bagratuni's career) even if it took him some distance into the future. He was careful, though, to scatter dating indications across his text and thus to enable an attentive reader to relate episodes chronologically to each other. It is only the latest notices – jotted down perhaps as news reached him from different quarters – which may induce confusion in the reader and which led Sebeos to include an apology in his conclusion (p. 176). He refrained from tampering with the substance of the material in his

[18] Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 21-29.

sources. This is plain to see in the case of the documents preserved whole, but can be demonstrated also *à propos* of the speech which he put in Heraclius' mouth in 615. The terms he offers correspond to those put forward in the formal letter suing for peace subsequently sent by the Senate. This suggests (but cannot by itself prove) that whatever embellishments Sebeos introduced, whether literary (in his rendering of diplomatic notes as well as speeches) or biblical (to give extra depth to his narrative and to signal the providential framework of contemporary history), were superficial and did not affect the basic structure of what was reported in his sources.[19]

There are, of course, imperfections in the *History of Khosrov*. Some leaps forward or backward in time are disruptive. There are instances of confusion, one of them very serious (the conflation of Persian thrusts to the Bosphorus in 615 and 626).[20] However, the chief grouse of the latterday historian is that Sebeos has been too selective. He has not reproduced as much from his sources as we would have liked. We know – from the provi-sional table of contents – that he had much more material on the Turks than he has included. We may guess – from the abrupt start of two notices – that the Dvin Source supplied much more information on the turbulent politics of Byzantium in the last years of Heraclius' reign than he has chosen to use. We are tantalised by what he transmits to us and are left wishing that he had been less severe an editor, had been readier to include material which had little direct or indirect bearing on Armenian history.

Movses Daskhurantsi's *History of Albania* is more ambitious than the *History of Khosrov*. It ranges from the beginning of time, from the origins of humanity and the dispersal of nations over the earth after the Flood, to Movses' own day. Geographically it may be narrowly focussed on what he calls 'the regions of the east', comprising the fertile plains of the middle and lower Kura and the edges of the highlands which frame them to north and south.[21] But Albania was so exposed to pressures and influences from without, from all four quarters, that its history had to be placed in a wider context of great power politics. Secular and ecclesiastical history are entwined. Movses introduced whatever information he could glean from available sources about domestic politics and the relations of local rulers with foreign monarchs, from the first ruler of Albania to be mentioned in a written source (Aran in the early Parthian period) to two contemporary rival

[19] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, pp. lxvi-lxvii, lxx-lxxi; for a contrary view, see Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 54-60.
[20] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, p. lxxiii.
[21] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, I.5, II.1, pp. 9, 106, transl., pp. 4, 61.

princely houses.[22] As for church history, he made artful use of the more plentiful material to hand about saints and leading churchmen, about venerated relics and important councils. He argued that Christianity came to Albania at almost the same time as to Armenia (preached first by Elishe, disciple of St. James, very soon after Thaddaeus' mission to Armenia, and taking proper root with the conversion of Urnayr, a ruler whom he made a contemporary of Constantine the Great and Trdat king of Armenia), and went on to claim parity of status for the catholicosate of Albania, assertions of authority by Armenian catholicoi being interpreted as acts of voluntary deference on the part of their Albanian counterparts.[23] There is thus more partisan advocacy in the *History of Albania* than in the *History of Khosrov*.

In the absence of a preface (the heading of I.1 hints that it may once have existed), neither the identity of the author nor the date of composition can be established with any certainty. The conventional attribution to Movses Daskhurantsi rests upon the uncorroborated testimony of two later writers, Mkhitar Gosh (around 1200) and his pupil Vanakan Vardapet. The placename Daskhuren is not known otherwise. For want of a better alternative, we may provisionally accept the medieval testimony (which was probably based on oral tradition).[24] A good case can be made out for production of the text either early or late in the tenth century. Greenwood places it soon after 900, on the grounds that from this point its relatively full narrative peters out into a short series of discrete notices. A.A. Akopyan, the foremost contemporary Armenian analyst of the text, plumps for a date between 982 and 988 when the last of the princes and catholicoi listed at III.23 and 24 were alive and in post.[25] I incline to follow Akopyan, and would explain Movses' failure to write any connected history of the recent past, partly by the difficulty of the task (so complex was the history of Albania in the tenth century, riven as it was by faction, with schism in the church and endemic conflict between two local dynasties),[26] but mainly by the character of his project (his chosen role was that of compiler, not

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[22] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, I.4, III.22, 23, pp. 8, 335-336, 338-341, transl., pp. 3-4, 221-222, 224-227. It should be noted that the heading at p. 319, which separates III.17 from III.16, is missing in Dowsett's English translation. Dowsett's numbering of subsequent chapters therefore lags one behind that of Arakelyan's critical edition.

[23] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, I.6, 9, pp. 9-11, 14-15, transl., pp. 4-6, 7-8. Cf. Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 183-184, 204-207; Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 105-110.

[24] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 166-169; Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 122-123.

[25] Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 111-121; Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 212-216, 223.

[26] Zuckerman, 'À propos du *Livre des cérémonies*', pp. 563-588.

composer, of history, and there were no conveniently packaged accounts of tenth century events from which to extract material).[27]

In the course of his meticulous examination of the text, Akopyan has identified the main contributory sources, some of them extant so that Movses' editorial performance can be appraised, others postulated so as to explain the pattern of his coverage and shifts both of perspective and in manner of presentation. He draws a fundamental distinction between the core of book II (chapters 9-16, 18-45), which deals with seventh-century events in considerable detail, and the rest of the text which is more economical in expression. He does so mainly on the basis of style. The seventh-century core is written in elegant, sometimes flowery language, the narrative being embellished with apposite similes, snatches or longer passages of direct speech, biblical quotations and occasional classical allusions. This contrasts with the straightforward, efficient presentation of material, in unadorned language, which is characteristic of the rest of the text.[28]

The main body of the text, competently put together and conveying information succinctly and plainly, may be disposed of swiftly, since it has no bearing on the history of Heraclius' reign. Movses admits (I.8, III.24) that he had difficulty tracking down sources, but he made the best of what he did find. These sources may be enumerated as follows: (1) three extant historical texts – an Armenian translation of the Chronicle of Hippolytus, and the Histories of Movses Khorenatsi and Elishe;[29] (2) two accounts of the Christianisation of Albania, one spurious (I.6, 7, 9, 11) which underpins a claim to parity of status with the Armenian church, the other dubbed the Tale of Vachagan by Akopyan (I. 14, 16-23) which acknowledges the known dependence on the Armenian church (the first Albanian bishop being the grandson of Gregory the Illuminator) – for Akopyan both originated in the early seventh century when the subordination of the Albanian to the Armenian church became a live issue;[30] (3) a collection of ecclesias-

[27] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 169-177; Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 100-104. Akinyan's conjecture, taken up by Akopyan, that Movses Daskhurantsi was Movses, last of the catholicoi listed in III.24, seems implausible in the light of the compiler's modest literary ambitions and the text's silence about the fraught ecclesiastical politics of the recent past.

[28] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 169-172, 188-189, 197-198.

[29] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 201-203; Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 95-98.

[30] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 178-188, detects two distinct strands in the spurious tradition: (1) a legendary story of Elishe's mission (I.6, 7) which he dates to the early seventh century; and (2) retrojection of the conversion of Urnayr from the 360s/370s to the early fourth century (I.9, 11), datable probably to the eighth century but ascribed by Akopyan to Movses himself (pp. 181-184). Cf. Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 124-127 who defines the two traditions somewhat differently.

tical documents and short texts which was probably put together in the catholicosate and which, we know, was read by the Armenian Catholicos Anania Mokatsi (946-967) during a visit to Albania in 949; [31](4) a list of caliphs prefaced by an account of Muhammad's life (III.1-2);[32] (5) a secular annalistic chronicle which paid particular attention to Arab military activity in Transcaucasia between 697/8 and 897/8 (III.16-17, 20-22);[33] and (6) lists of princes and catholicoi of Albania (III.23-24), ending respectively with Yovhannes Senekerim (ruling from shortly before 970) and Movses (982-988).

Movses Daskhurantsi was a competent compiler. His narrative was pieced together out of passages, normally abridged but sometimes transcribed, which he selected for inclusion from his literary sources. This can be demonstrated in the case of the three historical texts used by him which are still extant: he was careful to preserve the structure and language of the original, restricting his editorial additions to a bare minimum.[34] He was equally scrupulous in his handling of the documents which he incorporated (many of which are independently preserved), normally contenting himself with making some excisions. But he was ready to intervene if there were, in his judgement, errors to be corrected or awkward details in need of editorial massaging which might otherwise bring into question either the independence or the orthodoxy of the Albanian church (*e.g.* II. 47, 48, III. 8).[35] He was adept at marshalling and deploying his variegated material at appropriate places in his text. The basic principle of arrangement was chronological. Material from different sources was broken up and distributed in larger and smaller chunks across the text. The whole was divided up into chapters, the subject-matter being signalled by headings composed by him. Finally Movses bound together his interleaved materials with short linking passages and occasional cross-references.[36]

I turn now to the rich, detailed narrative of seventh-century events embedded in book II. Within it can be distinguished four clusters of material. It is the first of these which concerns historians of Heraclius' reign (II.10-16). It presents a full account of the final stages of the Roman-Persian war of 603-628, within a clear chronological framework constructed out of Sasanian regnal dates. After a brief cast-back to Khusro's successes in the

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[31] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 178, 203-208, 216-223.
[32] Greenwood, *A History*, p. 143.
[33] Cf. Greenwood, *Armenia*, pp. 119-120, 144, who also attributes III.15 (a cast-back over the seventh century) to this source and characterises it as biassed in favour of one of two rival local dynasties (the Eranshahik house).
[34] Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 96-100.
[35] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 201-207.
[36] *Ibidem*, pp. 172-173, 223-226; Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 101-104.

earlier phases of the war, it notes that eventually the balance began to swing against him. Then it plunges into the narrative of Heraclius' campaigns, paying close attention to the involvement of the Turks and the damage inflicted by them on Albania. Even a superficial inspection reveals that this section combines two different sorts of material. It gives a general overview, diplomatic and strategic, of the final stages in the war, and culminates in a graphic account of the *putsch* which brought down Khusro II in February 628. This material is similar in character to the corresponding section of the *History of Khosrov* but fills in the missing gap about the Turks. It probably derives ultimately from an amalgam of official Roman and Persian sources, probably composed in Armenia, akin to, if not identical to that used by Sebeos. It is interleaved with material taken from a detailed, evocative, eloquently written account of the effects of the war on Albania, composed by an eyewitness, in which the figure of the Catholicos Viroy, released from exile in Ctesiphon early in 628, looms large. Viroy is presented as the saviour of Albania who managed to secure reasonable terms from the Turkish occupying forces in 628, well before the crisis in central Asia which forced their sudden withdrawal in 629 (described briefly at II.16). This section also includes a short, rhetorical text, possibly somewhat abridged, written by Viroy himself (II.15).[37]

It is followed by extensive extracts from a eulogy of Juansher, prince of Albania (II.18-28), prefaced by a garbled genealogy of his family and background information about the troubled first decade of Khusro II's reign which should be attributed to Movses himself (II.17).[38] Juansher's career is outlined, from his appointment as commander of the Albanian contingent mobilised for the Persian counteroffensive against the Arabs (in 637/8) to his second audience with the Caliph Muawiya in Damascus in 669/70. His return, loaded with honours, bringing all manner of valuable presents including an elephant and a parrot, was almost certainly the occasion which prompted the composition of the eulogy. The author was an accomplished writer. He was present when Juansher came back and writes lyrical descriptions of the two exotic creatures which he saw then.[39] A provenance can also be suggested for the third cluster of material, hagiographical in character (II.29-31, 33), which describes the discovery by Israyel, a monk at the time (later a distinguished bishop), of three buried reliquaries, two containing fragments of the True Cross and one miscellaneous relics, all allegedly brought back in the fourth century from Jerusalem. For the source is cited at the beginning of chapter 29, 'a true, ornate but somewhat short

[37] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 190-191.
[38] *Ibidem*, pp. 196-197.
[39] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.28, pp. 196-201, transl., pp. 127-130.

account of the solitude of Israyel'. A chunk of related material explaining how the relics reached Albania and why they were concealed is to be found at I.27-30. This background material almost certainly belongs to the cited Life of Israyel.[40] It was probably composed soon after the discovery of the relics in the 670s, and was not so much a biography of Israyel (after all it halted before his consecration as bishop [reported at II.37]) as an account of the discovery of the Jerusalem relics, in which Israyel played the leading part. Movses presumably was responsible for separating the background material and relocating it much earlier in his chronologically ordered history, as also for introducing unrelated material on illicit noble marriages and a disputed election to the catholicosate (II.32). Fourth and finally, there is a cluster of material dealing with different aspects of the period 680-682 (II.34-45). It covers the death of Juansher (killed in 680 by an assassin whose identity is concealed), the succession of his son Varaz-Trdat, an attack by the North Caucasus Huns which Varaz-Trdat managed to halt, and the mission of Israyel, now a bishop, to the Huns (December 681- spring 682).[41] The mission is the main subject of this last collection of material, Israyel's arguments and actions against the pagans being reported in great detail.[42]

The question now arises as to who fitted together these four clusters of seventh century material. Was it the work of Movses himself, who, as we have seen, was a perfectly competent editor? Greenwood and Constantine Zuckerman disagree on this point. They break down the core of book II somewhat differently from the analysis given above. Greenwood identifies three main constituent parts: (i) II.10-14, 16 (dealing with warfare, diplomacy and the fate of Albania in the 620s) which he dates to the mid-660s at the earliest and with which he associates the prefatory chapter 9; (ii) II.18-28, the Eulogy of Juansher, which he classifies as a heroic biography, together with II.34-38 which he takes to be a continuation of the biography; and (iii) all the material about Israyel in II.29, 33, 39-45. He suggests that the information about Israyel was taken from a Jerusalem-oriented ecclesiastical source, which also supplied a spurious version of the Christianisation of Albania (I.6, 7) and explained how the relics discovered by Israyel reached Albania and why they had been buried (I.27-29). He has

[40] The legendary material about Elishe's mission and his relics presented at I.6, 7, which likewise stresses the connection with Jerusalem, should probably be classified as deep background material and attributed to the same ultimate source. Cf. Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 184, 196.

[41] The dates of Juansher's death and of Israyel's mission are established by Akopyan, 'O khronologii'.

[42] There is no positive indication in the text to support Akopyan's suggestion (*Albaniya-Aluank*, p. 198) that the author went on the mission.

Movses combine these three antecedent sources plus some infill material to form a coherent whole in the tenth century.[43] Zuckerman defines the Eulogy of Juansher rather differently: he regards the preface at II. 9 and the overview of the Roman-Persian war presented in II.10-11 as background material which belongs to the Eulogy proper at II.18-28 (which he dates reasonably to 670). This has been grafted onto material taken from a source written much earlier (in the 640s) by an associate of Viroy (II.12-16). All the material concerning Israyel (II.29-45) he attributes to a Life of the saint (which also supplied the information in I.27-30). He has these three distinct bodies of material combined by a chronicler who pieced together a History of Albania in the eighth, probably the early eighth century. He leaves unexplained the extraordinary void in Movses' text about the dramatic events of the period 685-688 when first the Khazars and then the Byzantines exploited the second great internal crisis of the caliphate to intervene in force in Transcaucasia, and the equally remarkable silence about the Arabs' *riposte* in 692, immediately after the end of the second civil war, when they reasserted their authority and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Byzantines at Sebastopolis (Sulusaray). These episodes should surely have featured prominently in the putative eighth-century chronicle, especially if it was written early in the century.[44]

Akopyan also envisages most of this seventh-century material coming already conjoined into Movses' hands. He takes the fine writing evident in much of it as a sign of earlier editorial activity by someone who was more of a stylist and more of a scholar than Movses. He stresses the significance of Movses' silence about events after 682, especially the series of interventions by outside great powers. He is surely right to explain it by a sudden failure on the part of Movses' principal seventh century source. For all the various strands of the narrative – political, concerning the rule of Varaz-Trdat at home, diplomatic, concerning his relations with Huns, Khazars and Byzantines, and ecclesiastical, concerning the subsequent fate of Christianity among the Huns – are cut off at the same time. From this he infers that the seventh-century editor halted his work abruptly, at some point between the last reported event in 682 (the decision of the church authorities that Israyel could continue to oversee the Hun mission) and the first important event to go unmentioned, the Khazar invasion of 685. He postulates 684 as the year of its completion and designates it accordingly the *684 History*.[45]

[43] Greenwood, *A History*, pp. 129-142, 146-147.
[44] Zuckerman, 'The Khazars'.
[45] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 197-201.

So far Akopyan's argumentation has real force. It might be preferable, though, to identify the seventh century source by the terminal date of its coverage, in conformity with the usage of Syriac and Byzantine scholars, and call it the *682 History*. This is a mere quibble. But there is a point of some importance on which I disagree with Akopyan. He does not follow through the logic of his argument and attribute all four clusters which I have identified in the higher-style core of book II to the *682 History*. He hives off the first cluster (which he defines as II.10-14, 16) together with the preface in chapter 9, designates it the *History of Viroy*, and has it composed by a close associate of Viroy's very soon after his death in 629. He detects some linguistic differences which, in his view, mark off the first cluster of material from the rest of the *682 History* (notably more similes). This is true, but may simply reflect specific features of a source used by the late seventh-century historian.[46] He then conjures up, with the aid of several conjectures, a scenario in which the author could only have written so enthusiastically about Viroy in a very short period: the author, he suggests, was a Monophysite (hence what he takes to be his coolness towards Heraclius);[47] Viroy, who is known to have been a Chalcedonian early in his tenure of the catholicosate, and the Albanian church must have re-entered into communion with the Monophysite church of Armenia; both churches must have been Monophysite at the time of writing; since the Armenian church, taking the Albanian with it, went over to Chalcedon at the Council of Theodosiopolis in 631 or 632, the *History of Viroy* must have been written before that date and after 629 (date of the last reported event, the Turks' withdrawal, and of Viroy's death).[48]

Akopyan's scenario is intriguing but cannot stand up to close scrutiny. There are clear indications that his *History of Viroy* was composed long, long after Viroy's death. A cast-forward at the end of II.13, referring to the removal of kingship from the Sasanian dynasty, cannot have been written before the defeat and death of the last Shah, Yazdgard III, in 652.[49] The editor's hand can be detected embellishing some of the documentary material incorporated in the text, and one example of this pushes the date well into the 660s: Khusro II, in a diplomatic note sent to the Turks, dismisses Heraclius as a fugitive wandering among the islands of the western sea (II.11), thus likening him anachronistically to Constans II who, in 662, took

[46] *Ibidem*, pp. 188-191.
[47] His attitude seems to me rather one of studied neutrality. The reader is left to make his own judgement on the basis of the events narrated. The tone reflects that of the antecedent sources.
[48] Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, pp. 191-195.
[49] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.13, p. 149, transl., p. 92; Cf. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, II, pp. 264-266.

the dramatic step of moving west to take personal charge of Byzantine territories in Italy, Sicily and North Africa.[50] A yet later date of composition can be suggested with confidence on the basis of the editor's mistaken identification of the northern nomads who intervened decisively on the Roman side in the 620s as Khazars (II.11). He cannot have done so before *ca.* 670 when the Khazars first emerged as the hegemonic power in the steppes north of the Caucasus.[51]

It is but a small step to attribute the editing of what Akopyan terms the *History of Viroy* to the compiler of the *682 History* and to view it as an integral part of that work. On this hypothesis, it was he, not a close associate of Viroy's, who, in the early 680s, first pieced together a history of the 620s out of material extracted from three independent sources – a general overview of war and diplomacy, a vivid local Albanian history written by an eyewitness (presumably a Chalcedonian like his hero) and a piece of Viroy's writing. He was probably unaware that Viroy had been a Chalcedonian, or chose to pass over that awkward fact because of the great services he had rendered his countrymen. The workmanship is impressive. The narrative moves forward in an orderly fashion. A detailed local account, adorned with striking similes, has been neatly combined with wider-ranging history. Diplomatic notes are introduced at the appropriate places. There is much vivid description. There are relatively few editorial lapses, the most notable resulting in the presence of two versions, very different in tone and probably taken from different sources, of what appears to be the same Persian diplomatic note.[52] A major disruption, involving the transfer of material from chapter 11 to chapter 12, is the fault perhaps of Movses, more probably of a later copyist.[53]

With this important amendment, we may provisionally accept Akopyan's thesis that the high-grade, high-style core of book II derives

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[50] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.11, p. 133, transl., p. 82; Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 59-61.

[51] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.11, p. 133, transl., pp. 81-82; Zuckerman, 'The Khazars'. Zuckerman rightly observes that another editorial mistake – the attribution of Khusro I's new foundation for the deported population of Antioch to Khusro II (*Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.10, pp. 129-130, transl., pp. 77-78) – would be hard to explain if the author were a contemporary or near-contemporary of Khusro II.

[52] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.11, 12, pp. 133-134, 143, transl., pp. 82, 88.

[53] The full extent of the disruption is as follows: the title of ch. 10 has been transferred to ch. 11; the first few paragraphs of ch. 11 concerning Heraclius' embassy to the Turks in Khusro's thirty-sixth regnal year and the first Turkish invasion of Albania and Azerbaijan in the following year have been transferred, together with the title of ch. 11, to head ch. 12 (Movses, pp. 140-143, transl., pp. 86-88). Cf. Dowsett, *The History*, pp. xiv-xv; Akopyan, *Albaniya-Aluank*, p. 226.

from a single, anterior source, the *682 History*. It betrays considerable editorial skill, rather superior to that shown by Movses elsewhere in his text. But it is above all its literary patina which distinguishes it from the rest of the *History of Albania*. The writing is consistently fine. The local history in the first component is embellished with striking similes. The narrative is enlivened throughout by passages of direct speech. It is also larded with biblical quotations. The story-telling is vivid, showing good psychological insight. There are, it is true, variations between its components: there are no similes in the account of Israyel's hunt for relics; narrative grip is at its strongest in the last, contemporary part. But these variations probably reflect differences in the character of the sources used. It looks as if the late seventh century editor has gone through the variegated materials extracted from his sources and has retouched them so as to make his text more homogeneous. Hence a scattering across the second and fourth components of images familiar from the first: bear, lion-cub, serpent, swift-writing pen. Hence the presence of one or two classical allusions in three of the four components. Hence perhaps the last items in a list of plunder taken by the Persians from Jerusalem in 614, 'many quadrupeds and birds the very names of which were quite unknown to the lands of the east', which are reminiscent of the exotic creatures brought back by Juansher from Damascus in 669/70.[54] But this stylistic revision is far from complete and distinctive features of the ultimate sources used by the 682 historian still show through. It looks as if he was forced to break off and was never able to resume the task.

An interruption, presumably caused by the Khazar invasion of 685, would also explain why the *682 History* has a preface (II.9) but no conclusion. The preface has a strong apocalyptic tone, the wars and natural disasters of previous years being interpreted as signs that the second coming may be imminent. Hope is expressed that God may perform a miracle, inflicting countless losses on the enemies surrounding Albania, as He did once before (a reference probably to the mutual slaughter of Turks in a civil war which began in 629).[55] This mixture of apprehension and hope is not unexpected in an author at work in the early 680s, when the caliphate began to break apart after the death of Muawiya. There was now a chance that the Arabs might suffer the fate of the Turks, but the scale of the coming conflict might well presage the end of time. The search for an answer may have partly motivated his careful study of the recent past, from the beginning of Albania's time of troubles, in the 35th regnal year of Khusro II (623/4).

[54]Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.10, p. 129, transl., p. 77; see also II.28, pp. 197, 199-200, transl., pp. 127-129.
[55] Arakelyan, *Movses Kalankatuatsi*, II.16, pp. 169-170, transl., p. 106.

There was thus a striking similarity between the circumstances in which Sebeos and the 682 historian gathered and arranged their material. Both too were ready to read an apocalyptic meaning into the recent past. But it should be stressed that the 682 historian, like Sebeos, was careful to separate his interpretation from his narrative of events, and allowed the antecedent sources which he was using to shape his narrative. He may have sought to give his variegated materials a literary polish of his own, but there is no evidence that he tampered with their substance. Like Sebeos, he was above all a transmitter of what he judged to be high-grade historical information, and he restricted his own commentary to a bare minimum, to two linking passages which point up two pivotal episodes. He prefaces a detailed account of the *putsch* which disposed of Khusro II with a short, rhetorical passage, announcing that the shah, called 'the terrible hunter, the lion of the east, at whose roar alone distant peoples shook and trembled and those close to his presence grew small like melted wax', is going to be ensnared in the cage of death.[56] Later, he interrupts his account of Juansher's career with some reflections on the dramatic events taking place in the world around Albania, and returns to the eschatological theme sketched in his preface. 'Even now towering hills are flattened and levelled by dread at the countenance of the Lord, and the furious transports of the waters of the surging deep sink within themselves. Thus was the terrible glory of the Persian Empire humbled, and the deep swallowed up its haughty, cloud-capped heights. The winged voices of the deep were silenced by the fury of the winds, and the thorns of the fields, flying through the air, came and dwelt upon the waves of the wide ocean'. The void thus created was filled for a while by the Romans, who with their massed armies spread over the whole world. Finally God retracted His favour from the he-goat of the west and 'the savage wild boar [evidently of the south] grew fierce and ground his horn', at which the emperor fled to the far west.[57] A third key moment, the assassination of Juansher, is highlighted not by any comment from the historian but by the inclusion of a moving funeral elegy recited at the time.[58]

There is no question then of the 682 historian *imposing* an eschatological interpretation on his material. It was rather a view which events suggested to him, and which he only expressed in his preface and in one later editorial passage. It is possible indeed that he reverted to it largely for literary and dramatic effect, to impart an appropriate sombre tone to a passage of fine writing. The 682 historian was perhaps less certain than

[56] *Ibidem*, II.13, p. 146, transl., p. 90.
[57] *Ibidem*, II.27, pp. 192-193, transl., pp. 124-125.
[58] *Ibidem*, II.35, pp. 225-230, transl., pp. 145-148.

Sebeos had been that history was entering its final phase, and more reticent about saying so or indeed about voicing any historical judgement of his own. There is plenty of praise (especially of the three leading Albanian protagonists) and some criticism (of Khusro on the eve of his fall, of the Turks, of Juansher just before his death) in his text, but it is recycled from his sources. In contrast to Sebeos, he finds no villain in the story which he tells, but is content to let the materials which he has assembled speak for themselves. Heraclius, it should be noted, is treated like other great foreign rulers – not with deliberate coolness (as Akopyan claims) but in a remarkably objective manner. His actions are reported without emotion, whether it be his success in reversing the fortunes of war in the 620s or his alliance with the Turks which had grim consequences for Albania.

There is little that can be said about the identity of the 682 historian, so few are the clues which he has left in his work. He tells us nothing about himself save, in one aside, that he came from the village of Kalankatuk (not far from Partaw, capital of Albania).[59] Otherwise all we know is that he was well educated and could write elegant flowing prose, that he was alive in the early 680s and was much concerned with the recent history of Albania and the surrounding world, and that he wondered whether the end of time was near. The keenness with which he reports Israyel's words and deeds on his mission to the North-Caucasus Huns might suggest that he was a churchman, but this is hard to square with his silence about doctrinal debate. He was, we may conjecture, killed in the troubled period following the Khazar attack of 685. His history provides much unique and vital information about Transcaucasia before and after the coming of Islam, as also about the great powers which pressed in upon it from east, west, north and south.

One final question remains to be answered: had the 682 historian read the *History of Khosrov*? It is evident, from the range of sources which he used, that he had access to a good library or, possibly, had built up a considerable stock of books of his own. In either case, it is surely more likely than not that he had come across a copy of so important and so recent a historical text. It might also be surmised that his eschatological presentiment was aroused partly by his reading. There is, however, very little solid evidence to back such a conjecture. There are no allusions to the *History of Khosrov*, apart from an elliptical reference (in the editorial preface to the account of Khusro's fall) to the military and political backing which helped Khusro II secure his throne (reported in detail by Sebeos).[60] Some omissions from the

[59] *Ibidem*, II.11, p. 137, transl., p. 84.

[60] *Ibidem*, II.13, p. 146, transl., p. 90. Cf. Abgaryan, *Patmutiwn Sebeosi*, pp. 76-80; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, II, pp. 170-173.

682 History – for example, its silence about the peace negotiations initiated by Khusro's son, Kavadh – can be explained as motivated by a desire to avoid duplicating material already quarried by Sebeos from a common source (in this case an Armenian version of the *Khwadaynamag*). This may also account for its cursory treatment of the Roman-Persian war before 624 and of the origins of Islam. More telling is what looks like the converse procedure – inclusion of material omitted by Sebeos. It looks as if the 682 historian sought to complement what Sebeos had written about the final phase of the Roman-Persian war in the 620s, partly by passing swiftly over some operations dealt with in detail by Sebeos, but above all by including an extensive account of Turkish diplomatic and military involvement, which is not reported by Sebeos. This omission was a deliberate editorial choice on Sebeos' part, since it appears from his provisional table of contents that he intended originally to cover Turkish actions. The 682 historian, who, as has been suggested above, probably had access to the same general account of the 620s, filled this serious gap.

There is thus some tenuous evidence of collusion between the two texts, which suggests that the author of the *682 History* had read the *History of Khosrov*. The similarity between the two historical enterprises, both as regards range and tone, may perhaps be ascribed to mutual influence as well as to the similar circumstances in which they were written. Naturally, given time and place of composition, they differ in chronological scope and geographical focus, but between them they provide a full history of Transcaucasia, focussed on the Araxes and Kura basins but reaching out deep into the surrounding non-Armenian world, in the course of more than a century of dramatic change (572-682). The history of Heraclius's reign would be even patchier than it is without this Armenian contribution. The politics of his final grim years and the following prolonged crisis would be impossible to read. We would be deprived of some of our few slithers of evidence about structural change. It would be impossible to reconstruct a satisfactory history of warfare against Persians and Arabs, if a whole series of episodes which they alone report were removed from our gaze.[61]

Historical writing flourished in Armenia and Albania in the seventh century. We have the direct testimony of the two extant texts discussed in this paper, the free-standing *History of Khosrov* and the *682 History* embedded in Movses Daskhurantsi's *History of Albania*. But careful examination reveals that both drew on a wide range of now lost sources, most, if not all, apparently composed in Armenia and Albania. They testify indirectly to the existence of encomiastic biographies of Smbat Bagratuni and

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[61] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, II, pp. 228-231, 240-257, 263-264.

Juansher, a hagiographical account of the invention of relics by Israyel, an Armenian version of the *Khwadaynamag*, an annotated list of Persian governors of Armenia, an account of fighting and negotiations in the 620s, a local history of Albania focussing on the period of Turkish invasion and occupation, and several sources dealing with later events in the 630s, 640s and early 650s. If only the Roman/Byzantine and West Syrian historical traditions could have matched this, how much easier it would be to understand an era of dramatic change in the Near East, how much more definition could be given to Heraclius' institutional reforms, how much more confident might we be about Heraclius' contribution to the long-term survival of a rump Roman empire under a new, Islamic world-order.

THE PORTRAYAL OF HERACLIUS IN SYRIAC HISTORICAL SOURCES

John W. Watt

For the Syriac-speaking communities of the Middle East the reign of Heraclius was indeed a period of crisis and change. At its outset the two major branches of Syriac Christianity, the Monophysite Western and Nestorian Eastern,[1] were roughly divided along the Roman-Persian border. 'Rough' is perhaps a particularly apposite term here, for it was not only the two empires that were in conflict. There were also sharp divisions between the two confessions, and for some time the Monophysites had been gaining ground and winning adherents and influence on the Persian side at the expense of the Nestorians. At the end of the period the context in which both communities were living had completely changed. The old Roman-Persian border had now disappeared, and both branches, not just the Eastern, were living under non-Christian rule. For the Western Syrians the Byzantine emperor was now 'over the border', as he always had been for the Eastern, while for the Eastern the rule of the shah to which they had become accustomed was now replaced by that of the Arab 'king'.

With the benefit of hindsight it is not hard for us to mark out these years of the last Roman-Persian war and the following conquests of the Arabs as a decisive turning point in the history of Syriac Christianity and of the entire Middle East. Much more difficult, of course, is to ascertain how decisive these events were seen to be by those living through them at the time, and to trace the ways in which their momentous character was realised and assessed. At the death of Heraclius it could not be known for certain that the arrival of the Arabs in the Fertile Crescent and the departure of Roman and Sasanian power was permanent, but for Syrians of a later date that was undoubtedly the most important feature of these years. The various Syriac historical sources dealing with this period are instructive primarily in affording us insight into the reactions of the Christians of these lands to the tumultuous events of Heraclius' reign – the reactions both of those quite

[1] 'Nestorian' is here used as a convenient term in a general historical context. It is recognised that it is not a very felicitous description of the East Syrian church in the context of the history of Christian doctrine, but it remains a more convenient label in a wider historical context than the term 'Theodorian'.

close to it in time, and those more distant. The Syriac sources are not the place to which we naturally turn, for example, for an assessment of the importance of Heraclius' reign for the administrative restructuring of the Byzantine empire, nor on the whole are they very informative about the military issues which determined the outcome of events, for such matters are mostly beyond their horizon, but they are of considerable value in appraising how the peoples of the Middle East interpreted the events of these years.

The fact that some of the Syriac historical sources which have most to say about this period are rather far removed from it in time does not therefore detract from their importance to the extent that at first sight may appear. Distance can impart a perspective which brings into view features obscure to those closer to the events. Furthermore, later chronicles often used earlier ones as sources and incorporated their material with little change into their own accounts. These remarks apply particularly to the West Syrian sources for the period of Heraclius. The three most extensive of these, namely the *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian*,[2] the anonymous *Chronicle to 1234 AD*,[3] and the *Chronography* of Bar Hebraeus,[4] all belong to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but they derive the bulk of their material from earlier writers, notably Dionysius of Tellmahre (died 845 AD).[5] Dionysius, in turn, depended on sources, the most important of which appears to be (with some variations or additions) common to him, Theophanes, and Agapius, and which may well be the lost eighth-century historical work of (the Chalcedonian) Theophilus of Edessa.[6] Heraclius is mentioned in a number of earlier West Syrian chronicles, but the information provided by these is very scanty, although the *Chronicle to 724* gives some valuable chronological information on the events of his reign.[7]

When we turn to the East Syrian sources, we find a rather different situation. The most important writing on this side, originating from outside the Roman empire, naturally does not devote any section of its narrative to the activity of Heraclius as a topic in itself, but on account of its subject

[2] Chabot, *Chronique.*
[3] *Idem, Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (English translation in Palmer, *The Seventh Century*).
[4] Bedjan, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon* (English translation in Budge, *The Chronography*).
[5] On Dionysius as the source of these extant West Syrian chronicles, cf. recently Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 85-110.
[6] Cf. recently on this question Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 400-409, and 631-671 for his attempt at a reconstruction of Theophilus' work.
[7] Brooks and Chabot, *Chronica Minora* II; English translation in Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 13-23.

matter it does, directly or indirectly, have some significant things to say about it. The work usually known as the *Khuzistan Chronicle*[8] is entitled 'Some events from *qlsstyq'* or ecclesiastical histories and of *qwsmwstyq'* or secular histories from the death of Hormizd, son of Khosrau, to the end of the kingdom of the Persians'. Being dedicated to the last half century of the Persian rulers, and also extending beyond the end of the Sasanian kingdom, it covers a longer period than that of Heraclius. As the title indicates, it is a compilation of secular and ecclesiastical history, a fact which naturally has given rise to theories of multiple sources or authors, and the possibility has also been mooted, on account of its abrupt beginning, that it represents the latter part of a more extensive historical work. Although it broadly follows a chronological order, it does not always adhere to it exactly and is not structured according to an annalistic scheme. As most later East Syrian historiography is concerned predominantly with ecclesiastical and monastic matters, the interest of the *Khuzistan Chronicle* in secular affairs is quite noteworthy. Naturally it has more detailed knowledge of events in the Sasanian empire than of those in the Roman, but it still has interesting things to say about Heraclius and his wars. It has been noted that it has 'a taste for gossip',[9] but such 'gossip' can reveal an author's attitude to events, even if it does not provide reliable information about the events themselves. It was certainly written before the end of the seventh century, perhaps during the years 670-680, perhaps as early as 660.[10] As the author appears to be particularly interested in events in the region of the lower Tigris, and in particular gives a detailed account of the Arab conquest of Khuzistan, it is generally thought to have been composed there.

Shortly after the *Khuzistan Chronicle*, around the end of the century, a world history with a more pronounced theological perspective was penned by an East Syrian writer. John bar Penkaye's *Resh Melle*[11] covers the history of the world from its beginning to what he expected was going to be its imminent apocalyptic ending. The last two books of this treatise cover the period subsequent to the death of the apostles, dividing it into a pre-Islamic

[8] Guidi, *Chronica* (German translation with commentary by Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*).
[9] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*; the citation (from Howard-Johnston), p. 195. The translation of Sebeos gives the page references to the Armenian text edited by Abgaryan, *Patmut'iwn Sebeosi*.
[10] Cf. Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 2-3, for the dating in the period 670-680; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 182-185, for an earlier date no later than 660. There is a study forthcoming by Robinson, 'The Conquest'; and a new translation and commentary is being prepared by Brock, Whitby and Conrad.
[11] Mingana, *Sources syriaques* (English translation with introduction and commentary by Brock, 'North Mesopotamia').

and an Islamic era. More precisely, Book 14 ends with the Arab conquests, while Book 15 deals with the period of Arab rule.[12] The time of Heraclius is therefore of pivotal significance for him, even though it is Khosrau rather than Heraclius who receives a mention in his text. The third East Syrian work which may be noted here is much later, the eleventh century chronographical treatise of Elias of Nisibis, which concisely records some events of the years of Heraclius.[13] Two other East Syrian works, while not strictly falling within the category of general or secular Syriac historical sources, provide material supplementary to the *Khuzistan Chronicle*, though they are both much later. The monastic history of Beth Abhe by Thomas of Marga[14] has much in common with the *Khuzistan Chronicle* for the period of Heraclius; the same applies to the Arabic *Chronicle of Seert* of the tenth or eleventh century, a translation of an earlier lost Syriac chronicle.[15]

The earliest of the significant Syriac sources is therefore the *Khuzistan Chronicle*. In its closeness to the time of Heraclius and its comments, brief as they are, on the events of his reign, it is a most valuable text. On the assumption that it and Sebeos were both composed some time after the middle of the seventh century, it can be viewed as a southern Syriac counterpart to Sebeos' northern Armenian perspective. The two of them, of course, belonged to rival christological confessions, and as an East Syrian, albeit writing after the end of the Sasanian kingdom, the author of the *Khuzistan Chronicle* might well be supposed to have shared the divided loyalties of the Christians who lived under the Sasanians.[16] The East Syrian church in Persia saw itself through most of the Sasanian period as an integral part of Sasanian society and basically loyal to the shah, yet the sporadic persecutions, even if instigated by Zoroastrian clergy rather than the shah himself or occurring mostly during times of war, could not but test that loyalty. Whether occasioned by hostilities between the two empires or conversions from Zoroastrianism, the martyrdoms that did occur high-lighted the element of uncertainty in its relations with the Sasanian state.[17] A further bone of contention in the years preceding the end of the Sasanian monarchy was the growth of Monophysite influence, particularly at the court itself.[18]

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[12] On the date of the work, *ibidem*, p. 52 (for a date between 692 and 694); Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 199-200 (for a date between 687 and 691).
[13] Brooks, *Eliae Metropolitae Nisibeni Opus* (French translation by Delaporte, *Chronographie*).
[14] Budge, *The Book of Governors*.
[15] Scher, *Histoire nestorienne*.
[16] Cf. Brock, 'Christians'.
[17] *Ibidem*, esp. pp. 5-12; Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 332-342.
[18] Cf. Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 349-351, 372-380.

The Chronicler's attitude to Khosrau emerges very clearly in his remark attached to an incident involving Nathaniel bishop of Siarzur, who expelled from his region an official who had created trouble for Christians at the time of the Persian siege of Dara. The *Rad* is said to have told the shah, 'You fight for Christians,[19] yet I am banished by Christians'. Nathaniel was therefore imprisoned for six years and then crucified, on which the Chronicler comments: 'Even if Khosrau made an outward show of love to Christians because of Maurice, nevertheless he was an enemy of our people'.[20] However divided the loyalties of the East Syrians may have been in earlier years, the writer of the *Khuzistan Chronicle* is thus emphatic that Khosrau II was an enemy of Christianity. His view may be compared with that of Sebeos, whose theme is 'the story of the destructive and ruinous Khosrau, cursed by God'.[21] The East Syrian historian was also bitter at Khosrau's patronage of Monophysites (see below), a fact which would of course not have troubled Sebeos. But even so, both East Syrian and Armenian were in agreement in seeing Khosrau as the enemy of Christianity – and therefore Heraclius, by implication, as its champion. Nevertheless, at this early stage of the war, the Romans, according to the Chronicler, did not have God on their side; on the contrary, the Persians were the agents of divine wrath against them. Even though Khosrau was 'an enemy of [God's] people', his ostensible reason for invasion – to avenge the murder of Maurice – was indeed, according to the Chronicler, the cause of the divine wrath against the Romans, and when Jerusalem fell, its most holy treasure was surrendered by the patriarch to the Persian generals:

> [Sharbaraz] seized the bishop and the chief men of the city and tortured them on account of the wood of the Cross and the vessels in the treasury. And because divine power broke the Romans before the Persians, because they had shed the innocent blood of the emperor Maurice and his sons, God left no

[19] The reference is to Theodosius, (true or false) son of Maurice. According to the Chronicle (Guidi, *Chronica*, p. 20/19; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 15-16), Khosrau, together with the Catholicus, had Theodosius crowned in Ctesiphon. Sebeos (Abgaryan, *Patmut'iwn Sebeosi*, p. 107; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 58) has Theodosius crowned in Edessa by the rebel Roman general Narses before being received by Khosrau.

[20] *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, p. 21/19; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 17-18). The term 'people of God' is characteristic of East Syrian theology; cf. Brock, 'Christians', pp. 12-19.

[21] Sebeos (Abgaryan, *Patmut'iwn Sebeosi*, p. 72; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 13).

> hidden place which the bishop and chief men did not reveal to the Persians, and they showed them the wood of the Cross.[22]

According to the Chronicler the Cross was received with great ceremony at Ctesiphon, while the Persian army moved on to Alexandria, which it is said to have taken with the help of a Christian from Qatar who had studied philosophy there in his youth.[23]

At this point Heraclius himself first appears in the text:

> Then when Khosrau was staying at Royal Dastagerd, Heraclius Caesar gathered many troops and marched against him. Khosrau took fright before him and was in great fear. Heraclius marched through the northern regions, destroying, ravaging, and laying waste all of them. When he came to Dastagerd, Khosrau fled before him and went to the [royal] cities (*Mahoze*). It is said that when he wanted to flee from Dastagerd, he heard the sound of a [church] gong (*naqqusha*), and taking fright and striking (*nqash*) his back, his entrails were disgorged. Shirin said to him, 'Have no fear, O god', but he replied, 'How am I a god? Look, I am put to flight by a priest!' He said this because he had heard that Heraclius had received priestly rank. He [Khosrau], however, had sworn, 'If I achieve victory, I will leave no church or gong in my whole dominion'. The fright and fear which gripped him at the sound of the gong were because he reckoned that it was the Romans who had a gong with them and had arrived at Dastagerd. [Heraclius] captured the whole royal treasury, laid waste and ravaged many regions, and returned home.[24]

In this concise account of Heraclius' campaign, we learn scarcely anything of the military events, though the brief description it gives of Khosrau's flight usefully complements those of Sebeos and Theophanes.[25] From the

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[22] *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, p. 25/22; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, p. 24). Cf. Sebeos (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, pp. 68-70 [115-116] and Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, pp. 290-291.

[23] *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 25-26/22-23; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 24-25). That the man was a Christian is evident from his name, Peter. On Qatar, cf. Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 25 note 2 and 44 note 2.

[24] *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 27-28/24; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, p. 28).

[25] Sebeos (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, pp. 84-85 [127]); De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, pp. 325-327/transl. by Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 453-455. On the campaign of Heraclius and the flight and overthrow of Khosrau, cf. recently Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, pp. 218-221, who list the sources.

anecdote of the church gong, however, we may learn much more about the East Syrian's interpretation of Heraclius' victory. It casts the whole war into the mould of a struggle between Christianity and Zoroastrianism, and shows that Heraclius' efforts to portray it as a holy war found acceptance even by East Syrians, just as Sebeos demonstrates the same attitude on the part of Armenians viewing events from the Persian side of the border.[26] Whereas, according to the Chronicler, the (Chalcedonian) Heraclius is elevated to the Christian priesthood, Khosrau is no longer a 'god' according to the normal Zoroastrian mode of address, even though his Christian – but Monophysite – wife Shirin is portrayed as addressing him as such.[27] By the time of Heraclius' accession, Khosrau had lost the support of the Nestorians, having refused to appoint a Catholicus to the empty see since 608/9. The Monophysite court physician Gabriel of Sinjar had worked to frustrate all the Nestorians' hopes, and with the backing of Shirin had induced Khosrau to favour the Monophysites. All this had been reported by the Chronicler.[28] Khosrau is thus cast into the role of an enemy of Christianity, as he also so appears in the anti-Christian letter which Sebeos claims he sent to Heraclius in 623,[29] and the equally dismissive demand to the emperor to renounce Christianity in his response to Heraclius' peace overtures of 616/7 according to Theophanes.[30] The inclusion of this popular anecdote thus places the campaign of Heraclius in a favourable light for the East Syrian Christians: whereas by Khosrau's early successes the Romans were punished for the murder of Maurice, Heraclius now vanquished the enemy of God's people and saved the Christians of Persia from destruction. The assertion that he was made a priest is presumably connected not only with the religious fervour associated with the war on the Byzantine side, but also with this perception of its significance for Christians in the Persian territories.[31] If that was the view of these Christians at the time of the events

[26] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, pp. 84, 90 [126, 131].
[27] Cf. on this Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, p. 28 note 4; Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 30-31.
[28] Cf. *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 22-23/19-21; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 18-22). On the whole episode, cf. recently Reinink, 'Babai the Great's *Life of George*', pp. 178-180, 185-190.
[29] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, pp. 79-80 [123-124].
[30] De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, pp. 301 (translation Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, p. 433). Later Theophanes, *ibidem*, pp. 314 (translation Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, p. 445), reports that Khosrau 'in his rage sent emissaries to confiscate the treasure of all the churches that were under Persian rule and forced the Christians to convert to the religion of Nestorius so as to wound the emperor'. West Syrian tradition records that he first installed bishops brought from the East, then local Monophysites. Cf. below, note 57.
[31] Could this idea possibly have arisen from the circumstance that Heraclius

themselves, it could have been a factor contributing to Heraclius' success in Armenia and Mesopotamia and to the subsequent fall of Khosrau.[32]

The capture of the Cross and its return after the overthrow of Khosrau may also have contributed to the positive assessment of Heraclius' campaign by the Persian Christians. Surprisingly, however, its return is reported without very much emphasis in the *Khuzistan Chronicle*, perhaps because it was effected by Sharbaraz, who crucified the Christian Shamta (cf. below),[33] or more likely because the Nestorians were granted access to it while it was under Persian control and took some pleasure in its presence at Ctesiphon.[34] But the Chronicle does report in considerable detail the revolution against Khosrau and his replacement by Sheroe, and identifies Shamta and Nehormizd as the real instigators of the revolt.[35] Shamta was the son of Jezdin, a Nestorian Christian well known both from the Chronicle and from Thomas of Marga,[36] and Shamta's prominent role in the revolution may point to a general Christian dissatisfaction with Khosrau and a favourable attitude to Heraclius.[37] In Thomas of Marga[38] it is Shamta himself who administered the fatal blow to Khosrau, but in the Chronicle this was done by Nehormizd, after Shamta had intended to do so but

'appointed a certain priest Philippicus [the brother-in-law of Maurice] as general' (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 67 [114]).

[32] Cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, pp. 357-358, note 4: 'Vielleicht ist diese Stimmung der Christen dem Heraclius in Armenien und dem Tigrisgegenden, wo meist Christen wohnten, um wesentlichem Vorteil gewesen, wie sie gewiss bei Chosrau's Sturz ein Factor war'. Cf. below, note 37.

[33] Both the return of the Cross and the crucifixion of Shamta are attested in the Chronicle. An agreement between Heraclius and Sharbaraz including the return of the Cross as early as Sharbaraz's march on Constantinople, mentioned by Dionysius and Theophanes (cf. below, note 61) is without mention in the Chronicle or Sebeos and is probably quite unfounded (cf. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 88 [129-130]). Sebeos (*ibidem*, p. 90 [131]), however, makes much more of the return of the Cross than does the Chronicle.

[34] Cf. *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 24-25/21-22; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, p. 23, with note 4, and pp. 24-25).

[35] Cf. the commentary on Sebeos in: Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 221.

[36] Cf. *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 23-25/21-22; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 22-25); Budge, *The Book of Governors* I, pp. 47, 63; II, pp. 80-82, 113; also Scher, *Histoire nestorienne*, pp. 524-525. On Jezdin and Shamta, cf. Morony, *Iraq*, p. 171; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 246-254.

[37] Cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, as in note 32: '(Die Tradition der Nestorianer) ist dadurch wichtig, dass sie uns zeigt, wie allerdings damals, so viel wir wissen zum ersten Mal, ein christlicher Grosser und mit ihm wohl seine Glaubensgenossen tätlich in die Geschichte des Reiches eingegriffen'.

[38] Budge, *The Book of Governors* I, pp. 62-63; II, pp. 112-115.

hesitated in response to the pleading of the shah.[39] The Chronicler subsequently maintains that 'in the days of Sheroe there was peace and quiet for all Christians',[40] although Shamta himself was imprisoned and mutilated by the new king and eventually crucified during the subsequent putsch of Sharbaraz. Sharbaraz's agreement with Heraclius, including the return of the Cross, his seizure of power, and his subsequent assassination are all briefly recorded.[41] Finally Boran became queen, and according to the Chronicler 'she wisely sent the Catholicus Mar Isho'yabh to Heraclius to make peace with him (...) Caesar Heraclius received [him and his companions] with great joy and did everything they wanted'.[42] Thus the Chronicler hammers home the message that Heraclius was indeed the friend and saviour of the Persian Christians. His favourable attitude towards him may well stem not only from his perception of the Roman emperor as a Christian leader in a holy war against the Magian foe, but also from the perception of the Nestorians during the reigns of Sheroe to Boran (628-631) that Heraclius wished, against the Syrian Monophysites, to unite the Chalcedonian and East Syrian churches as well as promoting the spread of (dyophysite) Christianity in Iran.[43]

If this was indeed their view at the end of the Roman-Persian war, the subsequent defeat of Heraclius by the Arabs must have been something of a shock, whatever they made of the defeat of their own king Yazdgird. The Chronicler simply states that after the accession of Yazdgird and his appointment of Rustam as army commander, 'God brought up against them the children of Ishmael (...) whose leader was Muhammad (...) and they became masters of the whole country of the Persians', also penetrating Roman territory and defeating the troops Heraclius sent against them. After recording the emperor's return in sadness to his capital, and his illness and death, the author adds: 'The victory of the children of Ishmael, which overthrew and overcame these two powerful kingdoms, came from God. But God has still not given them power over Constantinople. So his is the victory!'[44] A certain tension in the attitude of the East Syrian Christian to the Byzantine empire thus remains unresolved: God's agent in the salvation of

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[39] *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 28-29/24-25; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 29-30).
[40] *Ibidem*, p. 29/25; resp. *ibidem*, p. 30.
[41] *Ibidem*, pp. 29-30/25-26; resp. *ibidem*, pp. 30-32.
[42] *Ibidem*, p. 30/26; resp. *ibidem*, pp. 32-33. Cf. the later account in Scher, *Histoire nestorienne*, pp. 557-561.
[43] Cf. Mango, 'Deux études', pp. 105-117; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 319-327; and Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 227.
[44] *Khuzistan Chronicle* (Guidi, *Chronica*, pp. 30-31, 37-38/26, 31; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, pp. 33-34, 45-46).

the Persian Christians is himself vanquished by God through the agency of the children of Ishmael, but God nevertheless preserves Constantinople *for the time being*.[45] If divided loyalties in relation to the shah characterised the attitude of the East Syrian church through most of the Sasanian period, the Chronicler of Khuzistan has no longer any loyalty to the shah, but is divided in his loyalties between the Christian emperor who so recently saved the East Syrians from an evil shah and the new Muslim rulers under whom God has now placed them.

An instance of further reflection in East Syrian circles seeking a theological assessment of the Roman and Persian defeats may be found in John bar Penkaye's *Resh Melle*, penned just a decade or two after the *Khuzistan Chronicle*. He advises his readers that they 'should not think of the advent [of the children of Hagar] as something ordinary, but as due to divine working'. This is in accord with the evaluation of the *Khuzistan Chronicle*, but John goes on to say that 'before calling [the children of Hagar God] had prepared them to hold Christians in honour', and 'he called them from the ends of the earth so as to destroy by them a sinful kingdom and to bring low through them the proud spirit of the Persians'.[46] Subsequently he explains why Christians on both sides had to suffer. Until 'believing kings held sway over the Romans', i.e. in the period before Constantine, Christians had prospered through divine care rather than any human aid, but after that 'corruption and intrigues entered the churches' and 'each year they made a new creed'. At the Roman court 'lovers of fame did not fail to stir up trouble, furtively using gold to win the imperial ear, so that they could play about with the kings as if they were children'. The church in Persia, by contrast, had been free from such evils, and thus it had been preserved from serious error. But that in itself had produced the unfortunate side effect that it had left the church unprepared to rebut with sufficient vigour the heretical doctrines which the Christian emperors had attempted from the outside to impose on it.[47] John is thinking here of 'theopaschism', the *bête noire* of the East Syrians,[48] and thus, he claims, 'when God saw that no amendment took

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[45] According to Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik* (p. 3), this indicates that the author knew of the unsuccessful Arab campaign against it in 674-680; however Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 185 note 41, relates it to the expedition of 654. Sebeos too (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian Chronicle*, pp. 144-146 [170-171]) attributes the salvation of Constantinople in 654 to God.

[46] Mingana, *Sources syriaques*, pp. 141-142; Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', pp. 57-58. Cf. also the similar evaluation of Isho'yabh noted by Brock, 'Syriac Views', pp. 15-16; see below, note 70.

[47] Mingana, *Sources syriaques*, pp. 143-144; Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', pp. 58-59.

[48] Cf. Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', pp. 52 (note 11), 59 (note b), 62.

place, he summoned against us the barbarian kingdom'.[49] The Romans, therefore, were punished for the intrigue and heresy around their 'believing kings', the Persian Christians for their flab-biness under the rule of the Magi in the defence of right doctrine.[50] Clearly Heraclius was implicitly implicated in this criticism of believing but heretical and interfering kings. The spectre of Sasanian persecution of Persian Christians has thus faded away, and the heretical Roman emperors are now seen as the greater evil, which God has countered by giving authority to the children of Hagar, despite the suffering that entails for Christians.

John's work ends on an apocalyptic note, viewing the Arab civil war as the beginning of the destruction of the Ishmaelites and the dawn of the eschaton. Here again we see a similarity between East Syrian and Armenian historiography, as Sebeos too goes into an apocalyptic mode at this point;[51] the seventh century was of course a period which witnessed the production of much apocalyptic literature, and John's work may well have been designed to provide an eschatological explanation for the rise of Islam.[52] By the time of Elias of Nisibis (died 1049), however, who produced the only surviving East Syrian world chronicle, the permanence of Arab rule was evident. The annalistic entries for the years between the accession and death of Heraclius are mostly devoted to Muhammad and the Arab conquests. The Persian pillage of Edessa and Rhodes is noted, as are the deaths of Khosrau and the last Persian kings, but nothing is said about the campaign of Heraclius.[53] While this could no doubt have been due in the first place to the sources employed by Elias, the general trend is clear: in the course of time the memory of Heraclius' great feats against the Persians faded ever more before the event of his reign with truly lasting consequences, the beginning of 'the kingdom of the Arabs'.

On the West Syrian side we have no extensive historical sources for the reign of Heraclius from as early as the seventh century, but with the *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* and the anonymous *Chronicle to 1234 AD* we do have two later evaluations, the common substance of which, however, goes back to Dionysius of Tellmahre (died 845 AD). These accounts are longer and more detailed on the course of events than that in the *Khuzistan Chronicle,* but are historically less reliable. They have much in

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[49] Mingana, *Sources syriaques,* p. 145; Brock, 'North Mesopotamia, p. 60.

[50] Cf. also Brock 'Syriac Views', pp. 16-17.

[51] Mingana, *Sources syriaques,* pp. 156-167; Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', pp. 65-74; cf. Sebeos (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History,* pp. 151-154 [176-177]).

[52] Cf. Reinink 'East Syrian Historiography'.

[53] Brooks, *Eliae Metropolitae Nisibeni Opus,* pp. 125-134/61-65 and Delaporte, *Chronographie,* pp. 78-84.

common with that of Theophanes, as Dionysius claims to have made use of Greek sources, and Theophanes may have used a Greek translation-continuation of the Syriac (Chalcedonian) history of Theophilus of Edessa, in all likelihood the principal source of Dionysius.[54] However, the different confessional allegiances of Theophilus and Theophanes on the one hand, and Dionysius and the extant West Syrian chroniclers on the other, provoked diverse reactions to the person and work of Heraclius. In his preface Dionysius wrote that 'Theophilus of Edessa [was] a Chalcedonian who regarded it as his birthright to loathe the Orthodox [i.e. Monophysites] [and] his presentation of all events which involved one of our number is fraudulent'.[55]

Dominating the West Syrian presentation of the events of Heraclius' reign is the bitterness engendered by the Chalcedonian persecution of the 'Orthodox'. Immediately before the mutiny against Maurice, the two major chronicles record his persecution of the Monophysites in Edessa, 'as Maurice wanted to imitate the kings who were before him'.[56] While East and West Syrians both viewed Khosrau's early successes as a punishment on the Romans, the reasons adduced were therefore rather different, and the West Syrians could see a real advantage in the Persian invasion, because Khosrau expelled the Chalcedonian bishops from the churches in the conquered cities of Mesopotamia and gave them over to the Monophysites. The West Syrian chronicles record that at first he called bishops from the East to take possession of the Chalcedonian sees, but when they were not accepted he installed (local) Monophysites instead;[57] thus 'the Lord brought the crimes [of the Chalcedonians] back on their own head: what they had done by the agency of the Roman monarchy was paid back to them by the agency of the Persian kings of Assyria'.[58] The cruelty of the invaders, and particularly the order for the deportation of Edessenes to Persia,[59] still

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[54] Cf. above, notes 5 and 6.

[55] Chabot, *Chronique,* IV, p. 378; II, p. 358; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 92.

[56] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, pp. 217-218/171, transl. by Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 117-118; cf. Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 386-387; II, pp. 372-373.

[57] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, pp. 224-225/176; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 125-126; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 389-390; II, p. 379; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 126, note 283. Cf. above note 30 for Theophanes' assertion that he 'forced [the Christians] to convert to the religion of Nestorius'; and in general on Nestorian-Chalcedonian contacts at this time, Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 319-327.

[58] Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, p. 391; II, pp. 380-381; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 126, note 283.

[59] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, pp. 230-231/180-181; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 133-135; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, p. 408/II, p. 411.

implied that Heraclius' campaign could be seen as salvation of a sort,[60] but here there is no indication that the emperor received divine aid in a 'crusade' against a pagan foe, and every suggestion that the defeat of the Persians was due primarily to their own internal dissension and the (legendary) pact between Sharbaraz and Heraclius at Constantinople.[61] The brief earlier West Syrian *Chronicle to 724* asserts that the Persians evacuated Alexandria and all the cities of Syria 'by the command of God, not force of man', pointedly dissociating the actions of God from those of Heraclius.[62]

In fact, far from being raised to the priesthood as the *Khuzistan Chronicle* asserts, the West Syrian chronicles report that Heraclius, 'rabid with the lust of the flesh and flouting the laws of God, the church and nature itself, took Martina, his brother's daughter, to wife'.[63] While this criticism was of course also voiced on the Chalcedonian side, in the Jacobite historians it sits easily alongside the emperor's oppressive ecclesiastical policy. The West Syrian chroniclers present him as being pushed towards this position as a result of his short temper and the underlying difference in Christology, although according to Michael he had originally declared about the Edessenes, 'How can we leave such admirable people outside?'[64] Thus they tell how the metropolitan of Edessa refused to give him communion unless he anathematised the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo, upon which the emperor became angry, expelled him, and gave the church to the Chalcedonians.[65] Later on, at Mabbug, when according to the *Chronicle to 1234* he received back the Cross from Sharbaraz, he debated with the Monophysite bishops, praised their faith, but then asked them to accept the Monothelete charter he had drawn up, allegedly in conformity with Cyril's doctrine of 'one incarnate nature of God the Logos'. When they saw that this charter 'was in accord with Nestorius and Leo' and refused to

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[60] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, p. 231/181; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 134: 'When news arrived of Heraclius' expedition against Persia, Edessa was spared for this reason from deportation ...'

[61] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, pp. 231-234/181-183; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 135-138; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 408-409; II, pp. 408-409. Cf. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 223 and above, note 33.

[62] Brooks and Chabot, *Chronica Minora* II, p. 146/113; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 17-18, 23-24.

[63] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234* p. 233/182; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 137; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, p. 410; II, p. 410. On the reaction in Byzantium, cf. Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 112-113.

[64] Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 408-409; II, p. 411.

[65] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, p. 236/185; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 140; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 409; II, pp. 411-412.

accept it, he again became angry and ordered a general persecution of the Monophysites.[66]

It is therefore no surprise that in the West Syrian chronicles the success of the Arab invasion in the subsequent years is closely linked to this imperial persecution of their confession:

> Heraclius did not permit the orthodox [i.e. Monophysites] to present themselves before him, and he did not agree to hear their complaints over the theft of their churches [by the Chalcedonians]. This is why the God of vengeance (...) roused up and brought the Ishmaelites from the land of the South (...) to deliver us through them (...)[67]

To what extent this interpretation of the events reflects the views of Monophysites at the actual time of the conquest remains questionable,[68] but for the major West Syrian chroniclers there could be no doubt that 'it was no small advantage for us to be delivered from the cruelty of the Romans (...) and from their cruel zeal against us (...)'.[69]

Both East and West Syrian writers therefore perceived the hand of God in the victory of 'the children of Ishmael' over Heraclius, but for the West Syrians the emperor's transgressions were felt much more keenly and the advent of Arab rule offered relief from a much greater oppression. In Heraclius' victory over Khosrau they perceived no 'holy crusade' against an infidel, but only saw the return of the churches in the repossessed cities to the Chalcedonians and renewed persecution of their confession by the victor over a foreign king who, cruel as he was, had nevertheless favoured them over the Chalcedonians. While for the East Syrian writers Heraclius had been at worst one of the 'interfering kings' promoting theopaschite heresy and subject to the intrigues which had entered the Roman churches, for the Western he had deceptively claimed to adhere to the doctrine of Cyril while in reality holding to that of Nestorius and persecuting the faithful Christians – the equivalent in the West of what the *Khuzistan Chronicle* alleges as the intention of Khosrau in the East. So in the West Syrian chronicles his parting shot as he says farewell to Syria is to give his army leave to ravage indiscriminately, as if the country already belonged to the enemy.[70]

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[66] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, p. 238/186; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 142; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 409-410; II, p. 412.
[67] Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, p. 410; II, p. 412.
[68] Cf. Moorhead, 'The Monophysite Response'; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 22-26; and the contribution of Van Ginkel in the present volume.
[69] Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, p. 410; II, p. 413.
[70] Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, p. 251/196; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 158; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, p. 418 and II, p. 424. On the various

The chronicles of Michael and the anonymous to 1234, probably reproducing the standpoint of Dionysius (died 845), were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The last great West Syrian historical work, the *Chronography* of Bar Hebraeus, also comes from the thirteenth century, but its tone is very different. The outline is the same, but by its omissions and insertions it gives a quite different impression of Heraclius. The account of the period of the Persian war omits any reference to the rivalries of Chalcedonians and Jacobites, the Chalcedonian Christology of the emperor, or his persecution of the Monophysites.[71] The only thing mentioned against him is his marriage to Martina,[72] and the Arab invasions are recorded without the interpretation of the Arabs as the agents of God's vengeance on the Romans for the persecution of the Jacobites.[73] An anecdote concerning Theodoric, a Chalcedonian stylite, and a Monophysite soldier, which in Michael and the anonymous *Chronicle to 1234* is told at length with the unmistakable message that the persecution of 'the followers of Severus' (i.e. Monophysites) was the cause of the Roman defeat, is radically truncated in Bar Hebraeus and the explicit linkage of persecution and defeat eliminated.[74] The defeated Roman troops leaving Syria are indeed said to 'have plundered the native Christians, and these Romans were far worse than the Arabs', but Heraclius' words on departure give no authority or permission for them to ravage the country.[75]

In the account of Bar Hebraeus, it was not to discuss the issues dividing Chalcedonians and Monophysites that Heraclius called together bishops and priests, but those concerning the status of the religion of the Arabs.[76] As in the two earlier chronicles, in his account of the reign of Heraclius there is an exposition of the beginnings and character of the new religion, but those aspects contravening Christianity mentioned in the earlier accounts are omitted,[77] and there is a new section on their philosophy and theology. For

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sectarian interpretations of the Arab victories, cf. in general Brock, 'Syriac Views', pp. 10-11; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 524-526; and above, note 46.

[71] Bedjan, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon*, pp. 94-96, 99-103; translation in Budge, *The Chronography*, pp. 87-90, 93-96.

[72] *Ibidem*, resp. p. 100 and p. 93.

[73] *Ibidem*, resp. pp. 99-109 and 93-99.

[74] *Ibidem*, resp. pp. 100 and 93-94. Cf. Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, pp. 242-244/190-191; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 148-149; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 414-415, II, p. 418.

[75] Bedjan, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon*, p. 102; Budge, *The Chronography*, p. 95.

[76] *Ibidem*, resp. pp. 96-97 and 90.

[77] *Ibidem*, resp. pp. 97-98 and 90-91. Cf. Chabot, *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234*, pp. 227-230/178-180; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, pp. 129-132; Chabot, *Chronique*, IV, pp. 404-408; II, pp. 403-405.

Bar Hebraeus, the thinker who owed so much to Islamic philosophy and theology and endeavoured in his own writings to create a synthesis of Graeco-Syriac and Arabic-Islamic tradition, among the Arabs 'there arose philosophers, mathematicians and physicians who surpassed the ancients in the exactness of their knowledge (...) Thus we [Syrians] from whose translations they acquired the wisdom of the Greeks have been compelled to ask for wisdom from them'.[78]

In Bar Hebraeus' *Chronography* it is none other than Heraclius himself who, having summoned the bishops when the armies of the Arabs overtook him and occupied the various countries, first declares that 'these people in their actions and manners and faith are like unto an early cloudy dawn, in which there is no absolute darkness and yet it lacketh light which is perfect and clear'.[79] The story is clearly legendary, and the *Chronography* of Bar Hebraeus no doubt represents the 'point of diminishing returns'[80] in the search for factual information on the time of Heraclius. But in his understanding of the deeper cultural significance of certain historic events, as in his appreciation of so much else, Bar Hebraeus stands head and shoulders above the rest of his countrymen. The anecdote is not without parallel in both Muslim and East Syrian tradition,[81] and Bar Hebraeus – pupil of an East Syrian (Jacob), avid reader of Muslim Arabic authors, and possessor of a tolerant and 'ecumenical' outlook[82] – could draw freely from both. But by locating the story where he does in his *Chronography*, Bar Hebraeus invests it with greater significance and makes Heraclius into a wise interpreter of the great cultural change occurring at that time.[83] In Heraclius' words, even though Islam is declared to be 'primitive' in relation to Christianity,[84] its advent is nevertheless presented as a benefit to Syrian Christians. Thus Heraclius, who began his literary 'life' in Syriac historical sources (in the *Khuzistan Chronicle*) as a Christian warrior against paganism, ends it (in Bar Hebraeus) as the first Christian – one might almost say philosophical theologian – to understand the significance and the benefit of the beginning of 'the kingdom of the Arabs'. Bar Hebraeus may have perceived that

[78] Bedjan, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon*, p. 98; Budge, *The Chronography*, p. 92.
[79] *Ibidem*, resp. p. 96 and p. 90.
[80] Cf. Morony, *Iraq*, p. 569.
[81] In the East Syrian tradition: Scher, *Histoire nestorienne*, p. 626; and on the various Muslim traditions concerning *Hiraql/Qaysar*, cf. Bashear, 'The Mission', pp. 100-101; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 43.
[82] On Bar Hebraeus' early studies, cf. Abbeloos and Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon*, I, cols. 667-668; on his 'ecumenical' outlook, Wensinck, *Bar Hebraeus's Book*, pp. 60-61.
[83] Cf. Brock, 'Syriac Views', pp. 12-13.
[84] On this *topos*, cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 536-538.

benefit more clearly because with the fall of Baghdad in his own lifetime (1258 AD) to the Mongols he saw that same kingdom coming to an end[85] – and with that possibly the advent of another period of profound cultural change.

[85] In Bar Hebraeus' *Chronography*, the 'Ninth Series' (the 'Kings of the Romans and the Greeks') runs from Tiberius I to Heraclius, the 'Tenth Series' (the 'Kings of the Arabs') from Heraclius and Muhammad to the fall of Baghdad, and the 'Eleventh Series' is that of the Huns after the conquest of Baghdad.

HERACLIUS, THE NEW ALEXANDER

APOCALYPTIC PROPHECIES DURING THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

Gerrit J. Reinink

In the episode describing the battle between Alexander the Great and the Persian king in the *Syriac Alexander Legend* (written c.630),[1] Alexander's troops raise the battle-cry 'God, help us!' after the model of the Latin exclamation *adiuta Deus*, prescribed as the Byzantine army's battle-cry in the *Strategicon of Maurice*.[2] This prayer for divine help was answered, for in the following battle the Romans with God's assistance gained a crushing victory over the Persian enemy.[3] By 628, when the emperor Heraclius after a campaign of six years had gained the decisive victory over the Persians, it could be concluded that the prayer on the reverse of the silver hexagram, *Deus adiuta Romanis*, 'God, help the Romans', had indeed been answered. This text surrounded the figure of the Cross on the silver hexagram, which had been introduced by Heraclius and struck since 615.[4] Walter Kaegi considers this inscription a testimony of the anxiety about the future existence of the empire, which had plagued Byzantium during the Persian invasions.[5]

By 615 the empire found itself in a deep crisis: in the East large parts of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Cilicia had been lost to the Persians,[6] and the bloody sack and destruction of Jerusalem in 614, including the loss of the relic of the True Cross, had caused a tremendous shock among the

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[1] Ed. and English transl. by Budge, *The History*, pp. 255-275/144-158. A revised form of the Legend is preserved in the West-Syrian Pseudo-Dionysius Chronicle, ed. and Latin transl. by Chabot, *Incerti auctoris Chronicon*, pp. 41-45/33-36; cf. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, pp. 128-129.
[2] Ed. and transl. by Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, pp. 442-443/484-485. Most scholars now assume that the work was composed by the end of the sixth or at the beginning of the seventh century; cf. Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, pp. 15-16; Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, pp. 130-132; *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III, pp. 1962-1963; Schlosser, *The Reign*, pp. 28-34.
[3] Budge, *The History*, pp. 271-274/156-157.
[4] Cf. Grierson, *Catalogue*, II, 1, p. 270, no. 61.2; Grabar, *L'iconoclasme*, p. 15; Yannopoulos, *L'hexagramme*, pp. 19-22, 114-143.
[5] Kaegi, *Byzantium*, p. 207.
[6] Cf. Treadgold, *A History*, p. 290; for a survey of the Persian conquests, see also Whittow, *The Making*, pp. 73-76.

Christian population.[7] The city, together with its victorious symbol of the Christian Roman empire, had fallen into the hands of the pagan enemy.[8] In these years, fears for the impending definitive fall of the empire increased, and what this meant within the wider perspective of the course of history was perfectly clear: the end of the Roman empire would usher in the very last terrors of world history, in the form of the invasions of the eschatological peoples of Gog and Magog and the advent of Antichrist.[9] We do not need to recur to apocalyptic works written after the Arab conquests in order to answer the question of whether inhabitants of the empire perceived the events of the time in apocalyptic terms.[10] Some sources testify that during the Roman-Persian war (603-628) apocalyptic sentiments arose among Christians inside and outside the empire. The *Life of Theodore of Sykeon* predicting the incursions of many barbarian peoples, much bloodshed, universal ruin and captivity, the fall and instability of the empire and the impending advent of the Adversary (2 Thess. 2:4) may well reflect the feelings of people in Anatolia facing the Persian military successes in the first two decades of the seventh century.[11] The *Life of George of Choziba*, written not

[7] For a discussion of the sources of the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians, see Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 151-172; see also Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 22-28; Averil Cameron, 'Byzantines and Jews', p. 254.
[8] For the Cross as religious and political symbol, see Averil Cameron, 'Byzantium', pp. 262-265, and the literature mentioned in note 38.
[9] Cf. in general Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*; Daley, *The Hope*; Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*; McGinn, *Antichrist*.
[10] For 'conclusive evidence' regarding the empire's inhabitants interpreting events in apocalyptic terms, see Kaegi, 'Variable Rates', p. 194, who points to the Pseudo-Daniel vision published by Berger (*Die griechische Daniel-Diegese*), which was written directly before the siege of Constantinople by the Arabs in 717/718 (cf. Winkelmann and Brandes, *Quellen*, pp. 317-318).
[11] *Life of Theodore* § 134, Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*, pp. 106/110-111. George, the author of the *Life of Theodore*, began to record the saint's life while Theodore was still living (Theodore died in 613), and he finished it after the death of Heraclius in 641 (in § 166, Festugière, *Vie*, pp. 154/158, Theodore predicts the length of Heraclius' reign). The prophecy concerning the fall of the Roman empire and the advent of Antichrist is placed shortly before the death of the patriarch Thomas in 610 and the death of the emperor Phocas in the same year. As a *vaticinium ex eventu* it may refer to the capture of Caesarea in Cappadocia by the Persians in 611 and to Theodore's prophecy that after his death a great army of the Persians would devastate the country as far as the sea, which most likely refers to the Persian invasion of Asia Minor in 614/615 and the capture of Chalcedon, immediately opposite Constantinople (§ 153, Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*, pp. 123-124/129). In a wider geographical context one may be inclined to see in the 'incursions of many barbarian peoples' also an allusion to the Avar and Slav invasions in the north at about the same time, but we should keep in mind that George's biography of Theodore is

long after the saint's death about 625 by his disciple Antony in the Judean desert, expresses fear for the imminent doomsday after the Old Testament examples of the Deluge and the rain of fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah.[12] The *Life of Mihr-Mah-Gushnasp/ George*, written between 621 and 628 by Babai the Great, the abbot of the monastery on mount Izla to the north of Nisibis, considers the disasters of the time and the wars of 'nation against nation' (Matth. 24:7) as signs of the world hurrying towards its end.[13] Even after Heraclius' victory over the Persians, the author of the *Return of the Relics of Anastasius* is still convinced that his generation is the very last in world history.[14]

These pessimistic views concerning the future of the Byzantine empire, which circulated in monastic communities in Asia Minor, Palestine and North Mesopotamia, needed a vigorous response after Heraclius' succesful conclusion of the war. One of the means to counter these negative feelings and restore the ideology of the emperor and the empire was to give Heraclius' victory a positive role and universal signification within the framework of imperial eschatology.[15] This, indeed, may have been a major motif in some works written by Heraclius' panegyrist George of Pisidia soon after Heraclius' victory.[16] Here themes from traditional eschatology are used in order to emphasise the universal importance of Heraclius' victory: a new age has set in with Heraclius the *kosmorystēs*, 'the saviour of the world',

very much focused on Anatolia and the fears of Persian raids and plundering in the region of his monastery in the first two decades of the seventh century. For the importance of this Life as historical source, cf. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, pp. 122-150, and Kaegi, 'New Evidence'.

[12] *Life of George* IV § 18 (Houze, 'Sancti Georgii Chozebitae', p. 117).

[13] Bedjan, *Histoire*, pp. 475-477. For the date, see Reinink, 'Babai the Great's *Life of George*', p. 174.

[14] Edition and French translation by Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, I, pp. 104-105 (ch. 6: 14). This work was written in the monastery of Anastasius to the north of Jerusalem between 2 November 631 and 1 September 632; cf. Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 329-330.

[15] By 'imperial eschatology' we understand the already ancient Christian idea that the Roman empire is the fourth empire of the Book of Daniel, which, as the 'withholding power' (2 Thess.2:7), would last until the advent of Antichrist; cf. Podskalsy, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, p. 55, note 332; *idem*, 'Représentation du temps'; Mango, *Byzantium*, p. 203; Magdalino, 'The History', p. 4.

[16] In particular in George's *Heraclias* and *Hexaemeron*. The *Heraclias* was probably written in 628 (Mary Whitby, 'Defender', p. 271) and the *Hexaemeron* about 630 (Mary Whitby, 'The Devil', p. 129 against Olster's arguments for dating the *Hexaemeron* to 638: Olster, 'The Date', p. 171).

comparable to the seventh day of rest after the six days of creation.[17] However, even though George applies eschatological language to describe the universal renewal, the eschatological themes mainly remain metaphors of the new age which has come in the history of the world.[18] For George it was the correspondence of the seventh day of rest following the hexaemeron with the seventh year following the six years of Heraclius' campaign that brought him to a 'mystical vision': Heraclius, who endured many hardships for six years, found rest in the seventh year, when he returned to the capital with peace and joy.[19] Of course, the concept of the 'seventh day' undoubtedly recalled associations with that of the seventh millennium of world history, but it was common opinion among the Christians in the seventh century that six millennia of world history had elapsed and that, therefore, they were already living in the seventh and last millennium.[20] In George's work eschatology is made to serve imperial ideology in order to create hopes of a new and better future for the empire after the disasters of the seventh century. Apocalyptic eschatology which predicted the end of the Roman empire was supplanted by imperial ideology using eschatological imagery in order to typify the auspicious new beginning of the empire.

In the *Syriac Alexander Legend*, which was composed at about the same time as George's *Heraclias* and *Hexaemeron*,[21] the positive role of the empire in the eschatological scenario became part of two truly apocalyptic prophecies, of which the first is connected with Alexander the Great and the second with the Persian king Tubarlaq. Alexander's prophecy appears in an inscription upon the gate which he built against the barbarian peoples of the

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[17] For George's use of the titel *kosmorystēs*, see Olster, 'The Date', p. 161; Mary Whitby, 'A New Image', p. 206; *eadem*, 'The Devil', pp. 119, 122; *eadem*, 'Defender' , pp. 254, 260.

[18] The topic of the 'second life', 'another world' and a 'new creation' is used in particular as a metaphor for imperial renewal in the *Heraclias* 1.82-83: Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 244. Cf. Olster, 'The Date', p. 161; Mary Whitby, 'A New Image', p. 214. For its possible role in the *Hexaemeron*, see Olster, 'The Date', pp. 161-168; Mary Whitby, 'The Devil', pp. 115, 129.

[19] This tradition is preserved in Theophanes' *Chronographia*, De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, pp. 327-328, but it is probably based on the lost final part of George's *Heraclias*; cf. Olster, 'The Date', p. 161.

[20] Cf. Alexander, *The Oracle*, pp. 118-120; Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, p. 92, note 544; *idem*, 'Marginalien', p. 357, note 28; Mango, *Byzantium*, pp. 203-204; Witakowski, 'The Idea'; Magdalino, 'The History', pp. 4-7; *Alexander Poem* I, 432, II, 441, III, 501: Reinink, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, pp. 106-107 (transl.); *Pseudo-Methodius* XI,1, Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse*, p. 40, note 1 (transl.).

[21] See above, note 16. For the date of the *Alexander Legend* being about 630, see Reinink, 'Die Entstehung', pp. 279-280.

north.[22] In this prophecy Alexander predicts the future invasions of these peoples (here called Huns)[23] into the countries of the Romans and the Persians,[24] the destruction of the gate by divine command at the end of times, the ensuing eschatological incursion of the Huns (the Gog-Magog motif) and the subsequent terrible war between the kingdoms of the Huns and the Persians, in which both kingdoms will destroy each other; where-upon Alexander's empire will acquire world dominion:

> And my kingdom, which is called [the kingdom] of the house of Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian, shall go out and destroy the earth and the ends of the heavens. And there shall not be found any among the nations and tongues who dwell in the Creation that shall withstand the kingdom of the Romans.[25]

This prophecy is confirmed by Tubarlaq's astrologers after Alexander's victory over the Persians and the conclusion of the peace-treaty between Alexander and the Persian king:

> And [the astrologers] told [Tubarlaq] that at the final consummation of the world the kingdom of the Romans would go out and subdue all the kings of the earth; and that whatever king was found in Persia would be killed, and that Babylonia and Assyria would be laid waste by the command of God.[26]

This prophecy is put into writing and presented to Alexander by Tubarlaq:

> And Alexander took with himself in writing the king's and his nobles' prophecy of what should befall Persia: that Persia would be laid waste by the Romans, and that all the kingdoms would be laid waste, but that that [kingdom of the Romans] would last and rule to the end of times and that that [kingdom

[22] Budge, *The History*, pp. 268-271/154-156.
[23] The Huns are identified with the biblical eschatological peoples of Gog and Magog (Budge, *The History*, pp. 263/150); this was a usual identification in the seventh century. Cf. the commentary on the Book of Revelation composed by Andreas of Caesarea (late sixth-early seventh century): Schmid, *Studien*, pp. 223-225. For Andreas' commentary, see also Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschato-logie*, pp. 86-88; Mango, 'Le temps', pp. 434-435.
[24] These incursions are connected with the years 826 AG/515 AD and 940 AG/629 AD. For a discussion of these dates, see Reinink, 'Die Entstehung', pp. 268-270 and notes 26 and 27.
[25] Budge, *The History*, pp. 270/155.
[26] *Ibidem*, pp. 275/158.

> of the Romans] would deliver the kingdom of the earth to Christ, who is to come.[27]

As I argued in 1984, the *Alexander Legend* presents an amalgam of older materials and traditions connected with Alexander the Great and the recent history of Heraclius' campaign against the Persians.[28] In so doing, the author wants to demonstrate the special place of the Greek-Roman empire, the fourth empire of the Daniel Apocalypse, in God's history of salvation, from the very beginning of the empire until the end of times, when the empire will acquire world dominion. He created an Alexander-Heraclius typology, in which the image of Alexander is highly determined by Byzantine imperial ideology, so that his contemporaries would recognise in Heraclius a new Alexander, who, just like the founder of the empire, departed to the east at the head of his army and combatted and defeated the Persians. We shall not enter here into a further discussion of the *Alexander Legend*, its objectives and its pro-Byzantine propaganda, which may have been addressed in particular to the Syriac-speaking monophysites in North Mesopotamia, since I have already done this in more detail in earlier publications.[29] Here, I should like to pay special attention to the question of why the author of this work connected his highly optimistic prophecies concerning Byzantium's future with the figures of Alexander and the Persian king Tubarlaq.

Not only is Alexander in the *Alexander Legend* portrayed as a proto-Heraclius and Heraclius as a new Alexander, but King Tubarlaq is also none other than Heraclius' great opponent, the shah Khusrau II.[30] In the following I shall try to adduce some arguments to the thesis that the apocalyptic prophecies of the *Alexander Legend* may be understood also as responding to prophecies connected with Khusrau II, which predicted a less rosy future for the Roman empire. These traditions appear in the fifth book of Theophylact Simoccata's *History*.[31]

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[27] *Ibidem*, pp. 275/158.

[28] Reinink, 'Die Entstehung', p. 266.

[29] See in addition to 'Die Entstehung' in particular Reinink, 'Pseudo-Ephraems "Rede über das Ende"', pp. 452-455; *idem*, 'Alexandre et le dernier empereur', pp. 149-159; *idem*, 'Alexander the Great', pp. 100-110.

[30] The origin of the name Tubarlaq remains obscure. Perhaps the name was inspired by the name of the Persian general Shahrbaraz, cf. Hunnius, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, p. 19, note 1.

[31] This work was written during the reign of Heraclius. For the author and the sources of the *History*, see Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*; Olajos, *Les sources*.

The first tradition, an apocalyptic prophecy pronounced by Khusrau, is placed in the historical context of Khusrau's flight into Roman territory from the usurper Vahram (590/1).[32] After having been insulted by the Roman general John Mystacon, Khusrau pronounces the following prediction:

> But since you (i.e. John) are proud in present circumstances, you shall hear what indeed the gods have provided for the future. Be assured that troubles will flow back in turn against you Romans. The Babylonian race will hold the Roman state in its power for a threefold cyclic hebdomad of years. Thereafter you Romans will enslave the Persians in the fifth hebdomad of years. When these very things have been accomplished, the day without evening will dwell among men and the expected fate will achieve power, when the transient things will be handed over to dissolution and the things of the better life hold sway.[33]

Theophylact's source for this tradition is unknown, and, as a result, we do not know where exactly this Christian prediction in pagan disguise originated and circulated.[34] The interpretation of some of its details also raises some difficulties. Of course, the three hebdomads of Persian supremacy refer to the period of the Persian invasions and conquests during the first decades of the seventh century.[35] If we take the the year 603 as the starting-point (the beginning of the Persian attack) or the year 604 (the capture of the important Roman frontier fortress of Dara), the three hebdomads would cover the period 603/4-624/5;[36] but the compelling character of the hebdomad system requires some flexibility on our part in fixing dates, and one cannot exclude the possibility that they indicate the period of Persian successes and military supremacy only roughly. The real problem is the fifth hebdomad of Roman supremacy. Until recently scholars assumed that the fifth hebdomad had to be explained in the historical context of the

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[32] For a discussion of Theophylact's account of the Persian civil war, see Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, pp. 292-304.

[33] *History* V,15: De Boor, *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, pp. 216-217. English translation by Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, p. 153. My translation differs in some points from the translation of the Whitbys.

[34] It is generally assumed that Theophylact did not take this report from his written source, the *History* of John of Epiphania; cf. Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, pp. 240-241; Olajos, *Les sources*, pp. 55, 151. Olajos ascribes this prophecy to contemporary oral tradition.

[35] So also Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, p. 153, note 80. Mango, *Byzantium*, p. 205, offers a different explanation by taking the year 591 as the starting-point and the year 612 as the end of the period. This interpretation is less likely.

[36] For a discussion of the early Persian invasions, see Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 79-80; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, II, pp. 197-201.

prophecy. Consequently, they took the year 591 as the starting-point, and this makes the year 626 the beginning of the fifth hebdomad.[37] Michael and Mary Whitby, however, have argued that the fifth hebdomad refers to Heraclius' counter-offensive, which lasted six years (622-628), and they have suggested that this period is called the fifth hebdomad because perhaps 'the prophecy was reckoned to include one hebdomad of peace, which is not mentioned, but which preceded the three hebdomads of Persian conquests'.[38] Although this solution has its attractive aspects (it provides a nice *vaticinium ex eventu*), it is not satisfying in every respect. The explication of the ordinal number fifth remains somewhat recherché, and one wonders whether the ancient readers of the prophecy would have accepted so easily an unmentioned preceding hebdomad of peace. On the other hand, the year 626 was indeed the turning point in the Roman-Persian war.[39] In this year the siege of Constantinople by the Avars and Persians was a complete failure and in the next year Heraclius was able to make his break-through into Persian Iraq, where he achieved a decisive Roman victory in the battle at Nineveh.[40] In any case, I am not convinced of the interpretation of the final part of Khusrau's prophecy as proposed by the Whitbys. They suggest that for the time after the hebdomad of Heraclius' campaign a messianic Golden Age similar to the apocalyptic prophecy in the *Alexander Legend* is predicted.[41] However, a Golden Age for the Byzantine empire as it is promised in the *Alexander Legend* forms no part of the Khusrau prophecy. The definition of the period after Heraclius' military successes in the Roman-Persian war as 'the day without evening' (τὴν ἀνέσπερον ἡμέραν) and 'the expected fate' (τὴν προσδοκωμένην λῆξιν) definitely reflects Christian symbolism[42] and wording. 'The day without evening' and 'the expected fate' are well-known expressions indicating the new creation of the world of eternal life, which begins after this transient world has come to an end,[43] and the future heavenly life of immortality.[44] For the Christian

[37] Alexander, 'Historiens byzantins', pp. 4-5; Mango, *Byzantium*, p. 205.
[38] Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, p. 153, note 80.
[39] Treadgold, *A History*, p. 298.
[40] Whittow, *The Making*, p. 80; Treadgold, *A History*, p. 298; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, II, pp. 218-222.
[41] Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, p. 153, note 81. Cf. also Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, pp. 240-241; *idem*, 'Greek Historical Writing', p. 73.
[42] The notion of the 'day without evening' is connected with the Christian concept of the eight day, the Sunday and the day of the Resurrection symbolising eternal life, which follows the hebdomad, the seven days of the creation, symbolising this temporary world; cf. Daniélou, *Bible et Liturgie*, pp. 355-387; Luneau, *L'histoire*, pp. 142, 162-163; Sharf, 'The Eighth Day', pp. 27-50.
[43] Cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 2, Giet, *Basile de Césarée*, p.

readers of the time these expressions could only mean that after a very short period of Roman military supremacy over the Persians the end of the world and the earthly kingdom would come, and that this would mark the beginning of the eternal kingdom of Christ. It is true that the Khusrau prophecy remains silent about the traditional eschatological motifs of the incursions of the peoples of Gog and Magog and the advent of Antichrist, which precede the advent of Christ. But it was not necessary to deal with these themes in a prophecy put into the mouth of Khusrau, which, applying the apocalyptic hebdomad system, only intended to predict the fortunes of both world empires and to show the relativity and the short-term impact of both Persian and Roman military successes.

The *auctor spiritualis* of the Khusrau prophecy still considered the Roman-Persian war as belonging to the apocalyptic scenario of the Gospel, according to which the rising of 'nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom' are the beginnings of the sorrows belonging to the end of times (Matth 24: 6-8). The reversal of fortune in favour of the Byzantine empire, which became manifest in particular from 626 onward, does not make this author nourish high hopes of an eschatological world dominion for the Byzantine empire, as is announced in the *Alexander Legend*. It is only a new phase in the war – to be precise the very last phase – for neither would the Persians have the opportunity to launch once more a counter-attack nor would the Romans have the time to restore the heavily damaged empire after this fifth hebdomad, since both world empires were then to give way to the 'day without evening', viz. the eternal kingdom of Christ.

The Khusrau prophecy is directly followed by a second tradition which is connected with Probus, the bishop of Chalcedon, who was the Emperor Maurice's envoy to Khusrau's court at Ctesiphon perhaps around 596/7.[45] According to this tradition Khusrau would have declared to Probus that the Mother of God had appeared to him, predicting that the victories of Alexander the Great would be bestowed on him.[46] Although Theophylact interprets the prophecy as being realised by Khusrau's recovery of the Persian throne with the military support of Maurice, it is possible that the prophecy was originally intended to predict the Persian conquests of the

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[44]Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, VII,1-2, Heil and Ritter, *Corpus Dionysiacum*, II, p. 121,7.12.20.23, and many other instances in this work and in other works of the Corpus Dionysiacum; the *Life of Thecla*, 2, 7, and the *Miracles of Thecla*, Prologue, Dagron, *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle*, pp. 178,40; 198,73; 290,104.

[45] For the date of this embassy, see Sako, *Le rôle*, p. 109.

[46] *History* V, 15, De Boor, *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, p. 217; Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, p. 154.

Near-Eastern territories conquered by Alexander.[47] This would mean that this prophecy could have been a piece of political propaganda addressed to the Christians in the conquered areas at the height of Persian military successes, perhaps shortly after 620, when Egypt too was in Persian hands. Its appeal to the Mother of God may have served to convince the Christians that the occupation by pagan Persians of the Christian (imperial) territories was divinely legitimated.

It is tempting to assume that the author of the *Alexander Legend* knew about these or similar Khusrau prophecies and responded to them by developing a completely reversed scenario. It is not Khusrau, but Heraclius who is a truly new Alexander, and Heraclius' victory over the Persians, which did not end in the fall of the Persian empire but in the restoration of the political *status quo* between both empires as existing before the war,[48] does not prelude the very end of world history; rather it should be taken as an omen for the future in which there is no more place for the existence of a Persian or any other kingdom in the world, since Byzantium will then achieve its eschatological world dominion according to God's designs in history. It is in this glorious future of the Roman empire that the author of the *Alexander Legend* is mainly interested. He completely ignores traditional motifs belonging to eschatology, such as the advent of Antichrist, and he even changes the traditional eschatological scenario by placing Byzantium's eschatological world dominion between the incursions of the barbarian eschatological peoples (the Gog-Magog motif) and the kingdom of Christ. The barbarian peoples, which traditionally serve to destroy all kingdoms of the world in order to usher in the reign of Antichrist, now prepare the way for the world dominion of the Christian empire by playing a role in the destruction of Byzantium's arch-enemy, the Persians. This is, indeed, a remarkable change in Christian eschatology, and it found an early imitator in Pseudo-Ephrem's *Homily 'On the End'* (composed after the Arab conquests, sometime between 640/2 and 680/3).[49]

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[47] Cf. Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, p. 154, note 83.

[48] For the problem of the peace treaty between Alexander and Tubarlaq in the *Alexander Legend*, see Reinink, 'Die Entstehung', pp. 270-271 and note 28 (p. 274); *idem*, 'Alexander the Great', pp. 101-103, 107.

[49] For the date, see Reinink, 'Pseudo-Ephraems "Rede über das Ende"', pp. 455-463. In Pseudo-Ephrem's *Homily* the Arabs now take the place of the Persians. The eschatological barbarian peoples will destroy the Arabs, after which the Roman empire will posses the world dominion of peace until the advent of Antichrist (Pseudo-Ephrem, *Sermo* V, 169-362, Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III*, pp. 63-68/84-89). However, the *Alexander Poem* (composed between 628 and 636 or 639/40) and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (composed about 692), which also knew and used the *Alexander Legend* as a source, both restored the traditional

Both George of Pisidia and the *Alexander Legend* present Heraclius' victory over Persia as an omen for Byzantium's future world dominion;[50] the difference between them lies in the fact that George suggests this glorious future to have already begun with Heraclius' triumph, whereas the *Alexander Legend* postpones it to the eschatological future. The reason for this may be the circumstance that the *Alexander Legend*, being addressed to the people in the East, had to give an explanation and justification of the peace-treaty of 628 by which, in fact, the political *status quo* and the former boundaries between both empires were restored.[51]

Did the positive eschatological views concerning the Byzantine empire's future affect political life after 628? According to some scholars imperial policy was indeed inspired by the eschatological preoccupations of the time, and they relate certain actions of Heraclius to his supposedly apocalyptic incentives:[52] Heraclius' hypothesised plans for he conversion of Persia to Christianity,[53] his formal assumption of the title *basileus* in 629,[54] the emperor's journey to Jerusalem in order to restore the relic of the True Cross in 630,[55] and the forced baptism of the Jews in the early 630s.[56] According to these scholars, imperial policy was, indeed, determined by contemporary apocalyptic eschatology, to such an extent that calling this a significant 'cultural change' would be no mistake![57] Since most of these themes are discussed in other contributions in this volume, I shall not enter here into the question of how far the assumption of Heraclius' allegedly apocalyptic thinking playing a role in taking these initiatives may be justified or probable. In conclusion, however, there is one work, related to Heraclius' orders concerning the forced baptism of the Jews, which requires some attention, since this work is responding to contemporary Jewish messianic hopes and also presents a Christian view of the future of the empire in an eschatological perspective. This work is the *Doctrina Jacobi nu-*

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scheme according to which Gog and Magog will destroy the Byzantine Empire or finish the eschatological world dominion of peace before the advent of Antichrist; cf. *Alexander Poem* I, 553-554, II, 586-587, III, 653-654, Reinink, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, pp. 104-105/130-131; *Pseudo-Methodius* XIII, 16-21, Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse*, pp. 41-43/65-69.

[50] For George, see *Hexaemeron* 1845-1852, edited by Mary Whitby, 'The Devil', p. 117.

[51] See above, note 48.

[52] Cf. Magdalino, 'The History', pp. 18-19.

[53] Mango, 'Deux études', p. 117.

[54] Shahid, 'The Iranian Factor'.

[55] Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius', pp. 232-233; Mango, *Byzantium*, p. 205, calls it a 'deliberately apocalyptic act'.

[56] Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 28-32, 42.

[57] For earlier examples, see Magdalino, 'The History', p. 7.

per baptizati, which was presumably written in Ptolemais in or after 634 (or in the early 640s, as one scholar has recently suggested).[58]

The *Doctrina* returns to the pessimistic view of the empire's future. 'Today', its author says, 'we see the Roman empire humiliated',[59] 'brought low and ravaged by the peoples'.[60] I do not agree with David Olster's opinion that the *Doctrina* is a unique document in seventh-century literature by virtue of its assertion that the fourth empire of the Daniel Apocalypse, the Roman, was in decline and that its fall was imminent.[61] As we have seen, pessimistic views of the empire's future were already circulating before 628, even among Chalcedonians, and the few witnesses of those years that have been preserved, may be merely the top of the iceberg. The positive eschatology regarding the empire, as it is reflected in George of Pisidia's work and the *Alexander Legend*, are, in my opinion, reactions to widespread fears for the empire's imminent end. The real cause of the *Doctrina*'s recurring to the pessimistic view were the political events in the 630s, which frustrated hopes of a Golden Age for the empire and the establishment of an uncontested Roman hegemony in the East. The Arab conquests of Byzantium's eastern provinces, which began in about 633, not only embarrassed Christians, who believed that things had taken a favourable turn for the empire after Heraclius' victory in 628, but they also revived Jewish anti-Roman messianic hopes.[62] Heraclius' plans for the conversion of the Jews, which were put into effect probably not long after his ceremonial entry into Jerusalem in 630 to restore the True Cross to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, were soon rendered out of date by political and military reality.

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[58] Dagron: in Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', p. 247. Dagron also adduced the arguments for the *Doctrina* being written by a Christian from Ptolemais (Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 240-246).

[59] *Doctrina* III,10; IV,5; V,5,18, Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 168-169, 192-193, 212-213.

[60] *Doctrina* IV,5, Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 182-183.

[61] Olster, *Roman Defeat*, pp. 158, 168.

[62] For the role of the Jews in the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614 and the consequences for the Jews of their cooperation with the Persians after the reestablishment of Byzantine rule, see Leder, 'The Attitude', pp. 64-65; Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 22-28; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 162-164, 310-311; Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 202-207, 218-232. For Jewish apocalyptic reactions during the Persian conquests, cf. Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 26-28, 41; Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 207-215; Averil Cameron, 'Byzantines and Jews', p. 255; Stemberger, 'Jerusalem', pp. 266-271. In the 630s some Jews considered the appearance of the prophet Muhammad to be heralding the advent of the Messiah; cf. *Doctrina* V,16, Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 208-209.

The political changes required a reorientation of eastern Christians towards the position of the Roman empire and a revaluation of the forced baptism of the Jews.[63] We may doubt whether the *Doctrina* was written for a Jewish audience only and intended for the conversion of the Jews, as, for example, David Olster assumes.[64] It is true that the *Doctrina* puts Jews on the scene discussing the truth of Christianity, and that the forcibly-baptised and then convinced Christian Jacob not only persuades his fellow newly-baptised Jews of the rightness of the Christian faith, but also his unbaptised cousin, Justus. The *Doctrina*'s main problem, however, has to do with contemporary Jewish expectations of the imminent fall of the Roman empire and the advent of the Messiah, and its main aim is to demonstrate that not the Jewish, but the Christian eschatology is right and in entire accordance with the Book of Daniel and the history of the Roman Empire and its contemporary political condition.[65] The imminent fall of the Roman Empire, the *Doctrina* says, shows that Christ has already come, and that the one who is now expected to come is not the Messiah but Antichrist.[66] The ruin of Rome, therefore, does not announce the advent of a Jewish Messiah and a glorious future for the Jewish people, but the very end of the world.[67] Nonetheless, it seems to me that the *Doctrina*'s message is aimed at Christians, who felt desorientated vis-à-vis the once more rapidly changing

[63] The *Doctrina* gives an eschatological vindication of the forced baptism, cf. *Doctrina* IV,5; V,9, Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 180-181, 198-199, and Déroche's commentary, *ibidem*, p. 263. For the increasing persecution of the Jews in the Byzantine empire in the sixth century, cf. also Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 345-348.

[64] Olster, *Roman Defeat*, pp. 159-160, 163; cf. also Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', p. 268; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 55, suggests that the *Doctrina* may have intended also to counter Christians like Maximus Confessor, who opposed the forced baptism of the Jews.

[65] Cf. *inter alia Doctrina* I,21-22; III,8,10,12; IV,5; V,5, Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 98-103, 164-167, 168-169, 170-173, 182-183, 190-193.

[66] Antichrist is called Hermolaos in the *Doctrina,* in conformity with contemporary Jewish views; cf. for a discussion of the background of the name, Berger, 'Three Typological Themes', pp. 155-162. It is a tempting idea to suppose that the *Doctrina* responds to contemporary Jewish identification of Hermolaos with the Byzantine emperor, *in casu* Heraclius; cf. Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 27, 265. The *Doctrina* counters Jewish expectation by portraying Hermolaos according to the traditional Christian view of Antichrist and identifying him with the 'Messiah' who is expected by the Jews; cf. *Doctrina* V,5,16, Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 186-187, 208-209.

[67] *Doctrina* V, 6-7,18 , Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 194-195, 212-213.

political conditions in the East, and who feared a political and religious alliance between Jews and islamic Arabs.[68]

Thus we see apocalyptic eschatology during Heraclius' reign moving from a negative to a positive scenario for the Byzantine empire, and then again from the positive to the negative scenario, adapting itself to the rapidly changing historical circumstances. However, though the political success story of the 'most pious and God-guarded emperor'[69] Heraclius was only short-lived, its literary form in the *Alexander Legend* generated by the end of the seventh century one of the most influential innovations in imperial eschatology in the East and the West: the Legend of the Last World Emperor, who would destroy the Arabs and found the eschatological world-dominion of the Christian empire.[70]

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[68] The Jews considered Muhammad to be the precursor of the Messiah, and they are expected to connect themselves with the Arabs and to persecute the Christians; cf. *Doctrina* V, 16-17 , Déroche in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 208-213.

[69] Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 735; transl. Mary and Michael Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 188.

[70] Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse*, pp. xxxiii-xxxvi, xlv (transl.).

JEWISH MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS IN THE AGE OF HERACLIUS

Wout Jac. van Bekkum

The sixth and seventh centuries CE constitute a period of great significance for the Jewish people of Palestine. The discovery of a number of synagogues in Gaza, Galilee and modern Jordan from this period reveals a high degree of participation of the Jews in the Byzantine culture around them.[1] The extant synagogue art with remains of mosaic floors and dedicatory inscriptions show a vitality and variety which we also find in contemporary liturgy and literature. The visitor of a Byzantine synagogue in Palestine in those days could expect to see beautiful representations of the lives of the patriarchs or the signs of the zodiac (sometimes combined with a depiction of the god Helios holding four horses which pull his chariot, or holding a globe in his left arm). He could also hear traditional Hebrew prayer interwoven with new *piyyutim* or artful poems produced by the local melodist for every single sabbath and festival.[2] He could also listen to the recitation of Hebrew biblical texts and enjoy their Aramaic translations or *Targumim*, possibly accompanied by sermons in Greek or Aramaic. In the synagogues or study houses of larger communities collections of rabbinic legislative and narrative material could be consulted, mostly in their last stages of redaction before being codified in an extensive encyclopaedia called the Talmud. The *Savoraim* were the sages and scholars who put the final touches to the talmudic tractates during the period under discussion.

Since the third century CE rabbinic teaching was intensified in Palestine and in Babylonia where the rabbinic academies gradually acquired a leading role in propagating legal decisions; these schools gained particular importance after the Arabic conquest in the days of the *Geonim* or 'excellent rabbis'. The Talmud in those days was not exclusively a study book full of explanations derived from the Hebrew Bible and religious teaching, but rather the sum total of regulations and homilies transmitted by thousands of sages who tried to guard the continuity of Jewish existence.

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[1] For a general survey, see Mango, *Byzantium*, pp. 13-30; Averil Cameron, *Continuity and Change*; Kazhdan and Cutler, 'Continuity'; Haldon, *Byzantium*.

[2] Prester, 'The Signs'; Leicht, '*Qedushah*', pp. 155-156; Englard, 'The Eschatological Significance'.

The study of the Bible represented in Roman-Byzantine Judaism has a supreme value of its own, but it could hardly be exercised without referring to the observance of biblical and rabbinic prescripts in practical life. The tractates of the Talmud can therefore be considered an extension of teaching the word and practice of the Bible in combination with a second-century rabbinic code called the Mishnah; literally the word *mishnah* means 'second teaching', translated into Greek as *deuterosis*. Alongside the talmudic editions (that is to say, the Babylonian and the Palestinian versions), a vast corpus of interpretive and narrative collections called the Midrash was produced predominantly in Palestine, reflecting a wide variety of social, intellectual and cultural developments in this region.[3]

Many sages and authors studying, writing and editing these compilations were found throughout Palestine, however, five prime centers of learning and economic activity can be discerned: Caesarea and Lydda in the central part of the country, Beit She'an, Tiberias and Sepphoris in Galilee. The Tiberian basilica-synagogue and adjoining academy called in Aramaic *sidra rabba* ('the great house of study') and in Greek *diple stoa* ('the hall of double pillars') was of major importance because, since the third century, the most notable sages had resided there as well as the Jewish patriarchs, the *nesi'im* or *rashey galuta*.[4] Frequent reports about incidents between Jewish leadership and the sages indirectly confirm the central role of Tiberias until the abolition of the office of patriarch as a result of severe political attacks by contemporary Christian authorities. It is this outright confrontation between Jews and Christians, starting off more or less as an internal affair in the first century and expanding into a struggle between two distinct communities, which destinated the history of the Jews in Palestine until the Islamic conquest. Major figures in the emerging Church, such as Origen and Eusebius, resided in Caesarea, and from this time onward Jewish sages would have to be prepared for the defence of their modes of interpretation in the debates with their Christian counterparts.[5]

When Constantine became the first Christian ruler who dominated Palestine, he renewed the decree of tolerance which had been issued by Galerius in 311 and recognised Christianity as a *religio licita* equal to Judaism.[6] It is unclear what exactly was stated about Judaism and the Jews in Constantine's legislation but some of the passages are repeated in the Codex

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[3] Safrai, *The Literature*, pp. 303-322.

[4] In the Palestinian Talmud only the synagogues of Alexandria and Tiberias are defined as *diplei isteba* or *difliston*, 'with a double row of pillars or seats'.

[5] Stroumsa, 'Religious Contacts'.

[6] Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, pp. 120-144; Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre*, pp. 141-160; Linder, *The Jews in the Legal Sources*; Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos Texte*, pp. 253-259; Carroll, *Constantine's Sword*.

Theodosianus and show strong anti-Jewish wording. The letter concerning the date of the Easter festival which Constantine sent to all provinces after the Council of Nicaea in 325 calls the Jews 'murderers of prophets' and 'God-killers'.[7] Protection was granted to Jews who wished to abandon their religion, and gentiles were warned not to join the so-called 'nefarious sect'. Christians should not celebrate Easter in any relation to the date of the Jewish Passover festival because according to the contents of the letter 'Jews have stained their hands by a serious crime and defiled their souls as a result of their cruel conduct'. Of course, the text could easily have been reformulated by a different or a later hand. One could argue therefore that Constantine himself cannot unquestionably be defined as an enemy of the Jews, but the political situation in Palestine during and after his reign was very favourable to the building of churches and the reception of Christian pelgrims at the expense of the status of Judaism.[8] The actions of Constantine and his family promoting Christianity seem to have provoked Jewish reactions of a messianic nature. The so-called 'small apocalypse' in the Mishnah is apparently connected to the early fourth century; this text is in any case dated before the reign of Julian the Apostate:

> With the footprints of the Messiah presumption increases, and death increases. The vine gives its fruit and wine at great cost. The kingdom turns to heresy [Christianity!], and there is no reproof. The gathering place will be for prostitution, Galilee will be laid waste, the Golan will be made desolate, and the men of the frontier will go about from town to town, and none will take pity on them. The wisdom of scribes will putrefy, those who fear sin will be rejected. The truth will be locked away. Children will shame elders, and elders will stand up before children: 'for the son dishonours the father and the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house' (Micah 7:6). The face of the generation is the face of a dog, a son is not ashamed before his father. Upon whom shall we depend? Upon our Father in heaven! (*Mishnah Sotah* 9:15)[9]

In most of the talmudic-midrashic sources of that time, almost two centuries after the loss of the Judean state and the revolt of Bar Kochba, the Messiah, like the ancient kings, is described as active on the public plane and des-

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[7] The Council of Nicaea was directed against Arius who was defined as 'the hidden Jew'. Cf. Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire*, p. 69.

[8] Stemberger, *Juden und Christen*, pp. 45-66; Külzer, *Peregrinatio*.

[9] Schäfer, *Geschichte*, p. 191: the expectation of a ruler from the house of Jacob and his destruction of Constantinople and Caesarea is found in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Numbers 24:18.

tined to save the nation as a whole. Since he is not a personal saviour as a rule, particular traits of his figure are absent. It is doubtful to which extent messianic sayings of this nature stimulated the Jews to organise their opposition against the Christian empire, as John Chrysostom would have liked us to believe.[10] Only when Julian the Apostate took the initiative to return to paganism and showed some interest in restoration of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, common Jewish people – certainly without the participation or the consent of the majority of patriarchs and sages – could have wished to cooperate in the realisation of the building. This enterprise and its failure has been totally obscured in Jewish sources – perhaps hardly any Jew was involved at all.[11] Most information comes from prejudiced Christian authors such as Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Jerusalem or from Syriac texts like the Julian Romance. Gregory of Nazianzus is the author who, in his derision of Julian, offers many legendary details about the Jews. When they started to clean the foundations of the Temple, a sudden storm and a strong earthquake drove them away. When they tried to find refuge in an adjacent sanctuary, the building collapsed and a fire from within killed and wounded many people. Finally, a radiant cross appeared in the sky, and because of all these events many Jews went to Christian priests and were baptised.[12]

Judaism as a power of some societal importance came to an end, and towards the late fourth and fifth centuries the political role and legal status of Jews was gradually limited by the enactment of a number of laws issued by Theodosius I. The law of the year 384 was addressed to the Jews and forbade them (again) to buy Christian slaves and to disgrace them by the Jewish sacrament, that is, by circumcision. The law of 388 repeated previous prohibitions of mixed marriage with the addition of mixed marriages now being considered adultery for which the death penalty was introduced. These and similar laws of Theodosius I cannot be regarded as a final blow to Judaism, on the contrary, they included warnings to some regional and local authorities who prohibited Jews to convene in their synagogues and destroyed the buildings. The situation under Flavius Theo-dosius Junior or Theodosius II was much more insecure; most peculiar is one of his first imperial decrees of 29 May 408, prohibiting the celebration of the feast of

[10] Meeks and Wilken, *Jews and Christians*; Wilken, *John Chrysostom*, pp. 132-138, 145-148.

[11] The strict silence in rabbinic sources about Julian's intentions is possibly linked to his pagan ideas, as opposed to what has been written in Syriac sources about the readiness of Jews to abandon monotheism, cf. Smith, *Julian's Gods*, pp. 143-159; Drijvers, 'The Syriac Julian Romance'.

[12] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 5,4 (Bernardi, *Grégoire*, p. 298). Cf. also Brock, 'A Letter'; Lieu, *The Emperor Julian*.

Purim because of the accusation that the Jews equated the evil Haman the Amalekite in the book of Esther with Jesus Christ:

> The governors of the provinces shall prohibit the Jews, in a certain ceremony of their festival Haman in commemoration of some former punishment, from setting fire to and burning a simulated appearance of the holy cross, in contempt of the Christian faith and with sacrilegious mind, lest they associate the sign of our faith with their jests. They shall maintain their own rites without contempt of the Christian law, and they shall unquestionably lose all privileges that have been permitted heretofore unless they refrain from unlawful acts.

Most likely, the custom of burning a crucified doll-like effigy of Haman was widespread among the Jewish communities on the day of Purim. The custom was interpreted by Christians as an actual murder rather than only a symbolic one. The Book of Esther speaks explicitly of 'the hanging of Haman' (Esther 9:10), but other sources apparently mention 'the crucifixion of Haman'. The Targum of the Book of Esther translates the passage 'and they hanged Haman' as 'and they crucified Haman on a tree.' We also find mention of the crucifixion of Haman in an authentic poetic example of early anti-Christian polemic that has been published by Joseph Yahalom and Michael Sokoloff. In this Aramaic-Greek composition for the festival of Purim the hanging of Haman is considered a crucifixion which enables the anonymous poet to draw an explicit comparison with the death of Jesus.[13] The law of Theodosius II permits the observance of Purim on the condition that the observance will in no way offend Christian sensibilities.[14]

In the view of the state Judaism was an increasingly marginalised phenomenon vis-à-vis Christian political power. A fanatic advocate of the Church like Cyril of Alexandria did not face legal consequences after expelling all the Jews from his city and setting fire to the great synagogue. Later, in 420, Theodosius II issued a law promising compensation for synagogues converted into churches.[15] This law contradicts the prohibition of building new synagogues, but archeological evidence appears to confirm the erection of several new buildings during the reign of this emperor. The practical application of this law is therefore doubtful. The Patriarchate was abolished in 429 and the highest Jewish authority in the country was divided among the presidents of the two courts of Sanhedrin in northern and

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[13] Sokoloff and Yahalom, *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry*, pp. 216-217.
[14] Rabello, 'The First Law'; Linder, *The Jews in Legal Sources*, pp. 236-238; Yahalom, 'Angels'; Rabello, 'La première loi'.
[15] Reichhardt, 'Die Judengesetzgebung'.

central Palestine.[16] A *Novella* from 438 called Jews 'people who are hostile to the highest majesty and the Roman laws' (*supernae maiestati et Romanis legibus inimici ultores*) who had to be banned from state office and civil service. New developments were afoot in this century when internal Christian strife led to the schism between Orthodox and Monophysites after the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Palestinian Jews were subject to the rule of the Orthodox Church and suffered from the attempt of the emperors to achieve a lasting union of the eastern and western Mediterranean under Orthodox imperial control. All non-Orthodox groups including the Jews (and the Samaritans who rebelled twice against Byzantine rule in 485 and 529) were defined as heretics who could not rely upon the protection of the state. The *Novellae* of Justinian I reiterate older prohibitions against keeping Christian slaves and participating in city councils. However, one unique law has become famous in modern Judaic studies: *Novella* no. 146, issued on 8 February 553 by Justinian at Constantinople and addressed to his prefect of the East. The legislator claims that he was asked to take action because of a serious dispute among the Jews of Constantinople concerning the use of languages in the synagogal worship, whether Hebrew alone was to be used or Greek as well. Therefore he prescribes the following measures for all Jews who dwell in his empire:

1. a free choice of any language for liturgical use in synagogue;
2. to read biblical texts in Greek either from the Septuagint or from Aquilas' translation;
3. corporal or pecuniary punishment of Jewish authorities who act in defiance of the principle of freedom of language;
4. strict prohibition of the *deuterosis* or 'second teaching', that is, as previously mentioned, the Mishnah, or in a wider sense rabbinic legislation;[17]
5. strict prohibition of the denial of the following dogmas: the Resurrection, the Last Judgment and the Creation of Angels;
6. punishment, confiscation and banishment on those convicted for breaking this law.

This very interesting text testifies to the tensions generated within the Byzantine-Jewish communities with regard to the prestige of several liturgical languages and concerning the use of more than one language in their con-

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[16] Stemberger, *Juden und Christen*, pp. 237-246.

[17] The text literally says: 'What they call *deuterosis*, we prohibit entirely, for it is not included among the Holy Books, nor was it handed down from above by the prophets, but it is an invention of men in their chatter, exclusively of earthly origin and having in it nothing of the divine'. Cf. Veltri, 'Justinians Novelle'.

gregations. However, it is uncertain whether the dispute that occasioned Justinian's intervention centered on the exclusiveness of Hebrew or of Greek, or on the right to use other languages in addition to Hebrew.[18] Interestingly enough, the dispute was settled in a way that the Scriptures would be read and studied in accordance with the Christian tradition of Byzantium, that is, in Greek. The same can be said of the interdiction of *deuterosis* which was considered 'heretical' and contrary to Christian dogma. Later Jewish sources give evidence of the practical application of this law, mainly in Palestine. Modern scholars argue that this law may have been the direct cause for speeding up the production of liturgical poetry in Hebrew because numerous allusions and references to rabbinic themes are stored away in its very special kind of language. Some of the sixth-century liturgical melodists with names like Yannai (Yannaios, Yannaeus), Simon bar Megas, Yehudah, and Elazar Qilir (with metathesis of two consonants perhaps a derivation from the name Cyril[los] or the noun *kleros*, clergy) have been rediscovered in the Genizah manuscript collections of Cambridge, Oxford, New York, St. Petersburg, and a number of other cities. In their compositions the melodists frequently refer to the worsening religious conditions combined with the restrictive decrees of the Byzantine emperors who supported the pervasive presence of the Church. In one of his liturgical hymns or *piyyutim* Yannai warns as follows:

> Do not rush [to live] on the property of the chiefs of the redskin man (Gen 25:25: Esau-Edom); do not enter the homes of the sons of the one who despised his birthright (Gen 25:34); do not approach the premises of utterly shameless folk; let not your foot tread where hunters of Israel live [...]; do not come to the meetings of apostates.[19]

In a fragmentary *piyyut* for Numbers 8:1 ("When you [Aaron] set up the lamps") Yannai bitterly complains about the success of Christianity and the decline of Judaism with the employment of repetition and symmetrical contrast. The lamps of the seven-branched candelabrum in Num. 8:1, an outstanding symbol of Jewish freedom and independence, serve as a metaphor for the antipodal development of two religions:

> The lamps of Edom became powerful and numerous, the lamps of Zion are destroyed and ravaged; the lamps of Edom burned increasingly stronger, the

[18] For similar discussions in Syriac Christianity, Brock, 'Greek and Syriac', pp. 158-159.
[19] Rabinovitz, *The Liturgical Poems*, II, pp. 126-127; Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography*, p. 35.

> lamps of Zion are extinguished and quenched; the lamps of Edom are everywhere present, the lamps of Zion are set back; the lamps of Edom, their light is bright, the lamps of Zion are blacker than soot; the lamps of Edom are haughtily risen, the lamps of Zion went down and are crushed; the lamps of Edom are respected and adorned, the lamps of Zion are seized und turned over; the lamps of Edom shine because of a dead man [Jesus], the lamps of Zion are passed out of mind like a dead man.[20]

More political is the opinion of the hymnist Yehudah (early seventh century):

> Until when shall we sit outside the Land, and will the ruler of the empire of Edom be extolled unto heaven? Humiliate him and pull him down into the depths of the earth, and let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice (Psalm 96:10).[21]

This type of Jewish judgment of the growth of Christian religious and political power was generally based on traditional terminology with a long history in biblical and rabbinical exegesis. Most concepts originate in the Hellenistic period and are closely connected with the generally accepted interpretation of Daniel 7, according to which an apocalyptic vision of world history is revealed.[22] The sages adhered to the vision of the four great beasts as an outline for the four successive empires: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Ultimately the Roman empire will be overthrown and a messianic king will establish the hegemony of Israel. The latter eschatological conception is often exemplified by the account of Gen. 25:23: 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger'. The twin brothers Esau and Jacob represent the two peoples of Rome-Byzantium and Israel, and the typology of Rome in the biblical image of Esau-Edom as an obverse of Jacob-Israel enabled the exegetes and hymnists of the early seventh century to apply the traditional world-view to their own situation.[23] Liturgical verse would never mention the ruler of Edom by his name but the suggestive usage of the terminology

[20] Rabinovitz, *The Liturgical Poems*, II, pp. 140-141.
[21] Van Bekkum, *Hebrew Poetry*, pp. xv-xvi, 104.
[22] Russel, *The Method*.
[23] Gen. 36:1,8,9,43 ('Esau, that is, Edom'; 'Esau the father of Edom'); Katz, *Exclusiveness*; Cohen, 'Esau as Symbol'; Lange, 'Jewish Attitudes'; Van Bekkum, 'Anti-Christian Polemics'. In another poem Yehudah complains about 'Those who eat pork in whose hands Your residence is given', an explicit reference to Byzantine rule of Jerusalem; cf. Van Bekkum, *Hebrew Poetry*, pp. xv, 45.

within a biblical-liturgical context was easily connected with the Byzantine emperor who in Yehudah's days could have been Mauricius, Phocas or even Heraclius.[24]

In an earlier stage, at the conclusion of the reign of Justin II in 578, the Persians raided Byzantine Mesopotamia but were driven back during the following years. At the same time other inconclusive wars began in Spain, Italy, and Africa. Whether precisely these circumstances were a stimulus or not, Jews and Samaritans mustered up their courage from the fact that Byzantium seemed to lose control; both groups mounted a serious rebellion against Byzantine rule in 578 which was quickly put down again.[25] Evidently the Jews judged that the Persians, who came in 606 as far as Syria and succeeded to capture Damascus in 613, had been sent for their liberation from Byzantine oppression. The year 614 must have started with high expectations when the Persians under the command of general Shahrbaraz invaded Palestine and rushed from Damascus through Tiberias, Sepphoris, Caesarea, and Lydda. The conquest of Jerusalem was within reach; in Jewish eyes the events were interpreted as a reenactment of the conquest in 538 BCE according to the books of Nehemiah and Ezra, when the Persian king Cyrus allowed the Judeans to return to the city and to rebuild the walls, houses, and the Temple. The large Jewish communities in the southern part of the Lebanon and the northern part of Palestine joined the Persians in a triumphal march to Jerusalem. The Christians of the city surrendered to Shahrbaraz, but in the spring of 614, after he had marched to Egypt, they expelled his garrison. Shahrbaraz turned back, besieged and captured Jerusalem, and deported most of its Christian population to Persia. Many churches were demolished and the supposed True Cross of Christ was removed from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[26]

Unfortunately, the information about the period between 614 and 617, when Jerusalem was supposedly more or less in Jewish hands under the aegis of Persia is very meagre, but one may assume that the perception of this historical event and its reverberations in the imagination of contem-

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[24] Olster, *The Politics*. According to the introduction of the *Doctrina Jacobi Nuper Baptizati* ('The Doctrine of Jacob the Newly Baptised') allegedly attributed to 'Sargis of Aberga', Heraclius attempted to isolate the Jews of Africa and convert them by force; Kaegi, *Byzantium*, pp. 220-221; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 55; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 55-61; Külzer, *Disputationes*, pp. 142-147, 239-240. On the intentions of the *Doctrina*, cf. Olster, *Roman Defeat*, pp. 158-179. However, Olster's views are strongly modified by Averil Cameron, 'Byzantines and Jews'.

[25] Treadgold, *A History*, pp. 218-227.

[26] Starr, 'Byzantine Jewry', pp. 280-293; Sharf, 'Byzantine Jewry'; Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, p. 128; Treadgold, *A History*, p. 292.

poraries caused an intensification of messianic and apocalyptic thought.[27] This type of apocalypticism is greatly influenced by popular Jewish eschatology, which emphasised the historical struggle between Israel and the nations within the Edom-Israel scheme. An inquiry into the actual history of the time offers hardly any certainty about the synthesis of a rebellious attitude of Jews towards the Byzantines and the rise of interest in apocalyptic and messianic ideas. It remains to be seen to what extent the traumatic-historic interpretation of the Danielic scheme can be applied to the literature related to the days of Heraclius. One peculiar writing, *Sefer Zerubbavel* or the *Book of Zerubbabel*, offers a picture of the last days of the world with motifs that are known from biblical and rabbinic literature:

> [The Lord said to Zerubbabel]: Go to the house of disgrace, to the house of merriment'. I went as He commanded. 'Turn yourself this way', He said. When I turned, He touched me, and I saw a man, despised and wounded, lowly and in pain. Now that despised man said to me, 'Zerubbabel, what is your business here? Who brought you here?' 'The spirit of the Lord lifted me up', I answered, 'and deposited me in this place. Fear not', he said, 'for you have been brought here in order to show you [a vision]'. When I heard his words, I took comfort, and my mind was at rest. 'My lord', I asked, 'what is the name of this place'? 'This is the great Rome (*Roma rabbah*)[28], in which I am imprisoned', he said. 'My lord, who are you', I asked, 'and what is your name? What do you seek here? What are you doing in this place'? 'I am the Lord's anointed, the son of Hezekiah', he answered, 'and I am imprisoned until the time of the end'. When I heard this, I was silent and I hid my face'. [...]
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> I asked him, 'When will the light of Israel come'? As I was speaking to him, behold, a man with two wings came and said, 'Zerubbabel, what are you asking the Lord's anointed one'? 'I am asking when the time of salvation will come', I answered. 'Ask me', he said, 'and I will tell you'. 'Who are you, my lord'? I asked. 'I am Michael', he answered. 'I am the one who announced good news to Sarah. I was the commander of the host of the Lord God of Israel who fought against Sennacherib and struck down 180,000 men. I was the commander of Israel who fought the wars against the kings of Canaan. And in the future I shall fight the wars of the Lord at the side of the Lord's anointed, that man who sits before you, against the king with the arrogant face (Daniel 8:23) and against Armilos son of Satan, who came out from the statue of stone'. [...]

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27 Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et chrétiens'; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*.

28 Traditionally a reference to the city of Rome, but here possibly transposed to Constantinople?

This is the Lord's anointed, who is hidden in this place until the end of time. This is the Messiah son of David, and his name is Menahem son of Amiel. He was born at the time of David, king of Israel, and a wind lifted him up and hid him in this place until the end of time. [...]

'The Lord will give Hephzibah, the mother of Menahem son of Amiel, a staff for these acts of salvation', he said. 'A great star will shine before her. All the stars will swerve from their paths. Hephzibah, the mother of Menahem son of Amiel, will go out and kill two kings whose hearts are set on doing evil. The names of the two kings: Nof, king of Yemen, who will wave his hand at Jerusalem. The name of the second, Iszinan (or Esrogan), king of Antioch. This war and these signs will take place on the festival of weeks in the third month'. [...]

The Lord's anointed, Nehemiah son of Hushiel, will come five years after Hephzibah and gather all Israel as one', he said. 'The children of Israel will remain in Jerusalem for forty years and offer sacrifices, and it will be pleasing to the Lord. Nehemiah will register Israel by families. Then in the fifth year of Nehemiah and the gathering of the holy ones, Shiroi, king of Persia, will go up against Nehemiah son of Hushiel and Israel, and there will be great trouble for Israel. [...]

[Then] he seized me and took me to the house of disgrace and merrymaking (a church) and showed me a marble stone in the shape of a virgin. The beauty of her appearance was wonderful to behold. 'This statue is the wife of Belial', he said, 'Satan will come and lie with her, and she will bear a son named Armilos. He will rule over all, and his dominion will reach from one end of the earth to the other. No one will be able to stand before him. He will slay by the sword anyone who does not believe in him, and he will slay many of them. [...]

With ten kings he will come to Jerusalem. They will wage war with the holy ones; many will fall. He will [stab Shiroi and] kill the Messiah son of Joseph, Nehemiah son of Hushiel, and sixteen righteous men with him. Then they will exile Israel to the wilderness. Hephzibah, the mother of Menahem son of Amiel, will stand at the east gate. No wicked man will come there, in order to fulfill the verse, 'But the rest of the people shall not be uprooted from the city' (Zechariah 14:2)'. [...]

And the tenth king is Armilos, son of Satan, who came forth from the stone statue of a woman. Armilos will come with the kings of Qedem ('the kings of the East', probably the Persian kings) and start a war with the sons of Qedar (the Arabs) in the valley of Arbael. The kingdom was theirs. He will ascend in

> his strength and has in mind to conquer the whole world. He will begin to plant on the face of the earth all the false gods of the nations, whom God hates. He will then take his mother, the stone from which he was born, out of the house of disgrace. Seven altars will be built for her; this will be the ultimate idolatry. From all over, the nations will come to worship that stone, burn incense, and pour libations to her. No one will be able to look upon her face because of her beauty. Whoever does not bow down to her will die, suffering like an animal. Armilos will anger God by his evil deeds. [...]
>
> This is the sign of Armilos: the hair of his head is colored like gold. He is green to the soles of his feet. The width of his face is a span. His eyes are deep. He has two heads. He will rise and rule the province with terror. Satan is his father. All who see him will tremble.

Thus far a selection of short quotations from the *Book of Zerubbabel* of which we do not have a critical edition at present.[29] The historical Zerubbabel was one of the leaders during the return of the exiled Jews from Babylonia to Jerusalem in the sixth century BCE. Some prophets like Haggai and Zechariah viewed him as a messianic figure chosen by God for his role in the rebuilding of the Temple. The pseudepigraphic author of this apocalypse chose Zerubbabel for his historical significance and as an actual promise for the imminent arrival of a descendant of king David who would establish the new kingdom of Judea and rebuild the third Temple. Parallels are found in the Babylomian Talmud (BT), tractate *Sukkah* 52a, for the Messiah who falls in battle before the coming of the victorious Davidic Messiah; in the Palestinian Talmud *Berakhot* 2:4 and BT *Sanhedrin* 98b the name of the Davidic Messiah is likewise Menahem ('Consoler'); the same sources present the idea of a Messiah who hides himself in the city of Rome long before his appearance, and the suffering of the Messiah is also described in BT *Sanhedrin* 98a-b.[30] Although there are major problems in defining specific historical events on the basis of the present known transmissions and copies of this apocalyptic work, a few passages may indirectly show the kind of atmosphere at that time. Some scholars have proposed that the events described in the work reflect a messianically motivated Jewish rebellion in Jerusalem and that Hephzibah represents an important female leader. This claim seems to take the work too literally, especially because

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[29] The translation of the *Sefer Zerubbabel* by Martha Himmelfarb has been edited by Stern and Mirsky, *Rabbinic Fantasies*, pp. 67-90, notes pp. 81-90.
[30] Yahalom, 'The Temple', pp. 278-280; Even-Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ullah*, pp. 56-88. A parallel for the two Messiahs is found in the *Four Kingdoms Apocalypse* (4Q552 and 553) at Qumran. Cf. Moore Cross, 'Notes'.

this text constitutes the only evidence for such a supposition. Nowhere else in Jewish messianic speculation is the mother of the Messiah so important a figure, and even here her role has not been fully integrated into the traditional picture. Despite the influence of the *Book of Zerubbabel*, Hephzibah disappears completely from the Jewish apocalyptic tradition. Martha Himmelfarb has argued that if one assumes that this book was composed at the time of Heraclius, statues and paintings of the Virgin Mary would have been prominently present outside and inside buildings, particularly churches. Images of the Virgin Mary were used during Heraclius' campaigns to seize the empire from his predecessor Phocas and during military operations at a later date.[31] The military role assigned to Hephzibah in the messianic age is to be understood as an attempt to offer a Jewish counterpart to the figure of the Virgin Mary. Himmelfarb also notes a strong ambivalence in the text: the beautiful statue of Mary is supposed to protect cities under siege or armies in battle, but the same stone statue is the mother of Armilos.[32]

Who is Armilos? Armilos is described as the prototype of an arch-enemy and an anti-Messiah in the *Book of Zerubbabel*. He does not appear in rabbinic sources, and is an episodic figure in Jewish apocalyptic tradition from the seventh century onward. His name has been taken as the Latin form of Romulus and as a derivative of the Greek form Eremolaos (or (H)ermolaos in *Doctrina Jacobi*) which is close to the vocalisation Armalyos in some Hebrew manuscripts. Armilos means 'one who will destroy people' or 'destitute of people' in accordance with the Greek compounds of the name *erèmo(s)* and *laos*.[33] The figure of Armilos was inspired by very ancient typologies and elaborate Christian descriptions of the Antichrist as an evil Roman emperor, often taking the form of Nero *redivivus*.[34] He is understood as a terrifying final ruler of 'great Rome' who will kill the

[31] Cf. Stern and Mirsky, *Rabbinic Fantasies*, p. 69; also Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*; Kitzinger, 'The Cult'.

[32] Cf. Averil Cameron, 'Images of Authority', pp. 29-35; Himmelfarb's theory is largely accepted by Knohl, 'About 'the Son of God'', p. 32, note 91; Speck assumes that the *Book of Zerubbabel* is an originally Christian composition which underwent Jewish redaction and translation: Speck, 'The Apocalypse'. This is very unlikely because the different versions of the text do not show any trace of a Christian origin. Cf. also Fleischer, 'Hadutah-Hadutahu-Chedwata', pp. 92-96; on the parallels between the *Book of Zerubbabel* and the Christian account of the fall of Jerusalem in 614 by Strategios, cf. Wheeler, 'Imagining'.

[33] Berger, 'Three Typological Themes'.

[34] Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*; Jenks, *The Origins*, pp. 187-192; McGinn, *Antichrist*; Knohl explains the figure of Armilos with the help of the imagery of Romulus and the divine Augustus, as can be found in the *Oraculum* of Hypastes and in the work of Suetonius. See his 'About the "Son of God"', pp. 32-37.

Messiah son of Joseph and ultimately will fall victim to the Davidic redeemer. The two messianic figures and an apparently earlier Armilos typology are also preserved in poetic form in a *piyyut* of consolation for the Ninth of Av, the traditional Jewish date on which the destruction of the first and second Temple is commemorated. This anonymous *piyyut* (supposedly composed by the hymnist Elazar Qilir) is certainly closer in time to an original version of the *Book of Zerubbabel*:

> The king of the West and the king of the East, they will crush each other;
> and the king of the west: his armies will show strength in the country;
> and from Yoktan a king will go forth: his armies will be strengthened in the country [...]
> Edomites and Ishmaelites will fight in the valley of Acre,
> until their horses will sink in blood and panic [...]
> and Harmalyos will come and he will stab the Messiah of God,
> the [other] Messiah will come and he will revive him by the word of God,
> and all Israel will have faith in him.[35]

The eschatological content of the pseudo-Qiliri *piyyut* seems to reflect the cataclysmic events of the time and specifies by name the three nations which take part in the war: 'The king of the West' or 'the Edomites' (Byzantium), 'the king of the East' (Persia), and 'the king of Yoktan' or 'the Ishmaelites' (Arabia). Moreover, the poem could have been written in direct response to specific events after 617 when the Persians drew some political conclusions from the limited significance of their Jewish supporters and reinstalled the Christian Monophysite population of Jerusalem. All Jews were deported from the city. The sudden loss of Persian protection must unavoidably have been a tremendous deception for the Jews. Their disillusion must have been even greater when they were told that Heraclius astonishingly reoccupied almost all of the lost territories of the Byzantine empire culminating in the capture of Ctesiphon in 628. Ultimately he succeeded to return to Jerusalem with the relic of the True Cross in 630. Jews experienced terrible years of compulsory baptism, persecution and death decreed by Heraclius,which lasted until the Arab capture of Tiberias in 636 and Jerusalem in 637.[36] In a second anonymous poetic fragment

[35] Yahalom, 'On the Validity', p. 130, l. 6-8, p. 131, l. 22-23, p. 132, l. 54-56; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 319-320: 'On That Day'; Yahalom, 'The Temple', pp. 278-280.

[36] According to the letter of Maximus Confessor to a certain Johannes Presbyteros (perhaps to be identified with John of Kyzikos) compulsory baptism for the Jews and expulsion from Jerusalem was decreed in 632. The historical consequences of this decree are described in Déroche, *Doctrina Jacobi*, in: Dagron and Déroche,

close to the first, visionary sections can be found which tie together 'the commander-in-chief' (*sar ha-rosh*) or 'the capstone' (*ha-`even haroshah*) and Armilos. Ezra Fleischer believes that 'the commander-in-chief' means the military leader of the Persians killing the Messiah son of Joseph in Jerusalem.[37] This could be true, but it is quite certain that at a later date 'the commander-in-chief' or 'the capstone' were understood as Armilos within the context of the *Zerubbabel* traditions:

> The land is mourning all by itself, because the anointed of the war (the Messiah son of Joseph) is lost, the mourning for him will be very grievous, the enemy [and his army will be too strong for him], this is the capstone that will be placed, this is the little horn the pleasant man (Daniel) has visioned, who stood amidst ten horns, and three horns he intends to overthrow, the holy people will be destroyed (*lehashmid*, possibly: coerced into apostasy), persecution (*shmad*) is decreed upon them.
> That is Armalyos, that is his name, [God] will cause him to crush and to tear down, He will appoint him to destroy (or: to coerce into apostasy) and to annihilate, and he will put down an idol for his [own] name, whoever does not kneel he will condemn him to death, whoever does not bow he will spill his blood, by means of [the idol] he will curse God and His people, he will oppress those who God has carried since their birth (Israel), he will trample and tread on His whole footstool (the entire world).[38]

There is no clear evidence but with all cautious assessment this apocalyptic description of Armilos could reflect a contemporary dislike of Heraclius' anti-Jewish policies and his special efforts to reconstruct the ruined holy sites of Christendom in Jerusalem. Heraclius' hostility to Jews and its religious implications in that particular period of time has been demonstrated extensively in Byzantine literature, as can be exemplified by the court historian Theophylact Simocatta who writes in his *Historiae*: 'The Jews are a wicked and most untrustworthy race, trouble-loving and tyrannical, utterly forgetful of friendship, jealous and envious, and most implacable in enmity'.[39] The apocalyptic *piyyut* references to Armilos are difficult to sub-

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'Juifs et chrétiens'.

[37] Fleischer, 'Solving the Qiliri Riddle', p. 404, note 59: Fleischer erroneously took two apocalyptic *piyyutim* as one whole.

[38] Fleischer, 'Solving the Qiliri Riddle', pp. 414-415.

[39] Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, p. 335; Kaegi, *Byzantium*, p. 116-117: Heraclius had ordered a massacre of Jews around Jerusalem and in the mountains of Galilee, presumably in 630. Many Jews had fled from this action. This massacre surely embittered Jewish survivors, who would have looked even more favourably on the Muslims. The fact of a massacre is credible, but the actual number of Jewish

stantiate on a historical level but the intensity of concern towards this type of an anti-Messiah could well be explained as a reaction to Heraclius' military and religious activities in the region.[40] These hymns were copied over and again in the course of centuries without emendation or omission, and it is for this reason that liturgical poetry of an apocalyptic nature has come down to us as a source of information, whatever its limitations as a historical account may be.

It is, however, essential to pay attention to a specific moment in historical time, in order to understand better an eschatological event. The complicated transition from Persian and Christian rule to the dominance of Islam triggered new expectations and asked for a reconsideration of the Danielic scheme of the four kingdoms.[41] The seventh-century hymnist Yohanan ha-Kohen is quite specific in his reference to the coming to power by the Arabs. He views the newcomers as fitting into a divine plan to wipe out the Byzantine empire and therefore he versifies:

> Dispossess the mountain of Seir and Edom, speak to Assur (*Ashur* - Arabia): he has to make haste and hurry, to plough down a godless nation by your mighty sceptre, to tread them down by the kingdom of the wild ass.[42]

The name 'Assur' refers to the Arab conquerors (Hosea 8:9: 'They have gone up to Assyria like a wild ass wandering alone') and not to the Persians.[43] It is clear that the Arabs were expected to play a significant role in the messianic-apocalyptic drama. Both Yohanan ha-Kohen and (pseudo-) Qilir tried to find confirmation from the Hebrew Bible for the conclusion that the Ishmaelites or Kedarites were sent by God in order to deliver Israel from the Edomites. The recognition that Judaism and Islam had much in common may have stimulated the hope that the mission of the Arabs or the

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victims is unknown, as is the nature and distribution of the surviving Jewish communities.

[40] The fictional Armilos and his identification with the historical ruler Heraclius shows characteristics similar to the tendency in Christian apocalypticism to connect a personal ruler with the Last Emperor; cf. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 174-184; cf. also Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 273-279.

[41] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 527, 532-535; on the attitude of the Jewish communities of Babylonia and Persia to the Muslim conquest, cf. Gil, 'The Babylonian Encounter'.

[42] Weisenstern, *The Piyyutim*, p. 78; Yahalom, 'The Transition', pp. 6-7; Van Bekkum, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp. 297-308, esp. 307; on historiography in early Islam, cf. Donner, *Narratives*, pp. 275-296.

[43] *Pace* Fleischer, 'An ancient Jewish Tradition'; for pro-Muslim reactions in the years 635-638: Friedman, *The History*.

mission of Islam was to put an end to Christian beliefs and practices in the land of Palestine, to relax Heraclius' ban on Jewish access to Jerusalem, to expel his armies and to restore to the Jews their ancient rights. The high spirits of the moment are expressed in a belief in acute messianic redemption and salvation for Israel through Muslim triumph. The proliferation of apocalyptic verse was of great importance for Jewish self-definition and survival. With the help of Psalm 83:7 (Edom and Ishmael are mentioned together in the phrase "The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites") the scheme of four kingdoms was adapted to the permanence of Arab rule and Muslim domination. It was more preferable to envisage a new scenario for world history that assigned to the kingdoms a double name representing two successive powers.[44]

The discovery of an anonymous *piyyut* from the eighth century shows that the composer was concerned with a new identification of the four kingdoms and employed the Danielic vision of the statue with its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay (Daniel 2:31-35). This apocalyptic poem offers an estimate of the years of the rule of the fourth kingdom:

> They will continue to rule for sixteen jubilee periods (16 x 50 = 800 years);
> starting with Edom and concluding with the Ishmaelites;
> the legs of iron include the Edomites;
> and the feet of iron are the sons of Qedar (cunning as) foxes;
> and the toes of the feet of iron are to be compared with the end of the kingdom (Dan 2:42);
> and the toes of baked clay these are the *Ashurim*, the rod of the wicked and the sceptre of rulers (Dan 2:41; Is 14:5);
> they keep the kingdom to the servant of rulers (Is 49:7).[45]

Scholars like Bernard Lewis and Joseph Yahalom argue that the detailed concentration on the toes of the statue suggests a further specification between Umayyad and Abbasid rule: 'the servant of rulers' or *'eved moshlim* can be taken as *'Abd Muslim*, the name of the reformer Abd-a-Rahman Abu Muslim who brought the Abbasids to power in 754-755.[46]

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[44] Yahalom, 'The Transition', p. 9; for a Qumranic precedent for changing the identification of the four kingdoms, cf. Collins, 'Apocalypticism', pp. 415-417.
[45] Lewis, 'An Apocalyptic Vision', no. V. There are also striking parallels between the lines of this *piyyut* and a prozaic writing called *The Secrets of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai*.
[46] Yahalom, 'The Transition', pp. 16-20.

Needless to say, in assessing the Jewish reactions to the conquests of the seventh century, it is essential to take into account that the Jews came to provide their own particular interpretations of these events.[47] We find strikingly similar interpretations based on apocalyptic lines among Syriac and Byzantine writers, as well.[48] In conclusion, when the fifth kingdom was understood as a new oppressor of Israel, Muslim rule was generally assigned the former Byzantine role and returned to the scheme of the four kingdoms: Ishmael was no better than Edom. With this observation we enter a new stage in the discussion of Jewish thought on history, apocalypticism and messianism, another subject for another time.

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[47] The main difficulty is that historiographical use of these literary Jewish sources will only provide some evidence for the impressions that Jews held about Byzantines and Arabs, but not necessarily any coherent chronology or any coherent picture of them; Cf. Déroche, 'La polémique anti-judaïque' (a critical reaction to Olster, *Roman Defeat*).

[48] Brock, 'Syriac Views'; Reinink, 'Pseudo-Methodius'; Kaegi, 'Initial Byzantine Reactions'.

HERACLIUS IN EARLY ISLAMIC KERYGMA

Lawrence I. Conrad

Modern scholarship on the emperor Heraclius has traditionally been the preserve of historians of Rome and Byzantium writing the history of his reign on the basis of eastern Christian sources, primarily Greek but also including Syriac and the languages of other local traditions in the Near East.[1] The copious materials surviving in Arabic and emanating from the literary tradition of early Islam long remained peripheral to these discussions, but over the past twenty years more integrative research has resulted in considerable progress toward incorporation of all the relevant materials into new historical perspectives spearheaded by both Byzantinists and Arabists. Three recent contributions are especially worth noting. Walter Kaegi, who has been working on Greco-Arab relations in the early seventh century for more than twenty years,[2] has produced a history of the Arab conquests in Byzantine lands that takes full account of the Arabic sources.[3] The late Suliman Bashear examined the accounts of the famous letter that Muḥammad is said to have sent to Heraclius, discussing such matters as the legendary aspects of these accounts, tribal considerations, historical geography, and the limitations in the Arabs' genuine awareness of the emperor's reign and even who he was.[4] In a quite recent article Nadia Maria El-Cheikh has usefully shifted our attention from straightforward considerations of historical reconstruction to cultural perceptions: specifically, the 'islamisation' of Heraclius as a device for legitimating the rise of Islam.[5] Her study is especially important for the way in which it addresses broader historiographical and paradigmatic problems.

In the following pages an effort will be made to build on this research and come to grips with the central issue of what we can expect to gain from incorporating the Arabic sources into our study of Heraclius, and how this effort toward integration should proceed. While dealing with some of the discrete episodes for which information is available in the sources, what I primarily aim to do here is to use a selection of early source materials to ask what sort of discourse these accounts represent and what implications this has for research

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[1] See, for example, the classic study of Pernice, *L'imperatore Eraclio*.
[2] E.g. his 'Heraklios', pp. 109-133.
[3] Kaegi, *Byzantium*, esp. pp. 14-17 on the perception of Heraclius in the Arabic Islamic tradition.
[4] Bashear, 'The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī'.
[5] El-Cheikh, 'Muḥammad and Heraclius'.

on this emperor.[6] This study fleshes out the views entombed in a footnote to another historiographical study published fifteen years ago,[7] and seeks systematically to broaden those brief remarks into a more coherent argument.

The Context of 'Messenger Stories'

Any degree of reading in the Arabic Islamic sources for the seventh century will quickly reveal that these works take a specific interest in the leaders of empires and communities that surrounded the Ḥijāz in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, the most prominent vehicle for this interest being stories about letters and messengers allegedly sent by Muḥammad to these figures. Detailed attention is paid to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, who is, as we shall see, the most prominent target of these missives and the figure most frequently discussed in the sources. But attention is also directed to such major personalities as the Negus of Abyssinia, Chosroes, ruler of Persia, and the Muqawqis in Egypt, as well as to an array of lesser figures: various tribal shaykhs, the people of certain towns in Arabia, Musaylima, the princes of the Ghassānids, and the peoples or leaders of such Syrian towns as 'Ammān, Maqnā, Ayla, Mahra, Adhruḥ, and Buṣrā.[8] The Syrian emphasis of this corpus of stories is evident from the outset, and as we shall see, Syria played a major role in generating these tales.[9] While some of this material may in various incidental ways add to our historical knowledge of the events under discussion, in the main it comprises part of the Islamic kerygma.[10] That is, its purpose is to promote the

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[6] Bashear, 'The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī', pp. 81-84, suggests that references to *qayṣar* and 'Hiraql' do not always denote Heraclius himself, but his arguments all involve a misreading of the character of the material. I.e. he misses the point that, as we shall see below, these tales are all kerygmatic and originate from within an Islamic milieu; once this is recognised it is easy to see that in every case the emperor Heraclius is the individual referred to in these stories, however 'unimperial' and otherwise anomalous they make him appear to be.

[7] Conrad, 'Al-Azdī's History', p. 40, note 46.

[8] The most useful introduction to this material remains Wellhausen, 'Ibn Sa'd, die Schreiben Muhammads'. Cf. also Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. I, pp. 725-739, nos. 45-55; and Baneth, *Beiträge*. A good bibliographical impression of how this material figures in *ḥadīth* is available in Wensinck, *A Handbook*, p. 135.

[9] Most of the accounts of Muḥammad's messengers to minor places and persons concern locations in northern Arabia and southern Syria. The subject cannot be pursued here, but most of these stories are probably calques on or variants of an early cluster of tales about messengers to Heraclius.

[10] On kerygma in general, see Bartsch, *Kerygma und Mythos*; Barthel, *Interprétation du langage mythique*; Pannenberg, *Christentum und Mythos*. Valuable observations on kerygma in early Islamic historiography are to hand in Wansbrough, *The Sectarian*

claim of Islam to be the true religion through arguments retrojected into the historical past in narrative form.

The immediate archetype for early Islam's engagement with leaders and political figures in other lands is the New Testament motif of Jesus sending forth his apostles and others to spread his message in new lands.[11] The connection is quite easy to discern, since the early Muslim tradents themselves were clearly aware of it. Ibn Isḥāq (d. 151/761), for example, lists disciples and other followers who were sent out by Jesus to various countries,[12] and elsewhere a tradition of the Medinan tradent al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) has Muḥammad ordering emissaries forth to the nations, admonishing them not to shirk their task as the apostles of Jesus had done when they accepted to go to nearby lands but balked at journeys to remote places.[13] As with the early Christian evangelists,[14] and in line with the development in Umayyad times of miracle stories surrounding the life of the Prophet,[15] Muḥammad's messengers are endowed with the ability to speak the languages of the places to which they are sent.[16]

The argument of the messenger stories is thus the assertion of the role of Islam as a world religion superseding the other faiths – specifically, Christianity – of the lands around Arabia. As Muḥammad is the one who orchestrates these missions the stories about them are set forth in the *sīra*, the literature on the biography of the Prophet. The various leaders are viewed in different ways in these tales, depending on the roles they were believed to play

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Milieu, pp. 1-49, though these do not directly cover some of the material (e.g. the *futūḥ*, or 'conquests', tradition) under investigation here.

[11] Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, Luke 24:47-49, Acts 1:8. Preliminary remarks on this are already made by Grimme (*Mohammed*, vol. I, pp. 122-126); Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. I, 727, no. 45; Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, pp. 294-298.

[12] Ibn Hishām (d. 218/834), *Sīrat rasūl Allāh* (ed. Wüstenfeld, I.2, 972:8-15).

[13] *Ibidem*, I.2, 971:5-10; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/870), *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā* (ed. Torrey, p. 45:3-14); Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (ed. Sachau *et al.*, I.2, 19:17-28); al-Ṭabarī (wr. 303/915), *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (ed. De Goeje *et al.*, I, 1560:6-18). Interestingly, the sending of Muḥammad's messengers is also compared by the tradents to the way in which 'Uthmān dispatched copies of the newly redacted Qur'ān to the various provinces; see, for example, al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* (ed Krehl and Juynboll, I, 27:5-10 *'Ilm*, no. 7).

[14] Mark 16:17, Acts 2:1-47.

[15] See Horovitz, 'Zur Muḥammadlegende'; Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, pp. 26-91; Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, pp. 160-164; Knappert, *Islamic Legends*, vol. I, pp. 185-256. The perspective of piety on these miracles is well-represented in Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, pp. 67-80; al-Nabhānī, *Ḥujjat Allāh 'alā l-'ālamīn fī mu'jizāt sayyid al-mursalīn* (ed. 'Alī).

[16] Ibn Sa'd, I.2, 15:16-18; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1560:15-18.

vis-à-vis the emergent Islamic community. For example, the Negus of Abyssinia is presented as reacting favourably to Muslim emigrants from Arabia and to news of the career of Muḥammad. In one messenger story about him, he takes the letter of the Prophet, places it over his eyes, humbly descends from his throne to the floor, and accepts Islam; reciting the profession of faith (*shahāda*) in genuine sincerity, he says: 'Were it possible for me to go to him I would do so'.[17] Elsewhere we are told that Muḥammad sent 'Amr ibn Umayya al-Ḍamrī to the Negus to advise him that his nephew Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib was coming with an entourage of Muslims; the Negus should receive Ja'far and his companions hospitably, and further, he should accept Muḥammad's views on Jesus (which are set forth in detail) and believe in Muḥammad as the Apostle of God. The Negus replies that Ja'far is safe and well, that he himself agrees with Muḥammad's views on Jesus, and that he accepts Islam and believes in Muḥammad's prophethood and will come to him if he so wishes.[18] Later he writes a document professing his Islam and denying that Jesus was the son of God. We are told that subsequently he stood by this position in time of danger to his throne, so when he died Muḥammad prayed for him and asked God to forgive his sins.[19] There are accounts contradicting this view, but in general it is clear that the Negus stories have little to do with the history of Muḥammad's time, and rather are all later inventions arguing apologetic points with an emphasis on refutation of Christian christological doctrines.[20] That is, they are part of early Islamic kerygma: they imply, on the one hand, a social context of increasing conversion to Islam,[21] and on the other, and of course closely related to this, an intellectual context of tension and debate with Christians.[22]

An archetypically negative figure, on the other hand, is Chosroes, whose domains were entirely overrun in the Arab conquests. He is depicted in sharply negative terms as an intractable enemy of Islam, and unsurprisingly for stories of this type, the various accounts of his reception of Muḥammad's summons to Islam are contradictory. In one version – another tradition of al-Zuhrī – he tears up Muḥammad's letter; when the Prophet hears of this he appeals to God to 'tear up' the Persians completely.[23] The original audience for this tale is of

[17] Ibn Sa'd, I.2, 15:18-16:3.

[18] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1568ult-1570:4.

[19] Ibn Hishām, I.1, 223:4-224:6.

[20] See Raven, 'Some Early Islamic Texts on the Negus of Abyssinia'.

[21] See Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, pp. 104-113, on Syria.

[22] See Griffith, 'The Prophet Muḥammad'; *idem*, 'Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts'.

[23] Ibn Sa'd, I.2, 16:15-27, 139:17-23; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 242/855), *Musnad*, I, 243:26-244:1, 305:11-14; IV, 75:6; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 27:10-14 *'Ilm*, no. 7; II, 232:13-18 *Jihād*, no. 101; III, 183:17-184:1 *Maghāzī*, no. 82; IV, 417:4-9 *Akhbār al-*

course Umayyad, i.e. one that would have known that the Prophet's appeal for the destruction of the Sasanians would inevitably be granted. In another, Chosroes in Ctesiphon comes to hear of the Prophet's preaching in the Ḥijāz and writes to his governor in Yemen to order Muḥammad to desist from his claims to prophethood; should he agree, then all well and good, but should he refuse, the governor should send his head to Chosroes. The governor instead sends his letter on to Muḥammad, who predicts Chosroes' death on a certain day. When the ruler does indeed perish on the appointed day, murdered by his own son, the governor and the other Persians in Yemen convert to Islam.[24]

Study of the vast array of messenger stories relating to these and other missions would simply confirm in ever sharper detail the general conclusion that is evident from what we have seen above. While historical contexts and vignettes may be appropriated by the tradents for these accounts as and when required, the accounts themselves are not 'historical'. Rather, they represent tendentious historicising arguments[25] asserting the validity and superiority of Islam over all other spiritual alternatives. This can easily be confirmed by reference to the most elaborate of these legends, that of Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius and the emperor's response.

Heraclius and his Engagement with Islam

In the Islamic tradition Heraclius occupies a complex position as a ruler who ranked among the enemies of Islam, but who nevertheless attracts generally positive attention. This can already be seen from the way he is presented in the messenger stories. In one of these we are told that the tradent Yazīd ibn Ḥabīb al-Miṣrī (d. 128/745-746) discovered a document (*kitāb*) elaborating these tales; he sent it to al-Zuhrī, who verified it as authentic and then used it in his own teaching and research. Here we find that Heraclius had made a vow to walk from Constantinople to Jerusalem barefooted should God grant him victory over his enemies in the Persian Wars. After the Roman triumph he made good on his vow and walked all the way to Jerusalem, where he had a vision of a circumcised man whose kingdom will be victorious. His advisors seek to convince him of the need to behead all of the Jews,[26] as they alone practice circumcision, but then a messenger from Buṣrā arrives with an Arab, who is questioned on religious matters by Heraclius and then stripped to see if he is circumcised. Upon seeing that he is, Heraclius orders a search for other Arab informants and in this way happens onto none other than Abū Sufyān, the

āḥād, no. 4; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1572:9-13.

[24] Ibn Hishām, I.1, 46:6-47:1.

[25] On historicisation in early Islamic tradition, see Donner, *Narratives*, pp. 209-214.

[26] This may be a calque on the Massacre of the Innocents; Matthew 2:16-18.

father of the first Umayyad caliph Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān (r. 41-60/661-680). From him Heraclius hears of all the signs confirming that Muḥammad is indeed a prophet. The emperor predicts the loss of his own kingdom and wishes that he could go to Muḥammad and wash his feet.[27] The story then launches into a second section, perhaps an independent account at some earlier stage, in which al-Zuhrī relates what he claims to have heard from a Christian bishop in the time of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 65-86/685-705). A letter was brought by Diḥya al-Kalbī to Heraclius in which Muḥammad called on the emperor to embrace Islam. The ruler confirmed with a learned scholar who could read Hebrew that Muḥammad was indeed the prophet the Romans were expecting, so he summoned his patricians and generals to call upon them to convert to Islam. The Romans were furious at him, however, and out of fear for his life he recanted and said he had only been testing their Christian faith. In another version – again, typical of this sort of storytelling – Heraclius tells Diḥya that while he realises the truth of his message he fears for his life; Diḥya should to go with his news of Muḥammad to a certain bishop whose opinion counts for more among the Romans even than that of the emperor himself. The messenger does so, and the bishop confesses that this man 'Aḥmad' in Arabia is the expected prophet named in the Christian scriptures[28] and proceeds to a church where he publicly professes his conversion to Islam. The Romans pounce upon him and kill him, however, and when Diḥya returns to Heraclius with the news the emperor reiterates his fear for his life, since among the Romans the slain bishop had enjoyed a higher standing even than himself. Yet another version dispenses with the messenger Diḥya and places Heraclius in Syria, where he hears of the mission of Muḥammad. Assembling the Romans, he advises them that this is the prophet predicted in scripture and urges that they follow him. But his retinue protests that they should never come under Arab rule when they have the world's greatest empire, rich, fertile and populous. He then proposes payment of tribute or cession of Syria to the Arabs as a means of placating them, but again the notables refuse. At last Heraclius must acknowledge that his rule in Syria is doomed. Facing the land he knows he is about to lose, he sits on his mule and delivers a farewell salute to Syria: 'Farewell for the last time, O land of Syria', and then makes his way back to Constantinople. Finally, there are versions that make Heraclius pursue his quest for information about Muḥammad. He sends an envoy to examine

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[27] The washing of feet is of course a common Biblical motif of servitude and humility. Cf. Genesis 18:4, I Samuel 25:41, Judges 19:21, I Timothy 5:10, John 13.

[28] I.e. the Paraclete mentioned in John 14:26. See Baumstark, 'Eine altarabische Evangelienübersetzung'; Guillaume, 'The Version of the Gospels used in Medina *ca.* A.D. 700'; Schacht, 'Une citation de l'Evangile de St. Jean'; Griffith, 'The Gospel in Arabic', pp. 137-143.

Muḥammad for the 'proofs of prophethood',[29] and sends a letter in which he confirms his belief in Muḥammad as the Apostle of God predicted by Jesus, apologises for his failure to convince his people, and assures the Prophet that he wishes he could be there to wash his feet.[30]

The corpus of Islamic lore on Heraclius' attitude toward Islam is considerable, and it would be a useful (if difficult and extremely tenuous) task to trace the development and elaboration of the corpus over time. This would show how blocks of material could be shifted and elaborated to produce increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive accounts, culminating with such features as claims to eyewitness authority[31] or discovery of the aged messenger whom Heraclius sent back to Muḥammad, a man now living quietly among the Muslims.[32] Here, however, the above sampling of the material is already sufficient to illustrate the justifications for a few general conclusions.

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[29] On the emergence of lore on this subject within the context of debates with peoples of other religions, see Stroumsa, 'The Signs of Prophecy'; Donner, *Narratives*, pp. 149-154.

[30] Al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), *Kitāb al-maghāzī* (ed. Jones, III, 1018:18-1019:3); Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224/838), *Kitāb al-amwāl* (ed. Harrās, pp. 32:1-33:9, nos. 55-56); Ibn Sa'd, I.2, 16:4-15; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 262:2-263:15; III, 441:27-442:25; IV, 74:19-75:11; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 7:1-9ult *Bad' al-waḥy*, no. 6, 21:15-19 *Īmān*, no. 35, 85:11-15 *Ḥayḍ*, no. 7; II, 232:2-5, 232:18-235:11, 243:1-5 *Jihād*, nos. 99, 102, 122; III, 214:3-216:8 *Tafsīr*/Āl 'Imrān (3), no. 4; IV, 495:5-9 *Tawḥīd*, no. 51; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/875), *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 59:12-60:21 *Jihād*, no. 73; al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897), *Ta'rīkh* (ed. Houtsma, II, 83pu-84:11); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1561:7-1568:11; Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/957), *Kitāb al-aghānī* (ed. al-'Adawī *et al.*), VI, 345:8-349:14; Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176), *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq* (ed. 'U.Gh. al-'Amrawī, II, 37:1-10, 38:5-41:9, 91:4-94:8; XVII, 201:1-216:3; XXI, 58:2-59:3; XXIII, 422:2-431:2) Cf. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. I, 731-34, no. 50; Pouzet, 'Le *ḥadīth* d'Heraclius'; El-Cheikh, 'Muḥammad and Heraclius', pp. 10-14, 15-18.

[31] As for example in the materials transmitted about Abū Sufyān, which eventually are recast into first-person reports so as to claim him as the narrating eyewitness, with stress on the fact that these reports come directly from the mouth of Abū Sufyān and the man to whom he told the story, Ibn 'Abbās. See Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 262:2-263:15; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 7:1-8:13 *Bad' al-waḥy*, no. 6; II, 232ult-235:11 *Jihād*, no. 102; III, 214:4-216:8 *Tafsīr*/Āl 'Imrān (3) no. 4; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 59:12-60:21 *Jihād*, no. 73; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1561:10-1565:13; *Aghānī*, VI, 345:8-349:14.

[32] See Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, IV, 74:20-22, where an Arab arriving in Syria is told that 'in this church there [lives] Caesar's messenger to the Apostle of God'. Elsewhere (*ibidem*, III, 444:27-29) this becomes more specific: the messenger is now a man of the tribe of Tanūkh, he lives in Ḥimṣ, and he is an elderly neighbour of the Arab

First, the stories tell us nothing about Muḥammad's perceptions of his imperial enemy to the north, or about what the Greek emperor knew or thought about Islam and the Prophet, or about the content or character of any communications as may have transpired between the Greek and Arab sides – at least not in the time of the Prophet himself. The most decisive proof of this is the fact that the figure of Heraclius is simply an Islamic caricature of a Roman emperor, one entirely unaware, for example, of the enormously important role of the *basileus* as the vicar of Christ on earth, the instrument of God's will. It was absolutely essential that the ruler of Byzantium be, or present himself to be, a guardian of the law, pious and Christ-loving (*philochristos*), a leader who, if not infallible, was in the main guided on the true path by God.[33] Moreover, when Heraclius formally assumed the title of *basileus* in 629, he was the first emperor publicly to assert his right to rule in the name of Christ as a *dominatus*.[34] Unaware of this and instead perceiving Heraclius simply as 'a ruler', the Islamic literary tradition, in its various forms and modes of expression, easily proposes to its audience (and for that matter, expects this audience to believe) that a Christian emperor would react to information about Islam by instantly recognising its superiority to the faith it was his mission in life to uphold and protect.

Other objections are more difficult to document but are hardly less fatal. However Byzantine authority was represented in southern Syria in the early seventh century, a threatening letter from a religious personality in the far-off Ḥijāz would hardly have been sent on from Buṣrā to the emperor himself. The entourage of the emperor is presented in the form of stereotypes of pride and arrogance; when the Roman notables hear Heraclius call upon them to convert to Islam, they most often reply by 'snorting' (*nakharū*) their sneering disapproval and pointing to the supreme military power of their empire. Arguments between the two sides are cloyed and artificial. The Romans either have no arguments at all in defense of Christianity, or only have weak points that are easily overwhelmed, or simply fall back on a stubborn and arrogant refusal to give up their power. Their Muslim interlocutors, on the other hand, are cast as the champions of pure and self-evident religious truth. This is not the stuff of genuine historical debate, in which one would expect to find both sides well-prepared and self-assured, but rather of invented apologetics and polemic, in which the extant texts – whether Arabic, Greek, or Syriac – usually betray their

telling the story.

[33] See, for example, Guilland, 'Le droit divin à Byzance'; Bonfante, 'Emperor, God and Man in the 4th Century'; Ensslin, 'Gottkaiser und Kaiser von Gottes Gnaden'; Rösch, *Onoma basileias*, pp. 37-39, 42-43, 62-67; Mango, *Byzantium*, pp. 218-220.

[34] Shahid, 'Heraclius: Pistos en Christo Basileus'.

confessional viewpoint in short order via the simplistic and one-sided manner in which they argue their cases.[35]

Second, if these accounts are more-or-less complete fictions invented at later times, then the places and personalities to which they refer are simply the anchors required to give the account historical verisimilitude.[36] We cannot, for example, use these accounts as evidence of where Heraclius was at some particular moment: he had to be somewhere, and any of a number of places or explanations could be provided to establish a plausible geographical context.[37] That we have to do here with the gratuitous filling in of 'blanks' in pieces of storytelling with suitable toponyms is suggested by the fact that the sources cannot agree on where Heraclius was at key moments or why he was at that location.

Especially doubtful is the role assigned to the Muslim historical figures in these stories. Abū Sufyān was already well-known for his role as a chieftain of the Banū Umayya, as an early opponent of Muḥammad, and as the father of Mu'āwiya; what could be done with his persona was thus in at least general terms restricted by the limits of a known biographical framework. Diḥya al-Kalbī, however, was known for almost nothing of substance apart from his role as the envoy of Muḥammad to Heraclius, and the name may represent yet another example, following a venerable tradition of late antiquity,[38] of a largely invented Muslim historical figure.[39] This can be seen in the way the lack of any genuine reference point for his biography allows for a broad proliferation of details – not the sort of details one would expect from a historical perspective, however, but rather those typical of groundless storytelling at some future point. He is named by Ibn Sa'd, for example, as an early convert to

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[35] See the important recent collection of essays in Lazarus-Yafeh, Cohen, Somekh and Griffith, *The Majlis*, which curiously seem to underestimate this crucial difficulty. Few and perhaps none of the debate texts studied in this work represent genuine debates at the specific historical moments and situations to which they are ascribed.

[36] Cf. the comments in Donner, *Narratives*, pp. 210-211, on what he calls 'verisimilitude in counterfeiting'.

[37] The failure of traditional Orientalist scholarship to see this problem led to much havoc as scholars attempted to critique traditions on the basis of whether or not matters of 'itinerary' or 'topography' could be made to work. On Heraclius, see for example Wellhausen, 'Prolegomena', p. 85.

[38] That this takes place frequently in the Islamic literary tradition can scarcely be doubted, but it would be a great mistake to see it as any more than a continuation of a cultural phenomenon that had already prevailed prior to the rise of Islam in the Near East. One sees the same thing, for example, in the way details about the heroes of the Trojan War were gratuitously invented on a grand scale in late antiquity. Cf. De Biasi, 'I ritratti dei personaggi'; Beschomer, *Untersuchungen zu Dares Phrygius*, pp. 108-127. On the background to this particular tradition, see Evans, 'Descriptions'.

[39] See, for example, Horovitz, 'Salmān al-Fārisī'.

Islam,[40] but we find very few traditions transmitted on his authority and almost no role or participation is attested for him in the *maghāzī*. Ibn Sa'd's claim about his early conversion may therefore rest solely on the conjecture that as Muḥammad entrusted him with such an important mission, he must have been a deeply committed Muslim of established religious credentials – i.e. an early convert. Al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823) asserts that he 'participated in the campaigns of the Apostle of God after Badr',[41] but cannot name any of them; Ibn Sa'd claims that Muḥammad 'sent him on a one-man expedition',[42] but this 'expedition' of course remains nameless and may simply allude to the mission to Heraclius. Contrasting sharply with this mélange of dearth and the dubious in the historical arena, there are didactic and folkloric details – becoming more elaborate over time – attesting, for example, his role in debates over a selection of legal or theological issues and making him so handsome that the angel Gabriel took on his appearance when conversing with the Prophet.[43]

Third, this material seems primarily to have been handed down in a circle of early Medinan scholars influenced by issues arising in Umayyad Syria: Ibn Isḥāq, Yūnus ibn Yazīd al-Aylī (d. *ca.* 150/767), Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān (d. *ca.* 140/757), and Ma'mar ibn Rāshid (d. 154/770).[44] The place names and personalities figuring in the stories are all Syrian, or have crucial Syrian connections, but of course given the subject matter one would hardly expect otherwise. What is more significant in historiographical terms is that, as we have already seen, the traditions about Heraclius and his engagement with Islam are associated with the name of the Medinan tradent al-Zuhrī, the teacher of all four of the authorities mentioned above, and a scholar who had important connections with several Umayyad caliphs and spent long periods of time in Syria.[45] From him the traditions passed on to his students, some of whom were themselves important compilers and transmitters. The question of Heraclius as

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[40] Ibn Sa'd, IV.1, 184:5: *aslama Diḥya ibn Khalīfa qadīman.*

[41] *Ibidem*, IV.1, 185:5-6.

[42] *Ibidem*, IV.1, 184:25-26: *sarīyan waḥdahu.*

[43] Bashear, 'The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī', pp. 64-70. A representative collection of the lore available by the sixth/twelfth century concerning Diḥya is assembled in Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, XVII, 201:1-216:3.

[44] Not all these tradents are literally sons of Medina of course, but all are closely linked with the circles of Islamic scholarship that flourished in that town.

[45] On this extremely important authority, see Duri, 'Al-Zuhrī'; Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography*, pp. 235-261; Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, pp. 27-29, 95-121; Rippin, 'Al-Zuhrī, *Naskh al-Qur'ān* and the Problem of Early *Tafsīr* Texts'; 'Aṭwān, *Riwāyat al-shāmīyīn li-l-maghāzī wa-l-siyar*, pp. 69-150; Motzki, 'Der Fiqh des Zuhrī'; Ḥ. Sharrāb, *Al-Imām al-Zuhrī (...) 'ālim al-Ḥijāz wa-l-Shām*; Lecker, 'Biographical Notes'.

a Roman emperor sympathetic to Islam would of course have been most important in a Syrian context, i.e. in a province where the population remained overwhelmingly Christian and where many looked forward to a Byzantine restoration, even if only in apocalyptic terms.[46] What the available evidence indicates is that these matters were addressed in 'Heraclius and Muḥammad' traditions set into circulation not so much by Syrian tradents, though these were certainly not in short supply in Umayyad times, but rather by Medinans with good Syrian connections.

As we have seen, these connections focus on the person of al-Zuhrī, the teacher of all of the main Medinan transmitters of 'Heraclius and Muḥammad' traditions in the following generation. The transmission claimed by him for earlier times is erratic and suspect. At times the *isnād* through which he claims to have received Heraclius traditions displays the usual list of successive Muslim tradents, but if we wish to take these chains of transmission seriously, then it is to be noted that most of them trace the story they tell back to the Companion 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās, who could not have been more than about ten years old at the 'time' of Diḥya's alleged mission.[47] And in several cases al-Zuhrī suddenly claims to have information of an entirely different sort for what are essentially the same details, or for accounts that corroborate more normative accounts: the 'document' from Yazīd ibn Ḥabīb al-Miṣrī on the one hand,[48] and oral information from a Christian bishop on the other.[49] Such divergent claims seem clearly to represent efforts to assert greater verisimilitude for the accounts on offer, and in particular to appeal to wavering Christians and new converts, who would have been more impressed by the authority of a bishop or a written document than by appeal to Muslim tradents unknown to them. All this suggests that the circle of al-Zuhrī was responsible for the creation of the accounts as we now have them, though these in turn may have had some basis in earlier formulations now lost. We must also note that the traditions put into circulation by this circle are decidedly pro-Umayyad. By stressing the role of Abū Sufyān as Heraclius' informant about Islam, the tradents find a vehicle for the father of the first Umayyad caliph to assert his status as a Muslim who faced the emperor of mighty Byzantium, and to stress his genealogical ties with the Prophet, his honourable high birth, and his profound personal knowledge of Muḥammad. These motifs, which serve to offset other reports placing Abū Sufyān in an unfavourable light for his former

[46] See Reinink, 'Pseudo-Methodius'; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 257-330.
[47] *EI²*, I, 40a.
[48] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1560:6-10.
[49] *Ibidem*, I, 1565:14-17; *Aghānī*, VI, 349:1-2.

opposition to the Prophet, would have been welcomed by the ruling Umayyad house.[50]

Fourth, we may ask what the point of these stories was. As intimated earlier, they were not inspired by a dispassionate interest in the historical past, but rather by the concerns of kerygma. The basic problematic is entirely transparent. The Qur'ān refers to the Jews and Christians as the 'people of the Book', recipients of previous divine dispensations. But whereas the former had no significant political or military presence in the Near East at the rise of Islam, the latter were upheld by a major imperial power who not only defied the forces of Islam, but also, unlike Sasanian Iran, survived the Arab conquests. Kerygma sees divine plan everywhere, so this fact of survival could not be dismissed as a mere accident of history, but rather had to represent the active will of God in the world. So why had God decided to spare the Romans while destroying the Persian empire entirely? The answer to this question is located in the person of Heraclius, the emperor sympathetic to Muḥammad's message who is prevented by his violently unbelieving entourage from openly embracing Islam and leading his people to true faith. For this failing his empire must suffer the loss of its fairest provinces, but for the sake of Heraclius himself his empire will survive. Indeed, as Muḥammad himself is made to say, the empire of the Romans will survive so long as his letter remains intact among them.[51]

The career of al-Zuhrī, the mid-Umayyad period, and an atmosphere of increasing religious controversy between Muslims and Christians all come together in a crucial event – the beginning of the building of the Dome of the Rock by 'Abd al-Malik in 72/692.[52] There could not have been any more ambitious or open official Muslim challenge to Christianity than this monument, erected on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in the form of a Christian shrine and bearing Qur'ānic inscriptions specifically declaring Christianity to be a superseded religion. Certainly both Muslims and Christians recognised it as such a challenge.[53] Whether the erection of the Dome of the Rock inspired the traditions we begin to see emerging on 'Heraclius and Muḥammad' is difficult to judge, but certainly the two phenomena are closely connected.

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[50] See *EI*², I, 151a-b.

[51] E.g. al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 84:10-11: *yabqā mulkuhum mā baqiya kitābī 'indahum.*

[52] Cf. Blair, 'What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?'.

[53] See King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm and the Declaration of Doctrine'; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 696-699; and for the Christian side, Gerrit Reinink, 'Ps.-Methodius', pp. 181-186; *idem*, 'The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam', pp. 182-187; *idem*, 'An Early Syriac Reference to Qur'ān 112?'.

Muḥammad's Letter to Heraclius

The kerygmatic agenda of the tradition for Heraclius the crypto-Muslim is decisively illustrated by the text of the letter that the Prophet supposedly sent to the Roman emperor. Several scholars have expressed reservations about the authenticity of this letter in the past. Caetani critiques the letter on the basis of several such factors: chronological anomalies, his suspicion that the letter was forged by Ibn Hishām, and the silence about it among all Companions of the Prophet except for 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās.[54] Buhl's doubts were aroused by the miraculous general context of the messenger stories (as discussed above).[55] But useful as these criticisms are, they are not the decisive ones for the simple reason that they address only considerations of verisimilitude. When the tradents and collectors at work in early Islamic times engaged in elaboration of new materials or accounts, they did so with the goal of verisimilitude – i.e. they wanted to be believed, and they knew how to proceed in order to achieve this goal. So to limit one's discussion to this area alone necessarily limits criticism to the question of whether or not a possible forger has done his work well. That is, in the case of the alleged letter to Heraclius, were it possible to resolve the chronological difficulties, prove that the letter was not forged by Ibn Hishām,[56] discover *isnād*s attesting transmission of the letter among many of the Companions, and remove the problem of the miraculous associations – it could still prove necessary to reject the authenticity of the letter on other grounds.

The early Islamic literary form of 'letters' has been shown by Noth to be a major vehicle for introducing forged materials into the tradition,[57] and as with much else, this simply follows a pattern already evident in the Near East in late antiquity. A number of major Roman and Byzantine historians used forged letters in much the same way: to reinforce their arguments, add dramatic content, or simply to move the story forward.[58] On the other hand, for the form of 'letters' to possess any truth value in the eyes of the target Muslim audience it must have been the case – as one would suppose anyway – that in their view it was an ordinary thing for individuals to communicate in this fashion. So could this letter be one authentic item among swarms of forgeries? Our expectation must be that it cannot be such a document, since the missive to Heraclius comprises simply one element among the numerous ahistorical kerygmatic

[54] Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. I, pp. 733-734 no. 50.
[55] Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, pp. 294-295.
[56] As indeed, one can. See above, pp. 122-124; further comments will be added below.
[57] Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, pp. 76-87.
[58] See Cameron, Averil, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, pp. 148-149.

arguments and motifs being set forth by early Muslims in favour of the superiority of their religion. Study of the letter confirms this.[59]

There are certain variations in the wording of this document as reported among the various sources, but these are for the most part only minor divergences or scribal errors. This fact, coupled with the frequency with which the letter is quoted or referred to, suggests strongly that it figured in the telling of the story of the crypto-Muslim Heraclius from a very early point. Indeed, even today in many quarters the text is considered to be a genuine letter of the Prophet; Hamidullah 'edited' it as such,[60] and in 1977 the late King Husayn of Jordan announced that the 'original' letter was in his possession and had been authenticated by experts.[61] Hamidullah's text for the letter may be taken as a good starting point based on early source evidence, and gives the letter as follows:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate: From Muḥammad, the servant of God and His apostle, to Heraclius, chief of the Romans: Peace be upon those who follow the true guidance. Now then: I confirm that I summon you to embrace Islam – do so and you will remain safe, and God will award you a double recompense, but if you refuse, then the sin of the *arīsīyīn* will be held against you. 'Oh People of the Book, come hither to a Word common between us and you: that we worship naught but God, that we bring nothing into association with Him, and that we do not take each other as lords apart from God'. If they turn away, then say: 'Bear witness that we are those who submit to God'.[62]

This letter is of course an appeal for conversion, but is aimed not at Heraclius in the 620s, but at the non-Arab non-Muslim population of Syria with which Muslims were coming into sharper spiritual conflict some decades later. It points out, for example, that converts will receive a double recompense from God. This echoes passages in the New Testament concerning the doubting Thomas: he believes in the risen Christ once he has seen him, but Jesus admonishes him that of far greater merit than him will be those who have not seen and yet believe, for their belief will be based on faith alone.[63] The same sort of motif appears in the early Islamic literary tradition. During discussions

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[59] Cf. Bashear, 'The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī', pp. 64-70, where important arguments along these lines are adumbrated; also al-Jabūrī, 'Risālat al-nabī ilā Hiraql malik al-rūm'.

[60] Hamidullah, 'La lettre du Prophète'.

[61] El-Cheikh, 'Muḥammad and Heraclius', p. 11, note 23.

[62] Hamidullah, 'La lettre du Prophète', p. 98. Cf. also his *Documents sur la diplomatie musulmane*, p. 20; *idem*, *Al-Wathā'iq al-siyāsīya li-l-'ahd al-nabawī wa-l-khilāfa al-rāshida*, pp. 80-82.

[63] John 20:29, I Peter 1:8, Hebrews 1:1.

between the Muslim commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd and the Byzantine general 'Tarachus=Ṭarakhōs' *(jrjh)* just before the decisive battle of al-Yarmūk, the former assures the latter that even though non-Arab converts will be more recent Muslims, their merit in the eyes of God will be far higher because they have accepted Islam without having seen the miracles and proofs of prophethood that the Arabs had seen.[64] This appeal to a New Testament argument is then balanced with an appeal to the authority of the Qur'ān, since the last two sentences of the letter of Muḥammad comprise a direct quotation of Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (3), v. 64, which introduces an argument that Abraham was no Jew or Christian, but a Muslim and man of pure faith. In good kerygmatic fashion, the letter appeals to the local population of Umayyad Syria – both new converts to Islam and Christians who remain in their faith – with, on the one hand, arguments they will find familiar from their old religion, and on the other, reminders of the new superseding authority of the Qur'ān. This intertwining of spiritual authority is a powerful tool. Indeed, Heraclius himself is made to say at one point that in the Gospels the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, has ordered the Christians to believe in the prophet characterised by the traits that of course prove to be none other than Muḥammad's proofs of prophethood – the *dalā'il al-nubūwa* – as set forth in Islamic tradition.[65]

The key to our understanding of the letter is the central argument that if Heraclius refuses to accept Islam, 'then the sin of the *arīsīyīn* will be held against you' *(fa-in tawallayta fa-'alayka ithm al-arīsīyīn)*. Who are the *arīsīyīn*, and what is the sin that will be held against Heraclius? More than a hundred years ago Grimme could already see *arīsīyīn* as a plural approximating *arīsīn* (sing. *arīs*), or 'fieldworkers', though he considered that the sense remained unclear.[66] In his version of the letter al-Ṭabarī has *al-akkārīn*, 'cultivators', for *al-arīsīyīn*,[67] and in the lexicographical tradition Tha'lab (d. 291/904) already glosses *arīs* as *akkār*.[68] Similar readings or glosses along agricultural lines appear in versions of one of the al-Zuhrī tradi-tions: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal has *al-ikāra*, 'sharecropping',[69] and in the *Aghānī* one finds *al-akābir*, 'ancestors',[70] which seems to be a corruption of *al-ikāra*.[71] In a clearly

[64] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2095:7-10, transmitted by Sayf ibn 'Umar (d. *ca.* 180/796) from Syrian informants.

[65] Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Khān *et al.*), I, 131:12-15. Cf. al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, III, 1018:18-1019:3.

[66] Grimme, *Mohammed*, vol. I, p. 125, note 4.

[67] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1565:7.

[68] Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311), *Lisān al-'arab*, VII, 300:1.

[69] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 263:10.

[70] *Aghānī*, VI, 348ult.

[71] The notion of a 'sin of sharecropping' would not have seemed unusual to medieval

derivative form of the letter Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224/838) replaces *al-arīsīyīn* with *al-fallāḥīn*, 'peasants', and explains that the Arabs regarded all non-Arabs as *fallāḥūn* because they were tillers and cultivators of the land.[72] But it is clear that by his day confusion was arising. In a gloss to an archaic form of the letter he writes that the *arīsīyūn* were the attendants and courtiers of Heraclius.[73]

In modern scholarship other suggestions have been put forward. David Baneth, for example, suggested that *arīsīyūn* be interpreted as 'heretics' (from Greek αἵρεσις, 'heresy').[74] Robert Sergeant suggested that the term means 'presumably the heresy of Arius'.[75] Noting the various places in the Arabic sources where medieval commentators do indeed see the term as descriptive of some divergent religious group,[76] Bashear, elaborating on Baneth's suggestion, likewise argued that the word refers to 'the Arians'.[77] In a brief note buried in his translation of Ibn Isḥāq, Alfred Guillaume suggested that here the letter alludes to the New Testament Parable of the Husbandmen.[78]

Attempts to view the word *arīsīyūn* with reference to religious heresy fall afoul of several serious objections. This approach fails, first of all, to account for the association with 'cultivators' and similar agricultural connections that arise early on in the tradition. In addition, it implies the unlikely conclusion that Muslims would have considered Arianism a 'sin' (*ithm*); Arius (d. A.D. 336) was excommunicated at Nicaea for denying that Christ was an uncreated eternal being, which of course the Qur'ān and Islamic society also rejected. As al-Bīrūnī (d. *ca.* 442/1050) comments, Arian christology was closest to that of Islam and furthest from that of the rest of Christianity.[79] Finally, such scenarios do not account for how a failure to convert to Islam would render Heraclius comparable to such heretics, or how their misdeeds would be in any way relevant to him.

Muslim scholars, since the legality of this form of agricultural labour, called *muzāra'a*, was disputed in Islamic law. See Haque, *Landlord and Peasant in Early Islam*, pp. 1-116, 323-25; Johansen, *The Islamic Law of Land Tax and Rent*, pp. 52-54.

[72] Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, p. 32:8, 10-13, no. 55.

[73] *Ibidem*, p. 33:7 no. 56: *ya'nī bi-l-arīsīyīn a'wānahu wa-khadamahu.*

[74] Baneth, *Beiträge*, pp. 44-45.

[75] Sergeant, 'Early Arabic Prose', p. 141.

[76] E.g. in the letter of Muḥammad to Chosroes: '(...) then the sin(s) of the Magians will be held against you'. See al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 83:11; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1571:16-17.

[77] Bashear, 'The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī', pp. 88-91.

[78] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat rasūl Allāh* (transl. Guillaume, p. 655, note 1).

[79] Al-Bīrūnī, *Al-Āthār al-bāqiya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya* (ed. Sachau), p. 288:7: *wa-ra'yuhum fī l-masīḥ aqrab ilā mā 'alayhi ahl al-islām wa-ab'ad mimmā yaqūlu bihi kāffat al-naṣārā.*

The connection with heresy must thus be abandoned as having little beyond conjecture and speculation to recommend it, which leaves us with the sense of 'cultivators'.[80] The term *arīs* is in fact a loan word from the Aramaic *ārīs* (var. *ārīsā, ārīshā*), which in the Targums, Talmud, and Midrash (and in the patristic Greek form γεωργός, which it often translates[81]) denotes a tenant farmer who tills someone else's land in exchange for a share of the produce, as opposed to a cultivator who pays a fixed rent.[82] The term is not used in the Syriac Gospels in the Sinaiticus, Curetonian, Peshīṭtā, or Ḥarklean versions, where one rather finds peasant cultivators referred to in general terms as *pelāḥē* (cf. Arabic *fallāḥūn*), 'peasants'.[83] Indeed, so far as the New Testament is concerned the term seems to appear only in the Palestinian Aramaic lectionary edited by Lewis and Gibson more than a century ago, where, in Lesson 78, the Parable of the Husbandmen is taught and the cultivators are called *ārīs* and *ārīsīn* on four occasions.[84]

To understand the allusion to the 'sin of the husbandmen', as we may now call it, one need simply read the parable in terms of early Islamic kerygma. The thrust of the reference appears to be twofold. First, the phrase 'but if you refuse, then the sin of the husbandmen will be held against you' (*fa-in tawallayta fa-'alayka ithm al-arīsīyīn*) seems to be based on Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (3), v. 63: 'but if they refuse, then God knows what those who spread corruption do' (*fa-in tawallaw fa-inna llāh 'alīm bi-l-mufsidīn*). The textual affinity is tenuous at first consideration, but this Qur'ānic verse immediately precedes the verse quoted verbatim in the letter to Heraclius in the immediately following two sentences. The affinity between the two 'but if they refuse' passages in the Qur'ān and in the letter can thus hardly be coincidence, and the 'sin of the husbandmen' in the letter must therefore be something linked to 'those who spread corruption' in the Qur'ān.[85] Elsewhere it has been shown that the *Palestinian Lectionary* is Ibn Isḥāq's source for material from the Gospels;[86] this comprises yet another example, and if further instances can be es-

[80] On the historical context here, see Beg, 'Agricultural and Irrigation Labourers'.
[81] Examples in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, p. 314a.
[82] See, for example, Levy, *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch*, vol. I, p. 172a; Fraenkel, *Die aramäische Fremdwörter*, pp. 128-129; Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, vol. I, p. 120a; Kasowski, *Thesaurus Talmudis*, vol. VI, cols. 2846a-2847c.
[83] See Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, vol. I, pp. 321-325.
[84] Lewis and Gibson, *The Palestinian Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels*, pp. 88-89.
[85] References to this abound in the Qur'ān. See 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Al-Mu'jam al-mufharas li-alfāẓ al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, pp. 518b-519b.
[86] Cf. note 28 above.

tablished[87] then there would be a strong case for regarding this text as a key source for early Muslim knowledge of the New Testament.

We may now turn to the parable itself. This appears in Matthew 21:33-41, where Jesus tells the story of a landowner who planted and developed a vineyard, and then rented it to some husbandmen and left on business. At harvest time he sent his representatives to collect his share of the crop, but these men the husbandmen either beat, killed, or stoned. The landowner sent an even larger group of representatives, but these were treated in the same violent way. So finally the landowner sent his son, thinking that the husbandmen would respect him, but they murdered the son, hoping to seize his inheritance. To Jesus' question of what in this case they thought the landowner would now do, the assembled audience replied that he would put an end to the miserable husbandmen and hand his vineyard over to others who would give him his due at the harvest time. Jesus confirms this and concludes: 'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit'.[88]

In Christian kerygma the triple repetition of increasingly brutal treatment of the landowner's representatives is simply rhetorical: the point is that the third time the owner (God) sent his son (Jesus Christ). But in Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius the emphasis is adroitly shifted to the 'sin of the husbandmen', and hence to the prediction of the end of their tenure over the vineyard. Jesus is now being made to predict the fall of Byzantine lands to the Arabs. Should Heraclius fail to agree to Muḥammad's terms, then just as the husbandmen were to be driven out of the vineyard, the emperor would lose his kingdom to the Arabs, who, unlike the previous tenants (the Romans) of the vineyard, would rule in accordance with God's will.

The episode of Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius thus presupposes the Arab conquests and most likely ought to be traced back no further than the mid-Umayyad period, perhaps to early in the career of al-Zuhrī. Historiographically, the materials reviewed so far indicate how closely related, in terms of kerygma, the *sīra* tradition was to that of the *futūḥ*. Reference to the latter will thus contribute much to our understanding of both in this respect.

Heraclian Kerygma in the Conquest Tradition

Where the Islamic assessment of Heraclius is concerned, it is crucial to bear in mind that in the first two centuries of Islam there was no necessarily unitary

[87] It is already clear that early Muslim tradents appreciated the didactic utility of New Testament parables. See, for example, Spies, 'Die Arbeiter im Weinberg'; Déclais, 'Les ouvriers de la onzième heure'.
[88] Matthew 21:43.

view or interpretation of the history of Islamic origins.[89] The events of the career of Muḥammad and the subsequent conquests in the Near East were being pieced together and interpreted in various parts of the Islamic world; and as discussions continued, old ideas and propositions provoked new questions and solutions. With time, that is, the state of the different questions under consideration became more mature and was subject to drastic changes in both emphasis and content.[90] For present purposes, this means that it is a hazardous undertaking to search for the 'Islamic' view of Heraclius at all, if by this one intends a collection of source material as if it all belonged to the same time and place. Most particularly, it would be a grave error to assume that the classical views of the emperor that appear in texts of the third century A.H. are necessarily representative of perspectives that prevailed in the earliest stages in the development of Arabic historical tradition. In the *Futūḥ al-buldān* of al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), for example, one finds none of the extended speeches or dialogues typical of more archaic *futūḥ* presentations. Heraclius moves from one place to another (Constantinople, Antioch, Emesa) and organises and dispatches armies, but little is said about him personally.[91] In the few places where such comments do appear, they mark a reversal of earlier views. After the battle of Ajnādayn, the scale of the Roman defeat overwhelms the emperor with cowardice, confusion and fear, and he flees from Emesa to Antioch; some, al-Balādhurī advises, are even of the opinion that he fled as soon as the Muslims entered Syria.[92] M.J. de Goeje, the editor of this text, preferred its version of events in writing the history of the conquest of Syria;[93] he too therefore has little to say about Heraclius, and in this sense reflects the image of the emperor that had won the assent of one compiler in the late third/ninth century.

It is possible to envisage how such dramatic shifts in the vision of Heraclius evolved from earlier stages of argument, but to this end one must turn to more ancient texts that seem to reflect the distinct regional perspectives out of which the classical formulations were later to emerge. Fortunately for us, two extremely important early Arabic historical texts on the conquests (*futūḥ*) in Syria survive to give us some impression of these more archaic stages of historical understanding. The earlier, and the work to which remarks in the following pages are primarily devoted, is the *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām* compiled by al-Azdī in the late eighth century and surviving today in three

[89] On early formulations on this theme see now Donner, *Narratives*, esp. pp. 174-182, on the *futūḥ*.

[90] For an illustrative example, see Conrad, ''Umar at Sargh', pp. 504-520.

[91] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (ed. De Goeje), pp. 113:12-13, 115:8-11, 117:1-2, 118:5, 123:5, 135:2-6.

[92] *Ibidem*, pp. 114:11-14, 130:18-19.

[93] De Goeje, *Mémoire*.

recensions that differ only in points of detail and the inclusion or omission of short phrases.[94] That is, al-Azdī's work is probably preserved to us in versions handed down by several students, or more likely, students of his students. The other work is the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* compiled by Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī in 204/820. This date is recorded in the introduction to one of the manuscripts of a Persian translation of the work in its first form, which came down to the time of al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī Ṭālib only. The text was later extended, probably by the author, to the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, and then was further edited and extended by later hands.[95] The full text of the work survives today in the form of the latest of these extended versions,[96] but a large fragment of the original book has also been preserved and provides a clear idea of the sorts of alterations that were made to the text subsequently.[97] These changes prove to consist largely of deletion or abridgement of the many passages in verse, and as in al-Azdī, minor variations in wording. There are, unfortunately, sometimes substantial lacunae in the first part of the text, where the conquest of Syria is discussed, but these can be at least partially made good from the Persian translation, which the Hyderabad edition uses to fill these lacunae.[98]

Al-Azdī and Ibn A'tham share common sources, and from collation of the two works it emerges that both are based on a Syrian tradition.[99] Much of the same material is scattered through the 80 volumes of the recently published *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asākir, and there this material is cited on the authority of Sa'īd ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tanūkhī (d. *ca.* 167-168/783-784),[100]

[94] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām* (ed. Lees); (ed. 'Āmir); recension of al-Ṭalamankī (d. 429/1037) in Anonymus, *Al-Durr al-nafīs fī uns al-ẓā'in wa-l-jalīs*. Here I will use the Cairo recension as it is more readily available, though in some places 'Āmir has simply copied Lees' notes into his own edition of a different recension of the text. For a preliminary assessment of al-Azdī's work, see Conrad, 'Al-Azdī's History', pp. 28-62; and on the al-Ṭalamankī recension, Landau-Tasseron, 'New Data on an Old Manuscript'. Still useful is Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. III, pp. 205-10, 578-83. Most recent is Mourad, 'On Early Islamic Historiography', which disputes aspects of my own findings.

[95] Cf. my summary account in Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. I, cols. 314a-b.

[96] See above, note 65.

[97] This fragment comprises a Bankipore manuscript falsely attributed to al-Wāqidī and published as such under the title *Kitāb al-ridda wa-nubdha min futūḥ al-'Irāq* by Ḥamīd Allāh. Cf. Muranyi, 'Ein neuer Bericht'.

[98] A not unproblematic solution to the difficulty, since the Persian and the Arabic represent different recensions that often vary considerably.

[99] Mourad, 'On Early Islamic Historiography', disputes this and argues for an Iraqi origin.

[100] On him see Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, XXI, 193:6-213:10 no. 2514; al-

who in turn names as his informants the *qudamā 'ahl al-Shām*, 'ancient Syrian authorities'.[101] So what al-Azdī offers us is one version, or rather slightly differing versions, of a Syrian take on the conquests that had already emerged by the mid-eighth century, i.e. the end of the Umayyad caliphate, and that can also be found in similar forms in other sources that have likewise tapped into this Syrian tradition. Ibn 'Asākir's use of this material is especially important not only for his preservation of it on a large scale, but also for his conservative handling of it; it is already becoming clear that he took very few liberties with his sources and presented them more-or-less as he found them.[102]

But what sort of view did this Syrian *futūḥ* tradition represent? Certainly it was a tradition heavily coloured by tribal considerations. It takes care to specify the size of the contingents contributed by the various tribes and the tribal affiliations of individuals through the course of the conquest,[103] and it points out that it was the south Arabian tribes, not those of the north, who won Syria for Islam.[104] Heroes of the south Arabian tribes are extolled, and in many places the text assumes the form of tribal boasting of great and glorious deeds.[105] Particular attention is paid to the presence and deeds of men from al-Azdī's own tribe of Azd,[106] and of course with good reason so far as our compiler is concerned: no other tribe fought so fiercely or wreaked such slaughter upon the enemy,[107] and at al-Yarmūk they comprised a full third of the Muslim army[108] and suffered more casualties than any other tribe.[109] A tribesman of Azd is one

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Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (ed. al-Arna'ūṭ *et al.*), VIII, 28pu-34ult no. 5; Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449), *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, IV, 59:10-61:3 no. 102.

[101] Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, II, 148:15. Cf. also XVII, 461:8-9; LVII, 202:20.

[102] This is a major conclusion of the various studies collected in Lindsay (ed.), *Ibn 'Asākir and Early Islamic History*.

[103] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 16:3-14, 24:11-14, 25:13-15, 39:5-6, 42:12-13, 43:7-9, 56:3-4, 69:4-5, 76ult-77:1, 81:9, 17, 113:9, 148:14-18, 189:3, 222pu-223:2, 226ult-227:1, 238:3; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 258ult, 259ult.

[104] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 16:12-14, 218:3-8. Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 255:2-5; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2222:16-17; also Wellhausen, 'Prolegomena', pp. 85-89.

[105] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 81:16-17, 136:9-17, 145:6-14, 189:3-4, 223:9-11, 224:1-2, 227ult-228:6, 233:8-11, 238:13-241:3, 240:4-241:3.

[106] *Ibidem*, pp. 16:8-9, 64:4-5, 71:5, 92:13, 184:16-17, 187:11-13, 191:6, 192:11, 193pu, 207:12, 20-21, 212:13, 214:11, 222ult, 224:1-225:14; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 257:8-258:6.

[107] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, p. 224:1-2.

[108] *Ibidem*, p. 218:4.

[109] Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 262:11-13.

of those named as the Muslim who killed Māhān, the Byzantine commander at al-Yarmūk.[110] The tradition is also a prominently north Syrian one, which should not surprise us since the south Arabian tribes dominated this part of Syria after the conquest. Special attention is paid to the city of Emesa (Ḥimṣ), to its importance, and to the great south Arabian heroes, especially Dhū l-Kalā', who settled there or performed some exemplary deed there.[111] Early on, for example, Ḥimṣ is compared to Damascus in stature among the cities of Syria,[112] and eventually it is declared 'the place in Syria with the finest people and fortifications; it has the most population, raises the largest armies, and produces the highest tax revenues'.[113]

The Syrian tradition also participates in the general Islamic kerygma that, as I have argued elsewhere, provides both unifying structure and detailed content to the whole of the early *futūḥ* tradition,[114] and beyond this, as we have seen, plays an important role in the *sīra* as well.[115] The argument here is that in pre-Islamic times – the Age of Ignorance, or *jāhilīya* – the Arabs were illiterate primitives who lived their lives in misery in the wastes of Arabia, adhering to all sorts of barbaric customs such as the eating of lizards and the killing of new-born girls. But then God sent them His Prophet and called upon them to believe in Him. The Arabs responded by accepting Islam and supporting Muḥammad, with the result that Islam triumphed in Arabia. As their reward, God decreed that the Arabs should be allowed to expand beyond Arabia and exchange the stones and sand and thorns of their desert homeland for the lush fields and flowing rivers of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. This also gave God the opportunity to punish the Romans and Persians for their disbelief in Him, as well for the general tyranny and injustice of their rule. The conquest of Syria thus comprises a direct extension of the career of the Prophet as a manifestation and proof of the direction of God's plan for mankind.[116]

We should of course expect to see the Byzantine emperor who lost Syria playing a major role in these perspectives. Interestingly enough, Heraclius does not figure at all in the factional vaunting of the tribal perspective. While no end of effort is devoted to claiming the great battle of al-Yarmūk as the victory of the participating tribes, Heraclius himself is never brought into the argument; the triumph of the tribes is not seen as a personal victory over the emperor, and

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[110] *Ibidem*, I, 270:9-10.

[111] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 9pu-10:3, 16:3, 146:1-5.

[112] *Ibidem*, p. 108:1-3.

[113] *Ibidem*, p. 146:19-20. Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 220:1-2.

[114] Conrad, art. 'Futūḥ' in: Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. I, cols. 237b-240b.

[115] As argued in Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*.

[116] See Conrad, 'Al-Azdī's History', pp. 39-40 and note 46.

the glorious personal heroes of the south Arabian clans are not compared or juxtaposed to him in any way. There are accounts of barbaric injustice and cruelty on the part of the Romans,[117] but none of this activity is foisted onto Heraclius or even associated with him. As in the *sīra*, he is the victim of poor advice from misguided and arrogant courtiers. Similarly, the regional perspective of north Syria does not figure in the attitude toward Heraclius. The people of Ḥimṣ, for example, while full of venom on the subject of Byzantine injustice, never drag the emperor personally into their denunciations. Indeed, there seems to be an effort to distance Heraclius from personal responsibility for the shortcomings of his rule in Syria.[118]

This lack of integration suggests that we have to do here with two different layers of material.[119] The older consisted of reports in which the conquests were perceived in terms of traditional Arabian values: personal honour and glory, the vaunts of one's own tribe, and competition for distinction among the various provincial centres where the Arab conquerors were based. In this material the Arabs are fighting the 'Romans' and there appears to have been very little need or use for attention to a 'Heraclius' with a specific persona. This material was then revised and amplified along more specifically Islamic kerygmatic lines. It is here that 'Heraclius' becomes important, and attitudes toward him are thus shaped by the general kerygmatic attitude we have already encountered in the stories in the *sīra* about Heraclius' engage-ment with Islam. But even here the emperor is not presented in negative terms personally. In the *futūḥ* tradition one finds, for example, legends according to which this or that Arab leader goes to the Romans for negotiations, but then offends the Roman leader; the latter reacts by treacherously plotting the death of the Arab, who escapes by adroit recourse to his wits. The Roman who betrays his oath of safe conduct is never Heraclius, but rather always one of his commanders or governors. Our task here, then, becomes one of piecing together the vision of Heraclius displayed in the early Syrian *futūḥ* tradition, and seeking to explain it in terms of the broader kerygmatic agenda that comprises its framing paradigm. We will of course be recovering little of substance about the historical Heraclius at this stage, since, as can already be seen from what has been said thus far, we are dealing with a secondary accretion to the tradition.

In al-Azdī Heraclius makes his first appearance when the Arabs, marshalled and organised by Abū Bakr in Medina, have already begun to march against Syria. The emperor is not in his capital, Constantinople, but, as in the

[117] E.g. al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 175:6-177ult.

[118] Cf. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 137:4-19, from Sa'īd ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tanūkhī.

[119] See the similar suggestion for the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq in Sellheim, 'Prophet, Chalif, und Geschichte'.

'Heraclius and Muḥammad' traditions, in Palestine. There his advisors warn him:

> The Arabs are approaching and have marshalled a great host against you. They claim that the Prophet who was sent to them has told them that they will triumph over the people of this land, and they come hither with no doubt that this will come to pass. They are even coming with their women and children in conviction of the truth of the statement of their Prophet, and they say: 'If we invade [Syria] we will conquer it and settle there with our women and children'.[120]

The kerygmatic agenda of the tradition is already evident here, in that the Romans concede straight away that Muḥammad was a prophet sent by God. The 'statement of their Prophet' refers to the materials in *ḥadīth* where Muḥammad himself predicts the Arab conquest of Syria.[121] That the Arabs are coming with their families indicates that this is no mere raiding expedition, and likewise illustrates the Muslims' complete devotion to their religion and Muḥammad's promise that they would conquer Syria; they are so certain of victory that they are willing to risk the lives of their women and children. Here again we have to do with a popular motif of early *futūḥ* literature:[122] God will uphold the sanctity of His believers' families just as He upholds the sanctity of His religion.[123]

The emperor therefore mobilises his own forces and delivers a short speech to encourage them:

> O people of this religion, Great Almighty God has surely been gracious unto you, making your religion great and granting it victory over past peoples, over Chosroes and the Magians, over the unknowing Turks, and over their like among all other

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[120] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 27pu-28:4. Cf. the longer version of this in Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 100:1-9, with the lacuna at the beginning filled by the Persian text in the note.

[121] E.g. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 178:21-28; IV, 128:21-24, 160:14-17, 337:29-31, 337ult-338:5; V, 219:27-220:6, 241:3-7, 270:8-10, 288:13-20; VI, 24:23-26; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 468:16-469:2 *Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, no. 5.

[122] E.g. al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 10:15-17, 90:3-6; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 100:4-6, 145:12-14, 206:4-207:2, 223:14, 224:4-12, 253pu-254:6, 260:5-262:10, 266:9-16; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2197:5-9, 2331:10-14, 2363:4-11, 2419:4-7, 2467:2-5. More in keeping with the reality that probably prevailed during the conquests is al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2394:12, where Khālid ibn al-Walīd, dismissed by 'Umar, settles in Qinnasrīn and is joined there by his wife.

[123] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 25:17-26:9.

> peoples. This was because you have acted in accordance with the Book of your Lord and the practice (*sunna*) of your prophet, whose command was to what is right and whose deed comprised true guidance. But when you substituted and changed [your scripture], that made another people jealous of you, one of which we have never taken any account and with which we have never feared to come into conflict. They have come to you as a barefooted, half-naked, starving people driven forth to your land by draught, famine, and miserable living conditions. So march forth to them and fight to protect your religion, your land, and your women and children. I will lead you personally and will reinforce you with cavalry and infantry and everything you need; indeed, I have already appointed commanders over you, so harken unto them and obey them.[124]

Heraclius then sets out for Damascus, Emesa, and Antioch, where he delivers similar speeches. At his summons there assembles a vast and formidable army countable only by God; nevertheless, the Romans are awed by the approach of the Arabs and fear that they will be robbed of their kingdom.[125]

Here Heraclius invokes the telling argument interpreting military victory against religious foes in terms of divine covenant, following lines already to be seen in the Old and New Testaments[126] and also in the Qur'ān.[127] That is, if a people are sincere followers of God's true religion, then He will protect them, favour them, and grant them victory. As the Romans have been allowed by God to triumph over the Persians, the Turks, and all other peoples, this can leave no doubt that God is on their side and that Christianity is God's true religion. In early Islamic times this argument was probably attractive among Syrian Christians who were unconvinced that Islamic rule would long endure.

But al-Azdī is of course pursuing a Muslim rendition of this argument, and what Heraclius fails to take into account is the fact that his previous foes had all been pagans. For example, the reference to the Turks, actually the Avars, as 'unknowing' (*alladhīna lā ya'lamūna*) is Qur'ānic,[128] and in Islamic scripture the phrase alludes to the fact that pagans do not know of God's com-

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[124] *Ibidem*, p. 28:10-18. Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 100:1-9, with the fuller Persian text in the note.

[125] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 29ult-30:4.

[126] See Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*; Noth, *Gesammelte Studien*, vol. I, pp. 142-154; Hillers, *Covenant: the History of a Biblical Idea*; Kutsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz*; Arazu, *Covenant Broken and Reconciliation*.

[127] See Miṣrī, *Al-Wafā' bi-l-'ahd fī l-Qur'ān al-karīm*.

[128] Sūrat al-Baqara (2), vs. 113, 118; Sūrat Yūnus (10), v. 89; Sūrat al-Rūm (30), v. 59; Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt (39), v. 9; Sūrat al-Jāthiya (45), v. 18. Similar usages of the type '(...) *lā ya'lamūna*' are very common; see 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Mu'jam*, pp. 473a-474a.

mands, requirements of mankind, and impending judgment of the world.[129] But Islam is another monotheistic religion, the true religion of which Christianity is merely a defective derived form,[130] and the conquest of Heraclius' Syria will prove that it and not Christianity is the genuine faith favoured by God. So Heraclius' basic point is absolutely right, and ironically enough, his own impending defeat will prove it. It is all the more remarkable that Islam should triumph against the Romans, since as Heraclius says, the Arabs are barefooted, half-naked, and starving warriors whom the Empire has never before taken very seriously. But for those who enjoy the assistance of God everything is possible,[131] as the emperor will soon discover. So Heraclius is correct in many of the programmatic details of his speech, but not in the ways he supposes and not in the outcome of the final conflict gathering in Syria. He is in no way an evil character, but rather just a woefully mistaken one who makes the right arguments but fails to see how catastrophically correct they will be in his own case.

A powerful example of this may be seen already in the apprehensions the people of Syria feel at the Arab advance; should victory fall to them the Romans would be deprived of their kingdom. That is, they take no comfort in the fact that Heraclius has assembled a mighty host to drive back the Arabs. And from an Islamic perspective their misgivings are correct. The Qur'ān, following up on an argument already to be found in the Old Testament,[132] had assured the Muslims on several occasions that many times in the past a great army had been defeated by a small company supported by God.[133] The Muslim audience to which al-Azdī's work was directed would of course have known this, and the places where Heraclius considers that his tremendous numerical advantage will assure him victory thus highlight the futility of fighting against God and Heraclius' own ignorance of the situation he is facing.[134]

A valuable example of the narrative technique in play here arises when the people of the cities of Syria write to Heraclius to warn him that the Arabs are marching in large numbers against them from every direction. The emperor replies:

[129] I.e. the motif is more complex than suggested by Kaegi; see his 'Heraklios', p. 113.

[130] Casper and Gaudeul, 'Textes de la tradition musulmane'.

[131] Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2611:1-7.

[132] E.g. Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

[133] See, for example, Sūrat al-Baqara (2), v. 249; Sūrat al-A'rāf (7), v. 86; Sūrat al-Anfāl (8), vs. 19, 65-66.

[134] Cf., for example, al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 31:5-6, 82:1-3, 88:10-11, 159:12-18, 182:11; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 102:6-9, 181:14-182:1, 227:11-18, 229:11-14.

> I am amazed at you that you should seek my guidance and consider that the number of Arabs approaching you is too many for me to handle. I am well aware of them and of those of them who approach. But the people of a single one of your cities are many times more numerous than those who march against you. So confront them and fight them, and do not suspect that I am writing to you like this in order to avoid reinforcing you, for I am sending to you an army that would crowd a vast open plain.[135]

Again, his subjects appear to be more acutely aware of the danger than the emperor is. Or at least, they realise that numbers alone do not win or lose the day.[136]

Heraclius' mistaken assessment of his position vis-à-vis the Arabs will of course continue as a literary vehicle for launching into or reiterating such kerygmatic themes. In his headquarters in Antioch, the emperor receives word that the Arabs are besieging Emesa, that his army has been badly defeated at Pella (Fiḥl), and that in Syria generally his forces control little beyond the main cities that remain unconquered; the military and social elite of the Romans who had made their homes in Syria had by now moved to Caesarea, and the people of Palestine had taken refuge in Jerusalem. Summoning his leading and most experienced advisors, he asks them: 'Tell me, are these adversaries you are fighting not mortal men like yourselves?' 'Yes of course', comes the reply. 'And who is more numerous', the ruler inquires, 'you or they?' 'We are several times more numerous', the advisors answer; 'we have never clashed with them anywhere but that we were more numerous than them'.[137] 'So how do you explain the fact that you are defeated every time you encounter them?' Heraclius asks. At this the advisors fall silent, and finally an elderly man launches into an account of the Muslims' fortitude in battle, lofty character, pious and frugal lifestyle, integrity, even-handedness, and justice. The Romans, on the other hand, do not stand firm when attacked and do not keep their vows to destroy the enemy when they advance. They drink wine, commit forbidden deeds (by which sexual improprieties such as fornication and adultery are probably meant),[138] break their treaties, commit extortion,[139] per-

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[135] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 43pu-44:3. Cf. the parallel version in Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 119:9-16.

[136] On the *sīra* tradition, see Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, pp. 244-245.

[137] Cf. al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, p. 79:10: ten times more numerous.

[138] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 119:15, 175:16, 265:2-266:12, 262:16-264:8, 270:14; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 151:9, 182:7, 183:3, 235:1, 3, 300:12-301:17; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2126:6; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, II, 96:4-5, 97:11.

[139] In the texts this is *naghḍabu*, 'fall into rages', for which one probably read *naghṣibu*,

petrate injustices, believe in things displeasing unto God, prohibit what is pleasing unto Him, and spread corruption in the world.[140] Apart from the prime opportunity to argue points of kerygma, one notes here that the tradition is perfectly willing to concede the implication that Heraclius does not already know these things. As before, he is misguided but not personally responsible for the deeds of those who act in his name.

Once advised of the true state of affairs, the emperor of course makes the correct decision. He will abandon Antioch and even all of Syria itself, for how can he defend the province when he knows that no good can be expected from his depraved and wicked subjects? The advisor, however, now expresses alarm. Are the Romans to abandon Syria, the earthly Paradise, to the Arabs without mounting a proper defense? Heraclius points out that in all the Romans' previous encounters with the Arabs his forces have been defeated, put to flight and overwhelmed; but the advisor assures him that the better course of action is to assemble a vast army and overwhelm the Arabs by force of numbers.[141] Delegations from Caesarea and Jerusalem arriving at this critical moment to plead for assistance suffice to convince the emperor, and he thus chooses unwisely, putting his faith in numbers rather than acting according to his personal convictions.[142]

Heraclius now organises one great last effort to expel the Arabs from Syria. From Antioch he sends word to Rome, Constantinople, and every military man and Christian in the Jazīra and Armenia, and writes to all of his commanders to muster every male in his kingdom old enough to bear arms. The army thus formed is so huge that the land itself can hardly support it, and as he sends them off to fight he admonishes them that they should expect no restoration of security should the Arabs prevail:

> O forces of the Romans, the Arabs have triumphed over Syria and will not be content with it until they have taken over the remotest fringes of your land. Nor will they be satisfied with the land, the cities, the wheat and barley, the gold and silver, until they have also seized [your] sisters, mothers, daughters,[143] and spouses, taken

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as translated here.

[140] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 149:10-151:17. Cf. the parallel versions of this in Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 218:13-219:13; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, II, 97:3-13.

[141] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, p. 151:6-15. Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 219:13-220:7.

[142] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 151:16-152:4. Ibn A'tham does not have this material.

[143] For *wa-l-nabāt* read *wa-l-banāt*.

> the free men and nobles as slaves, and deprived you of your households, sovereignty, and the domain of your kingdom.[144]

This is the prelude to the famous al-Yarmūk campaign, in which Byzantine forces suffered their final and most catastrophic defeat. The claims that the Romans were driven in their thousands over cliffs to plunge to their deaths is a literary invention,[145] but does appear to evoke the memory of what was in fact a colossal defeat, one so complete that for record of it Byzantine historians could not even resort to their own Greek sources,[146] but had to turn to versions of Arab Muslim accounts that had made their way into Greek through Syriac.[147]

In this context Heraclius is again prominent, this time for his reaction to the disaster and for the opportunity to tie up loose ends that remained where characterisation of the emperor was concerned. Al-Azdī has two contradictory versions of Heraclius' reaction, which indicates, as one would suspect in any case, that we have to do here with later storytelling and not the recounting of genuine historical events. In the first story the emphasis is on the moral superiority of the Arabs:

> When word of the defeat reached the king of the Romans in Antioch, the first person to arrive was a man from the defeated army, who told him the news. [Heraclius] said: 'I already knew that they would defeat you'. One of his courtiers asked him: 'How did you know that, Sire?', and the emperor replied: 'Because they love death more than you love life, and they yearn for the Afterlife more than you yearn for the earthly life. As long as they remain so they will continue to triumph, and we will be attacked and destroyed as you were attacked and destroyed'.[148]

The reference to contrasting desires for life or death of course illustrates the Muslims' complete devotion to their faith, as opposed to the Romans' lack of commitment to their own. Not surprisingly, this motif occurs frequently in

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[144] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-ṣhām*, p. 152:16-19. Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 160:8-13, 220:8-222ult, 235:5-11.
[145] I hope to deal with this subject in a future study.
[146] See Mango, 'The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire', p. 38, note 36; *idem*, 'The *Breviarium* of the Patriarch Nikephoros', p. 545; Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwād', pp. 335-336; *idem*, 'Varietas Syriaca', pp. 86-89.
[147] See Brooks, 'The Sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers'; Conrad, 'Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition'; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 400-409, 631-671.
[148] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, p. 234:11-17.

varying contexts in early *futūḥ* texts,[149] with a few cases in which the Muslims' love of death is contrasted with the Romans' love of wine,[150] suggesting that 'love of life' refers to obsession with the distracting ephemera of physical gratification.

Of special interest is Heraclius' prediction that in the future his empire will suffer the same fate as that of his army at al-Yarmūk. This is of course a-nomalous in terms of other Heraclius materials, which accept that Byzantium will survive. It may be that this represents an early formulation of Islamic kerygma on our subject, one set into circulation before the full development of the motif of the believing Heraclius the survival of whose empire is explained in terms of his own personal inclinations toward Islam.

The second story argues in a different direction and indulges in a bit of black humour:

> When word of the defeat reached the emperor of the Romans, the first one to come to him was a Roman whom he asked: 'What news?' 'Good news, Sire. God has defeated and destroyed them'. Those around [Heraclius] rejoiced and were glad and cheered at the news, but the emperor said to them: 'Woe be upon you! This man is a liar! Have you ever seen anyone but a refugee from a defeat who looks like this, burdened with the news he brings? By my life, he is no dispatch rider (*barīd*). Had there not been a defeat he should still be standing by the side of his commander!'[151] In no time at all another messenger came to him. Heraclius asked him: 'Woe be upon you! What is the news?' 'God has defeated and destroyed the enemy,' the man replied, but Heraclius asked: 'If God has destroyed them, then what happened to you?' But his entourage rejoiced and said: 'He is telling you the truth, Sire'. 'Are you trying to deceive yourselves?', the ruler asked. 'By God, had these men been victorious, they would not have come stampeding in here so frantically on their horses, and would a dispatch rider not have gone ahead of them with the good news?' And so matters remained until Heraclius spied an Arab Christian named Ḥudhayfa ibn 'Amr from the tribe of Tanūkh on an Arabian mare and thought to himself: 'I never expect bad news except in the presence of this man'. So when the Arab drew close to him he asked: 'What news do you have?'

[149] E.g. *ibid.*, pp. 31:3, 64:8-9, 206:16, 234:15, 243:10; Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 102:5, 246:3-4, 289:13; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:14-15, 2020:9-10, 2022:12-13, 2041:11-12, 2053:14-15.

[150] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2019:14-15, 2054:1-2.

[151] Meaning that Heraclius' suspicions are aroused by the fact that the report comes not from a military dispatch rider, the sort of courier who would normally carry such news after a successful engagement, but from a field officer whose proper place would normally be by his superior's side with the army.

> 'Bad', came the reply.[152] 'Your face is a harbinger of bad news', Heraclius said, then turning to his entourage he continued: 'Bad news from a bad man from a bad people'. At that point one of the Roman notables came to him and Heraclius asked: 'What news do you bring?' 'Bad', was the answer, 'they have defeated us'. 'And what happened to your commander Bāhān?' 'Killed'. 'And So-and-so, and So-and-so, and So-and-so?" naming to him many of his commanders and patricians and noble Roman warriors. '[All] killed', the messenger replied. 'But you', cried Heraclius, 'are too vile, foul, and treacherous to defend a religious cause or fight for a worldly one!' Then he told his guards: 'Bring him!' So they brought him before the emperor and Heraclius said to him: 'Are you not the one who was most vehement with me on the matter of Muḥammad, the prophet of the Arabs, when his letter and messenger came to me? I wanted to respond to the appeal he made to me and convert to his religion, but you, you were one of those who were so adamant with me that I decided against doing so! Is this then how you now fight the tribe and companions of Muḥammad in defense of my dominion, compared to the vehemence I encountered from you when you prevented me from converting to his religion? Strike off his head!' So they brought him forward and beheaded him.[153]

This second account more or less consecrates the position of Heraclius as a victim of bad advice rather than as a wicked ruler.[154] It ties in with what we have seen on Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius in the *sīra* tradition, and the condemned advisor appears to be the man earlier described as convincing Heraclius to defend Syria rather than abandon it to the Arabs.[155] Such connections are used to promote the image of Heraclius as a well-intended but misguided monarch. It is his circle of generals and advisors who are to blame, and not surprisingly in some texts they are made to acknowledge their culpability. The Christian historian Eutychius (d. 940), for example, taps into Islamic tradition and tells us that Māhān, the Roman commander at al-Yarmūk, feared to return to Heraclius and face certain execution; instead he

[152] Al-Azdī (*Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, pp. 175:10, 178:1) has already presented this individual as a personal assistant to the Byzantine commander at al-Yarmūk and even cites part of the account of the battle on his authority as an eyewitness. So for our author's audience this tribesman could not have been ignorant of the true outcome of the battle.

[153] *Ibidem*, pp. 234:18-236:15.

[154] Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, I, 271:6-8, where Heraclius confesses that 'I knew matters would come to this'.

[155] See above, p. 140.

fled to Mt. Sinai, became a monk, and assumed the ecclesiastical name Anastasius.[156]

In all these accounts from the *futūḥ* tradition one notices the feature of transferability.[157] That is, various motifs are used like building blocks and shifted and rearranged to create whatever sort of report a tradent may wish to set into circulation. This is why they appear peppered throughout the tradition: they do not refer to genuine historical events, nor do they reflect any of the repetitive patterns of everyday life. While in some cases they may be used in new and ingenious ways, ultimately their topological character remains unaltered. These motifs therefore provide valuable information on how Heraclius and the conquest campaigns were perceived, but by their very nature and origin they can tell us nothing about the historical Heraclius.

This is not to say, however, that the Islamic literary tradition can tell us nothing about the historical Heraclius. As suggested above, kerygma is a secondary development in early Arab-Islamic historical tradition: i.e. it comprises a revision of material already in circulation. There was a tale of triumph to tell before an Islamic paradigm was made available to provide the events in question with spiritual meaning and significance. In places where this earlier material is still visible, then, it may be possible to arrive at some valuable historical conclusions. A well-known example will serve to illustrate the various prospects and perils of this approach.

The Farewell Salute

The images of Heraclius in early Islamic historical tradition end with his famous Farewell Salute, in which, usually after the battle of al-Yarmūk, he bitterly acknowledges that Syria is lost and bids farewell to the province.[158] This would fit perfectly into the kerygmatic picture sketched out above, but the Salute appears not only in the Arab-Islamic tradition, but also in chronicles of the eastern Christian communities. So could this be a case where the Arabic evidence reveals a genuine event – if only a vignette – relating to the historical person of Heraclius? Investigation of this question provides an opportunity to illustrate how the various historical traditions may be used to achieve a more unified and historically reliable assessment of the materials at our disposal.

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[156] Eutychius, *Naẓm al-jawhar* (ed. Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat), vol. II, 15:3-4.

[157] This element of transferability is a defining feature of topoi. See Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, pp. 109-110. More generally cf. Conrad, 'Historical Evidence and the Archaeology of Early Islam', pp. 264-268.

[158] Cf. De Goeje, *Mémoire*, p. 123; Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. III, 806-808, nos. 315-318.

There are numerous versions of the Farewell Salute in early Islamic tradition. In al-Azdī Heraclius receives word of the catastrophe of al-Yarmūk and summons his entourage to set out to return to Constantinople. As he departs from the land of Syria and approaches Byzantine territory he turns back to face Syria and says: 'Peace be upon you, O Syria, a salute from one bidding farewell, who considers that he will never again return to you'. Then he proceeds on into his own land and looking back to Syria calls out once again: 'Woe unto such a land as you! What a benefit you will be to your enemy, because of all the pasturage, fertile soil, and other amenities you provide'.[159]

While there may be some historical basis for this account, it has certainly been revised along Islamic kerygmatic lines. A Byzantine emperor would rue the loss of any part of his domains, and the particular emphasis here upon the natural wealth and fertility of Syria rather belongs to Islamic kerygma, in which, as we have seen, part of the Arabs' reward from God for their belief in His prophet and message is the exchange of barren Arabia for lush Syria.

In the annals of al-Ṭabarī we find a number of other versions of the Salute, all transmitted from early tradents to Sayf ibn 'Umar (d. *ca.* 180/796), and then on to al-Ṭabarī. We have already encountered one above, in which Heraclius bids farewell to Syria even before he has lost it, so certain is he of the religious superiority of the Muslim cause.[160] Here again the role of kerygma is obvious. In another version transmitted by Sayf the origins of the Salute again apparently have nothing at all to do with the battle on the Yarmūk River:

> Whenever Heraclius went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, then returned from Syria and entered Roman territory, he would look back and say: 'Peace be upon you, O Syria, a salute from one bidding farewell, but who has not achieved his objective with you and so will return'.[161]

This same report then explains that when Syria, Iraq and the Jazīra had all been invaded and occupied by the Arabs, Heraclius retreated to Shimshāṭ and prepared to cross over to Asia Minor (*al-Rūm*), and then uttered a new version of the Salute:

> He climbed up to a promontory, turned around and gazed upon Syria, and called out: 'Peace be upon you, O Syria, a salute after which there will be no [further] meeting. No Roman will ever again return to you, except in fear, even unto the

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[159] Al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-Shām*, p. 236:17-20; with a shorter version in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 137: 1-4.

[160] See above, pp. 118-119.

[161] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2395:13-16.

> time the Ill-Omened One is born – would that he never be born! How sweet will be his deeds, but how bitter will be their consequences for the Romans'.[162]

Here we see what can only be a late version of the Salute, since the report reflects an advanced knowledge of the Islamic doctrine of the Dajjāl, or 'Anti-Christ'. In *ḥadīth* it was said that this figure would not appear until the Romans had been defeated,[163] so Heraclius hopes that he will never be born. His deeds will be sweet for the Romans because he will fight the Muslims, but the consequences of these acts will be bitter for them because the Muslims will triumph.[164] Again, of course, we observe the impact of kerygmatic revision.

Other of Sayf's informants apparently had a different story to tell. According to this version:

> When Heraclius departed from Shimshāṭ to enter Asia Minor, he looked back to Syria and said: 'Previously I have bid farewell to you with the salute of a traveller,[165] but today, peace be upon you, O Syria, a salute from one taking leave of you. No Roman will ever again return to you, except in fear, even unto the time the Ill-Omened One is born – would that he never be born!' Then he proceeded until he reached Constantinople, taking with him the people of the fortresses between Alexandretta and Ṭarsūs so as to deny the Muslims the ability to march through any cultivated land (*fī 'imāratin*) between Antioch and the territory of the Romans. He slighted the fortresses so the Muslims would find no one in them, though sometimes Romans would lay in ambush at such places and pounce on stragglers by surprise, which forced the Muslims to take precautionary measures against such tactics.[166]

What is interesting here is that while the first half of the report is entirely kerygmatic and topological, the second half is not. As the report tells us, the removal of population and garrisons aimed to deprive the advancing Muslims of *'imāra*, i.e. there would be no crops or food supplies to provision a large army. The demolition of fortifications and the setting of ambushes for such elements of the Muslim forces as may have fallen behind represents a useful rearguard tactic for slowing the Muslim advance. None of this is anywhere attested as a transferable motif in *futūḥ* tradition, so this part may well belong

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162 *Ibidem*, I, 2395:17-2396:3.
163 See, for example, Ibn Māja (d. 273/886), *Sunan* (ed. 'Abd al-Bāqī), II, 1370:4-7 *Fitan*, no. 35.
164 On the conflict between Islam and the Dajjāl, see Cook, *Studies in Early Islamic Apocalyptic*, p. 103.
165 I.e. as one who expected to return.
166 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2396:3-12.

to an old layer of material to which kerygmatic revisions were made subsequently.[167]

From these examples it is clear that the Farewell Salute is a topos: that is, it has become a transferable motif that could be shifted about and appropriated as required by tradents creating new stories or revising old ones. If, as suggested above, the kerygmatic Heraclius material in the *futūḥ* tradition represents – so far as we can tell – the work of tradents in north Syria, then the version in al-Azdī, emerging from a north Syrian context, ought to represent an early version from which others may derive, whether directly or indirectly. Clearly, however, the version in al-Azdī has itself been heavily revised.

But this does not mean that there is no historical basis for the Farewell Salute. *To identify an account or motif as topological is not to prove that it is false*,[168] but rather merely to demonstrate that it has become transferable; it may well have genuine historical origins, but has broken loose from these moorings to become a motif in the storytelling répertoire of the tradents.[169] In the material above, for example, the discovery of a definite kerygmatic cast to the traditions in the form in which they are presented to us does not preclude a historical scenario something like the following: Pilgrims leaving the Holy Land in the sixth and seventh centuries used some kind of formulaic farewell salutation that was taken up by Heraclius during his own pilgrimage to Jerusalem – the first by a reigning Roman emperor. It was then used in a dramatically different way when the whole of Syria was lost during the Arab conquests. The reports including this point were then revised later on to give them sharper kerygmatic definition along Islamic lines, e.g. making the emperor admit that the province was now permanently lost, not to mention lost because of the superior religious merit of Islam, or as fulfilment of a covenant with the Muslim Arabs.

The eastern Christian historical tradition casts some light on the matter. In the Syriac *Chronicle of 1234* Heraclius hears of and responds to the disaster of al-Yarmūk in this way:

> When a Christian Arab came to Antioch and told Heraclius of the destruction of the Roman army and how not a one of his troops had survived the battle, the emperor was cast into great sorrow and left Syria for Constantinople. He is reported to

[167] Similar measures, also reported in a non-stereotyped fashion, seem to have been used by Byzantine forces in the Baysān region of Palestine. Dams and irrigation works were smashed in order to cause flooding, which in turn created muddy conditions that hindered both sides. See al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2145:15-2146:3, 2151:5-7, 2157:13-2158:6.

[168] *Pace* the implications in Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*, pp. 40-49.

[169] Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, pp. 109, 143-145.

> have said: *sōzū Sōriyā*, that is, 'Farewell Syria', as if he despaired of ever seeing it again. He then raised the sceptre that was in his hand and gave his forces leave to ravage and plunder, as if Syria were already hostile territory. He wrote to Mesopotamia, Armenia, Egypt, and other countries where Roman forces remained in place, commanding them not to fight against the Arabs nor to stand against the command of the Lord, saying that all should stand firm in the city or region where they were posted until no longer able to do so.[170]

The Syrian Orthodox patriarch Michael I Qīndasī ('Michael the Syrian', d. 1199) has much the same in his own world history,[171] including the crucial words *sōzū Sōriyā*, the Syriac transliteration of Greek σώζου Συρία, 'Farewell Syria', the essence of the Farewell Salute.

In patristic usage the verb σώζω means 'to save' or 'preserve', and can be used in the sense of a salutation ('fare thee well' or 'may [God] keep you safe') or a plea for protection or salvation ('may [heaven/God] help you').[172] This tallies exactly with what we find in the Arab-Islamic tradition: *al-salāmu 'alayka*, 'peace be upon you'. It may thus seem that the Salute represents the survival of an old Greek report, cited in translation among the later Syriac historians, about a genuine historical incident already attested anyway by the Arab Muslim tradents. The reports of Byzantine delaying and defensive tactics by Sayf on the Arab side and by the Chronicler of 1234 and Michael in the Syriac tradition likewise suggest common ground, perhaps in genuine historical events.

On the other hand, there are features that appear to echo Islamic kerygmatic considerations: the motif of the Christian Arab, as we have already seen in the Arab-Islamic tradition, the utter destruction of the Byzantine army, the victory of the Arabs as the command of God, and the futility of Roman resistance. And it is only in terms of Islamic kerygma, not in historical terms, that we expect Heraclius to give Syria up as irretrievably lost now that it has been conquered by Muslims. The successful Persian occupation of much of the Byzantine Empire during the Persian Wars had not prevented Heraclius from launching campaigns that ultimately gained him final victory, and there is no reason to think that he did not hope for the same sort of triumph over the Arabs. Certainly it was not the case that after al-Yarmūk Byzantium adopted a purely defensive strategy: the loss of Egypt, for example, provoked retaliation in the form of the reoccupation of Alexandria in 645.[173]

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170 Chabot, *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, I, 251:9-25 (Syriac text), 196-197 (transl.).
171 Michael I Qīndasī, *Chronique* (ed. and transl. Chabot), II, pp. 424-425.
172 See Lampe, *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, cols. 1361b-1362a.
173 See Butler, *The Arab Conquest*, pp. 465-483.

In the Arabic world history by the Melkite historian Agapius (d. *ca.* 950), we are assisted by the following version of events:

> Having seen how the Romans had been put to flight and having received word of how the Arabs had dealt with the Persians, Heraclius, then in Antioch, was seized by rage and indignation and cast into melancholy gloom. He wrote to Egypt, Syria, the Jazīra and Armenia, ordering them not to fight the Arabs and not to oppose the command of God. This bane, he advised them, had been sent upon mankind by God Almighty; he would not defy the command of God, and he would not blindly rush forth (...)[174] to Ishmael, son of Abraham, and that many kings would issue from his loins.[175]

This passage is obviously textually related to what we find in our thirteenth-century Syriac chronicles, but no less obvious is the presence of Islamic kerygma. As previously, it is unlikely that at this point a Roman emperor would have conceded that the definitive Arab conquest of Syria was by the command of God. And while Heraclius may well have known that the Old Testament does promise Abraham that for his sake the descendants of Ishmael will be made into a great nation,[176] the doctrine that this refers to the Muslim Arabs of course belongs to later Islamic kerygma and not to the strategic theology of a Roman emperor in the early seventh century. The idea of the futility of trying to fight the Muslims is likewise vividly kerygmatic, and is specifically attested in this fashion in the *futūḥ* tradition.[177]

We do not see the Farewell Salute in Agapius, however, and the same is true of the Greek chronicler Theophanes (d. 818), who simply says that Heraclius 'abandoned Syria in despair' already before the battle of al-Yarmūk.[178] One may wonder, on the other hand, if this latter report reflects a knowledge of what we see in greater detail in other eastern Christian sources.[179]

The confluence of this evidence follows a pattern that I have sought to establish on several other occasions.[180] Michael and the Chronicler of 1234[181]

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[174] There is a lacuna in the text at this point.
[175] Agapius, *Kitāb al-'unwān* (ed. and transl. Vasiliev), p. 471:6-9 (Arabic text, French below).
[176] Genesis 21:13.
[177] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2103:4-6; cf. below, pp. 153-154.
[178] Theophanes, *Chronicle*, p. 468.
[179] Cf. also Eutychius, *Naẓm al-jawhar*, II, 16:11-12, where Heraclius, upon hearing that Damascus has fallen, says: 'Upon you be peace, O Syria', or 'O Damascus [capital] of Syria'. This brief report does not help us in our present concerns.
[180] Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwād', pp. 322-340; *idem*, 'The Arabs and the Colossus', pp. 166-175. Justification for the relationships among the various sources is argued in detail in both of these studies and need not be repeated here.

both used the lost Syriac chronicle of the Syrian Orthodox patriarch Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē, covering the period 582 to 842,[182] and it was from this source that they took the account translated above from the *Chronicle of 1234*, with its reference to the Farewell Salute in the form *sōzū Sōriyā*. The additional testimony of Agapius and Theophanes shows that the ultimate common authority for knowledge of Heraclius' withdrawal from Syria among all these historians is the lost Syriac chronicle of Theophilus bar Tōmā of Edessa, who wrote just after the 'Abbāsid revolution and was an important source for Dionysius. But neither Agapius, who used Theophilus directly, nor Theoph-anes, who had access to him through a Greek redaction of his chronicle, have the Farewell Salute. This suggests that while Theophilus related the story of Heraclius' withdrawal,[183] his account did not contain the Farewell Salute, which Dionysius therefore must have from some other source.

But what was this source? While it could have been a Syriac historical work that has not survived to modern times, the colouring of Islamic kerygma that one sees in the eastern Christian accounts indicates that his source was rather material from the nascent Arab-Islamic tradition. As I have shown in another study, eastern Christian historical tradition sometimes does contain motifs and accounts derived from the emergent Islamic literary tradition via contacts with Muslims.[184] Dionysius himself was a widely travelled scholar favoured by the 'Abbāsid court,[185] and by the mid-ninth century the contents of classical Islamic historical tradition were widely circulated. Far from confirming the Farewell Salute as an archaic survival from the conquest period itself, then, the eastern Christian sources in which it appears immediately raise the possibility that the chroniclers responsible for them have yet again tapped into the Arab-Islamic literary tradition, via one common source shared by all of them, for information about early Islamic times.

The Farewell Salute is thus a complicated historiographical problem that in some respects defies definitive answers. This is absolutely typical of the difficulties encountered in comparative historiographical studies on early

[181] While it does not impinge upon matters of concern to us here, it is worth noting that the *Chronicle of 1234* is actually a chronicle by an anonymous author to 1204, which another anonymous Syriac historian simply copied and continued to 1234. It is unlikely that the continuator made many changes of his own, and indeed, it is rather more likely that he made none at all, since he did not even bother to drop the terminal colophons of the chronicle of 1204. See Chabot, *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, II, 213ult-214:2, 340:11-24 (Syriac text); 160, 253-254 (Latin transl.).

[182] Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, pp. 14-29.

[183] Cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 638-639.

[184] Conrad, 'Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition'.

[185] See Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides*, pp. 68-71; Conrad, 'Syriac Perspectives on Bilād al-Shām', p. 40.

Islam, for *all* of the literary traditions (i.e. *not* just that of the Muslims) sought to present history in terms most meaningful and acceptable to themselves. As Patricia Crone characterises the difficulty: 'One is harassed by an exasperating feeling that one cannot *see*'.[186] This is certainly true enough, but Crone goes on to portray what survives of the archaic Arabic tradition, the specific object of her remark, as 'rubble', 'debris', and so forth,[187] and this strikes me as excessive.[188] Archaic accounts were not altered gratuitously or randomly, nor were they simply smashed asunder; they were revised and elaborated to achieve certain purposes and to satisfy the expectations of a certain cultural and social milieu. By evaluating literary tradition broadly one can make at least some modicum of sense of these agendas, though undoubtedly there is much that will never be recoverable.

For the time being, then, the following scenario strikes me as the most reasonable – or least arbitrary – interpretation of the available evidence on the Farewell Salute. The phrase σώζου Συρία was a religious slogan associated with Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and may have been used in this way by Heraclius; it may also be the case that he uttered an ironic maxim of this sort as Syria was lost to the Arabs, though certainly he did not do so as a concession of the loss as permanent. Memory or record of this episode survived in north Syria in the Muslim community, among whose tradents it was including in reports of measures taken by the Byzantines to slow or hinder the Arab advance during the conquest. These reports were gradually revised to argue a more specifically Islamic vision of the meaning of the conquests, and in this context the Farewell Salute was likewise revised and expanded along kerygmatic lines.

Among the Christians the emperor's farewell may also have been remembered. But to write history was to record meaning and value as well as fact, and in the Syriac tradition of north Syria in the seventh century it would have

[186] Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, p. 11.

[187] *Ibidem*, pp. 10-16.

[188] Cf. Donner's critique of Crone in his *Narratives*, pp. 20-31, 283-285. The issue cannot be explored in detail here, but it seems to me that the tendency for Donner (*inter alia*) to characterise Crone and others as representatives of a 'sceptical approach' is problematic. For one thing, this results in scholars whose research agendas are in fact very different being lumped together as if their views are in harmony and they are all working in the same direction, which is absolutely not the case. For another thing, all historians are, or should be, sceptical, and in general terms I do not find the methodologies of the 'sceptics'– properly understood – to vary all that much from the canons that were developing in Western Orientalist scholarship in the period before World War I. The term 'sceptical' does at a general level accurately describe their conclusions, but not their working methods as historians, and in any case their conclusions are often very different.

been difficult to concede that already in the 630s Christian rule there had been effectively abandoned. Thus, while Theophilus records Heraclius' withdrawal from Syria, he says nothing about the Farewell Salute. As he did not balk at some concessions to what Muslims thought the conquests in general meant, this silence probably means that he did not find the Salute in the materials available to him.

Theophilus' account was taken up by Agapius, who probably translated it from Syriac more or less verbatim. In the Greek redaction of Theophilus available to Theophanes, however, this material was dropped, and evidence that it was even known to the redactor survives only in the brief concession that Heraclius 'abandoned Syria in despair'.

It is not atypical of Theophilus' open attitude toward Islam that he should so explicitly and without rebuttal give voice to the Islamic claim that the Bible itself predicts the rise of Islam. Dionysius, however, writing several decades later, could not do so. As patriarch he was the leader of a Christian community confronted by the increasingly obvious permanence of Muslim rule and threatened by the heightening pace of conversion to Islam and by gradual but irreversible assimilation of Christians to Islamic society and culture. When he compiled his own history, he abandoned much of Theophilus' account and replaced it with material that, while conceding the worldly success of Islam, which could hardly have been denied, declined to endow it with religious sanction. The source for this revision appears ultimately to have been the Arab-Islamic tradition, which for the first time introduced into Syriac historiography knowledge of the Farewell Salute and rearguard measures taken by Heraclius against his Arab foes. The account that he produced was in turn copied by the Chronicler of 1234 and by Michael.

Early Islam and the Historical Heraclius

The ground covered above has been varied and complex, so it may be worthwhile to make a few concluding observations concerning questions that have been in play more or less throughout. A first problem is whether one ought to see some close connection between, on the one hand, what we observe Medinan tradents in the *sīra* tradition circulating on the themes of Muḥammad's letter to Heraclius and the latter's engagement with Islam, and on the other, the north Syrian *futūḥ* materials orienting the conquests within an Islamic kerygmatic framework with Heraclius featuring as the right-believing monarch who nevertheless takes bad advice and thus loses the better part of his realm. In all likelihood the connection is quite strong. Textually it is evident in the way in which the same kerygmatic motifs are deployed in both or transferred back and forth, as we have seen most clearly with the Farewell Salute. Intellectually, these affinities suggest an extensive transfer of information,

motifs, and working methods between Medina and north Syria, which can again be confirmed in the person of al-Zuhrī, who was active in Medina and Damascus but also followed the caliph Hishām ibn ʻAbd al-Malik (r. 106-125/724-743) to al-Ruṣāfa, the late Umayyad imperial court in North Syria.[189] While the evidence is circumstantial, taken together it comprises a compelling argument for seeing al-Zuhrī as a central figure in the generation of Heraclius traditions in the mid and later Umayyad period.

The popularity of the Heraclius traditions can be seen in the fact that they were quickly taken up by scholars elsewhere. Sayf ibn ʻUmar, for example, has the following interesting account. On pilgrimage in Jerusalem, Heraclius receives word that the Arabs are close by. He advises his commanders not to fight them, but rather to agree on terms dividing the revenues of Syria with them, provided that the Taurus range (*jibāl al-Rūm*) remains in Roman hands. But his relatives ʻsnortʼ in disgust, his retinue is outraged, and the emperor is compelled to take up arms. As Arab success increases, he chides his commanders:

> Did I not tell you to refrain from fighting them? You cannot prevail against such an adversary, whose new religion imbues them with such renewed determination that no one can stand against them, no matter how much they are prepared to endure.

But his commanders again refuse to listen to his sound advice and suggest that he defend his realm as an emperor should. But later, at al-Yarmūk, when an Arab embassy refuses to enter the Romans' silken reception tents because silk is forbidden in Islam, Heraclius receives word of this and again fears the worst:

> Did I not warn you that this would be the beginning of the humiliation? Syria will bring us to no good end! Woe be upon the Romans at the hands of a child of ill omen!

The emperor is right, of course, as the outcome of the battle will soon demonstrate.[190]

In this account Sayf telescopes the gist of the entire range of available Heraclius lore into a single continuous narrative. Heraclius receives no letter from the Prophet, but rather knows somehow that his forces should avoid clashing with the approaching Arabs. The motif of dividing Syria is taken up, as is that of the ʻsnortingʼ entourage around the ruler. His comments reminding

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[189] See Kellner-Heinkele, ʻRuṣāfa in den arabischen Quellenʼ.

[190] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2102:9-2103:15.

his commanders that he had warned them provides a bridge to al-Yarmūk, from which the emperor already expects defeat and the loss of Syria. His lament at this replaces the Farewell Salute.

We may further ask why the Arab-Islamic tradition adopted such a magnanimous attitude toward this Byzantine emperor. The primary and crucial fact here is that, as noted above, Heraclius' empire survived the conquests while that of the Sasanians did not. The kerygmatic argument seeing victory as a sign of divine favour ultimately requires that utterly wicked rulers be utterly destroyed, so the survival of Byzantium, even as a crippled and desperately imperiled vestige of its former world imperium, poses an awkward problem. But a way out is available if the Byzantine emperor was not so much wicked as misguided. But does this sort of concession not imply a certain social context? By the end of the Umayyad period Byzantium was no threat to the power of the caliphate, nor yet even to the stability of Arab rule. This would have been clear from the impunity with which the Arabs had annually launched summer raiding expeditions into Asia Minor and had over the years wreaked incalculable ruin there.[191] Heraclius may have been an easy target, but there was little point in demolishing his image and some reason, as we have just seen, why this would have been problematic in any case. Finally, there is good evidence that after the conquest Christians and Muslims were for some time willing to live together in harmony in north Syria. The province of Ḥimṣ was exceptionally rich and prosperous, and provided more tax revenue to the Umayyads than all the rest of Syria, Egypt, and Arabia combined.[192] If one may judge by the prosperity of monasteries, this benefitted the Christians as well as the minority of Arab Muslim occupiers. It also seems that in cultural terms north Syria was a focus of tolerant intellectual curiosity. While eastern Christian culture elsewhere had through the course of the sixth century (i.e. already before the rise of Islam) come to adopt a narrow interest only in matters important to religion and the concerns of the Church, in north Syria there was a vibrant continuation of research in the ancient sciences and in the landmarks of classical learning, all of which were pursued for their own sake and not for their relevance to the Church.[193] If we may judge from the example of Theophilus of Edessa, this eclectic attitude also involved a modicum of tolerance toward the rise of Islam. Theophilus indulges in none of the excesses typical of later eastern Christian writers, for whom Muḥammad was at best a false prophet and at worst a liar and depraved epileptic.[194] For Theophilus – or shall we more broadly say in his time and milieu – it was still possible to describe

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[191] Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion*; Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 92-124.
[192] See Rotter, *Die Umayyaden und der Zweite Bürgerkrieg*, pp. 61-62.
[193] Conrad, 'Varietas Syriaca'.
[194] See, for example, Griffith, 'The Prophet Muḥammad'.

Muḥammad's career in non-polemic terms, to concede that Islam was a revealed religion, and to describe its spiritual content in terms that most Muslims would readily have accepted.[195] In other words, eastern Christian scholarship in north Syria at the time of the Umayyads and very early 'Abbāsids had not yet adopted a stridently adversarial attitude toward Islam. There was therefore no reason for Muslim scholars to adopt a venomous perspective toward the Christians of their land and the Roman emperor whom they had defeated so many decades previously. Indeed, it may well be that they were willing to see in Heraclius a profoundly human archetype, that of an essentially decent individual, a good emperor, whose efforts were brought to naught by basic human failings and shortcomings, as opposed to personally culpable sin and wickedness. In a land where tales of Achilles, Hector, Sarpedon, and Priam still vibrated in the scholarly imagination, such a perspective is perhaps not to be greeted with any particular surprise.

The Heraclian stories in early Arab-Islamic tradition examined above thus represent a confluence between two powerful influences: an intensive effort to tell the story of Islamic origins in terms of a divine plan, as pursued in Medina, and a more tolerant and open-minded perspective, prevailing in north Syria, that was willing to concede genuine religious merit to a rival but defeated emperor without fearing for the subversion of their own religious beliefs. That both Christian and Islamic religious motifs are in play throughout confirm what a stimulating era this must have been in the development of Islamic historiography, and of Islamic literary culture more generally.

Finally, what are we to expect the Arab-Islamic tradition to tell us about the historical Heraclius? The above remarks have sought to demonstrate that the treatment of the emperor in the early Arab-Islamic tradition is profoundly kerygmatic, and that this kerygmatic material, by its very nature, pursues arguments that do not readily lend themselves to reconstruction of history in the Rankian sense. Such materials are of course enormously useful, as they inform us about how Heraclius was perceived and understood in later times; these views are an important part of the history of the period in which they emerged. But so far as the time of Heraclius himself is concerned, it must be conceded that enormous difficulties exist. We know, for example, that Heraclius undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem after his victory over the Persians. That much is clear, and the event was surely one of tremendous importance. Kaegi introduces the Arabic sources into his discussion of this event, and offers as objective fact details on the pilgrimage that are recorded only in these sources.[196] I.e. the early Islamic account of the pilgrimage is traced back to the

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[195] Theophilus' account survives in Arabic translation in Agapius, *Kitāb al-'unwān*, pp. 456:6-457ult.

[196] Kaegi, *Byzantium*, pp. 74-77.

event itself, which was remembered among contemporary observers and 'thus found its way into Muslim tradition'.[197] But these records are all part of the kerygmatic projection of Heraclius as a pious ruler secretly convinced of the truth of Islam. What they offer is verisimilitude, but not necessarily historical truth; the details on the emperor's pilgrimage could reflect nothing more than a general awareness, which should not surprise us, of how Christian religious rites were normally conducted in the late antique Near East and that Heraclius had in fact made such a pilgrimage.

This is not to say that nothing can be known about Heraclius from the Arab-Islamic sources, but rather to assert that methodological difficulties must be taken into account wherever they arise. The problem of kerygma obliges us to be sceptical of all elements that serve this purpose and to assess them against a broader historical and historiographical context. But two considerations justify a certain measure of optimism. The first is the fact that – as in all literary accounts – kerygmatic tales are assimilative as well as creative; they take up information already in circulation and incorporate it into their own narratives. As one becomes more familiar with how the tradition operates and what the contents of its argumentative répertoire are, it becomes easier to discern, as in the Farewell Salute, other older elements that perhaps do not belong to this arsenal and thus may be of some historical foundation.[198] The second has to do with the sheer bulk of the Arab-Islamic literary record for the period in question. One could easily set aside 90% of what is offered as historical fact in these sources and still have much more material than what is available for all of Byzantine history in the Bonn corpus. The recent publication of the vast history of Ibn 'Asākir, for example, is a landmark event for scholarship on early Islam, and this and other works, if posing very great difficulties in historiographical terms, promise to add much to our knowledge not only of how the rise of Islam was perceived, but also of the unfolding of the events themselves. The key problem confronting historians is how to disengage the one from the other.

[197] *Ibidem*, p. 74.

[198] Cf. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, pp. 26-27.

GEORGE OF PISIDIA'S PRESENTATION OF THE EMPEROR HERACLIUS AND HIS CAMPAIGNS

VARIETY AND DEVELOPMENT

Mary Whitby

The poet George of Pisidia acted as official Constantinopolitan publicist for Heraclius and his deputies in the 620s. Surviving works are addressed respectively to Heraclius himself, to the Patriarch Sergius, to Heraclius' young son Heraclius Constantine and to the *magister* Bonus, who, with Sergius, defended the capital during the Avar siege of 626.[1] In many ways the works are remarkably homogeneous. A limited number of topics are repeatedly highlighted – for Heraclius, his liberation of the city from the 'tyrannical' rule of Phocas,[2] his selfless and untiring care for his people,[3] his army reforms,[4] his careful preparation for war,[5] his hands-on personal leadership of his troops on campaign,[6] his tactical superiority over the Persians,[7] his divine protection,[8] and so on.[9] The unity is further sustained by the creation of a consistent yet evolving typology for the emperor, by which he is repeatedly assimilated to a range of mythical and biblical heroes – Heracles above all, but also Perseus, Orpheus, Moses, Elijah and Christ himself[10] –

[1] All of these people are certainly addressed, although identification of the addressee in individual cases is not always straightforward, see Whitby, Mary, 'The Devil'; *eadem*, 'Defender', pp. 263-269. Bonus was either *magister utriusque militiae, praesentalis* (Martindale, *The Prosopography*, III, pp. 242-244, *s.v.* Bonus 5) or *magister officiorum* (Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, pp. 444-446).
[2] E.g. *On Heraclius' Return*, 39-62; *On Bonus*, 56-59; *Avar War*, 49-52; *Heraclias*, 1.148-151, 2.5-33.
[3] E.g. *On Heraclius' Return* 42-55; *Persian Expedition* 3.319-335; *On Bonus* 79-110; *Avar War* 246-287, 302-306; *Heraclias* 1.131-139, 148-158.
[4] E.g. *Persian Expedition* 2.38-59, 145-169; *Heraclias* 1.122-130, 155, 2.153-159.
[5] E.g. *Persian Expedition* 2.177-184, *Heraclias* 2.118-121, 133-143.
[6] E.g. *Persian Expedition* 1.196-199, 3.89-128; *Heraclias* 1.159-176.
[7] E.g. *Persian Expedition* 2.261-285, 3.13-36; *Avar War* 251; *Heraclias* 2.204-212.
[8] E.g. *Persian Expedition* 1.126-129, 2.70-78, 170-174, 3.293-304, 385-427; *Heraclias* 1.177-187.
[9] See further, Whitby, Mary, 'Defender'.
[10] Mythical and biblical typology: Whitby, Mary, 'A New Image'.

and likened to recognised commonplace types, the wise helms-man,[11] the caring doctor.[12] In addition, particular fields of imagery are regularly invoked: water, rivers, the ocean; light, fire, the heavenly bodies; the natural and animal worlds.[13]

In this paper, however, I would like to consider George's panegyrical poems for Heraclius from the perspective of variety and development across the corpus. The three short occasional poems in Pertusi's edition[14] have a different character from the long narrative poems. Different dedicatees get their own distinctive treatment.[15] With Heraclius' defeat of the Persians in 628, not surprisingly, a new tone and new typologies are introduced.[16] This survey provides a context for reconsideration of the fragments of George's poetry which have been recovered from the prose narrative of the ninth-century chronicle of Theophanes and from the *Suda* lexicon.[17] I ask whether consideration of the scope of George's output illuminates their place within the corpus.

My paper falls into three parts. I look first at the three shorter poems in Pertusi's edition, considering matters of technique, range and tone. Section two is concerned with George's long poem on Heraclius' Persian campaign of 622. Here I consider how comprehensive the coverage is and comment on rhetorical devices used to bind together the narrative. The last section turns to the fragments and the post-victory poem, the *Heraclias*, with which the fragments were associated by Pertusi.[18]

I: *The shorter poems*

The three works, *On Heraclius' Return from Africa*, *On Bonus*, and *On the Restoration of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem*, span the whole period of Hera-

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[11] E.g. *On Heraclius' Return* 76-79; *Persian Expedition* 1.221-252; *Heraclias* 2.83-89.

[12] *On Bonus* 84-115; *Heraclias* 2.34-54, 66-70; cf. Frendo, 'Special Aspects'.

[13] See further Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement'.

[14] Pertusi, *Giorgio*. I confine this discussion to these poems, the major works inspired by Heraclius' Persian campaigns, although several of the 'religious' poems also encompass panegyrical themes (e.g. *On the Resurrection*, the *Hexaemeron*), while religious material is prominent in most of the 'panegyrical' poems.

[15] Whitby, Mary, 'Defender', pp. 263-269; *eadem*, 'Devil', pp. 125-127.

[16] See, e.g., Whitby, Mary, 'Devil'; Frendo, 'Classical and Christian Influences'.

[17] See Sternbach, 'De Georgii Pisidae apud Theophanem aliosque historicos reliquiis', and *idem*, 'De Pisida fragmentis a Suida serratis'.

[18] I leave aside the *Avar War*, which is concerned with Sergius and the 626 siege of Constantinople, which was repulsed in Heraclius' absence, and concentrate on the fragments in Theophanes rather than those in the *Suda* lexicon, where lack of context makes discussion more hypothetical.

clius' activities against the Persians and range in mood from cautious and flattering optimism soon after Heraclius' seizure of power,[19] through anxious appeal to the absent emperor at the time of the Avar siege in 626, to exultation at the news that Heraclius had restored the Cross to Jerusalem in March 630. Each focuses on a single central point and contains virtually no narrative.

Each has a powerful, attention-catching opening, flattering to its honorand.[20] The main theme emerges and is developed towards the middle.[21] George regularly concludes by returning to the immediate occasion, often appealing to the honorand to accept his poem, and/or ending with a prayer for the future.[22] Careful composition is a key feature, its essence being a verbal web which binds together intrinsically unconnected material by linguistic ploys and echoes. This verbal play is deployed in conjunction with rhetorical techniques such as apostrophe, exclamation, rhetorical question, and so on, to create a sense of immediacy. In the absence of narrative, the meat of the shorter poems is provided by elaborate comparisons drawn from myth, the Bible and the everyday world.

The earliest work, *On Heraclius' Return* (89 lines) already displays George's mature style.[23] Its three-line introduction plays on the word *logos*, both rhetorically by repeating it three times in three cases, and by linking the words of the poet with the divine Logos in order to honour the emperor:

> Word does not have the power to describe you,
> since the Word of God has ordained that you
> are ranked above these transient words.
> (*On Heraclius' Return* 1-3)

The poem returns to the *logos* theme at the end (86-89) in mentioning the inadequacy of George's celebration of Heraclius ('After hymning you with

[19] See Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', pp. 167-171, for the early date of *On Heraclius' Return*, following Sternbach and arguing against Pertusi, *Giorgio*, pp. 18-19.

[20] *On Heraclius' Return* 1-3, play on the term *logos* (see below); *On Bonus* 1-9, favourable comparison of Heraclius with Heracles; *Restoration* 1-5, invocation of Golgotha to celebrate Heraclius' restoration of the Cross.

[21] *On Heraclius' Return*, 33ff., new hopes arising from Heraclius' murder of Phocas; *Bonus* 49ff., call for Heraclius' return; *Restoration* 27ff., arrival of the Cross in Jerusalem.

[22] *On Heraclius' Return* 73ff.; *Bonus* 154ff.; *Restoration* 104ff. (news reached Constantinople on the Feast of Lazarus).

[23] The poem is analysed more fully by Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', pp. 166-179. I follow his interpretation of the opening lines.

these small words'). In the opening lines, however, he constructs his poetic web by drawing a contrast with others who celebrate feats of physical prowess such as beast-slaying – a glance at Heracles who is to become a favourite paradigm for his namesake – rather than mental excellence (4-7). Heraclius, by contrast, deserves praise for his spiritual exertions and approach to God through Scriptures (8-13), but the beasts return (14-23) as a threefold analogy for the emperor's pacificatory style of government, his assault on sin, especially heresy, and his success in taming barbarian tempers. At 23 George returns to the *logos* from which he began, but now it is the appeasing word of the emperor.

The passage illustrates George's technique. The network created by verbal play – here on words and beasts – links the poet and his theme with the achievements of his honorand. Here praise of Heraclius centres on his connections with God, the high value he places on spiritual exercises and powers of persuasion as opposed to feats of violence. Scriptural allusion[24] combines with mythological paradigm – tacit reference to Heracles and Orpheus. Only at 33 is the real point of the poem introduced: the hope that Heraclius' pious 'salvation' of the state through the elimination of Phocas, achieved by his seeking out toil for himself at considerable personal risk (33-62), may be a presage that God will assist him a second time in securing a wider peace.

Brief summary cannot do justice to the careful construction of the poem or the rising crescendo of its tone: Heraclius' murder of Phocas is exonerated by likening him to the Old Testament Phineas who committed a murder justifiable on religious grounds (56-58),[25] while four vocatives addressed to the emperor over the course of the work (4, 19, 44, 63) build up to apostrophe of him in terms appropriate to God himself as 'O furnisher of fair favours' (72) – in fact simply an appeal to Heraclius to accept George's poem.[26] This work is remarkable for the boldness with which it links Heraclius to God, presenting him from the outset as a divinely-appointed saviour figure, who at times verges on the Divinity itself. Such is George's concern

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[24] E.g. 10 'having assumed this like a panoply from on high', recalls Ephesians 6.13, 'Wherefore take unto you the whole armour (πανοπλίαν) of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'

[25] He slew a prominent Israelite for flaunting a Midianite woman near the Tent of Witness at a time when the Israelites were being afflicted with plague for their sins, and was rewarded with an everlasting priesthood: Numbers 25.6-15. Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', pp. 175-176, rightly suggests that this unusual parallel is selected because it helps justify Heraclius' dragging of Phocas from sanctuary prior to murdering him.

[26] I here differ from Frendo, who suggests ('The Poetic Achievement', p. 176) that this line is addressed to God.

to stress Heraclius' divine associations and hence the validity of his rule, that the mythological paradigms which are so prominent a feature of other works are here merely adumbrated.

The poem *On Bonus* dates to 626, when the Avars were at the walls of Constantinople and Heraclius absent on campaign in the East, leaving Bonus and the Patriarch Sergius to organise the defence. The work falls into two sections. The first (1-48) focuses on the relationship between Heraclius and Bonus, initiated by an elaborate contrast between Heracles and his task-master Eurystheus. This leads to reflection on the spiritual love which unites Heraclius and Bonus so that they are as 'one soul attached to two bodies' (27). Heraclius, then, is as good as present in Bonus. After this flattery of his dedicatee, which also offers public reassurance that the city is well cared for by its deputy, the remainder of the poem is an appeal to Heraclius to 'pity us whom you ransomed long ago' (56) and return.

This piece uses altogether different fields of imagery from *On Heraclius' Return*. Gone is the elaborate biblical typology and scriptural allusion, while links between Heraclius and the divine Logos are introduced only in the peroration (156ff.). In its place George uses images from the natural and human worlds: Heraclius is a sun shining out in winter (49-55), an indulgent parent to his children, even when they vex him (60-75) and, most elaborate of all (84-115), a conscientious doctor who tries to be everywhere at once 'on a round of universal malady' (86), and who is prepared to apply tough surgery in order to contain disease (102-110). The material is well worn, but applied with considerable ingenuity.[27] This lower-key imagery is appropriate to the secular Bonus who surely commissioned the work for public recitation in the capital, although it may also have been dispatched as part of an appeal to the emperor on campaign.

The third and last of the short poems, a response to the arrival of news in Constantinople of Heraclius' restoration of the Cross to Jerusalem, illustrates George's late 'triumphalist' style. Gone are the elaborately articulated connections, to be replaced by staccato, often asyndetic, exclamation, imperative, apostrophe and question. Golgotha is invoked to skip (1),[28] biblical and mythological images are boldly juxtaposed: Heraclius' arrival in Jerusalem is analogous to that of Christ on Palm Sunday (6-8), but he is also a Jason who has recovered the Golden Fleece (19-24). Apostrophe of the Apostle Paul (39) is capped by invocation of the Emperor Constan-tine

[27] Frendo, 'Special Aspects', pp. 53-54, examines the section on surgery.
[28] For such a sentiment applied to landscape, Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', p. 180, compares Ps. 113 (114).4 τὰ ὄρη ἐσκίρτησαν. But note also *Heraclias* 1.13 σκίρτησον αἰθήρ, and Agathias, *AP* 4.3B.7 Αὐσόνιε, σκίρτησον, ὁδοιπόρε (on freedom of travel in Justinian's peaceful empire).

whose own discovery of the Cross is surpassed by his 'child' Heraclius' recovery of it from the 'Persian furnace' (47-63).[29] Emphasised throughout is the mystical power of the Cross, which has paradoxically burned to ashes the fire of the magi (12-14; 64-68) and has been more effective than the biblical ark in not only defeating its enemies,[30] but causing them to turn upon themselves in civil strife (73-81). Finally the life-giving Cross is connected with the occasion on which news of its restoration reached the capital – the Feast of Lazarus, a dead man restored to life (104-110). This poem is unified by its reiterated reference to the Cross, frequent biblical allusion,[31] and its uniform tone of exultation.

II: *The Persian expedition*

I turn now to the earliest of the longer poems, the *Persian Expedition*, which deals with Heraclius' military exercises and encounters with the Persians in 622. It illustrates George's handling of narrative material and is also relevant to the fragments of his poetry preserved in Theophanes, since the poem has been identified as the major source for Theophanes' narrative of Heraclius' 622 campaign.[32] In his peroration, George offers his poem to Heraclius (3.374-384): it was almost certainly commissioned by the emperor and delivered before him on his return to the capital in 623. The dedication includes an apology for failure to be comprehensive – to navigate in his small boat the whole of Heraclius' sea.[33] George will have selected

[29] See Cameron, Averil, 'Byzantium' at pp. 261-265, who cites this passage in connection with discussion of the increasing attention paid to the Cross in the seventh century. Note too the anti-Jewish comments which George introduces in this poem: 25-26, 40-41.

[30] Cf. I Samuel 5, the ark defeats the Philistine God Dagon and the Philistines of Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. Cf. Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios', pp. 97-98, associates lines 71-77 with David's return of the ark to Jerusalem, linking George's reference to Heraclius 'dancing (72 συγχορεύων) with the angels' with the allusion to David dancing before the Lord at 2 Samuel 6.14; however, the Septuagint text says merely that David struck up on his musical instruments (ἀνεκρούετο ἐν ὀργάνοις ἡρμοσμένοις). I would link George's reference to Heraclius' dancing here with his earlier call to Constantine to leave the heavenly city and 'dance (συγχορεῦσαι) with us here in the city below' (52-53).

[31] E.g. 6f., 40f., 73-76, 108, 114-116.

[32] De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, I, pp. 303-306; Sternbach, 'De Georgii Pisidae apud Theophanem aliosque historicos reliquiis', pp. 4-24; discussed by Howard-Johnston, 'The Official History', p. 64. Fragments of George are signalled in the translation of Theophanes by Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 435-438.

[33] 3.381-3844 'Yet in a small and slow-running hull / I am accustomed to cross your sea, / and have not failed in not navigating all; / for a limit is not defined for

material congenial to his purpose of celebrating the emperor, high-lighting and passing over as he thought fit. The work is arranged in three cantos, for presentation in three sittings.

Canto one

The first canto contains little historical material. First, the Trinity is invoked in lieu of the Muse (1-34). This permits linkage of the divine Logos with the poet's own word and need for inspiration much as in the opening of *On Heraclius' Return*, but here a contrast is also drawn between true Christian religion and that of Persia, 'whose custom it is to worship created things above you, the Creator' (1.19-20).[34] Next Heraclius' virtues are outlined (66-99): he is the embodiment of all the virtues, but clemency is singled out for extended treatment (82-99). Third, debate in the capital about Heraclius' personal leadership of the army is mentioned; Heraclius takes the initiative and sets out on campaign, taking with him an *acheiropoietos* icon (104-153).[35]

The final hundred lines (154-252) are devoted to an incident in which Heraclius demonstrates his powers of leadership in the rescue of a ship which foundered in a storm off Hieria. The act is symbolic of the rôle he will play in the forthcoming campaign, and also of his larger helmsmanship of the struggling empire, of which George views this first rescue as a happy omen. The incident reaches a climax with an injury to Heraclius' toe, in which the flowing of his blood is assimilated to that of martyrs and his wound to Christ's stigmata (239-247).[36] The historicity of the whole passage is questionable: the second canto (lines 8-11) opens with a reference to Heraclius' unchecked journey to Pylae in Bithynia in the course of a single day, which is at odds with the dramatic night storm of the preceding section. George's desire to rise to a climax with a vision of Heraclius as helmsman

infinity'.

[34] The passage is discussed by Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', p. 179.

[35] George comments (152-153) that the Word is Heraclius' advocate – a variation on a now familiar theme, cf. *On Heraclius' Return* 1-3, etc. For the parading of an *acheiropoietos* icon at Solachon in AD 586, cf. Theophylact Simocatta 2.3.4-6, with Whitby, Michael, '*Deus nobiscum*', pp. 194-195.

[36] 1.245-247 'dyeing (βάπτουσα) the earth and calling it to witness (καλοῦσα μάρτυρα); / for it was necessary for undiminished grace / for you to await the stigmata of piety'. The passage is discussed by Trilling, 'Myth', pp. 259-260, who notes that the end of line 245 might also be rendered 'naming a martyr', while βάπτουσα, 'dyeing', suggests baptism.

of the foundering state has certainly led him to magnify the incident, perhaps to relocate it from another context or invent it altogether.[37]

The first canto, then, may be seen as a prologue which indicates key topics in the remainder of the poem. Its major themes will subsequently be picked up and elaborated: pious Christian as opposed to barbarous Persian religion, Heraclius' clemency and his charismatic, if controversial, leadership, wielding the banner of the holy icon.

Cantos 2 and 3

A broad analysis of the second and third cantos suggests that they are constructed on parallel lines, each moving, like canto one, towards a climax of tension or excitement before a break in the recitation. Each has three main sections. The first deals with manoeuvres: 2.12-202, Heraclius' reshaping of the army and training exercises; 3.13-136, his attempts to lure the Persians down from the mountains to pitched battle. These incidents elaborate on Heraclius' successful generalship, both in mustering and inspiring his own army and in tricky tactical manoeuvres with the enemy. In both cantos this first section ends with a celebration of Heraclius' virtues, and both include direct speech (2.88-115 a rallying speech of Heraclius to his troops; 3.94-128 an imagined exchange between two of Heraclius' men admiring his hands-on personal leadership). Second, a specific encounter with an individual from the other side is highlighted: the capture of an Arab general fighting with the Persians (2.203-238), and the story of a Persian deserter (3.137-177). In each case the point is to demonstrate Heraclius' clemency, the virtue selected for special prominence in canto one. The final section of each canto culminates in an account of an encounter between the two armies: in each case Heraclius outthinks the enemy by a feigned manoeuvre which leaves the Persians hopelessly outwitted (2.256-375; 3.178-304).[38]

George, then, has shaped his material to demonstrate his chosen themes, which are geared to please a Constantinopolitan audience. Heraclius' decision to lead his army in person was controversial,[39] because it appeared to leave the capital vulnerable to enemy attack.[40] Equally Heraclius'

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[37] It is noteworthy that Theophanes does not mention the shipwreck incident.

[38] 3.305-461 describe Heraclius' recall to Constantinople to deal with a threat from the West (305-340), followed by an extended laudatory peroration with prayers for the future (341-461).

[39] For popular resentment, see *Persian Expedition* 1.112-125; *Heraclias* 2.122-132 (retirement to Hieria to plan campaign), with Whitby, Mary, 'Defender', pp. 261-262, on Heraclius' resistance to pressure to return, 'pitying his mother'.

[40] The Persian Shahin had already approached the walls in 615: *Paschal Chronicle*

mildness and clemency were unlikely to be prominent in the minds of his citizens. His economic measures were unpopular and George more than once hints at discontent;[41] the long development of the theme of Heraclius' paternal kindliness in *On Bonus* should also be interpreted in apologetic terms.[42] Presentation of the Persian enemy as easily duped and misguided in their religious beliefs and practices needs no explanation. It is the flip side to the elaboration of Heraclius as emperor by divine will, whose pious leadership will ensure his people's salvation.

Link passages

How does George articulate this long poem? In the shorter poems, we saw how he frequently introduces himself, especially at beginning and end to suggest his inadequacy for his task or to offer his poem to its honorand. Similar personal intervention, playing on commonplace rhetorical topics, is used both in the *Persian Expedition* and in the *Avar War*,[43] not only at beginning and end, but now also to move between different sections of narrative.[44] So, to take the first canto of the *Persian Expedition*, immediately after the initial invocation of the Trinity, George insists on his lack of flattery and devotion to truth, while at the same time admitting his inability to do justice to his subject (1.35-50, 60-65). Later, after expatiating on Heraclius' virtues, he apologises:

> Pleasure in your excellence has diverted me
> in a digression from the appointed theme.
> (*Persian Expedition* 1.100-101)

and before embarking on his shipwreck narrative:

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s.a., p. 706 (Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 159). Later, in 623, the Avars took even Heraclius unawares (*Paschal Chronicle s.a.*, pp. 712-713 (Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 165, with Appendix 4, pp. 203-205, on date). In 626 the civil governor Bonus associated himself with a plea to the emperor to return (*On Bonus*).

[41] E.g. *Heraclius*, 2.34-70, which presents Heraclius as a healing Galen, here employing 'an emollient verbal drug' (46) rather than surgery: see further Frendo, 'Special Aspects', pp. 51-52. References to Heraclius' desire to spare the commons (*Persian Expedition*, 2.63-65, *Bonus* 100-101, *Heraclias* 2.83-89, etc.) may mask his aloofness to popular feeling. Cf. Whitby, Mary, 'Defender', pp. 258-259. See further Whitby, Michael, '*Deus nobiscum*', p. 195.

[42] Lines 60-75; discussed above, section 1.

[43] I discuss this phenomenon in the *Avar War* more fully in 'George of Pisidia'.

[44] Much as in the contemporary classicising historian Theophylact Simocatta, e.g. *History* 1.2.3; 1.3.1; 1.9.1-3.

> But since I wish to run the life-enhancing course
> in a digression from my goal again,
> may none rush incidentally to check
> with dumbing reins the charioteer of the word.
> (*Persian Expedition* 1.166-169)

This passage further signals that the shipwreck narrative does not properly belong in the context of Heraclius' crossing to Pylae in 622. Such articulating link passages will be relevant to discussion below of the fragments and the *Heraclias*.

Theophanes

Finally in this section, how is George's poem incorporated into Theophanes' narrative? It has been demonstrated that key issues of topography and manoeuvring are sometimes misunderstood in a way which makes nonsense of tactics,[45] but I am more concerned here with editorial approach.[46] The chronicle uses narrative sections mainly from the second and third cantos of George's poem,[47] abbreviating heavily but usually keeping the poet's sequence and often his vocabulary: whole lines are

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[45] Conveniently collected by Howard-Johnston, 'The Official History', p. 60, note 7. It is a moot point whether the opening line of George's third canto, 'The goddess of Persia suffered eclipse' refers to a datable eclipse of the moon (July 28, 622 or, less likely, January 23, 623), which can then be used to provide a chronology for the whole campaign, or whether George's reference is metaphorical, alluding merely to a Persian reversal of fortune, mirrored in the heavenly bodies which were central to their religion. Oikonomides ('A Chronological Note') puts the case for the July eclipse, accepted by Mango and Scott (*The Chronicle*, p. 438). Zuckerman ('The Reign', pp. 209-210) argues that the allusion is metaphorical; I am inclined to agree with Zuckerman. Theophanes' expression ἡ σελήνη ὑπέστη (De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 305.4) does not unambiguously denote eclipse.

[46] Howard-Johnston ('The Official History', p. 64) summarises Sternbach's conclusion following the latter's close comparison of the text of Theophanes and George's poem (cf. above, note 32) as follows: 'Theophanes strove to be faithful to the language as well as the substance of his source, reproducing a fair number of the poet's phrases, mostly jumbled but sometimes with the metre intact.'

[47] Only two pieces of information are drawn from the first canto, the date of Heraclius' departure, the Monday after Easter in 622 (De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 302.33, cf. *Persian Expedition* 1.132-134, 154), and his taking of the *acheiropoietos* icon (De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 303.17-21; cf. *Persian Expedition* 1.139-151). An initial passage in Theophanes (pp. 302.32-303.17) is drawn from another source.

retained, although sometimes reordered or varied with a synonym.[48] The elaborate rhetoric is largely stripped out – link passages, extended comparisons, digressions, apostrophe and so on; so too is the panegyrical emphasis on Heraclius' clemency in the episodes dealing with the Arab captive and the Persian deserter. One of George's two speeches is eliminated, but a few lines from the first are retained;[49] simple comparisons are also kept – the likening of the Persians to deer and goats as they scramble in the mountains.[50] And Theophanes rounds off his narrative with a rhetorical question taken from George: 'Who had expected that the hard-fighting race of the Persians would ever show their backs to the Romans?'[51] These points bear on fragments from lost poems of George embedded in later parts of Theophanes, to which I now turn.

III: *The fragments and the Heraclias*

Theophanes' treatment of George's *Persian Expedition* can only be a partial analogy for his use of George's poetry in the campaigns of 624-628 because James Howard-Johnston has shown that for the latter George's poetry was not the sole source, but was integrated with a second narrative, which provided a precise and detailed military account. He identifies the second source as Heraclius' own war dispatches.[52]

The poetic fragments are not spread evenly through Theophanes' narrative, but cluster at high points, in which Heraclius is centre stage.[53] Many, however, treat material similar to the narrative of George's *Persian Expedition*: speeches by Heraclius to his troops, a reply from his men commenting on his inspirational leadership, and an admiring comment from the Persian general on Heraclius' heroic fight,[54] hostile reference to Persian

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[48] E.g. synonym substituted: Pylae: De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 303.9; cf. *Persian Expedition* 2.10; synonym and slight variation: De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 304.8; cf. *Persian Expedition* 2.142.

[49] De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 304.1-3; cf. *Persian Expedition* 2.107-110.

[50] De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 305.6; cf. *Persian Expedition* 3.23 (δόρκαδες); De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 305.30; cf. *Persian Expedition* 3.251 (ἀγρίων αἰγῶν δίκην).

[51] De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 306.6-7, transl. Mango and Scott; cf. *Persian Expedition* 3.296-7. Note the rhetorical question among the fragments of George's poetry relating to the events of 628, fr. 48 Pertusi: 'Who would have expected Khusro to flee?'

[52] Howard-Johnston, 'The Official History', pp. 67-72. My own comments in this section are greatly indebted to his meticulous work.

[53] *Ibidem*, p. 74.

[54] Frr. 3, 5, 6, 19. Cf. *Persian Expedition* 2.88-115; 3.93-128. Note also fr. 50, from

religion,[55] to the Persians roaming in difficult territory,[56] the resolve 'to steal a battle by night',[57] a reference to the Virgin who bore without seed,[58] lively animal comparisons – the barbarians jumping like frogs as Heraclius fights on a bridge, or the Persian Razates 'trailing behind like a dog'.[59] Finally there are a number of references, some in a more exclamatory style, to the concluding stages of the war – the death of Khusro and Heraclius' return to Constantinople.[60] A first hypothesis might be that the material preserved in Theophanes derives from a long narrative poem like the *Persian Expedition* which covered Heraclius' second and third campaigns. This was the view of Leo Sternbach.[61]

I turn at this point to George's second and last major poem on Heraclius' Persian campaigns, the *Heraclias*, a survey of the whole reign composed in the light of the arrival in Constantinople of news of the death of Khusro in 628. This poem shares the exultant tone of George's short *On the Restoration of the Cross*, likewise composed in celebration of the arrival in the capital of good news. George's editor, Agostino Pertusi, suggested that the fragments in Theophanes and those in the *Suda* lexicon derive from a lost third canto of this poem.[62] The proposal has points in its favour. First there is some external support in a fourteenth-century scholium in one of the manuscripts of George's *Hexaemeron*, which refers to 'the three cantos of the *Heraclias*', whereas we have only two. Second there is a good case to be made for the view that the *Heraclias* as we have it is incomplete.[63] Like the *Persian Expedition*, this work has a massive panegyrical prologue which occupies the whole of its first canto. It has rightly been doubted whether a

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a letter of Heraclius to Khusro, offering peace.

[55] Fr. 4α 'the deceit of the coals'. Cf. *Persian Expedition* 1.19-34; 3.12.

[56] Fr. 5 (from a speech of Heraclius). Cf. *Persian Expedition* 3.27, 237-241.

[57] Fr. 9. Cf. *Avar War* 116 (of the 'Avar surprise'); *Persian Expedition* 2.364-365.

[58] Fr. 26. Cf. *Persian Expedition* 1.145; *Avar War* 2.

[59] Frr. 18, 29. Cf. *Persian Expedition* 3.23, 251; 2.357.

[60] Frr. 48 (cf. *Persian Expedition* 3. 296-297), 50, 52, 54.

[61] Sternbach took into account also the additional fragments from George preserved in the *Suda* lexicon: see Howard-Johnston, 'The Official History', pp. 63, 72-73. It is also plausible to suppose, on the basis of the narrative of the *Persian Expedition*, that Theophanes preserves George's material in its original sequence. Howard-Johnston, *ibidem*, pp. 72-74, discusses and rejects Sternbach's suggestion, doubting that a major poem on the 624-628 campaigns could have disappeared completely from the record.

[62] Pertusi, *Giorgio*, pp. 23-30; first at *idem*, 'Dei poemi', pp. 417-427.

[63] That the *Heraclias* might have got split up may be made more plausible by the fact that two of the five manuscripts of George's historical poems, including the earliest, Cod. Paris. suppl. gr. 690 (eleventh c.) transmit only the first two cantos of the *Persian Expedition*: see Pertusi, *Giorgio*, pp. 49-62.

poem with a prologue of 241 lines could have been completed in a second canto which is in fact slightly shorter, only 230 lines.[64] By the end of the second canto the narrative has reached only the symbolical destruction of the major Persian fire temple at Takht-i-Sulaiman in 624.[65] The canto ends abruptly after a digression on the family of the founder of the temple, Ardashir, without George's usual epilogue returning to the poet and the occasion.[66]

A major difficulty with Pertusi's suggestion, however, is whether the entire campaigns of 624-628, and the fifty-seven fragments of George's poetry drawn from Theophanes and the *Suda* and arranged in Pertusi's edition could have come from a single lost canto of, say, 350 lines.[67] Furthermore, the first two cantos of *Heraclias* are rather different in style from the *Persian Expedition*. They include no speeches, but employ a snapshot technique, singling out highlights of Heraclius' entire reign starting from the overthrow of Phocas.[68] The style is exclamatory, like that of *On the Restoration of the Cross*.[69] The links introducing the poet himself and his words, such a prominent bonding element in both the *Persian Expedition* and the *Avar War*, are rare, replaced by juxtaposed narrative segments with interlocking language and imagery, more like the technique of, say, *On Heraclius' Return*.

At two points, however, personal intervention is used, and indeed developed at greater length than in the earlier poems. George concludes the first canto (1.219-241) with 23 lines on the torrent of material available to him and his difficulty in ordering it or dealing with it at all.[70] And the

[64] Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 25.

[65] South-east of Ganzak in Atropatene: see Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns', pp. 16-17, with map, p. 2.

[66] Cf. Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 26; Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns', p. 8, with note 26. This lack of the usual conclusion now makes me doubtful (*contra* Whitby, Mary, 'Defender', p. 254, note 35) about the argument for the completeness of the poem based on ring composition put forward by Frendo, 'Classical and Christian Influences', pp. 56-58.

[67] E.g. Howard-Johnston, 'The Official History', pp. 72-73. Frendo, 'Classical and Christian Influences', p. 58, postulates two further lost poems covering the second and third campaigns of Heraclius. Length of possible third canto: the third canto of the *Persian Expedition* is considerably longer than the first two, (461 lines, as opposed to 252 and 375), although the peroration begins at line 341. Cf. note 38 above.

[68] Cf. Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns', pp. 8-9; Frendo, 'Classical and Christian Influences', pp. 54-56.

[69] E.g. opening imperatives, 1.1, 6, 13 (cf. *Restoration* 1); anaphora 1.15, 20, 22, 26; rhetorical questions, 1.60-62; etc.

[70] The passage is held together by play on the theme of 'mingling', which

second canto, after touching on events from the death of Phocas to Heraclius' 622 campaign, has an extended passage of *praeteritio* on George's inadequacies (144-166) which allows him to skim, again in 23 lines, over Heraclius' journey east in 624, his gathering of the armies, crossing of the Euphrates and capture of Dvin.[71] It may be that further personal interventions in later (lost) sections of the poem enabled George to be similarly selective in the material handled. Such selectivity would account for the need for a second source in Theophanes' narrative to supply details of the campaigns of 624-628, in contrast to his narrative of the 622 campaign for which George's *Persian Expedition* is the major source.

However, the extent of the fragments remains problematical: Howard-Johnston has calculated that, if those from Theophanes and the *Suda* are taken together, they cover a minimum of eighteen episodes from the campaigns.[72] Furthermore the incidence of speeches and similes in the fragments is indicative of a leisurely style, while, as mentioned, there are no speeches in the first two cantos of the *Heraclias*.[73] Howard-Johnston's ingenious suggestion is that the fragments derive from a series of short, independent poems composed by George and inserted by him into Heraclius' military dispatches to give prominence to the emperor's role in the campaigns. This hypothesis has the great attraction of accounting for the coverage of the fragments and their different character from both the extant short poems and the *Heraclias*, but it does entail a hybrid prose/verse work of unparalleled character.

I have no new proposal to offer, but end with a small observation about the first canto of the *Heraclias* which may edge the balance towards Pertusi's hypothesis that the fragments derive from lost sections of this poem, but which also underlines the close connection between George's poetry and Heraclius' campaign dispatches. The *Heraclias* opens with an invocation to the heavenly bodies which echoes phraseology from the Psalms.[74] The campaign dispatch from Heraclius announcing the fall of

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encompasses Heraclius' battles, George's own confusion, the mingling waters of rivers and sea, and those of Heraclius' sweat; the water imagery culminates in George's resolution to 'unfurl' his mind and 'swim upon the deeds themselves'.

[71] The remaining 60-odd lines of the canto (167-230) centre on the destruction of the fire-temple and associated material.

[72] Howard-Johnston, 'The Official History', pp. 74-75.

[73] Fr. 3 (De Boor, *Theophanes Chronographia*, p. 307.3-16) poses a particular problem, since it is part of a speech made by Heraclius before the destruction of the fire-temple narrated at the end of canto 2, but this passage does not derive from the extant *Heraclias*; cf. Pertusi, *Giorgio*, pp. 27-28.

[74] *Heraclias* 1.1-5, cf. Psalms 94(95).1, 97(98).7f., 99.(100).1. Psalmic language is also used in the context of victory exultation at the beginning and end of *On the*

Khusro and preserved in the *Paschal Chronicle*[75] opens with related echoes of the Psalms, and the *Heraclias* is rightly seen as a response to that dispatch.[76] In addition, the final section before the peroration of the first canto of the *Heraclias* (1.201-218) is an anticipation of the emperor's return to Constantinople: Heraclius is hailed as general of the universe's birthday (1.201) and

> All adorn the city at your appearance,
> and gathering flowers of the spirit
> garland you with prayers as with roses.[77]
> (*Heraclias* 1.212-214)

It is exactly at this point, the *adventus* of Heraclius at Hieria, where he was received with acclamations and tears of joy by his son and the patriarch, that the quotations from George in the narrative of Theophanes end.[78] So we have here an interesting cluster of connections: the opening of the *Heraclias* is linked in theme and tone to the opening of Heraclius' military dispatch and the end of canto one is linked in theme and tone to the end of the fragments from George preserved in Theophanes' chronicle. The exclamatory tone of the *Heraclias* is also reflected in fragment 48, alluding to Khusro's unexpected flight.[79] If the first canto of the *Heraclias* surveyed the span of the entire poem up to Heraclius' 628 *adventus*, then Pertusi may have been right to associate George's fragments with the missing canto – or perhaps we should postulate more than one canto? – of the poem. At any rate this conjunction between the *Heraclias*, Heraclius' 628 campaign dispatch and the narrative of Theophanes reinforces Howard-Johnston's hypothesis that the narrative of Theophanes combines military dispatch with snatches of George's poetry.[80] But perhaps we should envisage George composing a

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Restoration of the Cross 1, 112-116: cf. Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievment', p. 180ff.
[75] *S.a.* 628, pp. 182-183 (Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*).
[76] Detailed comment: Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', pp. 181-182.
[77] A good example of George's ambivalence between the actual and the metaphorical.
[78] Pp. 327.24-328.10.
[79] 'Who would have expected Khusro to flee?' As noted (above, at note 51) Theophanes rounds off his material from the *Persian Expedition* with a rhetorical question derived from George.
[80] Howard-Johnston ('The Official History', pp. 70-71) notes that the date given by the *Paschal Chronicle* (p. 729; cf. Whitby, Michael and Whitby, Mary, *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 184) for the start of Heraclius' final campaign, October 17, tallies with Theophanes' date for the start of the last campaign (p. 317.26), indicating a link between the lost military dispatch alluded to in the *Paschal Chronicle* and the narrative of Theophanes.

poem of selective highlights which was independent of the text of the dispatch.[81]

I conclude on a note of *aporia*. The majority of the fragments are similar in character to the narrative of the *Persian Expedition*, suggesting that they derive from another such poem, as Sternbach proposed. The *Heraclias* as we have it appears mutilated, but its narrative style is unlike that of the *Persian Expedition* and of the fragments, except for the last few. The fragments appear to cover too much ground all to have been incorporated in a single lost canto of the *Heraclias*, although its first canto does encompass the same range of material. If the fragments derive from independent short poems, they differ in style, most obviously by the inclusion of speeches, from the surviving short poems. My overall aim has, however, been broader than this intractable problem – to illustrate some of George's poetic techniques and to comment on the variety and development of his poetry in the panegyrical poems, not to mention the so-called 'religious' poems which Pertusi relegated to a separate volume, never published.

Finally, there can be no question about the relevance of a study of this poet to a volume centred on the theme of cultural change. It has been a long-standing preoccupation of students of George to identify his place in the literary tradition.[82] In many ways he appears to stand apart from the high-brow poets of the sixth century with their affected and apologetic classicism. George took bold steps in abandoning the straitjacket of the elaborate Nonnian hexameter for the less constricting iambic which enabled him to create a personal idiom, and in rejecting the classical poet's 'embarrassment' at the introduction of biblical and contemporary material, a position in any case untenable for one whose poetry is fired by strong religious conviction and clear familiarity with biblical works. He retains the apparatus of the classicising poet, its commonplace topics and allusion to the great texts and figures of the classical past, but his pleasure in punning and word-play of every kind, alongside his overt Christianity, looks forward to the new and explicitly Byzantine literature, already foreshadowed in the sixth-century hymnographer Romanos, but which emerged definitively with the literary revival of the ninth century and beyond. George's position as publicist for a political regime has roots deep-seated in the Roman and Attic

[81] All of George's poetry was, in my view, composed for performance, but the prose/verse work envisaged in the 'Official History', with its changes of register between precise military narrative and high-flown poetic elaboration, would have made special demands in performance.

[82] E.g. Nissen ('Historisches Epos') submitted Corippus and George to analysis in order to determine whether their poems were pure epic, pure panegyric or mixed forms (p. 299).

past, but his mode of expression reflects the seventh-century watershed of a new religious world and a new taste in literary styles.[83]

[83] On George's distinctive style, see further Frendo, 'The Poetic Achievement', pp. 179-187. For changes in seventh-century culture and literature, see (e.g.) Averil Cameron, 'Byzantium'; *eadem*, 'The Eastern Provinces'; *eadem*, 'New Themes'; Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 403-435; Whitby, Michael, 'Greek Historical Writing'.

HERACLIUS AND THE *RESTITUTIO CRUCIS*

NOTES ON SYMBOLISM AND IDEOLOGY*

Jan Willem Drijvers

Introduction

The capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in the spring of 614 was a tremendous shock to the Christian world. The psychological impact of its conquest for the Byzantines is perhaps only comparable to the trauma the Romans experienced when Rome was sacked in 410.[1] Since the days of Constantine the Great, Jerusalem had been the emblem of the Christian empire and seventh-century Jerusalem was in all respects the Christian city par excellence, the emblematic capital of Christianity, and the symbolical center of the world. As such, it was closely connected with the Christian I-deology of the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires. The capture of Jerusalem was accompanied by the destruction of churches and the killing of Christians, but perhaps the heaviest blow to Byzantine morale was the capture of the True Cross, the relics of which had been kept in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre since at least the 340s.[2] The symbol of the Cross

* The research for this paper was done during my fellowship year (2000-2001) at the National Humanities Center North Carolina. I would like to thank the participants in the workshop for their comments and criticisms on the first draft of this paper.

[1] Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 224-226. For a succinct overview of the siege and sack of Jerusalem with references to all relevant sources, see Schick, *The Christian Communities*, pp. 33-39.

[2] Cyril of Jerusalem reports in his *Catechetical Lectures* (*c.* 350) that the remains of the Cross were present in Jerusalem; *Catech.* 4.10; 10.19; 13.4. Most sources report that the Persians took the Cross away. However, a contemporary source, the *Capture of Jerusalem* (*Expugnatio Hierosolymae*) by the monk Antiochus Strategus, reports that Zachariah, the patriarch of Jerusalem, when sent into exile to Persia in 614, took the relic of the Cross with him. See Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 218-224 and Stemberger, 'Jerusalem', pp. 261-263 for a synopsis of Antiochus' account, in which the Cross plays a central role; see also Wheeler, 'Imaging the Sasanian Capture'. It is a matter of some interest as to what exactly the Persians carried off and was ultimately restored by Heraclius. Were they, as seems most likely, the relics of the 'actual' holy wood that were being preserved in a gold and silver box, according to the fourth-century pilgrim Egeria (*It. Eger.* 37.1)? Or was it the gold and bejeweled crucifix that Theodosius II had donated and that was placed on the Rock of

signified, among other things, life, salvation, victory, and power. Moreover, through its presence on Golgotha, it made Jerusalem the City of Christendom. The removal and transportation of the Cross to the heartland of Persia was therefore an act laden with symbolism. The Byzantine defeat by the Persians could not have been better expressed than by the removal of the Cross, which had given Byzantine emperors since Constantine the Great so many victories over their enemies, was for Christians in the Mediterranean world and beyond the ultimate Christian symbol, and had given Jerusalem its special status as the unique city of Christendom.

Where the Christians lamented, the Jews rejoiced. The latter had, if we believe the Christian sources, supported the Persians in their conquest of Palestine and its major cities, including Jerusalem. The details about the taking of Jerusalem are obscure and the (Christian) sources are biased and contradictory, but it does seem that the Jews played a role in its capture.[3] They may even have ruled, or at least had dominance over, Jerusalem for some years, and attempted to transform it into a Jewish city again.[4] Furthermore, the Jews may have made efforts to resume the Temple services.[5] However, this was temporary and by 617 the Persians seem to have returned the city to the Christians, then led by Modestus, replacing the patriarch

Calvary, according to the ninth-century chronicler Theophanes (*Chron.* AM 5920; English translation by Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 135-136). About doubts as to whether Theodosius actually had a cross placed on Golgotha, see Taylor, *Christians*, pp. 122-124.

[3] Sebeos, chapt. 34, pp. 115-116 = Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, I, pp. 68-70, II, pp. 207-208; Strategius, *Exp. Hieros. A.D. 614*, Latin translation by Garitte (*Expugnationis Hierosolymae*), French translation by Couret, 'La prise de Jérusalem', partial English translation by Conybeare, 'Antiochus Strategos'; Sophronius, *Anacreontica XIV* (Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica*, pp. 102-1070); *Chron. Pasch.* 704; Theophanes AM 6106 (translation by Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 431-432); Nicephorus 12 (Mango, *Nikephorus*). For the role of the Jews, see further, for instance, Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, pp. 107-110; Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, pp. 261-265; Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 17-46, pp. 22-26; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 129-172; Schick, *The Christian Communities*, pp. 26-27.

[4] Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, pp. 265-268; Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', p. 22. Cf., however, Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 212-213 and Averil Cameron, 'Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine', pp. 78-79. Cameron rightly warns against the bias of the Christian sources about the Jewish role in 614 and thereafter: 'It is quite obvious – though many historians have accepted these accounts more or less at face value – that these are deeply biased and distorted accounts' (p. 79).

[5] See, for instance, Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, p. 266; Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 26-28.

Zachariah who had been exiled to Persia.[6] Modestus began restoring the demolished churches and it seems that the life of the Christian community gradually went back to normal.

After a successful campaign against the Sassanians in the years 622-628, the emperor Heraclius was able to bring back the relics of the Cross to Jerusalem and to restore the holy wood to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Golgotha.[7] This event is known as the *Restitutio Sanctae Crucis* and marked a major change in Heraclius' reign. There is a relative abundance of sources on Heraclius' restitution of the Cross, in both contemporary or near-contemporary writings as well as later Byzantine sources. The event is also mentioned in various Syriac and Arabic chronicles.[8] In spite of the wealth of sources, it is hard, if not impossible, to reconstruct from them the historical 'reality' about the restoration of the Cross; the available material is contradictory and fact and fiction are not always easily distinguishable. Nevertheless, scholars over the last century have in a positivistic manner attempted to discover the historical 'truth'. This has resulted in admirable publications by prominent Byzantinists dealing with matters such as how, when, where, and from whom Heraclius received the relics of the Cross after he had successfully concluded his campaign against the Persians in 628. Foremost in these studies is the question about the exact date of Heraclius' restitution of the Cross.[9] In a nutshell, the most likely sequence of events is that after the successful conclusion of his Persian campaign in 628, Heraclius concluded a peace treaty with the Persians in the summer of 629. Included in this treaty was the deliverance of the relics of the Cross. The relics were handed over to Heraclius in Hierapolis. From there he journeyed, possibly with a detour through Armenia, to Palestine to restore

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[6] About the length of the Jewish domination in Jerusalem, see Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, p. 111; Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, pp. 267-268; Mango, 'The Temple Mount', pp. 4-5. For Persian rule over Jerusalem, see Schick, *The Christian Communities*, pp. 39-47.

[7] For the campaign, see Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns'.

[8] Main sources for the *Restitutio Crucis*: Strategius, *Exp. Hieros*. 24 (Conybeare, 'Antiochus Strategos', p. 516); Sophronius, *Anacreontica XVIII* (Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica*, pp. 114-117); George of Pisidia, *In Restitutionem S. Crucis* (Pertusi, *Giorgio*); Anastasius, *BHG* 88 (Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, I, pp. 98-99); Theophanes, AM 6120 (Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 458-459); Nicephorus 18 (Mango, *Nikephoros*). For Theophanes' and Nicephorus' accounts, see Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier*, pp. 157-160, pp. 328-341. For the sources, see further Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, note xliii (pp. 384-387).

[9] For instance, Baynes, 'The Restoration'; Frolow, 'La vraie Croix'; Grumel, 'La Reposition'. A summary of the discussion and the best reconstruction of the events is given by Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, p. 293ff.

the Cross in great ceremony to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem on March 21, 630.

Be that as it may, my focus is on the symbolical and ideological significance of the *Restitutio Crucis* rather than on the historical reconstruction of the restoration of the Cross. Why was it so important to Heraclius to restore in person the Cross to Jerusalem and have his court panegyrist, George of Pisidia, compose a poem about it? What was the Ideological reasoning behind this extraordinary act? An act which gets an even higher profile by the fact that Heraclius was the first Byzantine emperor ever to visit Jerusalem.

Precisely because the event was anything but void of symbolical meaning and signified an important ideological change in Heraclius' reign, the topic is worth investigating in full. It can give us a better understanding of Heraclius and his rule at a crucial point in his reign. In earlier studies, the symbolism and ideology behind Heraclius' *Restitutio Crucis* have received some attention and explanations have been presented.[10] Although the topic probably deserves a book-length study, my purpose in this paper is to bring together what has previously been argued about the symbolism of the *Restitutio Crucis* as well as to discuss the implications of the restoration of the Cross with regard to the ideology of Christian emperorship and the dawning of a new age, in particular by Heraclius' evoking of Constantine's reign.[11] This subject is of relevance not only to a better understanding of Heraclius' reign but also to its 'Nachleben'. The restitution of the Cross was considered by later generations to be the most important event of Heraclius' rule. It was the subject of visual art and popular legend – in particular in the Latin West – the most widespread and well known of which was probably the one in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*.[12] In these stories, Heraclius was seen as the restorer of Christianity after he had brought back the Cross from his opponent Chosroes, who is depicted as the Antichrist. Not surprisingly, therefore, Heraclius' campaign against the Persian enemy

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[10] Frolow, 'La vraie Croix'; Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius'; Mango, 'Deux études', pp. 105-118; *idem*, 'The Temple Mount'; Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse*, II, p. 309ff.

[11] I will leave aside Frolow's ('La vraie Croix', pp. 101-105) interpretation of the *Restitutio Crucis*. According to Frolow, Heraclius should have returned the Cross in order to silence the ongoing discussions about the illegitimacy and incestuousness of his marriage with his niece Martina and to consolidate his moral authority. I consider this interpretation unlikely. For Martina, see now Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp. 61-72.

[12] For Heraclius' 'Nachleben' in the Latin West, see Kretzenbacher, *Kreuzholzlegenden*, pp. 67-77; Curschmann, 'Constantine-Heraclius'; Baert, 'Observations'; *eadem*, 'Das Antependium'; *eadem*, *Een erfenis van heilig hout*, pp. 109-151.

was seen, especially in the West, as the First Crusade and Heraclius himself as the first crusading knight. In later writings, the restitution of the Cross was connected with the stories about the discovery of the Cross by Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. In the ninth century, Hrabanus Maurus, bishop of Mainz, was the first person whom we know of to do so; his example was followed by others.[13] The connection with the events of the period of Constantine is an important one and goes back to Heraclius' own time. George of Pisidia had already made this association with Constantine in his poem *In Restitutionem Sanctae Crucis* (see below).

Other aspects that will be treated in this paper are the associations with King David in connection with the *restitutio*, the symbolical importance of the restoration of the Cross with regard to Christian-Jewish relations, and the importance of the Cross as a unifying symbol for church and state.

The legend of the Cross

In the first three centuries of our era, the Cross was considered a symbol of disgrace and powerlessness. This changed dramatically with Constantine's vision shortly before the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312.[14] The sign of the cross rapidly became a symbol of power and victory that could be seen throughout the Roman Empire. The Roman armies carried the cross as a

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[13] Hrabanus Maurus, *Hom. LXX: Reversio sanctae atque gloriossimae Crucis Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, cols. 131-134. Hrabanus calls Heraclius not by his own name but by the name of Gracchus. After having given the story about Helena's finding of the Cross, Hrabanus tells how Chosroes took away the Cross from Jerusalem and used it in a divine cult for himself. After having conquered the Cross, he built for himself a gold and silver tower and placed in it images of the sun, moon, and stars. Pumping water up to the top of the tower Chosroes let it rain, and machines in an underground cave produced noises like thunder. After his abdication in favour of his son, he settled himself in the tower and sat on a throne with the wood of the Cross on his right side representing the Son and a cock on his left side representing the Holy Spirit, and decreed that he should be called God. After Gracchus-Heraclius had defeated Chosroes' son in a man-to-man fight the Byzantine emperor journeyed to Chosroes. He offered to spare Chosroes' life on the condition that he would convert. Chosroes, however, refused and was consequently decapitated. Gracchus-Heraclius demolished the tower, took the Cross, and brought it back to Jerusalem where he reinstalled it. The best-known version of this so-called *exaltatio crucis* legend, of which the source is not known, can be found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*; Nicephorus 12 (Mango, *Nikephoros*) gives a slightly different version. See further Frolow, 'La vraie Croix', p. 98; Baert, 'Exaltatio Crucis', pp. 150-151. For other sources that connect the *inventio* and *restitutio/exaltatio*, see Kretzenbacher, *Kreuzholzlegenden*, p. 34ff.

[14] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 1.28-29, including the commentary by Averil Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius*, p. 204ff.; Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* 44.5.

military standard (the *labarum*) when going into battle; Christians made the sign of the cross out of reverence or for protection; crosses were seen as graffiti on houses, sewn on clothes, and even as tattoos.[15] Theologians and church leaders soon recognised the importance of the cross symbol. One of them, bishop Cyril of Jerusalem (350-387), called the Cross the glory of the Catholic Church, a source of illumination and redemption, the end of sin, the source of life, a crown of glory instead of dishonour, the ground of salvation, the foundation of the faith, as well as the sign of the Second Coming of Christ.[16] The same Cyril of Jerusalem informs us that in the days of Constantine the True Cross had been found in Jerusalem and had since been preserved in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[17] The Cross attracted many pilgrims who could venerate the holy wood on two annual occasions: Good Friday, when the relics of the Cross were put on display for everyone to see and touch, and 14 September, the alleged date of the discovery as well as that of the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[18] Cyril also recounts that, by the middle of the fourth century, pieces of the Cross had already been spread over the Roman world.[19] In the second half of the fourth century, a story developed about how and by whom the Cross had been found. This narrative originated in Jerusalem and Cyril was most likely its *auctor intellectualis*.[20] According to this legend of the *inventio Crucis*, the empress Helena, mother of Constantine, came to Jerusalem in order to search for the Cross.[21] When a sign from heaven indicated to her where the Cross was hidden, she tore down the temple of Aphrodite, which was built on that spot, and began to dig. She found three crosses. Either by way of Pilatus' *titulus* or through the healing/raising of a mortally sick/dead person, Christ's Cross was recognised. Helena sent part of the Cross to her son Constantine while the other part was kept in Jerusalem in a case of gold and silver.[22] The nails with which Christ was attached to the Cross were also found and sent to Constantine. At the place of the discovery Helena had a church built: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This story, known as

[15] See, for instance, Gagé, 'Σταυρὸς νικοποιός. La victoire impériale'; Stockmeier, *Theologie und Kult*, pp. 212-217.
[16] *Catech.* 13.1, 19, 20, 22, 37 (cf. 2-4), 38; 15.22). See Walker, *Holy City Holy Places?*, pp. 256-257, p. 328.
[17] *Letter to Constantius* 3 (Bihain, 'L'épitre', pp. 287-288).
[18] *It. Eger.* 48.1-2; 37.1-3.
[19] See the references in note 2.
[20] J.W. Drijvers, 'Promoting Jerusalem'.
[21] For the legend of *inventio Crucis*, see, for instance, Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*; J.W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*.
[22] Egeria mentions a gold and silver box in which the relic of the Cross was kept (*It. Eger.* 37.1).

the Helena legend, was included in the major fifth-century *Church Histories* as well as in other late antique sources. Around the year 400, two other versions of the legend of the *inventio crucis* came into being: the Protonike legend and the Judas Kyriakos legend.[23] The former one was only known in Syriac (and later on also in Armenian) and is an adaptation of the Helena legend, set in the first century AD; it need not concern us here. The second one is of particular importance for several reasons. The Judas Kyriakos legend is characterised by blatant anti-Judaism. In this version, it is not Helena who found the Cross but the Jew, Judas, a fictional character. Through his discovery, he presented demonstrable proof that the Jews had indeed killed Christ. Judas himself had become convinced of the power of the Christian God and converted – he would become bishop of Jerusalem and die a martyr's death in the reign of Julian. This version of the discovery of the Cross became the most important and best known one in the Byzantine and Western Middle Ages. It is an ideological story about the defeat of Judaism: the Cross by which the Jews had killed Christ and had attempted to eradicate Christianity now, through its rediscovery, became the ultimate symbol of Christian victory over Judaism.

The evocation of Constantine's reign

The reign of Constantine marked the beginning of a new, now Christian era. The symbol par excellence of this new age was the Cross. Later generations of emperors, both Western and Byzantine, regarded Constantine as their role model and his reign as their example.[24] However, this did not happen immediately, but would take some three hundred years. Although there are earlier references to Constantine,[25] it seems that the evoking of Constantine by Byzantine emperors was especially in vogue between the seventh and tenth centuries. This is attested by the composition of the Byzantine *vitae* of Constantine dating from this period,[26] the many emperors who were named Constantine, and the references to the first Christian emperor in theological

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[23] See J.W. Drijvers, 'The Protonike Legend'; H.J.W. Drijvers and J.W. Drijvers, *The Finding of the True Cross*.
[24] See Ewig, 'Das Bild Constantins'; Kaegi, 'Vom Nachleben Konstantins'; Linder, 'The Myth'; *idem*, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga'; Magdalino, *New Constantines*.
[25] At Chalcedon (451), Marcian was acclaimed as New Constantine; in 518 Justin I was hailed as *novus Constantinus* by the crowd in the hippodrome. Both as Caesar (574-578) and Augustus (578-582), Tiberius employed the name New Constantine. See Michael Whitby, 'Images for Emperors'.
[26] Winkelmann, 'Die älteste erhaltene griechische hagiographische Vita'; Lieu and Montserrat, *From Constantine to Julian*, p. 97ff.; Lieu, 'From History to Legend', pp. 151-157.

controversies.[27] In these *vitae*, as well as in the visual arts, Constantine and the Cross were closely connected and the legend of the finding of the Cross constituted an important element in these *lives*.

The turning point in the cult of Constantine came with Heraclius. He named three of his sons after the fourth-century emperor and associated himself in official documents, inscriptions, and coinage with Constantine.[28] Heraclius must have been well aware of the importance of the symbol of the Cross and its connection with Constantine; there were, for instance, many reminders of that connection in Constantinople where relics of the Cross were present.[29] However, it seems that only after his defeat of the Persians, in 628, did it dawn on Heraclius how he could exploit the symbol of the Cross for ideological purposes. George of Pisidia's poems dealing with the Persian campaign of 622-628 – the *Persian Expedition* and the *Heraclias* – even though they depict Heraclius as a true Christian soldier and servant of God who fought with His aid,[30] and presenting the war against the Persians as one with a crusading aura, as well as a Christian war against the Zoroastrian infidels, they contain not a single reference to the Cross.[31] Evidently the recapture of the Cross was not one of the primary objectives of Heraclius' campaign, as some later sources report.[32] Its restitution in Jerusalem did, however, mark the conclusion of the campaign and the start of a new era.

Sometime between 628, when the Persian defeat became final, and the summer of 629, something or someone must have impelled Heraclius to realise the ideological and propagandistic benefits of returning the Cross to Jerusalem since the restitution of the precious relic by the Persians seems to have been part of the peace agreement concluded in the summer of 629. Heraclius must have realised that the restitution of the Cross offered great opportunities for a new political programme of which the evoking of the reign of Constantine was an important part. Just as Constantine had conquered the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire with the help of the Cross, by defeating his opponent Licinius in the battle of Chrysopolis in 324 and restoring in this way the unity of the empire, Heraclius reinstalled the

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[27] See, in general, Magdalino, *New Constantines*; Brandes, 'Konstantin der Grosse'. I am grateful to Wolfram Brandes for drawing my attention to his paper.

[28] 'Ηράκλειος ὁ νέος Κωνσταντῖνος (612); Κωνσταντῖνος ἕτερος (615/6); Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ μικρός (625/5); see further Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius', p. 226 note 50. For Heraclius' children with Martina, see Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier*, pp. 33-40.

[29] See, for instance, Frolow, *La relique, passim.*

[30] See Mary Whitby, 'Defender'.

[31] Frolow, 'La vraie Croix', pp. 91-92; Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, pp. 250-251.

[32] See Frolow, 'La vraie Croix', pp. 89-90.

unity of the empire by reconquering the territory that the Persians had captured in the previous decade and making the Cross the symbol of this victory.[33] By doing so, Heraclius clearly stepped into Constantine's shoes and became his worthy follower and son, as George of Pisidia makes perfectly clear:

> May Constantine the Great laud such as you [Heraclius] because anybody else will not suffice in eulogizing you. Appear again, Constantine, in Rome; applaud your son, seeing how he restored your legacy which he received confused. It is proper that you now, having left the celestial city, take part with us in joy in the terrestrial city. Sad, in fact, was your spirit, and distressed as long as you did not see the Cross returning and triumphant, that Cross which you for the first time found again hidden in its own place and which your son [Heraclius] returned to its first place although it was not merely hidden, but had reached the furnaces of Persia. You have, in fact, a son by the grace of divine providence, just as if Constantine were found fortified by the life-giving wood.[34]

The *Restitutio Crucis* gave Heraclius the opportunity to associate his reign more emphatically with that of his exemplary predecessor and present his rule as a renewal of that of Constantine. He may even have adopted, although not officially, the name of New Constantine.[35] Heraclius' restoration of the Cross, therefore, should be viewed as a refounding of Constantine's Christian empire.[36]

The Christian empire was ideally a united empire both territorially and religiously. With regard to religious unity, Heraclius was again following in Constantine's footsteps and trying to emulate his predecessor. It is obvious that Constantine, by convening the Council of Nicaea in 325, pursued, although unsuccessfully, a unified church without any theological and christological disagreements. Later generations considered him the convener of councils and the defender of orthodoxy.[37] As in the days of Constantine, the

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[33] In several Byzantine Constantine *vitae* there are accounts of a Persian campaign by Constantine. Of course Constantine never led a military expedition against the Persians, but these accounts show that the personages of Heraclius and Constantine had become intermingled. Constantine's (fictitious) Persian campaign clearly echoes Heraclius' successful military enterprises against Chosroes; see Lieu, 'From History to Legend', pp. 167-168.

[34] *In Restitutionem S. Crucis* 47-63 (Pertusi, *Giorgio*, pp. 227-228).

[35] Grégoire, *Receuil*, Nr. 79, 80, 113; Petzl, *Die Inschriften*, Nr. 851, 851A; Engelmann, Knibber and Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften*, Nr. 1195.

[36] Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga', p. 1040.

[37] *Ibidem*, p. 1022.

church in the seventh century was hopelessly divided. In the reconquered eastern territories, monophysites were a majority which was, of course, heavily opposed and even hostile to the official creed of the Chalcedonian Church. In order to promote conciliation, Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, in close collaboration with Heraclius, adopted the doctrine of monoergism in 631. Although it seemed initially that both dyophysites and monophysites could live with the new doctrine, it was the Chalcedonian, Sophronius, the newly appointed patriarch of Jerusalem, who rejected monoergism at a local synod in 634. Heraclius then ruled by edict, in late 634 or early 635, that the question of the energies of Christ should no longer be debated. In 638, in a new attempt to achieve ecclesiastical unity and to gain the loyalty and support of the monophysites, Heraclius issued the doctrine of monotheletism in an imperial edict, the *Ekthesis*. This new principle did not lead to ecclesiastical unification either.[38] Like Constantine, Heraclius had not been able to end the schisms within the church.

Cyril Mango presented the interesting observation that Heraclius also strove after religious universalism in Persia. The restoration of the Cross was considered by Mango to be the centrepiece of Heraclius' policy of Christianisation of Persia after having made arrangements for a new unity in Christ of the former enemies with Chosroes' former general Shahrbaraz.[39] In this respect, we should note that Constantine also strove for Christian universalism and made efforts to obtain freedom of religion for the Christians living in Persia.[40] In spite of Mango's thought-provoking observation, it is more likely that Heraclius focused his energy mainly on the unity of faith within his own domains.

King David

When Heraclius restored the Cross in 630, expectations for the future ran high and there was a general sense that a new era had arrived. This new age, however, was not just a renewal of the reign of Constantine. In his *Restitution of the Cross*, George of Pisidia makes an interesting reference to the ark of the covenant. In George's poem, the Cross is compared with the ark, but is considered more powerful than that.[41] It seems that the reference to

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[38] For Heraclius' attempt to attain a unified church, see, for instance, Herrin, *The Formation*, pp. 206-210; Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 48-49, 299-303.
[39] Mango, 'Deux études'.
[40] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.8-14.1. See also Barnes, 'Constantine'.
[41] 'Thanks to you [Heraclius], the Cross was seen by the adversaries as a new Ark, but more than the Ark; for the Ark afflicted the barbarians in taking the place of missiles, but the force of the wood sent against them living missiles'; *In Restitutionem S. Crucis* 73-77 (Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 228).

the ark is meant to evoke the reign of King David with which Heraclius apparently also wanted to connect his own rule. David had installed the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6), which marked a new era in Jewish history. There are interesting parallels between David and Heraclius, of which the latter must have been aware.[42] Both kings did not come to the throne by way of orderly succession; both were killers of tyrants; both fought wars against infidels, won them, and brought back the sacred objects – the ark and the Cross – which were of such great importance for their respective religions; both had relationships with women that were not pleasing in the eyes of God. Furthermore, David was considered an ideal ruler, chosen by God, and functioned as an intermediary between his people and God. This biblical king was thus the ideal prototype for a monarch of a Christian empire, who was also to serve as a link between his subjects and God. Heraclius recognised this and also took David as his role model. Earlier in his reign, Theodore Synkellos, in one of his sermons, had already compared Heraclius with David.[43] Another allusion to David is made by Heraclius himself in an address to his soldiers during the Persian campaign.[44] The connection Heraclius desired to make with the reign of David is also clearly exemplified by giving the name of David to his newborn son (630). It may also well be that in this time the so-called David plates were manufactured on the order of Heraclius to promulgate the new ideology of his reign.[45]

Adventus

Heraclius' return of the Cross of Jerusalem resembles the late antique and Byzantine *adventus* ceremony.[46] Unfortunately, we do not know anything about what actually took place or about the ceremonies accompanying the restoration.[47] One thing is clear, however: the association of the emperor

[42] On Heraclius' association with David, see esp. Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius', p. 226ff. The aim of Spain Alexander's article is to make clear that the so-called David Plates were manufactured in 629 or 630 on the order of Heraclius himself.

[43] See Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius', p. 223.

[44] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio Persica* II, 113-115 (Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 102).

[45] Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius', pp. 234-237. Cf. also Trilling, 'Myth and Metaphor', who argues that the David Plates 'take on a new and rich significance as an attempt, in the face of a threat to civilisation, to give the emperor Heraclius a place among the great civilizing heroes of the world' (p. 263).

[46] See esp. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, p. 84ff.

[47] Since the *Restitutio Crucis* was such an important symbolic event for Heraclius, it must have been very well prepared. A glimpse of the actual happenings can be gained from Sebeos, chapt. 41, p. 131 (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Arme-*

with the Cross is also an association of the emperor with Christ.[48] Heraclius' entry into Jerusalem with the victorious Cross, therefore, was also evidently meant to evoke Christ's entry on Palm Sunday. Later sources were quick to make this connection.[49] They relate that Heraclius rode down the Mount of Olives on his royal palfrey, in full imperial regalia, and intended to enter the city by the gate through which Christ had entered on the way to his crucifixion. Suddenly, the stones of the gateway tumbled down and Heraclius' passage was blocked. An angel appeared, carrying a cross, saying that when Christ had passed this gate there was no royal pomp and that he rode an ass to show his humility. The message was understood by the emperor; he stripped down to his shirt and, barefooted, humbly entered Jerusalem holding the Cross in his hands. Heraclius' entry into Jerusalem reveals the clear affiliation that existed between the emperor and Christ, of which the victorious Cross was the associating principle. By the Cross, Christ had conquered death and made life anew,[50] and by the Cross, the emperor conquered his enemies and ruled the empire.

A new beginning and apocalypticism

The *Restitutio Crucis* was an evident symbolical act meant to establish a new imperial ideology and to mark a new beginning. Heraclius wanted to evoke and associate with David, through whose descendant, Christ (2 Samuel 7:13), Christianity came to the world, which was first officially recognised by Constantine, the founder of the Christian empire. Through his association with these three figures, Heraclius aspired to the renewal of his reign, a new beginning, and the start of a new age after a successfully concluded war. In this respect, the date of the restitution is of great importance. The 21st of March was a carefully chosen date. It corresponds with the day of creation of the luminaries of the sun and moon, or, in other words, the beginning of time. The repositioning of the Cross on 21 March,

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nian History, I, pp. 90-91), who reports that Heraclius, having received the Cross, set out for Jerusalem with all the royal retinue. There was great joy on the day that the emperor and his train entered Jerusalem and people were overwhelmed with emotion. Alms were distributed among the inhabitants of the city. Mango ('The Temple Mount'), suggests that the Golden Gate was built to commemorate Heraclius' triumphal return of the Cross.

[48] See MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, p. 84.

[49] For instance, Hrabanus Maurus, *Hom. LXX: Reversio sanctae atque gloriossimae Crucis Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, cols. 131-134; Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*.

[50] Cf. George of Pisidia, *In Restitutionem S. Crucis*, pp. 104-110 (Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 229).

therefore, marks a new era in the history of the Creation.[51] This new era had important eschatological and apocalyptic overtones. In his poem on the restoration of the Cross, George of Pisidia associates the revelation of the Cross with the resurrection of the dead, thereby clearly referring to the Day of Judgement.[52] In the *Apocalypse of Ps. Methodius*, composed at the end of the seventh century, there is a clear association between the restoration of the Cross and the Second Coming of Christ, and the restitution was seen as foreboding the final emperor.[53] According to this *Apocalypse*, the ending of all sovereignty and power on earth would be announced when the emperor of the Greeks came to Jerusalem. There he would reside until the coming of the Antichrist. When the Antichrist appeared, the emperor would go to Golgotha, reinstall the Cross there, and put his crown on the Cross.[54] He would then hand over the kingdom to God the Father; the Cross would be raised to heaven and the crown with it, because the Cross on which Christ had died was a sign that would be seen prior to the coming of the Lord (in Jerusalem);[55] and the last Greek emperor would die.

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[51] Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, pp. 314-315: 'la reposition de la Croix à Jérusalem marque le début d'un nouvel âge dans l'histoire de la Création'. It is therefore fitting that the incomplete *Chronicon Paschale* should have ended with the *Restitutio Crucis*; see Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, pp. xi-xiii. The *Restitutio Crucis* was not separately commemorated but its commemoration was incorporated in the feast of *Exaltatio Crucis* on 14 September which celebrated the finding of the Cross as well as the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; see Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga', p. 1040. A few years after the restoration of the Cross, Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634-638), delivered two sermons on the Cross. Cf. *Oratio IV in exaltationem s. Crucis*, cols. 3301-3310, and *Oratio V De festo s. Crucis*, cols. 3310-3316.

[52] *In Restitutionem S. Crucis*, pp. 109-110 (Pertusi, *Giorgio*, p. 229).

[53] See, for instance, Reinink, 'Ps.-Methodius'; Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, II, p. 315; Stemberger, 'Jerusalem', pp. 264-266. For a discussion of the Last Roman Emperor in Byzantine apocalyptic texts, see Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 151-184.

[54] According to Reinink ('The Romance' and 'Ps.-Methodius', pp. 170-176), the theme of the Cross is derived from the Syriac Julian Romance. For Ps.-Methodius and an English translation of his apocalypse, see also Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 13ff. First critical edition and German translation by Reinink (*Die syrische Apokalypse*). New edition of the Greek and Latin texts by Aerts and Kortekaas (*Die Apokalypse*).

[55] For instance, Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 244-246. Early Christians believed that Christ's kingdom would be established in Jerusalem; later tradition changed this into a heavenly Jerusalem. Since the fourth century there had existed the belief that the appearance of the Cross would announce the Second Coming. This is obvious from the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem; *Catech.* 15.1. The celestial appearance of a luminous cross above Jerusalem in 315, described by Cyril in his *Letter to Constantius*, should probably be interpreted as the Second Coming;

Heraclius' imperial ideology, the beginning of a new age inspired by biblical and messianic concepts, asked for a new official titulature. Probably already by 629 Heraclius adopted the title of πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς, which very adequately expresses the emperor's political and religious programme.

Anti-Judaism

The *Restitutio Crucis* also officially restored Jerusalem as the unique city of Christendom as it was once established by Constantine the Great. When in 614 the Persians had taken Jerusalem with the help of the Jews, the latter seemed full of joy and enthusiasm about the idea of transforming Jerusalem back into the center of Judaism it once had been. The capture of Jerusalem after so many years of Christian domination and suppression of Judaism even gave rise to Jewish apocolyptic treatises, two of which are known: the *Book of Elijah* and the *Book of Zerubbabel*.[56] Although the Jews must have realised that there was not much hope for them when the Persians allowed Christians to take over Jerusalem again in 617, their final defeat was symbolised by the restoration of the Cross in 630.[57] From the fourth century on, the Cross and Jerusalem had been inextricably bound up with each other and the Cross was seen not only as the emblem of the Christian empire but also as representing the overthrow of Judaism, as the Judas Kyriakos version of the legend of the Cross makes perfectly clear. Its return by Heraclius, therefore, also signifies, apart from the restoration of the Christian reign with all its symbolical and ideological overtones, the end of Judaism. It should not come as a surprise therefore that anti-Judaism received a new impetus in this period and that Heraclius' reign was a turning point in this respect.[58] After having restored the Cross to Jerusalem, Heraclius took

Irshai, 'Cyril of Jerusalem', p. 95; see also Reinink, 'Ps.-Methodius', pp. 174-175 and *idem*, 'Die Entstehung', pp. 279-280, esp. p. 273.

[56] See Wheeler, 'Imaging the Sasanian Capture', pp. 73-77; Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, pp. 207-215; Stemberger, 'Jerusalem', pp. 266-270.

[57] Peters (*Jerusalem and Mecca*, p. 88) makes the interesting suggestion that the building of the Golden Gate not only had to do with Heraclius' triumphal return of the Cross, but also symbolised the reclaiming of the Temple Mount for Christianity, which had been ignored before but 'whose status had been profoundly altered by a few brief years of Jewish liturgical occupation' in the years 614-617.

[58] For the increasing anti-Judaism in the seventh century, see Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 346-348; Averil Cameron, 'Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine', pp. 87-88. For Heraclius and the Jews, see the contribution of Van Bekkum to this volume. In George of Pisidia, *In Restitutionem S. Crucis*, 25-26 and possibly 40-41 (Pertusi, *Giorgio*, pp. 226-227), the connection between the Cross and anti-Judaism is also made. I would like to thank Mary Whitby for drawing my attention to these

radical measures against the Jews which must be seen against the eschatological background of the age but also, again, as an evocation of the reign of Constantine.[59] Probably in 630 Heraclius reestablished the Hadrianic-Constantinian measures. The emperor Hadrian, in his efforts to de-judaise and paganise Jerusalem after the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135), had decreed that Jews were not allowed to visit Jerusalem or to settle there. These interdictions were repeated by Constantine, possibly at the occasion of the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 335, and were probably more strictly enforced than in the second and third centuries.[60] In his turn, Heraclius expelled all Jews from Jerusalem – one wonders how many were actually (still) living there by 630[61] – and prohibited them from approaching within an area of three miles around the city.[62] Heraclius' next measure was of greater consequence. In 634, but possibly earlier, the emperor promulgated a decree that called for forced baptism of all Jews throughout the empire.[63] This legislation is the first of its kind on the initiative of the state. It should probably be considered not only an anti-Jewish measure but also part of Heraclius' efforts to reach religious unification within his empire. The enforcement of this law must have been nearly impossible and its material effect, therefore, insignificant, in spite of seventh-century Christian texts such as *The Teaching of Jacob the Newly Baptised*, that want us to believe otherwise.[64] However, the symbolical impact of Heraclius' measure must have been far from insignificant: the Jews became even more

passages.

[59] Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga', pp. 1040-1042. According to Eutychius, *Annales* (2.5-6, cols. 1089-1090), Heraclius was persuaded by the Christian com-munity in Jerusalem to punish the Jews for their crimes against the Christians when Jerusalem was captured by the Persians.

[60] See Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga', pp. 1027-1028; Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, pp. 13, 163-164; Stemberger, *Juden und Christen*, pp. 42-44.

[61] Dagron observes that the Persians after 417 may have already barred the Jews from living in Jerusalem (in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', p. 26).

[62] Theophanes AM 6120 (Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, pp. 458-459); Eutychius, *Annales* 2.5-6, cols. 1089-1090; Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga', pp. 1040-1041; Dagron (in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', p. 29) considers Heraclius' decree to be mainly a symbolical act: 'Il était symboliquement normal et presque nécessaire d'évoquer à nouveau une mesure d'éviction à propos de l'empereur qui rapportait la Croix, renouvelait la fête de son exaltation, renouait avec l'idéologie du fondateur et la poussait plus loin'.

[63] On forced baptism, see Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga', pp. 1041-1042; Dagron in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 30-32.

[64] The date of 634 is based on Michael the Syrian, *Chron.* 2.414 and 4.413 (Chabot, *Chronique*). On these texts, see Dagron in: Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 30-31; Averil Cameron, 'Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine', p. 83ff.

marginalised than they already were, which may have induced many of them to emigrate to Persia.[65]

Conclusion

The *Restitutio Crucis* was the apogee of Heraclius' reign. The return of the Cross was an event of multiple symbolical significance. It was meant to symbolise and mark the new beginning of Heraclius' rule after a twenty-year reign which, in its first phase, was characterised by difficulties and loss of territory and, in its second phase, by a successful period of defeat of the Persians and recovery of lost territory. Through the symbol of the Cross, the new age was ideologically associated with the biblical and more recent imperial past; it also had an evident eschatological significance. This new age was also envisaged as an era of religious homogeneity and Christian unification. The Jews obviously became the victims of this policy.

Heraclius' new age never materialised and only existed as an ideological construct. The 630s saw the invasions of the Moslem Arabs. In 638, Jerusalem was captured and lost to Christianity for many centuries. The Cross, which had been restored with pomp and circumstance and with great expectations for the future, had already been carried off to Constantinople in 635.

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[65] De Lange ('Jews and Christians', p. 23) thinks that the immediate consequences of Heraclius' decree were mass emigration and some insincere conversions.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

NOTES ON THE LEGAL HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

Bernard H. Stolte

We are fortunate in having several book-length studies of the seventh century or at least of certain major aspects of the period.[1] They enable us to see the events of its first half, dominated by Heraclius' reign, in a wider perspective. No doubt it was a period of crisis, and no doubt it was a time of change. It now seems to be common ground that this change had not always been initiated by Heraclius: rather, the emperor had responded to changes that had been forced upon him. Many of these changes were not unexpected or sudden, at the time: retrospectively, we are able to interpret them as symptoms of long-term social and economic trends, some of which made themselves felt keenly during the first decades of the seventh century. The 'vermeintliche Reformtätigkeit des Kaisers Herakleios'[2] is seen in this light as even more imaginary than Karayannopoulos had already concluded. Some of the changes do not stem from his reign, and others simply occurred, irrespective of the emperor's wishes.

For the legal historians, Heraclius' reign does not represent one of the traditional landmarks.[3] If anything, it is between two major legislative projects: Justinian's codification belongs already to the past, while the *Basilica* of the Macedonian emperors Basil and Leo still are two and a half centuries in the future. Even the Isaurian *Ecloga* is a century away. The *Basilica*, as part of the Macedonian renaissance, are generally considered an equivalent of Justinian's codification; indeed, there is evidence of at least Leo the Wise's intention to outdo his illustrious predecessor. No such pretensions are usually attributed to the Isaurian *Ecloga*, which has sometimes been described rather as the first truly Christian lawbook and thus would mark a radical departure from Roman legal tradition. This claim is seldom made nowadays, but it cannot be denied that the legal culture presupposed by the Jusitinianic codification greatly differs from that of the *Ecloga*.[4]

[1] For example Haldon, *Byzantium*; Stratos, *Byzantium*; Van Dieten, *Geschichte*.
[2] Karayannopoulos, 'Über die vermeintliche Reformtätigkeit'.
[3] Cf. Simon, 'Die Epochen'.
[4] For these works see Van der Wal and Lokin, *Historiae iuris graeco-romani deli-*

Heraclius' reign is almost exactly half way between Justinian's codification and the Isaurian *Ecloga*. Is it, in terms of legal history, in any respect more remarkable than just as a convenient stopping-place for the stage-coach on its way from Roman to truly Byzantine law?[5]

Four Novels by Heraclius have been preserved with their full text. Their subject-matter is unspectacular. Two of them, from 612 and 619, mainly deal with the numbers of the clergy of the Great Church of Constantinople. While the subject was no doubt economically relevant, it would not have been suprising if the emperor had had more pressing needs to attend to. A Novel of 617 legislates against the apparent problem of clergy and monks drifting from one place to the other and generally converging on the capital. Again the emperor could have been preoccupied with other matters, for instance, his own near-capture by the Avars near the Long Walls. The fourth dates from 629 and is concerned with the *privilegium fori* of the clergy. It effectively widens the jurisdiction of the Church, and does so in a period of triumphs for Heraclius, crowned by the return of the True Cross in the following year. The contents of the Novels have been analyzed by their latest editor Konidaris[6] and need not detain us here. A few notes in the margin may suffice.

First, the subjects of these laws had also been treated by Justinian. They repeat and amend existing legislation, and do so in a way which entirely conforms to the Justinianic model. As Konidaris already has noted, they were not a 'Reformwerk'; they are routine maintenance of the Justinianic building, for which the tool of the *novella constitutio* in its various forms is selected as a matter of course.

More striking is the fact that the Novels are all concerned with the Church and are generally favorable to its position. This may be due to the influence of the patriarch Sergius, the addressee of all four of them. At the same time it reflects the increasing importance and role of the patriarch, who had played a major role in the defence of the city and the empire. It is true that our sources have preserved traces of non-ecclesiastical imperial legislation, too, but its full text has been lost.[7] It is debatable whether this is more than a coincidence. And it is surely no coincidence that Heraclius' Novels conclude the tradition of law-giving in the Roman imperial style for a considerable period.[8]

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neatio; Pieler, 'Byzantinische Rechtsliteratur'; Troianos, *Oi peges*, all with further literature.

[5] Determining when the stage-coach finally arrived is a moot point. Personally, I would be inclined to say that it had already done so during Justinian's reign.

[6] Konidaris, 'Die Novellen', pp. 94-106.

[7] For example Dölger, *Regesten*, nos. 167, 173, 174.

[8] Cf. Haldon, *Byzantium*, chapt. 7, p. 254ff., esp. 256 with note 12.

The subject-matter of Heraclius' Novels should make us look in the direction of canon law. If the increased role of the Church as a public institution gave it a prominent place in the imperial legislation of the sixth and early seventh centuries, surely the Church itself would have to regulate the problems of organisation, discipline and doctrine accompanying that role. In other words, how did the Church adapt its canon law to the challenge posed by changing circumstances during Heraclius' reign? Before we try to provide an answer, we should first look at the state of Byzantine canon law at the end of the sixth century.

In councils held during the first centuries of its existence, the Christian Church had formulated a number of rules bearing on doctrine and discipline: *kanones* or canons. Gradually, a *corpus canonum* came into being, in which such canons were collected in roughly chronological order, according to the councils by which they had been promulgated. The increasing number of canons must have made it useful to have access to them according to their subject-matter, but not until the second half of the sixth century do we see the first systematic compilations of canon law: the *Sixty Titles*, the *Fifty Titles*, the *Fourteen Titles*. The position of the Church in the state brought about a number of pertinent secular laws, *nomoi*, which had been greatly increased in the same sixth century by Justinian's legislative activity. By then it had become impossible to treat a point of ecclesiastical law without taking account of both canon and secular or civil law. This is reflected by our manuscripts in that they usually contain these collections of canon law (*kanones*) accompanied by an appendix of secular law (*nomoi*).[9]

The most successful of these collections is a systematic repertory of canon law, divided into fourteen headings, the *Fourteen Titles*, each of them subdivided into a number of chapters. The chapters listed the pertinent canons on the subject, referring the reader for their full text to a roughly chronological *corpus canonum*.[10] The appendix to this collection was the so-called *Collectio Tripartita*, a compilation of the passages of Justinian's legislation on religious and ecclesiastical affairs, the three parts of which consisted of selections from Justinian's Code, Digest and Institutes, and Novels.[11]

This Collection of *Fourteen Titles* with its appendix, the *Collectio Tripartita*, may be dated to *circa* 580.[12] A next step was the integration of the

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[9] Cf. Van der Wal and Lokin, *Historiae iuris graeco-romani delineatio*, chapt. III-4, IV-2 and V-2; Troianos, *Oi peges*, chapt. 4.6.
[10] The best edition is by Benesevic, *Drevne-Slavanskaja kormcaja XIV titulov bez tolkovanie*.
[11] Edited by Van der Wal and Stolte, *Collectio*.
[12] *Ibidem*, pp. xviii-xxi.

two collections, which was to provide systematic access to all ecclesiastical and secular legislation bearing on the same subject. To this end someone compounded the *kanones* and *nomoi* under the chapters of the *Fourteen Titles*, thereby creating a true *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles.*[13] At this point we reach Heraclius' reign.

Obviously, Heraclius' Novels could have been inserted into the *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles* at their appropriate places, but this is not quite what happened. Two different routes seem to have been followed. The four Novels of Heraclius were added to the *Collectio Tripartita* as an appendix, at an unknown moment after 629.[14] More interestingly, it is not improbable that the integration of canon and civil law into the *Nomocanon* should have taken place during Heraclius' reign, before 619. This dating depends on one's interpretation of the insertion of the first Novel of 612 in *Nom.* I, chapt. 30, and the fact that the third Novel on the same subject of 619 does not occur. The simplest explanation remains the inference that the latter had not yet been issued (and did not find its way at a later date, either). Other explanations, however, are not to be excluded, but cannot be dealt with here.[15] Whatever one's interpretation, it is almost certain that the *Nomocanon* already existed at the beginning of, or came into being in, Heraclius' reign. It definitely predates the Council *in Trullo* of 690/1 and the oldest manuscript to contain it is a palimpsest of the seventh or early eighth century.[16]

This *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles* was to become the standard – though not the official – collection of canon law of the Byzantine church. It reflects the political situation of the early seventh century in that it combines explicitly *kanones* and *nomoi* pertaining to the same subject. It is as interesting for what it is as for what it is not. On the one hand, it is the logical inference from the obvious fact that ecclesiastical affairs were influenced by Church and state alike; this nomocanon must have facilitated consultation of the law pertaining to the church. On the other hand it left unresolved the potential conflict between canon and civil law on the same

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[13] See, for example, Van der Wal and Lokin, *Historiae*, pp. 66-67. The problems of the composition, authorship and subsequent development of the *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles* cannot be dealt with here. There is no satisfactory edition; the best one is by Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici Graecorum historia*, II, pp. 433-640.

[14] Almost invariably they are written in the order of IV-I-II-III (i.e., the most recent one first): see Konidaris, 'Die Novellen', p. 34.

[15] The dating to the years between 612 and 619 has found general favour, but for a dissenting view see Konidaris, 'Die Novellen', p. 94 with note 161.

[16] This is the middle layer of a palimpsest, now divided over Vat. gr. 2061A, Vat. gr. 2306 and Crypt. A.d.xxiii. See Broia and Faraggiana di Sarzana, 'Per una rilettura'; De Gregorio, 'Materiali', pp. 116-124, with plates 14-16 and full bibliography.

subject, a conflict never resolved in Byzantium, by simply listing canon and civil law side by side.[17] Our manuscripts occasionally permit us to see contemporary views on that potential conflict in marginal comments.

This, then, is the state of the 'official' law in Heraclius' time. Official, in the sense that it is the law as promulgated by the established institutions of Church and state, and capable of change through intervention of the same authorities, i.e., through decisions of councils and imperial legislation. This intervention, however, was already occurring much less frequently than in the past, and, in the case of canon law, not at all. The first church council after that of Chalcedon of 451 to issue disciplinary canons did not take place until the end of the seventh century, when in 690/1 the so-called Quinisext council or council *in Trullo* was convened. In Heraclius' time, therefore, no formal canons had been promulgated for more than 150 years. As for secular legislation, Heraclius' Novels seem to have been the last of their kind for some time to come.

John Haldon has advanced the view that 'no novels (for example) were produced, because the matters of administrative organisation, civil law and Church affairs traditionally handled in this way were now dealt with quite differently',[18] and goes on to stress the continuing importance of Justinianic Roman law as a symbol 'of the Roman state and everything that accompanied that notion'.[19] While I agree with his analysis, I should like to elaborate on his views on two points, namely canon law and legal practice.

Canon law

As has been said above, no canons had been issued by church councils after Chalcedon in 451. This lack of canon legislation might give rise to the suspicion that nothing had changed. In fact two different channels of change had been opened up in the meantime, and both were in permanent use. One has been mentioned already: the continuous intervention through imperial legislation, especially during the reign of Justinian and again in the reign of Heraclius. The other ran within the Church itself and was connected with the enforcement of discipline in the Church.

It would be mistaken to see canon law as a discipline independent of theology. Ultimately, it is based on the same sources, the most important

[17] Characteristic is Nom. I,2 : (...) πή μὲν ὅτι οἱ κανόνες ὡς νόμοι κρατοῦσι, πῆ δὲ ὅτιανόσι οἱ νόμοι ἀκολοθοῦσι (on the one hand the canons have the force of secular laws, on the other hand the secular laws are in conformity with the canons). See, for example, Troianos, 'Nomos'.
[18] Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 256.
[19] *Ibidem*, pp. 258-259.

among them the Bible. True belief includes obeying God's precepts for a proper way of living in accordance with the road to salvation. Ultimately, those precepts were included in, and followed from, God's written and unwritten will. Canons, as practical rules of conduct within the Church, or, as was the case in medieval society in both Byzantium and the West, as practical rules for everyone, were 'found' rather than 'made'; much the same could be said about canons as about Christian doctrine.[20]

Part of canon law thus tends to be fairly static. It is aimed at the preservation of the ideal order willed by God, an order which is not susceptible of man-made change. Its fundamental principles therefore are given: they may be in need of explanation, but not of innovation. In fact, the greatest recommendation of a canon legal rule is its immutability, its conformation to God's written and unwritten will. It may have to be clarified and reaffirmed, but cannot be altered. The problem does not lie in the rules, but in our imperfect knowledge of them.

If, then, the problem consists in ascertaining the actual meaning of God's explicit and implicit precepts, they required an interpreter for them to be applied in practice, and it is here that patristic writings acquired a role. The fathers are the interpreters *par excellence* of God's words. Insofar as God's word was considered to be in need of clarification, people would turn to the fathers for guidance. Naturally they also did so where matters of discipline were concerned, especially if a Church council had not proclaimed anything on that point. The fathers could then be considered intermediaries between God's will and the practical precepts that would have to be deducted from His word.

Strictly speaking, a canon originally was a common decision taken by holy fathers in assembly.[21] In order to create canon law, a church council needed to be convened. In legal terms, the authority to legislate resided in a church council, just as the authority to promulgate a *constitutio* lay with the emperor. It is here that we may note a difference between canon and civil law. Whereas the emperor claimed the prerogative not only to create law, but even to interpret law, and further claimed to be the sole source of law, no such exclusive authority was claimed for a Church council: if the writings of individual fathers might illuminate points of Christian doctrine, they might of course do the same on points of canon law; moreover, no council or father would evidently be able to speak against the Bible.

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[20] I am greatly indebted to Pelikan, *The Spirit*, chapt. 1.

[21] *Nomocanon* XIV Titt., prol. Τὰ μὲν σώματα, in the passage translated below; *Facundus, Pro defensione trium capitulorum* xii,3,2 (ed. Clement and Van der Plaetse, p. 381). I am not speaking about the history of the position of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church.

'In any complete enumeration of the means of instruction in Christian doctrine, the Scriptures of Old and New Testament, the doctors of the church, and the councils all had to be cited', as Jaroslav Pelikan quotes Maximus Confessor.[22] The question might be asked as to whether the same holds good for canon law. Could an individual father create canones of the same status as a church council?

At the risk of seeming over-legalistic, I would suggest that precisely this question was being debated in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. Our best witness is the first prologue (Τὰ μὲν σώματα) of the *Nomo-canon of the Fourteen Titles*. This is not the moment to go into the problem of whether the prologue has been interpolated or not. In any case, in its transmitted form it goes back to either the late sixth century or to the reign of Heraclius.[23] After the author has explained how he has compiled this collection from the ten holy synods, the so-called canons of the Apostles, and the council of Carthage, he continues as follows:

> I thought it a good idea to record in the same collection also the pious sayings of certain holy fathers in separate letters, adhortations and answers, which somehow may provide the regulation of a canon. Of course I know full well, as is also the opinion of the great Basil and Gregory, that we may indicate and select as ecclesiastical canons those which have been ordained not just by someone on his own, but by several holy fathers in assembly, on the basis of a common and carefully considered decision. However, I reckoned that these expositions of the teachers either dealt with what had already been said in synod and in any case would add something useful to it, in clarification of what some, understandably, found difficult to grasp, or that they were concerned with new problems which could be found nowhere among the recorded synodical debates and decisions, neither to the letter, nor to the spirit. In my view, those to whom it had fallen to decide on such problems could make their decisions not only beyond dispute, but also most laudable, on the grounds of both the trustworthiness of their persons, and of the spiritual light that flashed upon their words through God's energy.[24]

There can be little doubt that the author of the prologue felt the need to justify the inclusion of patristic writings in his collection. However, he stops short from attributing to them the status of canons: 'which somehow may provide the regulation of a canon' (καί τινα τρόπον κανόνος τύπον παρέχεσθαι δυνάμενα). In this respect he goes less far than his pre-

[22] Pelikan, *The Spirit*, p. 23, from Maximus Confessor, *Relatio*, 9, col. 124A.
[23] Cf. Van der Wal and Stolte, *Collectio*, pp. xvi-xvii.
[24] Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici Graecorum historia*, II, p. 446,11-447,3.

decessor, John Scholastikos, in his *Collection of the Fifty Titles* of *circa* 550.[25] John Scholastikos was the first to include excerpts from two of three 'canonical' letters of St Basil. Instead of justifying this step in his preface, he pointed it out as one of the advantages of his work over its predecessor, the *Collection of the Sixty Titles*, which had not yet contained this material. Without raising the possible question of their status, he speaks of 'the canons of St Basil'.[26]

On a point of English law, it is said, one must be dead to be quoted in court as an authority. The appearance of St Basil in the sixth century, as mentioned above, suggests that the same holds good for Byzantine canon law. In my view, it is important to distinguish between collections of formal canon law, and authorities which carried influence and to which one could appeal for guidance, but which were not themselves formal sources of canon law in the technical sense of the word. The latter category was of course an open one. The letters of St Basil show that he had been such an authority in his own time: he was being approached for advice and the letters document his answers. His reputation secured for him a role to play after his death. His letters continued to be consulted and quoted. All this did not yet make them formal sources of canon law, or 'canons'. Their incorporation into the *Fifty Titles* of John Scholastikos was a bold step, which was not based on a formal decision of a council, though it probably conformed to established custom.

It is worth mentioning that the later tradition – how much later it is difficult to say – refers to such letters as 'canonical letters' (κανονικαὶ ἐπιστολαί). The word *kanonikos* need not mean 'having the same status as conciliar decrees'.[27] For an early use we may turn to a passage of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon. Reference is made to 'the canonical letters and expositions of the holy fathers Gregory, Basil, Hilarius, Athanasius and Ambrosius', and in particular to 'the two canonical letters of Cyril [of Alexandria] which have been confirmed and published in the first council at Ephesus'.[28] The participants of Chalcedon are being invited to profess their faith; it is obvious that the expression means 'letters containing doctrinal formulations'.[29] A second possible reference to the word 'canonical' stems from the sixth century, from Justinian's *Liber adversus Originem*. Justinian

[25] John III Scholastikos was patriarch of Constantinople in 565-577 (cf. Benesevic, *Ioannis Scholastici Synagoga*).
[26] *Ibidem*, p. 5 l. 10; p. 7 l. 2; cf. 4 l. 23: ... Βασίλειος ὁ μέγας ... ἐκανόνισεν.
[27] See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. κανονικός, 2.
[28] Cyril's letters 4 and 17; see Quasten, *Patrology*, III, pp. 133-134.
[29] Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum*, pp.195,38-196,3.

quotes from either a 'canonical' or an 'ascetical' book of Basil, according to the manuscript one follows, but the better reading is 'ascetical'.[30]

As far as I have been able to ascertain, John Scholastikos was the first to refer to letters of Basil as 'the canons of St Basil'. He therefore might have used, but, actually, did not use, *kanonikos* in the sense of 'having the force of canons'.[31] The fact that he uses only two of the three canonical letters, as they were to be recognised, may point to their uncertain status.

A formal confirmation of certain patristic writings as 'canons' did not arrive until the second canon of the Council *in Trullo* of 690/1,[32] which codified the councils and fathers whose pronouncements were recognised as authoritative by the assembly of bishops. By then the list had become much longer than just the three letters of St Basil; it includes the three Gregories and several Alexandrian fathers.

The most recent name *in Trull.* c.2 is that of Gennadius I of Constantinople (died 471). In theory, it is possible therefore that John Scholastikos already included them in the *Fifty Titles*. The common opinion seems to be that the list of the *Trullanum* confirms that of the *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles*. We cannot be sure whether all these fathers were already present *circa* 580, *circa* 620, or not until the end of the seventh century. On the grounds of a lack of sufficiently ancient manuscripts the early stages of the development of the *Nomocanon* have to remain to some extent conjectural.[33] Three points, however, may be noted. First, later versions of the *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles* incorporated the canons of the *Trullanum* and subsequent councils. Second, although some other, more recent fathers entered the canonical collections of the Byzantine Church, they were not 'codified' in a canon such as *Trull.* c. 2 or incorporated in the systematic part of the *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles*. Third, the prologue of the revised *Nomocanon* of 882/3 does not mention the fathers at all.

It would seem to me that from Chalcedon onwards the development of canon law took place by way of interpretation of the existing body of legislation, in which the fathers played an important role. The gradual rise of the status of patristic writings as a canonical source would seem to me to be a

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[30] *Ibidem*, p. 206,20 with critical apparatus.

[31] Lampe (s.v.) only has 'containing canons' and does not mention 'having the force of canons', a relevant distinction.

[32] Unfortunately the acts of this council have not been preserved. For the text of the canons with an English translation, see, for instance, Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council*, pp. 41-186 (canon 2 at pp. 64-69), based on the edition by Joannou, *Les canons*.

[33] There is some hope that the palimpsest mentioned above (n. 16) will yield more information when it has been investigated with the help of multispectral digital photography.

natural consequence of their authority in matters of Christian doctrine. The thin line between legislation and interpretation, so familiar to lawyers of all centuries, was crossed occasionally, especially where no concrete rules had been issued by Church councils. As already said, about a hundred years after Chalcedon, John Scholastikos inferred from this situation that the rules formulated by Basil the Great were equivalent to the canons of the Church councils, and divided two of his 'canonical' letters into paragraphs which counted as canons. The subsequent hundred years saw the extension of patristic canons to an entire corpus, eventually codified in the second canon of the *Trullanum*.

It remains to investigate whether, in problems of canon law, the increased authority of fathers past was extended to fathers present. In my view two facts may be pointed out, one negative and one positive, which speak for an affirmative answer. One is the lack of councils issuing canons, until the *Trullanum*. The other is the dominant role of, for example, the patriarchs Sergius of Constantinople and Sophronius of Jerusalem, or of figures such as Maximus Confessor and Anastasius of Sinai. Individuals, not institutions or assemblies, seem to conquer the stage. As to this phenomenon, there might be a connection with the rise of the holy man, as we have been saying since Peter Brown.[34] Moreover, in the seventh century we may observe the increasing popularity of the genre of *Erotapokriseis*, *Questions and Answers*.[35] Certain problems were formulated and submitted to authoritative bishops or monks, and their answers circulated as standard solutions. Some of them may have originated in actual questions, others may have been hypothetical questions as a literary device in order to bring up a problem. There is a connection between these collections and patristic florilegia;[36] they remained popular in Byzantium until the end. A good example is Anastasius of Sinai, whose *Erotapokriseis* enjoyed wide circu-lation and are a vivid testimony to the concerns of seventh-century society. I leave the problems of authorship and attribution of this corpus of writings aside.[37] What concerns us here is the fact that several of these *Erotapo-kriseis* deal with, or touch upon, problems of canon law.

From Heraclius' reign onwards, we may observe a rise in the personal authority of prominent individuals as a possible source of rules of canon law. Disciplinary problems were being worked out in consultations with individual leading Church men, rather than in conciliar assemblies. It would

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[34] Brown, 'The Rise', pp. 80-101.
[35] Dörries and Dörries, 'Erotapokriseis'.
[36] Richard, 'Florilèges grecs'.
[37] Haldon, 'The Works', with literature; most recently Simonetti, in: Di Berardino, *Patrologia V*, p. 338.

seem to me that fathers present were gaining authority after the example of fathers past.

Legal practice

One of the central questions of Byzantine law concerns its application in actual practice, especially during the first few centuries of Byzantium, from which our sources are scarce. We know who had jurisdiction, but how it was being exercised remains largely in the dark by lack of sufficient evidence of actual court cases. It is impossible to build a satisfactory picture of 'law in action' from the scattered information lurking in, *inter alia*, saints' lives. We are well informed about legislation, about legal education especially in Justinian's time, and about its collapse, or at least decline, towards the end of his reign. General trends may be observed and have in fact been noted before by others. One of these is the increasing role of episcopal courts at the expense of secular courts. While Justinian's reign shows a flourishing 'legal science', we cannot be certain to what extent this sophisticated legal training influenced legal practice. It seems highly improbable that after Justinian a trial in, say, the episcopal court of Caesarea would have seen advocates pleading on the finer distinctions of the learned Papinian. Yet, while the decline in standard seems probable enough, all this remains highly speculative. It is here that additional information is available in the form of papyri, which brings us to Egypt.

This is not the place to enter into a discussion about the representativeness of Egypt.[38] Two questions seem to be worth asking. First, what evidence do we have for the time of Heraclius, and second, how does it compare with the decades before and after our emperor?

1. We have in fact abundant papyrological evidence. Among the Egyptian papyri, nowadays accompanied by an increasing number of non-Egyptian ones, there are numerous Late Antique or Byzantine papyri. The great majority of these are in Greek, but there are also a considerable number of Coptic and other non-Greek papyri. Quite a lot of them turn out to be dated to Heraclius' reign.

One dossier may be singled out here by way of an example. It consists of three papyri, two in Greek and one in Coptic.[39] They relate to the same

[38] For a positive view, see, for instance, Bagnall, *Reading Papyri*.

[39] P. London inv. 2018 = Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten VI (1963), 8987; P. London inv. 2017=Sammelbuch VI, 8988; P. Col. [Bu, in Coptic], Schiller, 'The Budge papyrus'. A fourth papyrus does not belong to the dossier, but is related to it; it is what in Roman terms would be a *donatio propter nuptias*: P. London inv. 2019 = Sammelbuch VI, 8986.

dispute, concerning the title to part of a house. The honour of having recognised the connection between these documents belongs to Arthur Schiller.[40] The case is essentially the following: an Egyptian woman mortgaged part of a house 'before the advent of the Persians', i.e. before 619. Apparently she did not pay her debt, for the creditors, an Egyptian couple already inhabiting another part of the same house, move in; the debtor leaves and dies soon after. Probably shortly after 640, her nephew, a deacon of the local church, claims a right to the house and drives out the couple with the help of the tax man. The couple does not rest: the litigants decide to resort to arbitration, but the couple also address the true heirs of the original debtor and, in 644/5, succeed in obtaining from them a deed – our first papyrus (2018) – documenting, curiously enough, a sale and transfer of ownership of the litigious apartment and payment of the price. The Coptic document (Bu) contains the minutes of the arbitration, allows an insight into the allegations of both parties and gives rise to the suspicion that the deacon was good for nothing. In any case, the deacon gives in as soon as the deed of sale is presented and he, for his part, in 647 draws up a deed – our third, Greek, papyrus – discharging the couple and confirming their rights to the litigious part of the house.

What, then, is special about the dossier? We find ourselves in the reign of Heraclius and in the last decades of Byzantine Egypt. The Persians have come and gone, the Arabs have come and stayed. The native population lives on and quarrels about a few rooms in a house, and succeeds in settling the dispute. Remarkably, after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in 640-641 the Egyptian notaries continue to draw up deeds in a terminology which is heavily indebted to Roman law, employing Latin words also familiar from Byzantine commentaries of the sixth century. In one case there is a signature in Latin letters, but in the Greek language. Greek and Coptic figure side by side. No doubt the parties have spoken Coptic, as is witnessed by the minutes of the arbitration. The final discharge has been given the form of a *stipulatio Aquiliana*, an institution borrowed from Roman law, the details of which need not concern us here.[41] I would not go so far as stating that we are dealing with Roman law, but we certainly see a legal system operating which has been influenced heavily by imperial law, and which is continuing to operate in the traditional way in the teeth of foreign conquest and domination.

A dossier as this is not at all untypical of legal practice in the first half of the seventh century. Is it, then, indicative of 'change'?

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[40] Schiller, 'The Interrelation'.
[41] See Steinwenter, 'Das byzantinische Dialysis-Formular', with further literature.

2. In order to be able to say something about long term developments it is of course necessary to survey large numbers of papyri. To do so here would be time-consuming and probably also extremely tedious. I have in fact seen a lot of these documents and will give my impression, for what it is worth.

Late Antique or Byzantine legal papyri from the Near East document a mixed system of indigenous and imperial law. Roman law definitely had an impact on indigenous law, but never replaced it. The promulgation of Justinian's codification in the 530s did not cause a sudden breach, nor did, for that matter, any upheaval, be it legal, social or political. We should probably say that, at least outwardly, such occurrences did not make themselves visible immediately. Such changes as may be observed are part of long term developments. The same holds good for the seventh century. As an example of a lack of immediate change we may quote the fact that, after the Arab conquest, an oath was still sworn by the health of the emperor.[42] Of course that habit dies in the end, but not immediately. A similar phenomenon is the continued use of legal institutions which, strictly speaking, are not supported by the political rulers. Just as, after the Roman conquest, indigenous Egyptian legal institutions remained in use, so, after the Arab conquest, Roman legal institutions are found in legal practice. This, of course, is just a complicated way of saying that law as applied in practice was a matter of custom and conservative practices, into which elements of various provenance might be incorporated, and which were to a large extent indifferent to the political rulers of the day. In other words, a dossier such as this could easily have belonged to the third or fifth century. It would not have been impossible after Heraclius' reign, either.

Conclusion

It is time to sum up. Did, as far as the law was concerned, the political, social or religious changes in the reign of Heraclius pose a challenge? As so often, the answer has to be nuanced.

First of all, there can be no doubt that the events of Heraclius' reign will have presented challenges to the law. What seemed fair yesterday may be utterly unreasonable tomorrow, because circumstances may have changed beyond recognition. The question, then, is whether the existing apparatus of the law will be able to cope and produce a satisfactory solution. If not, the legislator may have to intervene: in this respect legislation may reflect the events of that time. Heraclius' reign does not show that kind of legislation. On the contrary, his four Novels deal with fairly technical

[42] Our papyrus London, inv. no. 2017: see Bell, 'An Oath Formula'.

issues. The style of the four imperial constitutions is traditional; their *intitulatio* recalls the glorious past in spite of the difficulties of the present.[43] The same lack of visible change may be observed in papyri which bear on legal practice.

Changes, however, did occur, most clearly in canon law. On the one hand, the Church gradually became more prominent in settling disputes. The rise of the episcopal courts at the expense of secular ones, and the confirmation and extension of the *privilegium fori* in Heraclius' fourth Novel testify to the spread of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. On the other hand, the development of canon law itself is marked by the rise of patristic authority, not only of fathers past, but also of prominent living church men. In general, one might interpret these phenomena as symptoms of a gradual weakening of formal, especially, secular structures.

Finally, precisely in Heraclius' reign the integration of canon and secular law advanced another step with the compilation of the *Nomocanon of the Fourteen Titles*.

The changes in the law in Heraclius' time were slight, probably more shifts than changes. These shifts were but small steps in a development that can be traced over a longer period. Certainly no legal *Reformtätigkeit* was provoked by social, economic, religious or political change.

[43] In the fourth Novel of 629, Heraclius (together with Heraclius Junior) for the first time uses the title *basileus*. Cf. Bréhier, 'L'origine'; Kresten, 'Herakleios', with literature since Bréhier.

A ROUGH-GUIDE TO BYZANTINE MONASTICISM IN THE EARLY SEVENTH CENTURY

Peter Hatlie

Sometime after the year 622, the abbot Eustathios of the monastery of Atalline in Ankara sat down to write a letter to one of his fellow countrymen, Antiochos, monk of the Lavra Monastery of St. Sabas in the Judean wilderness. Ankara had recently suffered through a 'Chaldean winter', that is to say an attack and sack by Persian troops. In the face of this threat Eustathios and his monks had fled the city, heading presumably westward for safety, toward Bithynia, the Asia Minor coast, or some mountain hideout in between. The abbot's letter explained these traumatic events and then asked a favor. Although he and his community had suffered greatly and needed many things, above all they required books to replace those that they had left behind in their flight from the monastery. His own books had been too heavy to carry away, he explained, and were now nowhere to be found in the area in which they had established themselves. Specifically Eusthathios wanted a condensed version of the Old and New Testaments, no doubt so that he could begin to instruct his community systematically again and thereby reestablish some sort of routine within a situation that was anything but routine. Antiochos answered Eustathios with his impressive edition of the *Pandectes*, a set of about one hundred thirty meditations on a variety of ascetical themes, covering at present about two hundred printed pages, supported intensively and intelligently by the very Old and New Testament citations his correspondent had requested.[1] It is an impressive work of scholarship, and Antiochos seems to have been proud of it. In his cover-letter he gives us considerable information about both the content of his work and the conditions under which it was written. As it turns out, the Lavra of St. Sabas had been sacked not so long since, too, with a subsequent occupation of the monastery, the torture and murder of some of its monks, and the flight by others from place to place until they were able to return. Antiochos apologises for any deficiencies contained in his book, noting that under such adverse circumstances it proceeded less successfully than he had hoped.[2]

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[1] Antiochos the Monk, *Pandecta scripturae sacrae* (CPG[3] 7843), cols. 1428-1849.
[2] *Idem*, *Epistula ad Eustathium* (CPG[3] 7842), cols. 1421-1428, esp. 1421bc. For a

It is frankly a privilege in Byzantine studies to encounter a body of sources such as those just reviewed. For arguably we may be able to learn quite a lot from very little. For example, although the original correspondence from Eustathios to Antiochos is not preserved, the response certainly is; and in all events there can be little doubt that a real exchange of letters took place between these men sometime after the year 622. Whether Antiochos' cover-letter and book ever arrived, sent as they were from St. Sabas in Judea back to some location in Asia Minor, is rather immaterial. The very fact that monastic messengers dared, and were seemingly still able, to ply the waters or travel the land routes after the year 622 and before the final reconquest of Heraclius in 628 is a small but significant historical indicator in itself of the monastic response to the difficult conditions of the day. That Antiochos' *Pandectes* outlived one of the darkest ages in Byzantine history is also fairly remarkable.[3] It was a big book, after all, which managed to survive not only Heraclius' Persian wars but also the disruptions, dis-location and poverty of the soon-to-follow Islamic invasions. Whether the *Pandectes* came to be preserved and copied by subsequent generations of monks in Asia Minor or from Antiochos' presumed copy at St. Sabas is difficult to establish. The very fact of its survival is important in itself, however, insofar as it gives some indication about what types of monastic literature were affordable, in service and in demand during the age.[4]

Another observation about these sources and their context is also in order. Byzantine letters are typically quite indirect, even elliptical, in their discourses. As much can happen off the written page as takes place on it, and furthermore rhetorical flourishes often disguise the letter-writer's real message.[5] The letter in question is, however, quite different from the norm. Although it can be expected that Antiochos amplifies his story to a degree, there are no particular grounds to question the basic historical account he gives about his own and his correspondent's suffering, dislocation and uncertain prospects. As readers, what we get therefore is solid if still anecdotal evidence about the condition of two major monasteries, in two important monastic centers, in a time of crisis. The one, St. Sabas, has suffered a terrible sack around the year 614 but now, after five years of complete

discussion of these events, Chitty, *The Desert a City*, pp. 158-160; Foss, 'Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', p. 70; Patrich, *Sabas*, pp. 326-328; Schick, *Christian Communities*, pp. 41-47.

[3] For a brief discussion of the *Pandectes*, see Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, p. 449.

[4] For an analysis of current tendencies in monastic and ascetical literature, see Hatlie, 'Byzantine Monastic Rules'.

[5] Littlewood, 'An Ikon of the Soul,' pp. 197-222; Mullett, 'The Classical Tradition', pp. 75-93; Hatlie, 'Redeeming Byzantine Epistolography', pp. 213-248.

chaos, has been slowly reconstituted. Other sources indicate that Patriarch John the Almsgiver of Alexandria, the *locum tenens* in Jerusalem Modestus, and perhaps even the Persian governor Yazdin had a hand in improving the human and physical conditions of the religious in and around Jerusalem, and probably at St. Sabas too.[6] Whatever the exact magnitude of these reconstruction projects, it is clear that numerous monks returned to the monastery and that its monastic library had either been spared the sacking of 614 or, after some level of destruction, been reassembled by the time Antiochos exploited it for his research sometime after 622. These developments may not represent business as usual at St. Sabas, but the monastery had seemingly weathered the worst of the crisis and subsequently returned to its habitual life of work and prayer as best it could. And at no time, apparently, between these events in the early seventh century and the later eighth century did its monks bother to construct a defensive wall around the core of their lavra community – one of the many signs, certainly, that they had reached an accord, however uncertain and uncomfortable, with their new masters.[7]

What became of Eustathios and his followers from the monastery of Atalline in Ankara is less certain. If the *Pandectes* of Antiochos has survived as a result of the efforts of these monks, then it would be inviting to speculate that the community finally returned to a more or less settled monastic existence. But regrettably there is no secure, corroborative evidence with which to sustain such a hypothesis – neither a traceable link between the provenance of the earliest manuscript recensions of the *Pandectes* and later ones,[8] nor further written reports about the fate of Eustathios and his monks, nor indeed any dependable physical evidence for their having returned to Ankara to occupy their old monastery. Archeological evidence for early and mid seventh-century Ankara suggests that the city was downsized and heavily fortified, as were many cities during the age, presumably beginning with the Persian raids of the 620s. It further suggests that perhaps at least one monastery – be it that of Attaline, St. Nilos of Ankara, or someone else – may have outlived the disruptions of the age.[9] However tempting it may be to identify this site with the reconstituted monastery of Eustha-

[6] Schick, *Christian Communities*, pp. 41-46.
[7] Patrich, *Sabas*, p. 330. See also Hirschfeld, *The Judean Monasteries*, pp. 16-17.
[8] On this question, see the brief notes of Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, I, pp. 146-147.
[9] Foss, 'Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', pp. 65-66, 70. The converted temple of Rome and Augustus possibly served as the church for a monastic community, whose abbot Hypatios is remembered in an inscription. Remnants of what may be a monastic wall remain as well. Whether this complex outlived the hardships of the early seventh century is unclear.

thios, it seems more prudent to follow the history of the Atallineans only as far as the evidence will take us. And in this regard two reasonable conclusions can be made. First, in the years following their flight from Ankara the monks of Attaline were clearly coping fairly well. They had escaped the brutal sack of the city by the Persian general Sharbaraz, they had avoided the death and enslavement befalling some of their fellow Ankareans, and they had not been hunted down and killed as at least one other Galatian monk and hermit, mentioned in the *Life of Theodore of Sykeon*, had.[10] Instead their days full of fear, hunger and thirst had passed away,[11] leaving them now to concentrate on how to begin anew. This picture of the community reinforces a second, obvious point. Even though they had been forced to abandon their home monastery, they had not been so desperate as to flee to Constantinople, Rome, the Egyptian and Libya deserts, or any other location where they could be fairly sure of a permanent place of refuge. Their flight was instead a measured, strategic one. In other words, they had been forcibly uprooted and adapted as best they could, but were not yet willing to accept a revolution in their way of life, or a complete transplantation from one locale to another.

Toward a study of Byzantine monasticism in the age of Heraclius

So much for the histories of two Byzantine monasteries and their brief connections with one another during the middle years of Heraclius' reign. The question, of course, is whether these anecdotal and to some extent accidental accounts are representative of broader tendencies, and if so to what degree the experience of monks had changed or was presently changing, either in response to the dramatic political events of the age, or as part of some ongoing internal evolutions within monasticism, or indeed as the result of both of these factors working in unison. These are obviously large questions, with uncertain answers. Some limitations present themselves immediately. The sheer vastness of monastic geography and culture from the end of the sixth through the early seventh century certainly presents a major challenge to research. Withdrawal from the world and peregrination had long stood at the very core of the monastic vocation, and as such eastern Christian monastic communities were found practically everywhere, in both town and country, and not only in lands immediately bordering the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, but also deeper inland and further afield. Monks from completely different cultural horizons nevertheless identified themselves with a common group of founders, the likes of Anthony, Pa-

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 71.
[11] Antiochos, *Ad Eustathium*, col. 1421b.

chomios and other early ascetic and monastic heroes. Frequently, too, monks of different backgrounds occupied the same geographic space, as in Judea, Egypt and such great centers as Antioch, Constantinople and Alexandria. The result of these interactions between groups with a common point of reference but quite different life-experiences varied, of course, according to time and place. Some monks evidently ignored geography and the inherent cultural and even confessional differences separating them, preferring instead to focus and build upon their shared vocation as best they could.[12] This outlook on the monastic profession was not necessarily widely shared, however, even less so perhaps as time went by. For generally speaking the linguistic, confessional and other cultural traditions dividing one group of people from the next within the former Eastern Roman Empire had grown more severe by this age.[13]

Monks may have been slower to succumb to this tendency, yet they could not have been immune to it, notably in respect to confessional differences. Hence it seems impossible to deal with the whole of Eastern monasticism in this review of early seventh-century developments. Any number of methodological and historical issues would need to be addressed first.[14] And even then, such a study would run the risk of canvassing communities that had little or no communication with one another, or indeed had incompatible agendas in response to the major events of the day.[15] Given these complications, a comparative study of primarily Greek and Greek-

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[12] John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale* (BHG[3] 1142), transl. Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow*, p. 29.20-21 (on the two stylites of Aegaion, Cilicia), p. 26.17-19 (on the older monk and young recruit at Calamon).

[13] Haldon, *Byzantium*, pp. 337-343 and 355-366, discusses some of the dynamics of these changes. A corollary to these developments, suggested by Haldon and others, is the breakdown in both the attitudes and realities of universal imperial rule. See *ibidem*, pp. 355-374; Winkelmann, 'Kirche und Gesellschaft', p. 489; *idem*, *Die östlichen Kirchen*, pp. 133-135.

[14] Among the many preliminary problems to be sorted out in detail, for example, is to what extent monks exchanged ascetical texts with one another across geographic, linguistic, cultural and confessional divides. A brief glance at the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vol. 3, *Ab Cyrillo Alexandriano ad Ioannem Damascenum*, illustrates that ascetical literature was widely translated, yet to learn anything about the effect of these translations it would be important to evaluate their timing, extent, format of publication and specific audience(s). An additional challenge to such a cross-cultural line of research would be the scholar's command of the wide range of original languages in question, a skill this particular author makes no claims to.

[15] The development of Syrian monasticism seems to be a case in point, drawn as it was toward involvement in Monophysite issues (over and against purely monastic ones) and hence by definition away from sympathy with Chalcedonians, their fellow monks included. This matter is discussed at length by Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, vol. 3, pp. 200-223.

speaking monasteries seems more sensible. This more restricted geographic and cultural focus does not, of course, eliminate methodological problems entirely. For even Greek-speaking monks could no doubt become an island unto themselves, for whatever reason cut off from their Greek brothers in other communities and locales, and thus lesser participants in the major challenges and currents of the day. These cases aside, however, this more restricted outlook on monasticism still seems promising, given that it presents an opportunity to investigate the fortunes over time of what was arguably a community – and still a large and diverse one at that – joined in quite tangible ways as it entered the historic era of Heraclius. What became of its institutions is the subject of what follows. The fairly meager source base for the age does not permit a detailed investigation of the question, nor indeed can every institutional form of monasticism and locale be given equal attention. Yet available sources are adequate enough for constructing a rough guide to the institutional realities and tendencies of the times, both in their own right and in historical perspective.[16]

Greek monasticism in the latter half of the sixth century

Sources for the middle and later sixth century are considerably better, and they indicate that at this time monasticism was in full bloom.[17] At every institutional level – be it the coenobitic community, the lavra or the hermitage – and across age, gender and confessional lines the movement was strong and stable, if not actually growing.[18] At Ankara, for instance, there is archeological evidence for at least six sixth-century monasteries.[19] Given their size, these were in all likelihood coenobitic houses, and therefore represented only part of the total community in existence there. In Palestine, the number of coenobitic and lavriote communities grew to about eighty in the age. The great monastic leader Sabas had alone founded four lavras and six coenobitic houses during his lifetime, and his direct disciples added another three lavras and two coenobitic monasteries. The average size of

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[16] General bibliographies for the age of Heraclius are to be found in Haldon, *Byzantium*, *passim*, and Herrin, *The Formation*, esp. pp. 191-215. For a review of Byzantine literature during the later sixth and early seventh century, Cameron, Averil, 'New Themes and Styles', pp. 81-103. For monasticism, Winkelmann, 'Kirche und Gesellschaft', pp. 479-480; Kountoura-Galakê, *The Byzantine Clergy*, pp. 46, 57.

[17] However, see the cautionary remarks of Haldon, *Byzantium*, p. 295.

[18] See, for summary statements, Mango, *Byzantium*, pp. 112-114; Brown, 'The Rise', pp. 87-96; *idem*, 'Holy Men', *passim*; Rousseau, 'Monasticism', pp. 745-761.

[19] Foss, 'Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara', p. 61. Cf. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, II, pp. 115-116.

these monasteries is (to my knowledge) unknown, but the largest communities included from about one hundred twenty to one hundred fifty monks.[20] Such a number of monks per monastery does not seem exceptional. But other aspects of Palestinian monasticism in the age may be. By the normal standards of the day, and for obvious reasons, Jerusalem and its surroundings attracted and then ultimately hosted a proportionally huge monastic community in comparison to what seems like the healthy but nonetheless modest dimensions of monastic life in Ankara.

One measure of the strength of sixth-century monasticism is the indication itself that Palestinian monasticism was not so very exceptional at all, given the fact that other densely or extensively populated centers had emerged in other parts of the Empire. Constantinople was surely one of them. As the imperial capital and a major religious center, with a substantial population and plentiful economic resources, the City had been an attractive place for monks since the late fourth century.[21] By the sixth century it was by no means densely settled with monasteries, but rather like other large and important cities, including Antioch and Alexandria, it simply hosted a substantial population of urban and suburban monks.[22] The church council lists of the sixth century bear out this point. In a council held in the City in the year 536, for example, sixty-eight of the signatories were local abbots and another forty came from monasteries in nearby Chalcedon. Using this indicator together with other sources, it may be estimated that the total number of monasteries in the City and its suburbs was around one hundred thirty, with an average range of from ten and twenty to around one hundred monks per house.[23] This estimated ratio of monks to monasteries works well in some cases.[24] Yet some religious houses were reportedly much larger,

[20] Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 96 (for an estimate of institutions). See also Rezác, 'Le diverse forme', pp. 107-109 (for the foundations of Sabas and his disciples), p. 109 (for population reports and estimates). For other institutional developments, Maraval, 'Le monachisme oriental', pp. 730-732; Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors*, pp. 79-90, esp. p. 90, and pp. 161-182.

[21] For the fourth/fifth-century background and settlements, Pargoire, 'Les débuts du monachisme à Constantinople', pp. 67-143; Bacht, 'Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums', esp. p. 295; Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville', pp. 229-276, esp. p. 253, note 125 (for an estimate of 10,000-15,000 monks c. 500); Saradi, 'Constantinople and Its Saints', pp. 87-110; Kaplan, 'L'hinterland religieux de Constantinople', pp. 191-205, esp. pp. 191-192.

[22] Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville', pp. 253-254.

[23] For the council signatories, Janin, *Grand centres*, pp. 423-428. For a review and assessment of the various lists, Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville', pp. 240-244. On the total number of monasteries in Constantinople proper in the sixth century, Charanis, 'The Monk as an Element of Byzantine Society', p. 65.

[24] Loparev, *Life of Theodore of Chora*, chapt. 26, p. 11.24-25, chapt. 28, p. 12.11-12

including the 'Non-Sleepers' (*Akoimetai*) Monastery at a reported one thousand strong at the beginning of the century, and various monophysites houses from the mid-century and later, ranging in numbers from three hundred to five hundred heads.[25] These latter monophysite houses would naturally not have been represented at the Chalcedonian council lists indicated above, nor for that matter would the smaller coenobitic houses and hermits' huts that dotted Constantinople and its suburbs. In the absence of detailed and reliable written accounts,[26] and with virtually no surviving archaeological record, these groups have left behind little trace of their institutional histories. Whether smaller communities, in particular, added significantly to the institutional presence of monks in the City cannot be confirmed even if it remains inviting to think so.[27]

Besides Palestine and Constantinople, the city of Alexandria and its extended hinterland constituted a third great home for sixth-century monks – Greek and non-Greek speaking alike. The fourth and fifth century Egyptian background is well known and need not attract further attention here, except to note the reportedly spectacular size of Pachomian coenobitic communities and the wide expanse of different types of settlements throughout the region.[28] The city of Alexandria itself historically had a sizeable but hardly dense concentration of monastic settlements, and in the sixth century this situation remained basically the same. Reports about the monastic initiatives of the early seventh-century patriarch John the Alms-

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(100 monks in the Chora); Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae*, ii, chapt. 46, p. 83.9-14 (70 monks in Gwrdyswn).

[25] For the *Akoimetai*, a hostile and therefore possibly exaggerated source, in Ps. Zachariah of Mitylene, see Hamilton and Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle*, vii, chapt. 7, p. 168. For the Monophysite houses, with possible exaggerations, Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae*, i, chapt. 10, p. 5.18-26 (300 heads); *idem*, *John of Ephesus: Lives*, p. 475 (500 in the Hormisdas); Chabot, *Chronique*, chapt. ix, sect. 21, vol. 2, p. 192 (300 people, many probably religious, under imperial care). On the immigration of Monophysite monks to Constantinople in general in the sixth century, see Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society*, pp. 80-91.

[26] For the brief notices in *Life of Bendedianos*: *floruit* later fifth/early sixth century, Chalcedon), see Gedeon, *Life*, p. 67; *ibidem*, Doukakes, *Life*, pp. 18-22; Andrew of Crete, *Life of Patapios* (BHG^3 1427, *floruit* later sixth/early seventh century), *PG* 97, cols. 1205-1221; *idem*, *Life of Patapios* (BHG^3 1428), *PG* 97, cols. 1233-1253; *Life of Andrew of Crete* (BHG^3 1424), *PG* 116, cols. 355-368.

[27] The later-fifth century community surrounding Daniel the Stylite, and his/its reportedly dramatic impact on events in the city, is an inviting parallel.

[28] Good reviews in Weingarten, 'Der Ursprung des Mönchtums', pp. 1-35, 545-574; Chitty, *The Desert a City*, *passim*; Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, *passim*; Elm, '*Virgins of God*', *passim*; Goehring, 'The World Engaged', pp. 134-144; *idem*, 'New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies', pp. 236-257.

giver may suggest a higher concentration of urban monks. For one of his biographers claims that with John's foundation of two new communities in the city center, and their around-the-clock singing of the psalms, Alexandria was transformed into a virtual monastery.[29] Yet this claim alone, like those of many Byzantine hagiographies, remains notoriously difficult to interpret. Indeed, taking into consideration other sources of information, it may be the case that the numerous lay religious groups attested in the City played as much a part in creating this monastic atmosphere as did monastic communities themselves.[30] Whatever the case, Alexandria's sixth-century suburbs seemingly had as many or more communities than the City did itself.[31] Monophysite sources such as John of Ephesus, among others, report several new foundations along these lines in the middle of the century.[32] Another source puts the total number of monasteries in the area, of whatever size and wherever they may have been, at about six hundred.[33]

In the end, just how large the Egyptian monastic community was in the sixth-century is difficult to calculate. For in addition to the monastic centers within a reasonable distance from Alexandria, there were also several other urban-based communities such as that at Oxyrhynchos together with the newly fortified center on Mount Sinai and the numerous desert refuges, such the Scetis desert with its reported number of from 3500 to 5000 monks at different times in sixth century.[34] One report from the later sixth or early seventh holds that Egypt was actually overcrowded with monks, so much so that a certain Patapios and his companions decided to pack up and move to Constantinople for some peace and quiet.[35] Patapios may have emigrated

[29] Dawes and Baynes, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, pp. 250-251.

[30] Pétridès, 'Spoudaei et Philopones', pp. 343-345; Garrigues, 'Les charactéristiques du monachisme basilical', pp. 206-207; Dagron, 'L'Église et la chrétienté byzantine', pp. 37-38.

[31] Wipszychk, 'Le monachisme égyptien et les villes', pp. 1-44, esp. pp. 10-19.

[32] Brooks, *John of Ephesus: Lives*, pp. 344-351 (on the communities founded by Susan in the village of Minus), pp. 531-532 (on the two houses founded by the Constantinopolitan patrician Kaisaria).

[33] Goehring, 'The World Engaged', pp. 141-142 (referring to the Coptic *Book of the Patriarch*).

[34] Bacht, 'Die Rolle', pp. 293-295, and Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville', p. 254, note 129 (with rough estimates); Wipszychk, 'Le monachisme égyptien et les villes', pp. 26-35 (on other urban/suburban centers); Amantos, *Monastery of Sinai*, pp. 10-22 (on sixth-century Sinai). For the report at the Scete, cf. Clugnet, *The Life*, p. 67.15-18 (5000 heads); Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow*, p. 113.94.

[35] The anonymous *Life of Patapios*, *PG* 116, cols. 357b-360a. Patapios is joined by two fellow Egyptians, Baras/Varas/Mara and Rabboula/Raboula. For the story of the three, with slightly different explanations for the move to Constantinople, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, John Mauropous, *Life of Baras/Varas*, chapt. 2, p. 39.1-14.

for the reasons stated, of course, though it is not impossible that he was also responding to the increased security problems that had developed in the course of the sixth century in general, as a result of the weakening of imperial borders in North Africa. Other monks were apparently in motion, too, be it from the countryside toward cities and more secure centers such as that at Mount Sinai, or indeed abroad toward Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor.[36] Such security issues did not necessarily, in and of themselves, translate into lower monastic vocations in Egypt, or significantly decreased numbers of monks and monasteries, but rather probably reapportioned monastic institutional life. Put in simple terms, some communities moved on from this and other crises of the sixth century, some did not, and others suffered decline or collapse in the short-term but were repopulated and reconstructed at a later date.[37]

Mention of these Egyptian desert ascetics reminds us that both rural communities and those located in villages and smaller cities such as Ankara represented an important component of the whole. Their total numbers across the Empire were not nearly as great proportionally as those found in Egypt, or for that matter in the Judean Desert, but their presence locally was often significant in any number of ways, be it in a basic moral and social sense,[38] or more specifically in connection with the activities and mission of local churches.[39] Both written and archaeological evidence points to numerous existing institutions of this sort as well as several newly-founded ones. Among the new and most dynamic centers were those established under charismatic holy men such as Nicholas of Sion (in Lycia), Alypios in Hadrianopolis (in Paphlagonia) and Theodore of Sykeon (in Galatia).[40] A num-

[36] Herrin, *The Formation*, pp. 71-72. Though note, too, the reverse – the immigration of Monophysite monks into Egypt – as reported by Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society*, pp. 76-80.

[37] For a dated though still useful survey of Egyptian desert monasteries and their fortunes, see Meinardus, *Monks and Monasteries*, pp. 91-95 (for Dair Anbâ Bûlâ, near Thebes, with an apparent lapse of activity between the fifth and seventh century), pp. 117-133 (for the Scete, whose communities, despite difficulties, weathered well), pp. 351-358 (for Dair Abû Mînâ, in the desert near Mareotis, a similar story).

[38] Brown, ' The Rise', *passim*.

[39] This huge and complicated subject cannot be dealt with here. Relevant examples, however, include David of Thessaloniki's (*floruit* mid-sixth century) mission to Constantinople as an advocate for his city, discussed in Dagron, 'L'Église et la chrétienté byzantine', p. 21, and the appointment of monks to various official roles within the church, including bishoprics, discussed in, Bacht, 'Die Rolle', pp. 300-304.

[40] Ševčenko and Ševčenko, *Life of Nicholas of Sion*, chapt. 1, p. 20.10-13, p. 24.10; Delehaye, *Life of Alypios*, chapt. 15, p. 161.10-chapt. 18, p. 162.32, esp. chapt. 18, p. 162.23-32; Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*, 1, chapt. 40, p. 36ff., transl. in vol. 2,

ber of new Monophysite houses are attested to as well.[41] Finally, the emperor Justinian and his wife reportedly founded and repaired numerous monasteries in provincial cities and countryside.[42] This whole range of new and newly-constructed communities stood side by side with existing institutions of little or no repute, known today mainly by their surviving archaeological remains or mere passing references in written sources.[43]

A passing reference does not have to, but nevertheless does often signify an institution with an ephemeral history. Accordingly, sixth-century Byzantine monasticism seemingly flourished as an institution in purely numerical and geographic terms, with apparently many hundreds or even thousands of communities spread Empire-wide, but simultaneously it remained weak and unsettled in certain sectors. Perhaps the single most suggestive piece of evidence for the mere growth and popularity of the

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chapt. 40, p. 38ff. For the situation generally in Asia Minor, Trombley, 'Monastic Foundations', pp. 45-59, esp. pp. 46-51 (on Sykeon), pp. 53-55 (on Hadrianopolis), pp. 55-58 (on Sion). For the community at Sion, see Foss, 'Cities and Villages of Lycia', pp. 303-339. For Sykeon, inter alia, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 4. Galatien und Lykaonien,* pp. 228-229; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, pp. 124-139; Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture*, pp. 170-171.

[41] Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae*, i, chapt. 39, p. 34.8-12 (the monastery of Rupis, in Bithynia); iii, chapt. 36, p. 125.24-p. 126.13 (ref. to monasteries founded in Asia, Caria, Phrygia, Lydia – 4 in all); Brooks, *John of Ephesus: Lives*, pp. 104-105 (the Chalcedonian monastery of Tryz in Armenia – with 300 brothers), pp. 456-458 (report of ten monasteries founded in four provinces), pp. 506-508 (a monastery founded on Chios).

[42] Dewing, Procopius of Caesarea, *Buildings*, 3, chapt. 4, p. 198.11-13, transl., p. 199 (foundations in Sebasteia, Nikopolis), 5, chapt. 3, p. 324.2, transl., p. 325 (Nicaea), bk. 5, chapt. 9, p. 360.33-38, transl., p. 361 (Isauria, Pamphylia).

[43] *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 1. Hellas und Thessalia*, p. 107 (general information about Hellas/Thessaly); *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 2. Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charisianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos)*, p. 228 (on the monastery at Manda, in Cappadocia); *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 3. Nikopolis und Kephallenia*, p. 140 (on the monastery of Katzure, near Arta), p. 180 (on the monastery of St. Theodora, Kerkyra); *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 5. Kilikien und Isaurian*, pp. 193-194 (on the Alahan Manastir), p. 215 (on the complex at Biçkiçi Kalesi, near Selinus), p. 292 (on the complex at Karlik, near Adana), p. 336 (on the complex on Mahraş Daği, near Alahan Manastir), p. 364 (on the monastery of Nakkiba/Achiba, near Tarsos), pp. 460-461 (on the complex at Yelbis Kalesi); *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 6. Thrakien (Thrake, Rodope und Haimimontos)*, pp. 287-288 (on the monastery complex at Isperihova, not far from Plovdiv, Bulgaria), p. 499 (on the monastery at Malkoto Kale; in north-east Bulgaria); *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 10. Aigaion Pelagos (Die Noerdliche Aegaeis),* pp. 129-130 (on the monastery of the Archangels, on Thasos); Foss, 'St. Autonomus', pp. 187-195 (on the monastery of St. Autonomous on the south short of the Gulf of Nikomedia); Ruggieri and Zaffa-nella, 'La valle degli eremiti', pp. 70-88 (on a hermit settlement, in Lycia).

vocation right through to the end of the sixth century is the well-known law of Emperor Maurice forbidding candidates for the military and civil service from renouncing these obligations in order to become monks and churchmen. The law is not preserved in contemporary codices, nor does it admit to a single interpretation.[44] As primary evidence for the sustained growth of monasticism, it seems surely to have some value. At the same time, considered in its larger context of the Avar wars, and hence the possibility that young men entered religious orders as a way to dodge the draft, the law may indeed begin to teach a more sobering lesson about the monastic traditions of the age. A number of other sources from the century make a similar if broader point, namely that monasteries were not always founded with ample conviction, preparation and foresight. Several Novels of the emperor Justinian dealing with foundation arrangements, property rules, and monastic stability suggest as much,[45] as does the curious report of the historian Agathias for the year 557 when he speaks of an 'irregular expedient' the citizens of Constantinople seized upon after a major, recent earthquake. They suddenly became nicer and more just to one another, he claims, some giving money to the poor and others renouncing all property altogether and embracing the solitary life. However this behavior was temporary, he adds, not something true and lasting.[46] Evidently no sooner were many Constantinopolitans admitted into monastic orders than, when times were better, they left them.

Information about the longevity of Constantinople monasteries in the fifth and sixth century seem to substantiate Agathias' observations. Council lists and petitions, for example, suggest a fairly high degree of turnover, with monastic representatives mentioned in one decade disappearing in the next. The histories of a number of individual monasteries from the period reinforce the impression that institutional developments were fairly fluid

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[44] Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. 1, no. 110, pp. 13-14. For discussion, see Köpstein, 'Zu den Agrarverhaeltnissen', pp. 21-22; Frazee, 'Late Roman and Byzantine Legislation', p. 276.

[45] On the preconditions for new foundations, esp. *Nov.* 67, Nissen, *Die Regelung*, p. 12; Frazee, 'Late Roman and Byzantine Legislation', p. 273. On the alienation, sale, rent of monastic properties, esp. *Nov.* 120 and *Nov. 123,* Ueding, 'Die Kanones', pp. 274-276; Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture*, pp. 61-64; Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, pp. 165-166, p. 287. On *stabilitas loci*, and esp. *Nov.*123 and *Nov.* 133, Nissen, *Die Regelung*, pp. 22-23; Ueding, pp. 638-641; Herman, 'La 'stabilitas loci'', pp. 118-119; Frazee, 'Late Roman and Byzantine Legislation', pp. 274-276.

[46] Keydell, *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum*, chapt. 5, p. 5.4-chapt. 5, p. 5.6, transl., pp. 140-141.

and unpredictable. Or put another way, it was characteristic of the City to have monks without having monastic institutions as such.[47]

To be sure, this level of volatility was to some degree more keenly experienced in Constantinople than in other monastic centers, owing among other things to its standing as a veritable supreme court over theological issues that particularly impassioned monks, and hence drove them to its walls for shorter periods of residence. Yet the apparent rags to riches to rags stories of so many of the City's monasteries had a number of deeper roots, too, shared with most monks, everywhere. First and foremost, recent research suggests that the economic foundations for monasticism in general during the period were still rather shallow.[48] Exceptions to the rule were the Judean monasteries with their investments in the pilgrimage trade, and places such as Mount Sinai or any number of prestige centers that were fortunate enough to have attracted patrons, notably episcopal and imperial patrons with properties and perpetual rents to concede.[49] Alongside these exceptional cases, however, stood the vast numbers of individual communities without endowments of any sort, and indeed perhaps without any developed ethos of manual labor with which to tide them over in hard economic times. The community of the 'Non-Sleepers' outside Constantinople comes to mind in this respect, considering that it reportedly flourished through the fifth century only to fall into serious decline by the end of the sixth. Although a number of factors contributed to this decline, its economic and institutional arrangements were certainly not the least of them.[50] Given

[47] Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville', pp. 240, 244, 253-255; *idem*, 'Le christianisme dans la ville byzantine', pp. 3-10, 25. See also Charanis, 'The Monk', pp. 65-66. Some posssible, if not probable, cases in point are discussed in Janin, *Constantinople*, pp. 60-61 (Bassianos), p. 541 (Chorakoudion); *idem*, *Grand centres: Les églises et les monastères*, pp. 7-8 (The Prodromos of Phoberon).

[48] See esp. the body of work by Kaplan, *Les propriétés*, p. 21; *idem*, 'L'église byzantine', pp. 109-110 and pp. 115-116; *idem*, *Les hommes et la terre*, pp. 282, 297; *idem*, 'Les moines et leurs biens fonciers', pp. 209-211. For a comparable view, Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville', pp. 8-10; Winkelmann, 'Kirche und Gesellschaft', pp. 480-481. For different positions, Savramis, *Zur Soziologie*, pp. 45-52; Charanis, 'The Monk', p. 83, Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, pp. 315-340. For a general view of trends and evidence, Magoulias, 'The Lives', pp. 378-384.

[49] For Sion and its episcopal patronage, Foss, 'The Lycian Coast', p.27.

[50] For a criticism of their lack of a tradition of manual labor, Nilus/Ps. Nilus of Ancyra, *De voluntaria paupertate ad magnum* (*PG* 79, col. 997a). On their episcopal stipend having been cut in the sixth century, Hamilton and Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle*, bk. 7, chapt. 8, p. 170. For the monastery's institutional history, and relative decline in the sixth century, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, pp. 16-17; *idem*, IV, pp. 13-15; Dagron, 'La vie ancienne', pp. 275-276.

its earlier history as essentially a community of immigrants,[51] the 'Non-Sleepers' (*Akoimetai*) community may also have succumbed to a second great institutional weakness of the age – the rejection of stability (*stabilitas loci*). This was an old problem, criticised by generations of monastic leaders and repeatedly censured by imperial and canon law.[52] The motives for wandering were many, including mere adventure, pilgrimage, a change in vocation or discipline, economic need, politics, or simply abandoning one monastery for another. It was the unauthorised, irregular movements of monks that particularly troubled leaders, however, in part because of the danger to corporate ascetic discipline, and partly in view of the larger social and economic ramifications for monk and non-monk alike. What was essentially a survival tactic for some monks and groups of monks, therefore, was to some degree a challenge to the evolution and integrity of the larger monastic establishment. Or in any event, it was regularly perceived to be as such.[53]

Monasticism in the early seventh-century time of troubles

These observations on economies and stability shed some light on the challenges that average monastic leaders faced by the end of the sixth century. To call them challenges or problems today is naturally to suggest that average contemporaries – significant numbers of abbots and abbesses, in other words – perceived matters in this way and were therefore seeking solutions. There are some grounds on which to base such a view, notably that portion of prescriptive sources to which monastic leaders signed on to willingly, or perhaps even those rules and regulations that secular and church officials managed to impose upon monastic bodies against their leaders' will.[54] On the other hand, there is considerable evidence pointing to what might be called a steady and informed resistance to system, order and

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[51] Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, III, pp. 432-434; Dagron, 'La vie ancienne', pp. 271-273.

[52] See note 45 (above) for legislation. More generally, Herman, 'La 'stabilitas loci'', pp. 115-142; Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, pp. 41-49; McDonnell, 'Monastic Stability', pp. 115-150. For the economics of Egyptian instability, Wipszychk, 'Le monachisme égyptien', pp. 35-37.

[53] Canonical warnings and prohibitions are frequent, including canon 4 at Chalcedon (451), 41 and 46 at Trullo (692) and 21 at Nicaea (787).

[54] See, e.g., Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici* (*The Nomokanon in Fourteen Titles*), title xi, pp. 588-599 (for evidence of continued ecclesiastical interest in monastic affairs); Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*, chapt. 82, pp. 69.9-70.18 (for evidence of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and its exercise); Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow*, chapt. 1, p. 4 (for evidence of ecclesiastical intervention in abbatial elections).

progress. Much of this resistance was in keeping with the spirit of primitive monasticism. Other leaders may simply have been making the proverbial virtue of a necessity when they preached poverty and individual freedom in a community whose prospects for economical and institutional advancement looked grim. Whatever the case, these old-believers certainly constituted part of the fabric of monasticism as it left the heyday of Justinian's reforms and financial outlays, and entered the more troubled economic and political period of the later sixth and early seventh century. They were as much a type of monastic community and outlook as the more prosperous, developed and usually larger houses. Hence there were many communities – coenobitic, lavra, and hermitage – that no doubt occupied a place between these two extremes.

Returning again to the monasteries of Attaline and St. Sabas, these two communities were clearly two different kinds of institutions. They did not represent institutional extremes perhaps, but they surely were built upon different principles and had quite different resources and prospects by the beginning of the seventh century and the reign of Heraclius. As it turned out, by the early 620s and its monastery sacked, Attaline struggled to cope, with first a headlong flight from Ankara, and then a resettling process. There is very little chance that it returned to its home monastery and began anew. St. Sabas certainly faired better. After the initial sack of their monastery and their own flight in 614, the monks eventually returned to a monastery that had been looted and damaged but not destroyed. A small part of the community emigrated, either immediately in 614 or sometime later, travelling first to North Africa and then on to Rome to found the Monastery of St. Sabas around the year 650.[55] The rest of the community reassembled and ultimately outlived not only Bedouin and Persian sacks but also the later Islamic invasions. An inscription from 657, indicating the acquisition of new property, may even suggest a limited level of prosperity, as in the longer term does the flourishing of letters there.[56] Further afield in the Judean Desert a similar pattern was found. A least two of the approximately eighty or so monasteries attested to for the sixth century were forever abandoned.[57] But along with St. Sabas several others resumed life as before notwithstanding the damage or destruction of 614. And neither the reconquest by Heraclius in 628, nor the Islamic dominance from 634-637 changed the

[55] Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, pp. 22-29.
[56] Chitty, *The Desert a City*, pp. 158-160; Hirschfeld, *The Judean Monasteries*, p. 16; Patrich, *Sabas*, pp. 326-330; Schick, *Christian Communities*, pp. 25-32 and 43-46 (on the Persian and Arab conquests), p. 96 (with inscription notice), pp. 97-100 (on the later seven and eight centuries).
[57] Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 43 (Choziba at Wadi el-Qelt and Martyrois at Maa'le Adummim).

situation dramatically. As Schick has remarked, the communities that failed to recover quickly after 614 were lost forever, whereas the rest continued ahead, albeit with some restrictions on their freedom and a considerable loss of the prosperity and prestige that they once enjoyed.[58]

The pattern in Constantinople looks similar to that in and around Jerusalem. Even if it never fell, the City itself suffered great hardship and its suburbs sustained serious destruction on both the East and the West by Persian and Avar armies, respectively. When the worst was over toward the end of the 620s and into the 630s, a number of well-appointed institutions came immediately back to life. The Stoudios Monastery and that the Theotokos *tes Peges* in the city proper certainly numbered among them, as did the monasteries of St. Theodore *en to Rhesio* and Philippikos (or Chrysopolis) outside the walls.[59] Another handful of institutions attested to for the later seventh century seem to have weathered the storm too.[60] Others disappeared forever, notably those in the suburbs, but clearly numerous houses within the City walls as well.[61] Charanis has calculated that about seventy-five percent of the urban monasteries attested to in the sixth century disappear in the seventh century, with no new foundations reported. He himself remains somewhat unconvinced by this apparently drastic drop in houses, but on the other hand he cites no additional evidence to suggest that the situation may have been different.[62]

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[58] *Ibidem*, pp. 20-39 (damage assessment for Bedouin, Persian attacks), p. 23 (for the damaged but rebuilt monasteries of Kursi and Keniset er Ràwat), pp. 31-32 (for the undamaged monasteries of Calamon and Anastasios), pp. 41-47 (a general survey of conditions, pp. 615-628), pp. 57-67 (the same for 628-634), p. 96 (for a list of seven monasteries, including that of Sabas, attested for the year 634).

[59] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, pp. 430-440 (Stoudios), pp. 223-226 (Theotokos tes Peges); *idem*, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, pp. 143-145 (Theodoros en to Rhesio), pp. 24-25 (Phillippikos). For a further notice on the Pege, dated c. 650, see Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles*, chapt. 36, p. 192.5-8, transl., p. 193.

[60] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, p. 81 (Dalmatos), pp. 11-12 (The Egyptians), pp. 95-97, pp. 185-186 (Diomedes), pp. 451-453 (Sergios and Bakchos en tois Hormisdas), pp. 495-496 (Phloros), pp. 531-537 (Chora); Berger, *Leontios Presbyteros von Rom. Das Leben des Heiligen Gregorios*, p. 360 (Sergios and Bakchos).

[61] Fairly clear cases in Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, pp. 344-345, 444-445 (Ton Promotou), pp. 379-380 (Holy Olympia), pp. 286-289 (Holy Kosmas and Damian); *idem*, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, pp. 17-18 (Thomas ton Brochton), pp. 38-40 (Hypatios/Roufinianae). Rather unclear cases in Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, p. 75 (Galakrenai); *idem*, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, pp. 77-78 (George tou Sykeotou), pp. 275-276 (Kallistratos), p. 332 (Tes Neas Metanoias), p. 445 (The Romans en to Petrio).

[62] Charanis, 'The Monk', pp. 65-66.

In fact, there is no easy resolution to this question given the limited written source base along with the present and ever increasingly unlikelihood that new archeological finds will emerge from modern Istanbul and its suburbs. However it may be possible to refine Charanis' formulation in any of three ways. First, and in contrast to Palestine, economic and security conditions in the City deteriorated even further with the advent of the Islamic invasions. The seventy-five percent failure rate noted above may therefore reflect institutions that had reorganised themselves in the early seventh century, only to crumble under the weight of war and hardship later. Second, and again quite different from conditions in Palestine, it may be inferred that Constantinople continued and even expanded its habit of having monks in residence, yet without proper institutions as such. This seems to be one of the messages of the Emperor Heraclius' *Novel II*, when he speaks of monks and clergy coming to the City from both near and faraway provinces in search of a new home and income. The law is generally aimed at correcting an abuse, which, as applied to monks, specifically ranged from fraudulent misrepresentation, to the settling or occupation of irregular monasteries, to seeking income at the expense of existing clergy and monks.[63] The law is dated to the year 617, still early in the history of both Heraclius' and the Empire's trials under foreign enemies. Therefore it may represent a trend in irregular, individualised monasticism that grew ever more widespread as time passed. Two brief and uncertain yet suggestive notices point in this direction, the one mentioning a monk from the 630s whose monastery was simply his house (*ta idia*), the other which describes the damage done to *many* hermit dwellings from a violent wind-storm in the City in the early 641.[64] Third and finally, by considering the developments of the age of Heraclius in the context of sixth century developments we may come to understand better why some institutions endured and others failed. In any such analysis there is the risk of simply blaming the victims. However, there is reason in this case to suggest that relatively successful institutions in the seventh century were by and large those which had laid broad foundations – economically, politically and institutionally – already in the sixth or even very early in the seventh century. The history of the Phloros monastery, founded possibly in Anaplus (Arnavutköy) on the Bosphoros in 618, and still a prominent house in 695, seems to be a case in point,[65] whereas

[63] Konidaris, 'Die Novellen', pp. 73-79.

[64] Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles*, chapt. 39, p. 200.26-39, p. 202.3, transl., pp. 201-203; De Boor, *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, I, p. 697.10-12.

[65] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, pp. 495-496; *idem*, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, p. 431. This assertion is based on two assumptions: the first, discussed by Janin, that the Phloros mentioned in 695 is identical with that founded by Phloros in the late sixth/early seventh century as reported in his synaxarium account, Dele-

apparent developments at the 'Non-Sleepers' (*Akoimetai*) show how a once-strong monastery could decline and now practically fail.[66] These examples suggest that the fate of monasticism in Palestine and Constantinople were strikingly similar – the crises of the early seventh century acting in almost Darwinian fashion to favor houses with the sufficient internal resources to bounce back immediately, and punishing cruelly the mediocre ones. Other successful groups included Mount Sion in Lycia,[67] the Monastery of Hosios David in Thessaloniki,[68] a possible center in Caesarea in Cappadocia,[69] the three newly founded mon-asteries in Rome,[70] and the community on Mount Sinai.

The case of Mount Sinai is particularly interesting in light of evidence to suggest that the central monastery of St. Catherine suffered very little under Persian raids, and then later enjoyed both limited prosperity and a healthy communal life. The well-preserved state of sixth-century constructions indicates that St. Catherine's incurred very little material damage in the seventh century.[71] Its liturgical treasure was surrendered, apparently, but several important icons remained, and many new ones were acquired thereafter.[72] Violent raids took place periodically up above (on the Mount), along the roads and in the nearby deserts, but this activity amounted to an inconvenience rather than a fatal blow to life on the peninsula.[73] Indeed as a place

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haye, *Life of Phloros*, p. 324.1-18; the second, that the plague that precipitates Phloros's retirement and foundation of a monastery on his own property is that of 618.

[66] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I, reports no further information about the monastery until 787, when it was found the council proceedings of that year in thirteenth and twenty-seventh place.

[67] Foss, 'The Lycian Coast', pp. 30-33, 36-37.

[68] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, pp. 364-365.

[69] Thierry, 'Un problème', pp. 102-103 (with conflicting reports about the state of the city and its monasteries from Michael the Syrian and Sebeos).

[70] Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, pp. 12-13 (Renati), pp. 13-18 (Aquae Salviae), pp. 22-29 (St. Sabas). For the total numbers of Greek monks in Rome c. 650, see *ibidem*, p. 30. For the assertion that these monks were not desperate refugees (who would not have been able to make it to Rome in the first place), but rather privileged groups, *ibidem*, pp. 17-18. See also Mango, 'La culture grecque', pp. 695-699.

[71] Amantos, *A Short History*, pp. 26-27 discusses its dispensation under Islamic domination, reportedly from Mohammed himself.

[72] See generally, Amantos, *A Short History*, pp. 26-28; Mango, 'Justinian's Fortified Monastery', pp. 82-83. For evidence of its wealth, see Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine*, vol. I, pp. 4-77 (documenting 61 icons from sixth-tenth centuries, 14 of which may conceivably have been acquired in the seventh century).

[73] Nau, Anastasios the Sinaite/Ps. Anastasios the Sinaite, chapt. 2, p. 61.10-11 (destruction on the Mt.), chapt. 9, p. 65.23-24 (road to Palestine is 'barbarised'), chapt. 23, p. 74.3-4 (Saracen raids in the desert), chapt. 35, p. 80.16-22 (six monks

of relative security and some level of economic well-being, St. Cathe-rine's soon became the anchor of a larger community of monks – some living within the walls itself, others dwelling some short distance outside, and still other itinerant hermits and small groups of ascetics taking their chances to live farther away, while still keeping contacts with the center. The ethnic and cultural diversity of this extended community is striking.[74] It suggests that the Sinai peninsula had become what the Egyptian deserts had always been, a magnet for foreigners – and in apparently fairly significant numbers at that. Another striking feature of the community was the extent to which discipline, system and authority continued to be imposed. John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow* and John Klimakos' *Ladder of Divine Ascent* are general testimonies to the prevailing atmosphere, though more revealing in this regard is the latter author's first-hand account of an abbot in action, narrated in his *Book for the Abbot*. This anonymous leader of either St. Catherine's or the nearby Raithenu handed out severe penalties for disobedience; met with his monks every evening to say prayers, give sermons and issue practical orders; appointed watchmen on a twenty-four hour cycle to supervise the activities of his monks and make written reports of wrong-doings; apportioned material goods, not on the basis of a single standard for all, but rather to each according to his needs and station; and finally found time and resources to found a lavra.[75] Other evidence for the age reinforce this image of close, intelligent and strong management on the Sinai, including a report that monks had to fulfill a two-year novitiate in the coenobium before setting off into the wilderness, and another indicating that the abbot of St. Catherine's sent representatives out into that wilderness to check up on its affiliated hermits.[76] The abbots of Sinai during the age evidently took a chapter from the book of other great leaders of the past in their close attention to administration. The precise timing of these vigorous insti-

killed in 'barbarian' attacks 'beyond the sea'), chapt. 38, p. 82.17-20 (sacking and blasphemy on the Mt.). See also, Mango, 'Justinian's Fortified Monastery', p. 82 on the byways to Sinai being blocked in 634 on the occasion of the attempted repatriation of John Moschos' relics.

[74] Nau, Anastasios the Sinaite, no. 5 (a monk from Constantinople), no. 8 (one from Iberia), no. 14 (an *archiatros*, perhaps from Constantinople), no. 15 (a monk from Rome), no. 17 (a monk from St. Sabas, Judea), no. 20 (a monk from Byzantium), no. 28 (a monk from Cyprus), no. 29 (a monk from Ho Gademetes), no. 31 (a monk from Armenia), no. 35 (a monk from Cilicia), no. 37 (a monk from Armenia), no. 38 (many Armenian visitors).

[75] John Climacus, *Liber ad pastorem* (Migne, cols. 1200abcd). See also John Climacus, *Scala paradisi* (Migne, cols. 632-1208) as well as Luibheid and Russell, *John Climacus*.

[76] Nau, Anastasios the Sinaite, chapt. 5, p. 63.1-5 (novitiate), chapt. 12, p. 69.17-19 (inspectors).

tutional initiatives, as well as others,[77] is nevertheless difficult to date. Both the anonymous abbot's accomplishments and other reported institutional developments are found in *Narration* literature, a complicated string of stories which almost certainly pre-dated the Islamic invasions but may have gone back as far as the late sixth century.[78] Whether they date precisely to before, during or even after the age of Heraclius may, however, be less important to establish than simply taking note of the impressive regime that had evolved over the course of the whole period, and was certainly one of the key ingredients of the Sinai's ultimate success as a veritable fortress of Byzantine monasticism in the region.

Early seventh-century monks with neither a real fortress nearby such as that at Sinai, nor the protection of a fortified urban center, certainly had a radically different experience in the age. In this regard, Cyril Mango has spoken generally of the seventh-century monk's greater capacities to cope with the period's hardships in comparison to other groups.[79] At the same time Judith Herrin has remarked on the virtual end of a long tradition of itinerant asceticism.[80] There seems to be some truth to both of these views. The early seventh-century wandering experiences of such men as John Moschos and Theodore of Sykeon practically come to an end (as far as I can tell), replaced by two quite dissimilar patterns – the one (already reviewed), monks who maintained a rootless, itinerant lifestyle albeit within a microcosm, within or near a set of fortification walls, such as the hermits attached to Sinai or those setting themselves up around larger urban centers; and the second, the small, average rural or village monastery that sought simply to cope, much like the Attaline monks of Ankara. Either or both of these groups took shape, to some degree, and in some places, as the result of a forced migration of monks from their original home.[81] The fate of the last of these groups is perhaps the most difficult to grasp because it is the least known. Apart from the Attaline story, very few written accounts are available about monks in the countryside. These indicate merely that small

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[77] John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi*, col. 716ab (Luibheid and Russel) on *stabilitas loci*. *Ibidem*, *Liber ad pastorem*, cols. 1169-1209 *passim* (with various suggestions on an abbot's comportment, penance and punishments, etc).

[78] For the author(s) Anastasios the Sinaite, see Canard, 'Nouveux récits'; Haldon, 'The Works', pp. 109-125. For Climacus, see Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, p. 451; Amantos, *A Short History*, pp. 20-21; Dagron, 'L'Église', pp. 56-58. For Moschos, see Chadwick, 'John Moschos', pp. 41-74.

[79] Mango, *Byzantium*, p. 114.

[80] Herrin, *The Formation*, pp. 211-212.

[81] Mango, 'La culture grecque', p. 714, note 132; Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, pp. 17-18; Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture*, pp. 57-58; Schick, *Christian Communities*, pp. 81-88.

and remote communities may have survived around Mount Olympus in Bithynia, on Mount Auxentios in the diocese of Chalcedon, on the island of Mitylene, and in the area of Latros in southwestern Asia Minor, though nothing is sure.[82] Fortunately, archeological finds broaden the sample somewhat. In Lycia, for example, probable seventh-century monastic sites have been identified at Xanthus and near Fetiye, the one located within a fortified circuit of walls, the other found around a remote cave in the foothill, with a fortified basilica and some dormitories at its center.[83] A few other sites have emerged as well in various parts of the empire, notably in Egypt,[84] in Cappadocia,[85] perhaps near Arta in Epirus,[86] and in what seem to be newly founded, communities in southern Italy and Sicily.[87] The prospect of broadening this sample further through future archeological work, notably in the modern-day Turkish countryside (Caria, Lycia, Galatia), is fairly good. Even as it stands at present, however, the evidence points to the survival of some limited semblance of settled monastic life outside of large urban centers, normally in a village or small urban castle complex or tucked away in a remote mountain cave. That this was the prevailing pattern of life is naturally no surprise given the security concerns of the age. More impressive is the adaptability of these groups at all, in what frankly must have been conditions much like that of the desert fathers for monks who post-dated those fathers by centuries, were probably by and large average, and hence never necessarily sought such an extreme vocation in their lives.

Conclusion

Heading into the seventh century monks and nuns were fairly free, institutionally speaking, to do what they liked, where they liked it. Past gene-

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[82] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, pp. 127-128 (on Olympus); *ibidem*, p. 44 and especially Auzèpy, *Life of Stephen the Younger*, chapt. 11, p. 102.15-24, transl. pp. 195-196 (on Mount Auxentios); *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 10*, pp. 230-231 (on Andrew of Crete's visits); Vokotopoulos, 'Latros', pp. 74-75.

[83] Foss, 'The Lycian Coast', pp. 10-11 (on Xanthus); Ruggieri and Zaffanella, 'La valle degli eremiti', pp. 70-88.

[84] Most of these were Coptic and/or Monophysite, or alternately Monophysite and Chalcedonian, houses. See some of the more outstanding examples in, Meinardus, *Monks and Monasteries*, pp. 34-35 (Dair Ambâ Antûnîûs), 171 (Dair Ambâ Maqâr), 215-216 (Dair Ambâ Bishoî), 312-313 (Dair Ambâ Samwîl), 357-358 (Dair Abû Mînâ).

[85] *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 2*, p. 140 (Anatepe, 35km from Aksaray), p. 228 (Manda/Mande, 25km N. of Caesarea), p. 305 (Yedikapalu, 34km. NNW of Caesarea).

[86] *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 3*, p. 140 (Haghios Demetrios Katzure).

[87] Guillou, *Aspetti*, pp. 262-265 (monasticism in the area also attested to by written sources, esp. Maximos the Confessor).

rations of Byzantine emperors and churchmen had endeavored to regulate their internal activities, though apparently without significant and widespread effect. Hence most houses in the half century or so prior to the age of Heraclius still remained an island on to themselves, regulating their affairs as they wished. It seems that of these houses a relatively small number were rather astute in organising their internal affairs, building firm alliances with the local population and church, profiting from available patronage and in general planning better for the future. Large numbers of other houses, however, ignored the many challenges and opportunities at hand in the mid- and late-sixth century to build financially and institutionally stronger houses in up and coming locales. The succeeding decades, leading into and through the age of Heraclius, put this whole system and way of thinking to a grave test, notably in response to security issues, but most certainly in economic terms as well. What followed was an age of readjustment. Successful institutions in fortunate locales emerged from the chaos, damaged and reduced but still alive. The itinerant hermit lifestyle as such dried up, except when it was attached in some way to fortress-like locales, be it a city or protected monastic complex. Finally, the average, settled rural monastery, the most exposed element in the whole system, typically relocated itself, heading for safer areas most certainly, whether it be the protection of numbers in a village or city fortress, or the security of being so far away that no one cared. These seventh-century patterns of monastic life came about fairly suddenly but would have far-reaching implications, including the later appearance of remote but important region-al monastic centers in Latros and Olympus,[88] and the continued concen-tration of monks in and around major urban centers, not least the imperial capital Constantinople.[89]

[88] On Latros, see Vokotopoulos, 'Latros', pp. 74-75. On Latros and Olympus, see Papachryssanthou, 'La vie monastique', pp. 173-175, 175-178; Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, pp. 229-232, 127-129.

[89] The present author will treat this last theme in a forthcoming monograph.

HERACLIUS AND THE SAINTS

THE 'POPULAR' IMAGE OF AN EMPEROR

Jan J. van Ginkel

Introduction

> Après que notre Dieu miséricordieux et Sauveur Jésus-Christ, qui est la puissance de Dieu, en laquelle celui-ci a institué et maintenu toutes choses dans leur cours et développement, eut de sa propre main, sans effusion de sang, restitué l'empire à notre très pieux et chrétien empereur Héraclius, et après qu'il eut remis entre les mains de sa piété le trophée que lui-même a dressé sur la mort – la Vénérable Croix, veux je dire –, ce trophée qui, revenant de la Perse, se hâtait vers l'emplacement qui lui est propre, une joie immense et une indicible allégresse s'étaient emparées de tout l'Univers. Il se produit en effet ce qui jamais auparavant ne s'était produit. Alors en effet qu'aucun empereur des chrétiens, de mémoire d'homme, n'était venu à Jérusalem, seul notre sérénissime et très pieux empereur y vint, avec la vivifique Croix du Sauveur, en la troisième indiction, l'an vingt de son règne; cela encore, il l'accomplit d'une façon digne de lui, honorant celui qui l'avait honoré et rétablissant au lieu qui lui est propre ce qui assure la sécurité du monde. Après avoir rendu au trône épiscopal tout l'ornement qui lui convenait, après avoir comblé d'honneurs l'auguste habit des moines et joui des lieux vénérables et adorables, il retourne de nouveau en Mésopotamie.[1]

This introduction to the *Translatio* of the remains of Anastasius the Persian is one of the most elaborate accounts of the return of the Cross by Heraclius (AD 630) in hagiography. Anastasius had died as a martyr for Cross and Christianity during the Persian occupation of Palestine and the other eastern regions. In this introduction the author established a link between Anastasius and the vicissitudes of the Cross during the second and third decades of the seventh century. It had been the Cross, paraded through Persia, which had attracted Anastasius to the Christian religion.[2] Like the Cross, his remains had been brought back from Persia to their rightful resting-place,

[1] Flusin, *Saint Anastase,* I, pp. 98-99 (*Translatio* 1).
[2] *Ibidem,* pp. 46-49 (*Acta* 7).

Palestine.[3] Heraclius plays only a subordinate role in this story of the Cross. However, even if the emperor is but a minor character in Anastasius' *Life*, the details it produces on the emperor's life transform the account probably into the most elaborate eulogy on Heraclius in a preserved saint's *Life*.

Heraclius' reign saw several highly emotionally charged events like the restoration of the Cross.[4] Unfortunately, no *Life of Heraclius* has come down to us,[5] even though hagiography did flourish in the first half of the seventh century.[6] Some of the *Lives* produced during or immediately after his reign have been considered the most illustrative representations of the genre.[7] In these *Lives* the political events are but the stage on which the saint is being presented to his audience. Nevertheless the texts give historical information with the help of which some gaps in historiography can be filled. Some of the details will be discussed below.

More importantly, the *Lives* also reflect the social and cultural milieu of this era. Because of the political and socio-religious upheaval during the early seventh century, this period is usually seen as the end of Antiquity and the start of the Medieval or Byzantine period. In a century filled with conquests, displacements of large numbers of people, and fragmentation of existing political and religious systems profound changes took place in Christian society.[8] It was a time when people 'felt a sense of confusion not only about their religious beliefs but also about their cultural and social identity'.[9] As a result there was an outpour of theological texts and debate, which, according to Averil Cameron, must be seen as 'an expression of Greek identity called forth by a rapidly changing and threatening political situation'.[10]

In the following a closer look will be taken at some examples of hagiography from this period in order to determine how the authors of saint's lives did use the reign of Heraclius as a means to present their heroes as seventh-century holy men. The two central questions are: 1) what was the

[3] The military campaigns of Heraclius are briefly mentioned in the *Acta* and *Translatio* (Flusin, *Saint Anastase*, I, pp. 88-91, *Acta* 43, pp. 100, 101, *Translatio* 3), but only as far as they are relevant to the life of the saint. For the analogy, see Speck, 'Das Martyrion', pp. 185, 244.

[4] On Heraclius, see Kazdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, pp. 916-917, as well as Martindale, *The Prosopography*, pp. 586-587.

[5] For a *Life of Maurice*, see Wortley, 'The Legend', pp. 383-391 and Nau, *Les légendes*, pp. 773-778. On emperors as saints, see Schreiner, 'Aspekte', pp. 368-372.

[6] Dümmer, 'Griechische Hagiographie', pp. 284-296.

[7] Brown, 'The Rise'.

[8] On the influx of Greeks in Italy and the West, see Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*.

[9] See Cameron, Averil, 'The Eastern Provinces', p. 288.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 289.

relation between the emperors and the holy men, and 2) in what way is Heraclius presented differently from other emperors (if indeed he is treated in an other way)? These aspects are especially relevant in relation to the I-mage of the usurper Phocas in the *Lives*, which will be discussed, since it was Heraclius who had put an end to Phocas' reign.[11] The question now is to determine the way the fortunes of the empire and emperor influenced both the contents of the *Lives* and the image of the emperor as a person and as an institution.

Theodore of Sykeon[12]

According to his *Life* Theodore had been well-connected throughout his life, maintaining close relationships with several emperors. After having predicted Maurice's accession to the throne,[13] the latter rewarded his monastery financially and by way of privileges.[14] After Maurice's death[15] Theodore quickly became engaged in a relationship of patronage with Domnitziolus,[16] a nephew of the new emperor Phocas. This new sponsor of Theodore's monasteries provided Theodore again with access to the highest circles of the new government.[17] His asceticism and special relation with God provided Theodore with authority, which, at times, he used on behalf of Domnitziolus and Phocas' government.[18] In return Domnitziolus provided Theodore with lavish gifts and social power.[19] Nevertheless Theodore

[11] On Phocas, see Kazdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, p. 1666; Martindale, *The Prosopography*, pp. 1030-1032; Olster, *The Politics*.

[12] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*; Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, pp. 87-192 (English translation and commentary of an abbreviated version).

[13] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*, chapt. 54, pp. 46-47 and 49-50: together with his brother Peter; chapt. 169, pp. 159 and 163: Domitianus, bishop of Melitene and nephew of Maurice.

[14] *Ibidem*, chapt. 54.30-32, pp. 47-50: 200 modi of corn annually; chapt. 79, pp. 69-70, 66-67: ordering the patriarch to bestow the Omophorion upon Theodore after having accepted his resignation as bishop of Anastasioupolis; chapt. 82, pp. 69-70, 72-73: bestowing on the monastery the right of sanctuary and transfering the right to appoint abbots to the patriarchate.

[15] *Ibidem*, chapt. 119, pp. 95-96, 99: 'He deserves his fate for he has in many things governed ill, especially in the things which he is doing now'.

[16] Martindale, *The Prosopography*, pp. 417-418.

[17] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore,* chapt. 120, pp. 96-97, 100-101: Domnitziolus is sent to the East to take over the army. Note the reference to a conspiracy of the patrician Sergius, the emperor's father-in-law, of which no further details are known.

[18] See Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, pp. 41 and 48.

[19] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore,* chapt. 148, pp. 117-118 and 122-123: Domnitziolus backing Theodore against Megesthius.

had to contend with the rivalry of factions within the government. When Bonosus,[20] the oppressor of rebellions in the Levant and commander of Phocas' troops in the war against Nicetas in Egypt, visited Theodore, he clearly did not want to adhere to the protocol. Bonosus more or less forced Theodore to come down from his mountain to meet him and did not show proper respect during prayer. Theodore had to use his spiritual, and possibly political authority to put Bonosus in his place by physically grabbing him by his beard and forcing him to bow to God.[21] The author stresses that the saint had warned Bonosus as he had earlier warned Phocas during an audience granted by the latter, urging them either to stop their murderous activities or to face the consequences.[22] This is an attempt by the hagiographer, who was writing during the reign of Heraclius, to distance Theodore from Phocas' government and to prepare the change in government to come.[23] However, Theodore did not issue similar warnings in any of the meetings with Domnitziolus or the prelates appointed by Phocas. The saint's reprimand was only intended for some specific persons rather than the entire government.

Theodore's close link to Phocas' regime can also be detected in the report on a rebellion after Heraclius had seized Constantinople and had Phocas and members of his inner circle executed.[24] Phocas' brother Comentiolus was commander of the troops on the Persian front and therefore could not be apprehended by Heraclius' followers. Comentiolus brought his troops to Ancyra (AD 610/1) for the winter and effectively controlled Asia Minor. For a while it seemed as if the civil war would continue and that its conclusion was by no means foregone. However, after some prayers by Theodore, the threat to the empire was annulled by the assassination of Comentiolus by Justin, an Armenian patrician. God had decided who was to be the emperor of the Christian empire.[25]

It is possible that Theodore's involvement in all these events is only the result of the author's attempt to stress the importance and influence of his subject, Saint Theodore. However, at the same time, Theodore is credited with saving Domnitziolus from execution. After hearing of his arrest Theodore immediately sent a letter to Heraclius pleading for Domnitziolus' life. It is unknown whether Heraclius showed his respect for a famous saint, or used this opportunity to show clemency hoping to convince Comentiolus

[20] Martindale, *The Prosopography*, pp. 239-240.
[21] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore,* chapt. 142, pp. 111-113, 116-117.
[22] *Ibidem*, chapt. 133, pp. 105-106, 109-110.
[23] On the precarious position of Theodore, see Olster, *The Politics*, p. 174.
[24] Kaegi, 'New Evidence'.
[25] Festugière, *Vie de Théodore,* chapt. 152, pp. 122-123, 128-129.

that there could be a way out for him too.[26] Shortly afterwards, Herodianus and Philippicus, two officials sent by Heraclius to negotiate and spy on Comentiolus, contacted Theodore. In addition, the army commander Eutychianus sent him a letter from Ancyra. As a result of his private audiences with Phocas and contacts with other members of his government, Theodore may have been considered to be the perfect middle man for influencing Comentiolus.[27]

The last part of the *Life of Theodore* is filled with several predictions about the future, referring to the troublesome time of the coming Persian invasions.[28] When the Eucharist tasted stale and the little crosses, which were carried around in a procession, began to 'dance', the saint repeatedly warned that 'great afflictions and disasters were (text: are) threatening the world'.[29] However, man would be able to influence that future. When Heraclius marched east to do battle with the Persians (AD 613), he should have taken the time for a meeting with the saint, as was proper. Unfortunately, it was this decision to hasten to the front that would cost the empire dearly.

> S'il les [les cadeaux de bénédiction] avait pris, c'eût été pour lui une preuve de victoire et il serait revenu en joie. Le fait qu'il les ait laissés est le signe de notre défaite, et si ce n'était qu'il fût monté et eût reçu la bénédiction des saints, en vérité ce malheur fût allé jusqu'à nous tous.[30]

The author seems to make an effort to explain the setbacks in Heraclius' early reign while trying at the same time to preserve Heraclius' reputation as an emperor by the grace of God.

As is to be expected, the author of the *Life* identifies 'community' with 'empire'. Theodore is part of the social and political network which keeps the empire running. It is the local saint who has taken over the role of defender of the local community, a role played in previous centuries by pagan priests and the local administration. The image of Theodore in this *Life* could be the blueprint of the holy man as described by Peter Brown. His authority curbs violence by local and regional potentates as well as the forces

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[26] *Ibidem*, chapt. 152, pp. 121-122, esp. p. 127.

[27] *Ibidem*, chapt. 152, pp. 122-123, 128-129. It seems unlikely that a high-ranking officer in the area around Ancyra where Comentiolus had his wintercamp could be openly loyal to Heraclius.

[28] *Ibidem*, chapt. 153, pp. 123-124, esp. p. 129: describing the fall of Caesarea in Cappadocia (AD 611) and predicting that these people would return if 'we do not repent like the Ninivites', that is to say, the invasions of 620s.

[29] *Ibidem*, chapt. 127, pp. 102-103, esp. p. 106.

[30] *Ibidem*, chapt. 166, pp. 154, esp. p. 158.

of nature. On the other hand is he able to make decisions by the government palatable to the community.[31]

The hagiographer does not present Phocas as the evil usurper in between two legitimate emperors, Maurice and Heraclius, even though Theodore, upon foreseeing Maurice's death, is said to have predicted that 'after him worse things shall happen, such as this generation does not expect'. Theodore did rebuke Phocas and members of his government for their murderous policy, but Heraclius' succession did not end a period of anarchy. Life in the empire continued as before. The most likely explanation is that the text had been written before Heraclius' court press made Phocas the mythical source of all evil. Most of the material may have been written between 610 and 620. The text is interspersed with references to disasters yet to come, even though the tone is optimistic in the end.[32]

John the Almsgiver[33]

Another important figure during the reign of Heraclius, not only in the ecclesiastical and political, but also in the hagiographical sense, was John the Almsgiver, patriarch of Alexandria for the Chalcedonians. First of all John was no ordinary cleric, but a man who, as son of a wealthy governor of Cyprus, had lived a normal family life. It was only after the death of his wife and children that he had turned to a life-style of charitable ascetism.[34] After Nicetas had conquered Egypt for Heraclius (AD 609), he persuaded John to become patriarch in Alexandria (AD 610). Nicetas' choice may not have been based solely on John's charitable reputation since, according to the fragments of the oldest *Life of John*, John was an *adelphopoietos* of Nicetas.[35] The patriarch became the Godfather of Nicetas' children[36] and,

[31] *Ibidem*, chapt. 145-147, pp. 113-117 and 118-122. Note that Theodore was not always successful in establishing himself as the authoritative arbiter (chapt. 76, pp. 63-64, 66-67: Theodosius does not recognise Theodore's authority and gets away with it!).

[32] Possibly because the text was written before the worst of the disasters – loss of Jerusalem (AD 614) and Egypt (AD 619) and the siege of Constantinople (AD 626) – had happened. There is a reference to the duration of Heraclius' reign (Festugière, *Vie de Théodore*, chapt. 166, pp. 154, 158: 30 years), but this seems to be a later addition to the text. All other prophetic passages concern events predating the year 620.

[33] Festugière, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*. The author of the old life (only a few fragments have been preserved) is sometimes named as Sophronius. See Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, pp. 195-270 (English translation and commentary).

[34] Festugière, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*, chapt. 47, pp. 397-398 and 509.

[35] Delehaye, 'Une vie inédite', chapt. 4, pp. 20-21; Festugière and Fyden, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*, chapt. 4 (old), p. 323. See Macrides, 'Adelphopoiia', pp. 19-20. For

when the Persians were about to conquer Alexandria, Nicetas and John planned their escape together.[37] The bond between both men seems to have been very close. Although, according to the *Life*, there were some clashes between the two about attempts by Nicetas to increase the imperial revenues,[38] and although hagiographic convention may have provided the texture of the account of their friendship, John's appointment as patriarch clearly strengthened Heraclius' hold on Egypt.

John and Nicetas spent much of their time and energy on placating the Coptic Monophysites and trying to reunite the Church. According to the *Life*, John was successful, in part due to the help of Sophronius[39] and John Moschus.[40] Leontios, the author of the *Life*, considered it necessary to stress that John reputedly did not know the Scripture by heart, but that he rather focussed on practising what Scripture demanded. This suggests that John was willing to adapt to circumstances rather than rigidly enforcing all rules and regulations.[41] His undiscriminating generosity will have enhanced his reputation and authority among the Monophysite masses as well.[42] In addition, the demographic situation was also changing. Due to the Persian successes in the second decade of the seventh century, many Syrians and Palestinians fled to Egypt and beyond. As a result the number of Chalcedonians in Egypt and Alexandria must have risen considerably.

This *Life* presents another aspect of sainthood. John belongs to an aristocratic family and may even have been connected to the extended house of Heraclius. The relationship between the saint and the emperor's representative Nicetas is even closer than the one between Theodore and

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a different approach, see Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions*, although in this case Nicetas is married and begetting children at the same time, suggesting that Adelphopoiia did not replace a heterodox marriage. Cf. also Festugière, *Vie de Théodore,* chapt. 134.4, pp. 110, 106, and 135.25, pp. 107 and 112.

[36] Festugière and Fyden, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*, chapt. 12.75-76, pp. 357 and 457.

[37] *Ibidem*, chapt. 52, pp. 402-403, 515-516.

[38] *Ibidem*, chapt. 13.49, 67, pp. 362 and 463. John calls Nicetas 'son and brother', which may be a reference to the alleged relation through adoption.

[39] On Sophronius, see *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 14, cols. 1066-1073.

[40] Delehaye, 'Une vie inédite', chapt. 5.8-10, p. 21; Festugière and Fyden, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*, chapt. 5 (old), p. 323: on the seven orthodox churches in Alexandria (?); chapt. 16.1-11, pp. 364, 466: his knowledge of the Holy Scripture and his interest in 'dogmatic debate'; chapt. 33, pp. 383 and 490: the 'war of dialectics' against the Monophysites throughout the whole country with the help of John and Sophronius; chapt. 49, pp. 398-399 and 510-512: forbidding communion with heretics. On John Moschos, see *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 8, cols. 632-640.

[41] Festugière and Fyden, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*, chapt. 16.1-4, pp. 364 and 466.

[42] Frend, *The Rise*, p. 340 (note 8): John even became a saint in the Coptic Church, which again suggests his more practical attitude regarding dogmatic issues.

Domnitziolus. Imperial authority seems to have used John's reputation to enhance its religious policies. Hagiographic convention did influence the presentation, stressing the saint's independence, but in this case the secular may have won out over the spiritual. John's community is Christendom, although the distinction between Copts and Chalcedonians is always present.

Patriarch Benjamin[43]

Heraclius not only plays a role in Chalcedonian hagiography but he is also mentioned in some *Lives* from the Monophysite traditions of the Coptic and West-Syrian Churches. In the *Life of Benjamin I*, the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria (AD 626-665), the account of the ten years that Heraclius and the Colchian (or Caucasian) ruled over the land of Egypt is a pivotal part of the narrative.[44] This account is a very negative portrayal of the emperor and his representative, the patriarch and prefect Cyrus,[45] as well as of their attempts to unite the Coptic Church with the Chalcedonian Church of the Empire. While Benjamin hides in Upper Egypt, countless numbers of Copts 'went astray', 'some through persecution, some by bribes and honours, some by persuasion and deceit'. Even bishops denied the orthodox (i.e. Coptic) faith. In the *Life* Heraclius in person is held responsible for the death of Mennas, Benjamin's brother, who refused to accept the decisions of the council of Chalcedon.[46] 'Heraclius appointed bishops throughout the land of Egypt as far as the city of Arsinoe ... and like a ravening wolf devoured the reasonable flock, that is to say, the Theodosians (the Copts)'.[47]

In addition to this forceful challenge to the Coptic church, Heraclius is presented as having started a campaign to convert all Jews and Samaritans in the Empire. According to the *Life* an angel announced to him in a dream that 'Verily there shall come against thee a circumcised nation, and they shall vanquish thee and take possession of the land'. Heraclius supposedly misinterpreted the dream and tried to convert the only circumcised people he knew, viz. the Jews and the Samaritans.[48] Only when the Arab armies had conquered large parts of his territory, the emperor remembered that the

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[43] Evetts, *History*, pp. [223-254], 487-518: *Life of Benjamin*.

[44] Evetts, *History*, p. [229], 490: an angel announces 10 years of 'great troubles', p. [229], 493, p. [232], 496: announcing the end of this 'sore confict'.

[45] Previously bishop of Phasis in Kolchis (see Kazdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, p. 1164).

[46] Evetts, *History*, p. [227], 491.

[47] *Ibidem*, p. [228], 492.

[48] On Heraclius' attitude towards the Jews, see the contributions of Drijvers, Van Bekkum and Reinink to this volume. Cf. Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et Chrétiens', pp. 17-46.

Arabs, too, were a 'circumcised nation'.[49] In the *Life* there is an elaborate account of the Arab conquest of Egypt (AD 640-642). Towards the end of the text the patriarch Benjamin is invited by the Arab commander 'Amr to join him in Alexandria, where Benjamin prayed for him and predicted his further successes. Afterwards, the Coptic patriarch is said to have spent the rest of his life bringing back to the Coptic Church many of those who had been led astray by Heraclius.[50]

The *Life of Benjamin* is not an ordinary saint's life. It is part of a collection of *Lives* of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church known as 'the History of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria'. In a way it is a history of the Coptic Church, but written by various hagiographers. Unlike the other *Lives* referred to in this article, the date of this one is uncertain, but it was probably written in Coptic during the early eighth century, based on older material.

Much work has been done on this *Life* as a historical source for the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, for instance by Butler and Winkelmann.[51] Without discussing here all details, it can be stated that the author represented the conquest more directly than most others. The text clearly suggests that the Coptic Church, and Benjamin in particular, welcomed the Arab conquest. However, both from the *Life* and from other sources, most notably the *History of John of Nikiu*, it is clear that the Coptic Church suffered from the conquest and members of the Church were involved in resisting the Arab attack. This positive presentation of the Arabs may indeed be the result of hindsight.[52]

In contrast to the Arab conquest, the Persian occupation of Egypt is described in very negative terms and Heraclius' victory is described as being accomplished 'by the grace of Christ'.[53] In this one instance Khosrau is described as the unbelieving king, whereas, more or less by default Heraclius is presented as the good king. Historically speaking the *Life* is also important because of its grudgingly admitting that Heraclius and Cyrus had indeed been successful in making large numbers of Coptic Monophysites, including bishops, to accept some form of unification with the Byzantine

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[49] Evetts, *History*, p. [228], 492. On the theme of the dream, see Van Donzel, 'The Dream'. For the dream in other sources, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 218, note 12.
[50] Evetts, *History*, p. [233], 497.
[51] Butler, *The Arab Conquest*; Winkelmann, 'Ägypten und Byzanz'; *idem*, 'Die Stellung Ägyptens'.
[52] Winkelmann, 'Ägypten und Byzanz', pp. 161-182.
[53] Evetts, *History*, pp. [220-222], 484-486 (*Life of Andronicus*) and p. [223], 487, p. [225], 489 (*Life of Benjamin*): 'For by the grace of Christ, he (i.e. Heraclius) marched against them, and slew Chosroes, their misbelieving king, and ruined his city ...'.

Church. It should be noted that in the *Life of John the Almsgiver* there are also indications that patriarch and prefect, in this case Nicetas, Heraclius' nephew, had tried to reunite the Christian Church. These successful inroads into the Coptic community may help to understand Benjamin's strong antagonistic attitude towards the emperor.

The relationship between patriarch and emperor or, for that matter, the government, is described in very negative terms. The division of society on the basis of religion is more important than the feeling of 'romanitas' or of being an inhabitant of a Christian empire. Heretical rulers are more dangerous to the community than outsiders. As a result many of the 'evil' actions of Cyrus are described as personal decisions of Heraclius. This open attack on the emperor is new in Monophysite literature. In previous centuries the officials advising the emperor and implementing the orders were the ones who took the blame for the violent actions and crimes commited by the emperor.[54] The identity of the Coptic Church is defined in this *Life* in opposition to the Byzantine empire and its head, the emperor Heraclius. This break in loyalty to the empire and this definition of 'community' with the help of purely religious criteria transform this *Life* into a clear illustration of the shifts in cultural perception. Within the text the shift of allegiance can be seen in the reaction to both the Persian and Arab conquests. Whereas the image of the Persians is that of an enemy, the Arabs are presented as new patrons. The author of the *Life* used the motifs usually belonging to a violent change of power within the empire to describe the events of the conquest. Only this time it is not just the emperor that is replaced, but the state as well.

Maphrian Marouta[55]

In the Syriac Monophysite hagiography there are hardly any traces of any negative image of Heraclius as in the *Life of Benjamin*. In the seventh-century *Life of Marouta*, the Maphrian of the Syrian Orthodox Church, the lack of interest in 'événements politiques contemporains' struck its editor, François Nau, who felt compelled to write an historical introduction to his edition.[56] The author refers in two brief phrases to Heraclius' victory over the Persians and the Arab conquest of the Persian empire, but these historical events do not seem to have interested Marouta. Some historical information, however, on Christians at the court of Khosrau can be extracted

[54] See, for instance, Van Ginkel, 'John of Ephesus'. On 'Kaiserkritik' in general, see Tinnefeld, *Kategorien*.
[55] Nau, 'Histoire'.
[56] *Ibidem*, p. [52], 52.

from the text. Given the fact that both Nestorians and Monophysites shared the eucharist, it is interesting to note that in those days it probably was profitable for both parties to represent themselves as Christians in general, rather than as particular Christian communities. At times this behaviour was sanctioned by the local metropolitan. It was, however, abolished by Marouta.[57] With the support of various high-ranking Christian officials, including queen Shirin, the Monophysite community prospered during most of the reign of Khosrau II (AD 590-628).[58] In the end, however, the Sassanian empire was plagued by rebellions, 'because of sins and love of money',[59] which in turn weakened the empire, providing Heraclius with the opportunity to attack and destroy the Persian empire. No further mention is made of Heraclius or his government,[60] but the *Life* focusses on the saint and his community.

In this *Life* the author describes his saint as part of his community, not as a member of a larger society. His main interest is the re-establishment and consolidation, by the saint, of the religious identity of his community (Monophysitism) even against Nestorianism. The outside world is presented as having a limited impact on the community. Although the world was in flames, the author only shows an interest in his saint as a moral guide, whose authority was enhanced by God's blessing and His acting through his deeds. The Christian Empire and emperor have neither a positive nor a negative bearing on the communal identity. This may reflect the fact that the *Life* was written outside the territory of what once was Byzantine empire.

Epilogue

What do these *Lives* tell us about Heraclius, and the relation between saints and government? All the saints mentioned above, especially Theodore of Sykeon, are 'classic' holy men as described by Peter Brown.[61] More than anything Theodore acts as a healer and go-between for the local rural

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[57] *Ibidem*, p. [52], 52.
[58] During this period the Monophysites had been able to prevent the appointment of a new Nestorian Catholicos by the Sassanian king. As a result the Nestorian Church was without a leader and authoritative representative at the court. For details concerning the politics involved, see Reinink, 'Babai the Great's *Life of George*' (with an extensive bibliography).
[59] Nau, 'Histoire', p. [77], 77.
[60] *Ibidem*, p. [77], 77; references to the Arab conquest or perhaps to religious disputes with the Nestorians (p. [92], 92): 'le tumulte et la commotion des querelles qui arrivèrent à son époque'.
[61] Brown, 'The Rise', pp. 80-101.

population of his region. Whenever there is a problem in a village, Theodore is asked to intervene, usually to exorcise evil spirits. However, he also has sufficient authority to stop local powerbrokers from abusing their status. His authority and apotropaic power are based on his life-long ascetic lifestyle and the support of the holy martyr, Saint George. As a result whatever he prays for is granted by God.

It is not my intention to reduce this text to an account of social tensions within a regional rural society. However, using the terminology of evil spirits and prayer, the *Life of Theodore* presents us with a picture of ordinary life. It is filled with the internal conflicts and the pacifying influence of authoritative arbiters whose authority was based on charisma which in some cases was enhanced by worldly power. This *Life* is a good example of the presentation of a saint as an active and authoritative member of his community. The focus of hagiography is limited to the saint as the authority in his own world. Emperors and other members of the elite are only referred to when their presence in the account helps to highlight the saint's importance.[62]

As a result of this kind of approach Heraclius does not seem to be an important element in hagiography. His great accomplishments are usually passed by very quickly – and are only referred to if and when they have had an impact on the life of the community of the saint. Neither are his offences mentioned. Heraclius is not treated differently, compared to other emperors. This now is surprising, considering his accomplishments. Even more curious is the fact that Phocas and his government, treated so harshly in other sources, do not seem to be treated so very differently either.[63] In fact, in the *Life of Theodore* his government is presented as legitimate and normal.

From the start saints were involved in, or were being used in, politics. Patriarch Athanasius profited from his contacts with Antony to further his own goals.[64] Daniel the Stylite was one of the major champions of Chalcedon during the reign of Basiliscus, and he effectively contributed to the destruction of the emperor's authority in the capital.[65] In those days contacts

[62] Olster, *The Politics*, p. 175: '... hagiographers vilify or glorify ... but their genre credited emperors with rather different virtues and vices than appear in the sources produced by imperial patronage. Naturally, the genre assigned a more elevated and powerful role to the saint'. In addition Olster stresses the need for imperial patronage for saints in the Constantinopolitan area.

[63] On Phocas in pre-Heraclius texts, see Olster, *The Politics*, pp. 172-173: Sophronius' *Anacreontica*.

[64] Brakke, *Athanasius*.

[65] Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, pp. 48-59: St. Daniel the Stylite and his struggle against Basiliscus; Miller, 'The Emperor'.

between 'holy men' and secular authorities were few. Things, however, changed. In the *Lives* of the sixth and early seventh centuries we see the number of contacts between saints and high-ranking officials increase. The saint had become a well-established element in society. Most of them were now embodied in monastic life or in the hierarchy of the Church. They were therefore better situated to meet officials and were also more dependent on these patrons. This now explains their changing status: the saint became involved in political affairs by way of consultation.[66] The relationship between the spiritual father and his children integrated the former in a politically influential network. This relationship between saint and high-ranking official 'followed upon the acceptance of the saint by a large body of people, and on their respect for a sanctity associated with the qualities of curing, prophecy and asceticism. This acceptance showed itself in concrete form in increased patronage of the foundations set up by the holy men concerned – and in their rising reputation as spiritual guides'.[67] It goes without saying that the financial burden of running a monastery often also required outside support and stimulated contacts with those who held the secular sword.[68]

The communities of saints like those of John the Almsgiver and Benjamin, and to a lesser extent that of Marouta, are even more 'political'. The saints are leading members of a semi-political organisation. Their *Lives* are part of the official history of the church. Although emperors are not essential to their sainthood, they are essential to define the position of the saints in the world. Therefore, the image of Heraclius in the *Lives* of the saints is based on his position in the religious conflict. The emperor is the evildoer in the *Life of Benjamin* to the point that he becomes the focus of all evil; he is, however, the supportive helper of the state Church and its leader, patriarch John in the homonymous saint's *life*. The saints from the reign of Heraclius are the last of Antiquity. Already new influences became visible. The saint became increasingly a member of society, a position which gave him more and more political influence.[69] The power of the icon, the power of the relic, helped the saint in his combat against evil and provided support to the emperor, when saints were not present. Their world was changing, but for a short while the old system of heavenly patrons continued.

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[66] Brown, 'The Rise', pp. 91-101.
[67] Morris, 'The Political Saint of the Eleventh Century', p. 46.
[68] On the relationship between saint and emperor, also see Olster, *The Politics*, p. 174.
[69] For a later stage of this process, see Morris, 'The Political Saint of the Eleventh Century'; *eadem*, 'The Political Saint in Byzantium'.

'A painful process of readjustment was going on, and we must allow that even though they may have expressed it in terms alien to modern historians, the Greek writers, too, were trying to find some hope for the continuation of their culture'.[70]

[70] Cameron, Averil, 'The Eastern Provinces', p. 296.

MILITARY CADRES AND BATTLE DURING THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

Frank R. Trombley

Methodological frameworks

In the discussion that follows, I will try to find a clear-cut 'middle way' between archaeological data and Byzantine administrative texts on the one hand, and battle narratives on the other, in order to achieve an understanding of the societal and individual realities of warmaking in the reign of Heraclius. It was a period of endemic warfare. Heraclius seized power with the consent of the Senate at Constantinople in October 610. Until his death in February 641 – a reign of just over 30 years – the Byzantine state was in a state of continuous warfare on its eastern frontier for all but approximately five years. In contrast, the Byzantine territories in the Balkan peninsula were under continuous pressure from Turkic peoples like the Avars, and saw the continuous migration of Slavic tribes and other peoples. It is an easy proposition to offer geopolitical interpretations of the historical process during this period – which is widely seen as one of dislocation and demographic discontinuity.[1]

In the interest of saying something new, however, I would like to propose an interpretation that I will call an anthropology of endemic warfare amongst soldiers and in local societies, a study of the Greek ethnos and its associated peoples (Arabs, Armenians, Syrians) in the spirit of 'lower-case' history, one that can read a society from the 'bottom up' instead of from the 'top down', that is an approach to the facticity and experience of everyday life for ordinary individuals and collectives, as opposed to the political decisions and military gestures of the elites: in essence a study of existence at the bottom of the social heap instead of a new thesis of 'social revolution from the top' of the type that is so commonly argued for this period.[2]

In what follows, I will look at a selection of texts that lend themselves to comparative historiographic analysis, and then discuss certain applications deriving from them. The reign of Heraclius is well documented com-

[1] See the papers in Averil Cameron, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* III.
[2] See, for instance, Iggers, *Historiography*, p. 7f. For two experimental models, see Trombley, 'War and Society', and *idem*, 'War, Society and Popular Religion'.

pared to many periods of Byzantine history. My interest is in texts and non-narrative documents that reflect the experience of endemic warfare. It is not possible to discuss them all in a brief critique. In consequence, I will look for the applications spoken of above in a small number of texts, some of them written by elites for elites, others not: I am thinking here particularly of the tactical manual known as the *Strategikon* of Maurice,[3] *futûh* literature or the Arabic texts dealing with the military operations of the conquest period,[4] iconographic materials and sculpture that superficially depict military equipment *but implicitly explain military behaviour*,[5] and scatterings of 'lower case' documents such as papyri and inscriptions. An important underpinning of my arguments will be the *a priori* proposition that military equipment, behavioural structures and organisational know-how can be supposed to have become interculturally 'globalised' in different regional contexts. To limit the discussion, I will confine myself to the stretch of territories running between the four Armenias in the north to Palaestina III in the south. After giving a descriptive *précis* of the different documents, I will offer what I consider to be the most important applications. It is to be regretted that the anthropology of war, like other social scientific approaches, is still in its infancy as an academic discipline. 'Face of battle' quasi-anthropologies have to be given their due, but it must be recognised that these can only be used as a starting point.[6]

Historical discourse and demography

Now that these methodological presuppositions are out of the way, let me begin with an analytic *précis* of key source materials. The most important Greek text I will cite in detail is the tactical manual known as the *Strategikon* of Maurice. The document sets forth a detailed tactical system for the use of cavalry that was in use in some form by the late sixth century. The function of tactical manuals is twofold: on the one hand, they purport to describe a system of fighting that was theortically attainable by the standards of training existing at the time of their composition; on the other, they indicate the types of tactical formation and system of management that senior officers were to endeavour to achieve in light of the human raw material they had at their disposal. Tactical manuals are therefore both des-

[3] The translations that follow are adapted from Maurice, *Strategikon*. For the Greek text, see Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*. See Haldon, *Warfare*.
[4] See Donner, *Narratives*, pp. 174-182, etc. Cf. the anti-historicist arguments of Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*.
[5] See Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen*.
[6] Preeminently Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, pp. 15-78, which is as much a historiographic statement as an anthropological one.

criptive and prescriptive statements of doctrine to which military organisations were supposed to adhere and use as the standard for training troops.[7]

There are close but not exact correspondences between the tactical systems recommended in the *Strategikon* and the military operations described in Theophylact Simocatta's *Histories*, particularly during the last years of of the conflict with the Avars. It is an open question whether the *Strategikon* is modelled on the the system used by Priskos in the summer campaign on the Danube in 599,[8] or whether Priskos was carrying out an established tactical doctrine that was later codified in the *Strategikon*. The issue of who authored the *Strategikon* is beside the point: the document may well be a product of the advice of senior officers, including Priskos, Philippikos, the elder Heraclius and others, whose consensus is reflected in the text finally sanctioned by Maurice or possibly Heraclius. The system of equipping it reflects goes back to the late sixth century, when the cavalry was going over to the lighter, Avar model with the addition of certain types of Avar equipment.

The formations most experienced in the *Strategikon*'s tactical system at the beginning of the seventh century would have been the armies of Illyricum and Thrace, as well as the praesental armies that had been on campaign against the Avars. The military disasters of the reign of Heraclius raise all kinds of questions. For example, was the tactical system found in the *Strategikon* 'dislocated' by a revolution in tactics on the side of the Sasanids and Muslim armies of the conquest period?[9] This seems improbable in view of the tactical flexibility seen in the operations of the late sixth-century army, and in view of what is known about the Arabs' equipment in the archaeological and pictorial evidence.

A more obvious answer can be sought in the military census that Theophanes and Theophylact imply Heraclius conducted circa 612 which revealed that only two soldiers remained in the lists from the armies of Illyricum and Thrace that Phocas had transferred to Oriens in the winter of 603/4.[10] Simocatta indicates that these forces (which ranged between 10-20,000, had been completely swallowed up in ten years' fighting not only against the Persians, but also against the rebellious troops of Oriens and Armenia led by the *magister militum* Narses. An attrition rate of 1-2,000 soldiers per year in the army of a *magister militum* can be demonstrated from

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[7] This premise is a 'given' in the discussions about the tactical manuals of the early modern period in Europe, e.g. Wood and Farneworth, *Machiavelli*, pp. ix-lxxix. Gilbert, 'Machiavelli'. Luvaas, *Frederick*. For comparison, see Griffith, *Sun Tzu*.
[8] Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History*, 8.2.2 - 8.3.15, pp. 210-213.
[9] Following the tenor of Michael Whitby, 'Recruitment', p. 121ff.
[10] A discussion of this and the epigraphic material is found in Part II of Trombley, 'Heraclius' First Campaign'.

Prokopios' account of fighting in Italy during the late 540s, so the virtual disappearance of the veteran cadres of the Balkan armies could easily have occurred by the early years of Heraclius' reign. There are demographic considerations as well.

In this connection, I have carried out a survey of 169 funerary inscriptions of soldiers from the reign of Gallienus to the seventh century that record the age at death of the deceased and/or the length of his military service. Similar data pertaining to emperors and senior officers who actually served in combat were added as a control. The figures are interesting: based on 161 inscriptions the average age at death was 38.4 years, and, based on 48 inscriptions, the average length of a military career was 20.9 years. These figures require considerable shifting downwards because of under-represented groups: men killed in battle are under-represented because many would have been buried in mass graves; length of service is less often reported for younger men and this throws off the statistic on length of service by considerable margin; most important of all, lower rank officers and ordinary soldiers (including recent recruits) are significantly under-represented. But even if the statistical results of the epigraphic survey are taken at face value, it is clear that over a ten year period fifty percent of a given formation would have left the service or died as part of a predictable demographic attrition.[11] When this factor is combined with the effects of the low intensity operations carried out in Oriens during the reign of Phocas – there seem to be no reports of major pitched battles – one is left with the easy supposition that the cadres of troops who in the last years of Maurice drove the Avar khaqanate to the brink of extinction, and who had presumably mastered a good many of the Avar-style weapons and flexible tactical formations recommended in the *Strategikon*, had either been retired to non-combat duties or had been killed in battle.

Anthropology of tactics

Before looking further at the *Strategikon*, it is well to emphasise the main issues in the anthropological study of war; more precisely, one must define what constitutes 'civilised' warfare as opposed to 'primitive' warfare. In the time of Heraclius, more developed societies like the Byzantine state and Sasanid Persia (with literacy, division of craft and agricultural labour, and large agricultural surpluses) confronted less developed tribal societies like the Arabs, Avars, Slavs and the Langobardi, but it is impossible to regard

[11] My figures are far less optimistic that those given by Michael Whitby, 'Recruitment', p. 83ff.

any of the latter as primitive societies[12] – although even Byzantine and Sasanid warmaking reveals some signs of 'primitivity'. A brief look at the submilitary nature of 'primitive war' will reveal that all the societies of the Near East were above what H.H. Turney-High calls 'the military horizon'. Basic features of 'primitivity' include:

1. *No regularisation of participation in war*: primitive war is fought by militia bodies in which the warrior can often leave the campaign when he wishes.[13] It is impossible for tactical systems to develop where there is no regularisation of recruitment, not even the use of the line and column (which are not a fighting method but an organisational device).[14] The *Strategikon* and Sasanid evidence are suggestive about the regularity of recruitment and the necessity of tactical training.[15] There are references to the Sasanids' conscription of soldiers in the *sawad*;[16] but one gets a volun-tarist impression of the Muslim 'witnesses' to the cause of Islam and *jihad* in the alleged statements of the participants in run-up to the battle of al-Qadisiyya. It was said, for example, that the Lahm and Judham tribes let the Muslim Arabs down and fled after they experienced the ferocity of the fighting with the Byzantines firsthand.[17]

2. *Weak command functions*: primitive bands of warriors have some form of hierarchy but no chain of command. This clearly existed in the Byzantine and Sasanid armies in the protracted engagements at al-Yarmuk and al-Qadisiyya, but the likelihood of a swift and frequent correspondence between the *khalīfa* 'Umar b. al Khattab at al-Madina and his commanders in Iraq, Palestine and Syria has been questioned because of the overland distances travelled and the historiographic limitations of al-Tabari's principal source, Sayf b. 'Umar.[18] However there is plausible modern evidence of couriers on fast riding camels unencumbered with baggage being able to cover well over 50 miles per day.[19] It should be remembered that 'Umar went to al-Jabiya in Palestine in the year of al-Qadisiyya to accept the fall of Jerusalem personally and thereafter remained in the theatre of operations.[20]

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[12] Turney-High, *Primitive War*, p. 31.
[13] *Ibidem*, p. 87.
[14] *Ibidem*, p. 26.
[15] See Rubin, 'The Reforms', p. 293ff.
[16] For instance, al-Tabari, in: Friedman, *The History*, pp. 152, 154.
[17] *Ibidem*, p. 132.
[18] E.g. Noth doubts that a regular system of delivering official dispatches existed before c. 700 (*The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, p. 80ff.).
[19] Hill, 'The Role', p. 34.
[20] Friedman, *The History*, p. 144.

A primitive custom in the Byzantine, Sasanid and Arab armies in the reign of Heraclius that seems to have survived all transformations in the art of war was the practice of entertaining massed troops with battles between champions – which is not war at all.[21] Examples of this custom are seen in many episodes of Sayf b. 'Umar's account of al-Qadisiyya in the late 630s[22] and Heraclius' personal combat in a deadly charge against the Sasanid cavalry near Niniveh of 12 December 626. The narrative seems to describe a planned *melée* between the retinues of the two commanders *before* the actual engagement (see italics below), after which Heraclius led from the front to the extent of mixing with Sasanid infantry:[23]

> The emperor sallied forth in front of everyone and met the commander of the Persians, and by God's might and the power of the *Theotokos* overthrew him; and those who had sallied forth with him were routed. Then the emperor met another in combat and cast him down also. Yet a third assailed him and struck him with a spear, wounding his lip; but the emperor slew him too. *And when the trumpets sounded, the two sides attacked each other and, as a violent battle was being waged,* the emperor's tawny horse called Dorkon was wounded in the thigh by some infantryman who struck it with a spear. It also received several sword blows on the face, but, wearing as it did a cataphract made of sinew, it was not hurt, nor were the blows effective.

The *Strategikon* frowns on this type of behaviour:[24]

> On the actual day of battle the general should not take on too many tasks. *He might exert himself too much, become worn out and overlook some really essential matters.* He should not look downcast or worried but *should ride jauntily along the lines and encourage all the troops. He should not himself join in the actual fighting; this is not the role of the general but of the soldier.* After making all the proper arrangements he should station himself in a suitable spot ... When needed he should be ready to send assistance to a unit in trouble by making use of his reserves, that is the flank guards and rearguards.

It is far from clear in Theophanes' narrative how Heraclius could properly have directed the battle according to these standards; in the mind of the

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[21] Turney-High, *Primitive War*, pp. 49, 72ff.
[22] Noth regards these as literary topoi (*The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, p. 168ff.).
[23] Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, p. 449. Some translations are adapted from this version in light of my own reading of De Boor's Greek text (*Theophanes*).
[24] Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, p. 69.

Strategikon's authorship there was a clear distinction between 'leading from the front' and engaging in potentially suicidal single combat. Heraclius violated accepted tactical doctrine in doing this, unless he was trying to impress the non-Greek allied troops in his army with a show of bravado, which is possible. Sayf b.'Umar mentions ordinary fighters engaging in single combat in front of the al-Qadisiyya position. In two of the recorded instances it was the Persian who issued the challenge.[25] One is said to have shouted, *mard o mard* ('man to man!') in his own language. This practice was not unknown in the Sasanid forces.[26]

3. *Selection of the war leader for magico-religious reasons rather than experience, qualities of leadership and skill at training men*: so, for example, the leader of a primitive band might have a dream and then organise a war party based on the proposition that it would be victorious in its contact with the enemy.[27] This is sometimes called the 'war bundle' idea: a special blessing of the supernaturals guaranteeing every detail of the expedition, often in the absence of any tactical instruction. The use of *palladia* like the *acheiropoietos* icon of Christ in 622 when Heraclius moved against Persia is an example of this:[28]

> Taking the theandric image – the one that was not painted by hand, but which the Logos, who fashions and shapes all things, wrought like an image without recourse to painting, just as he experienced birth without seed – the emperor placed his trust in this image painted by God and began his endeavours after giving a pledge to his army that he would struggle with them to the death and would be united to them as with his own children ...

The promises of paradise in case of death in battle pronounced in front of the Sasanid general Rustam at al-Qadisiyya are not a species of this, being devoid of magical content and therefore not 'primitive'; this negative rule also applies to the alleged prophetic dreams of Rustam and Sa'd ibn al-Waqqas.

4. *A social organisation incapable of producing an agricultural surplus and transporting foodstuffs to the zone of operations is submilitary and therefore incapable of 'real' war.*[29] The *Strategikon* of Maurice makes many explicit references to the Byzantine system of logistics; in contrast,

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[25] Friedman, *The History*, p. 101.
[26] *Ibidem*, p. 92 and note.
[27] Turney-High, *Primitive Warfare*, p. 62ff.
[28] Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*, p. 436. Cf. Trombley, 'War, Society and Popular Religion', p. 103ff.
[29] Turney-High, *Primitive War*, p. 77.

the narratives of Sayf b. 'Umar about the Muslim position at al-Qadisiyya, however historically problematical, are suggestive of logistical failures and as a consequence widespread scavenging and raiding to collect subsistence materials. The Muslim Arabs' military horizon was sufficiently high to consider invading only areas where supplies of some description could be found. Among the behavioural structures that Sayf b. 'Umar reports are drinking camels' milk, slaughtering these beasts for meat, and receiving cereals and baked bread as part of a *sulh* agreement with a surrendered city.[30] These may be topoi, but are not inherently improbable styles of Arab logistic activity in the early seventh-century context. This applies also to a series of reports dealing with the initial Muslim advance into Mesopotamia under Sa'd b. Waqqas as the fighting bands reached the Euphrates. It reads somewhat like an aetiological myth to explain the naming of days (viz. 'battles', *ayyâm*), but its content is not inherently implausible for the time:[31]

> After the delegation set out to meet Yazdagird, the Muslims sent out a raiding party. It apprehended some fishermen with their catch. Sawad b. Malik al-Tamimi went to al-Nijaf ... He led away three hundred animals, comprising mules, donkeys, and bulls. They loaded the fish upon them, drove them away, and reached the camp in the morning ... This day was 'the Day of the Fish' ... The Muslims longed for meat; as for wheat, barley, dates, and other grains, they got hold of quantities sufficient even for a long stay. The objective of the forays was therefore to obtain meat, and the Muslims named their battles accordingly. Among the 'meat battles' (*ayyâm al-lahm*) were 'the Day of the Bulls' and 'the Day of the Fish'.

The Byzantine and Sasanid style of warmaking had certain features of primitivity, but their respective military systems were the product of technologically and culturally developed societies. Although late – Sayf b.'Umar was writing c. 800 A.D. – his reports about about the behaviour and pronouncements of the Muslims at al-Qadisiyya are not inconsistent with the attitudes of a developed society with some 'primitive' characteristics.

Turning back to the *Strategikon* of Maurice, there are some features of the Byzantine style of warfare that are quite striking. As to the regularisation of warfare, one can see that the Byzantine army differed little from modern long-serving armies. This is apparent in the system of manoeuvre and fire that seemed practicable to the authorship of the *Strategikon*. The method of cavalry manoeuvre recommended throughout the first few books is referred to as the 'Italian' drill. It entailed drawing up the army in two

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[30] Friedman, *The History*, pp. 175, 177. On camels, see Hill, 'The Role', pp. 32-34.
[31] Friedman, *The History*, p. 40ff.

lines, with the first line – the *koursores* – ten ranks deep delivering fire against the opposing line with archery. The first two lines were occupied by veteran cavalrymen equipped with lances – the dekarchs and others – who would have done most of the fighting if the Byzantine line made contact with the enemy in shock action. However attainable this system of training was, and however effective the use of the formation, the authorship of the *Strategikon* assumes specialist skills and assigns specialist functions to only about half the members of the typical cavalry *bandon* – the smallest unit of tactical organisation, consisting of about 300 men; the other soldiers were to fight with the weapons they best knew how to use, whether spear or bow.[32] This lack of experienced personnel is reflected in the authorship's observation that 'the dekarchs should be brave, good at hand-to-hand fighting and, if possible, good shots with the bow. Next are the pentarchs ... The rest, both veterans and recruits, should be assigned to groups of ten.'[33] Elsewhere: 'The dekarchies should be made up of old and young men in proper proportion. Otherwise the older men, if found by themselves, may be weak, and the younger, inexperienced men turn out disorganised.'[34] The authorship thus distinguishes between cadres of experi-enced personnel and recruits. The first two ranks of the *bandon* consisted of experienced men who did most of the fighting and herded the middle ranks about in battle. The *Strategikon* observes:[35]

> When the second line has passed and driven back the enemy [the medical orderlies] should collect the spoils from the enemy dead left on the field of the first battle and hand them over to the dekarchs or file leaders of their own tagma, receiving a share of it back from the dekarchs as a reward for their work. For we regard letting [the dekarchs and file leaders] have this as an equitable and suitable perquisite when they are victorious in combat, *since more than any others they have to do most of the fighting in the first assault* and also they cannot be allowed the chance to dismount and break ranks to collect plunder themselves.

During Heraclius' campaigns in the 620'a and 630's, it is possible that these standards were still attainable, but were practised by smaller and smaller groups of Greek soldiers being gradually diminished by attrition who were increasingly brigaded with allied groups of Armenian, Arab and Caucasian troops, who fought without being incorporated into the recognised tactical

[32] See Turney-High, *Primitive War*, p. 53.
[33] Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, p. 17.
[34] *Ibidem*, p. 29.
[35] *Ibidem*, p. 30.

system. The *Strategikon*'s recommendation may well have been carried out that foreign contingents be stationed outside the main formation of *koursores* in the first line, drawn up instead 'according to their own custom' and used as independent formations of *koursores* and in ambushes.[36] The viability of the Avar-style tactical model provided by the *Strategikon* may well have been obvious to Heraclius and his commanders during the 620s and 630s, but the operations in Armenia and upper Mesopotamia may have included a large element of ethnic fighters, as did the force that fought at the battle of al-Yarmuk. It is impossible to comment on the military effectiveness of these combined formations except to note their success against the Sasanids in the 620s and failure against the Muslim Arabs thereafter.

The excuses for failures of the Byzantine army that emerge from the different accounts of the battle of al-Yarmuk about the condition of the battlefield are all prognostically addressed in the *Strategikon*, as for example the supposed dust storm that arose, the oppressive heat and the difficulty in coordinating the movement of the Byzantine wings on the hilly escarpment where the battle was fought.[37] The Byzantine manual emphasises the need to keep the first and second lines – the *koursores* and *defensores* respectively – fairly far apart because the high levels dust being kicked up in an engagement would have caused the formations to get mixed together,[38] and the need to use the trumpet to give orders on uneven ground or if a violent wind makes orders inaudible.[39] On the subject of training, the *Strategikon* observes that '[manoeuvres] should be practised not only on level ground, but also in difficult terrain, in hilly and steep country. Even in hot weather it is a good idea to drill and practice [because] no one knows what will happen [in a real engagement]'.[40] There is also advice for generals not to engage in multiple-day battles if the fighting begins to go against the Byzantine side. It will be recalled that in the traditional accounts the fighting around al-Yarmuk went on for five days. It is conceivable that the Byzantine army of the 630s was deficient in training for reasons of attrition, with trained soldiers being lost faster than they could be replaced, but it would be simplistic to make this hypothesis the centre-piece of of a disaster theory for the Muslim conquest of the Near East in the 630s.

A well-known passage in Theophanes' *Chronographia* ultimately derived from George of Pisidia's poetry indicates that Heraclius carried out training manoeuvres with the army he took into 'the land of the themes' in

[36] *Ibidem*, p. 28.
[37] For topographical data, see Nicolle, *Yarmuk*, pp. 65-86.
[38] Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, p. 31.
[39] *Ibidem*, p. 33.
[40] *Ibidem*, p. 41.

622.[41] In doing so he was carrying out the tenets often iterated in the *Strategikon*, as for example: 'When several *banda* ... are practising encircling charges and are divided into two commands riding against one another ... great care should be taken to avoid collisions among the horsemen'.[42] The authorship gives a number of fairly sophisticated tactical drills: the Scythian, the Alan, the African and the Italian.[43] We are unable to gauge whether Heraclius' army reached this standard of training, but one of them, the Alan drill, has the flavour of the practice manoeuvres reported by Theophanes in 622:[44]

> In the Alan system the troops are drawn up in a single battle line, some as *koursores* and some as *defensores*. [The line] is divided into *moirai* (=*droungoi*), lined up about two or four hundred feet from each other. The *koursores* advance at a gallop as though in pursuit and then retire, filtering into the intervals or clear spaces in the main line. They then turn about and charge the enemy together with the *defensores*. In another manoeuvre the *koursores* turn about in those intervals and charge out against both flanks of the unit, *the men keeping their original relative positions.*

The authorship of the *Strategikon* would have both praised and abhorred Heraclius' behaviour with the army both on and off the battlefield. His paternalistic feeling for the troops as expressed in Theophanes' account is consistent with the advice of the *Strategikon*, as are the religious practices connected with the army going on campaign. The magico-religious aspect of leadership and victory characteristic of primitive societies is lacking – although we do learn of it from Theophanes. There is a rare topos in a section of the *Strategikon* concerning the day of battle. It has something in common with the 'with the help of God' formula that frequently turns up in Heraclius' letters from the zone of operations in Sasanid Persia during the 620s:

> A ship cannot cross the sea without a helmsman, nor can one defeat an enemy without tactics and strategy. With these and the aid of God it is possible to overcome not only an enemy force of equal strength but even one greatly superior in numbers. For it is not true, as some inexperienced people believe, that wars are decided by courage and numbers of troops, but, along with God's favour, by tactics and generalship.

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[41] Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns', p. 36.
[42] Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, p. 41.
[43] *Ibidem*, pp. 61-63.
[44] *Ibidem*, p. 62.

The 'with the help of God' formula in Heraclius' letters certainly developed in an ideological framework similar to this; religious arguments, no matter how sincerely felt, always have a pragmatic side tied up with the morale of an army in the zone of operations.[45] So for example the *Strategikon* observes: 'after a battle the general should give prompt attention to the wounded and to burying the dead. Not only is this a religious duty, but it greatly helps the morale of the living'.[46] Elsewhere it is observed that the Trisagion prayer be recited twice a day,[47] and that the general should worship God, so that when he gets into danger 'he can pray to God as a friend'.[48] The religious practices in the army detailed by Theophanes are consistent with this, like the *bibliomanteia* practised by Heraclius to decide on the route of a march in the 620s.[49]

The principles of religious leadership enunciated in the *Strategikon* are lacking in the magico-religious character that is so frequently reported in Theophanes. It is worth asking whether the quasi-priestly function he at times assigns to the emperor was a product of the desperation under which the latter conducted military operations, or were simply below the professional horizon of the authorship of the *Strategikon*.

Globalisation of tactics and weapons technology[50]

There appears to have been no change in the quality of weaponry during the reign of Heraclius. That of the Byzantine and Sasanid armies is well-known and needs little comment here.[51] The question of how the Christian and Muslim Arabs armed themselves during the first quarter of the seventh century is a separate and more difficult matter.[52] There is an often quoted literary report on this found in an early ninth-century work of 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz suggesting that the Arabs engaged in something approaching 'primitive' warfare as late as the reign of Heraclius, that is to say a style of fighting that was 'below the military horizon' of a developed society and therefore 'primitive'. The literary vehicle is somewhat to be distrusted, as

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[45] In general see Vieillefond, 'Les pratiques', pp. 322-330.
[46] Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon*, p. 70.
[47] *Ibidem*, p. 77.
[48] *Ibidem*, p. 83.
[49] Trombley, 'War, Society and Popular Religion', p. 111ff.
[50] See more broadly Mayerson, 'Saracens and Romans'.
[51] For instance, Bivar, 'Cavalry equipment'. See also the illustrative materials in Nicolle and McBride, *Romano-Byzantine armies* as well as Wilcox and McBride, *Rome's Enemies*.
[52] On general questions, see Kaegi, *Byzantium*. See also the illustrative materials in Nicolle and McBride, *Armies of the Muslim Conquest*.

al-Jahiz's Arabic text is a fictive dialogue between an Arab and a Persian that includes much boasting and literary hyperbole. However it predates the *khabar* traditions reported in al-Tabari's *Ta'rîkh* and other sources. Among his observations are:[53]

> You [Arabs] used to make war in separate, unorganised bands, for it was agreed that partnership is bad in three things, kingship, war, and marriage. You used not to fight by night, and you knew nothing of the night attack or ambush, of right wing or left wing, center and flank, rearguard and vanguard, scouts and pioneers ... Nor did you know about coats and trousers, the attachment of swords, about drums and flags, protective armor, coats of mail, helmets, armlets, and alarm bells, nor about the lasso, or shooting arrows in fives, or throwing naphtha and fire ... [It] was agreed ... that the Arabs did not have iron stirrups until the time of the Azariqa [a branch of the Kharijites in the late 7th c.]. It was not the custom of the Arabs, when they wished to mount, to put their feet in the stirrups; instead, they used to leap onto their seats.

Al-Jahiz's dialogue occasionally contradicts the *futûh* narratives, which at times mention soldiers wearing mail or plate armour,[54] the use of scouts,[55] the use of flags (e.g. the standard of the tribe of al-Nakha' on the Day of Aghwath),[56] and the articulation of Muslim armies into three wings, vanguards and rearguards.[57] Furthermore Sayf b. 'Umar reports night fighting at al-Qadisiyya:[58]

> When the Muslims reached the end of the day and entered upon the night, the fighting intensified. Both sides endured and emerged equal, with battle cries being heard of both sides. The night was called the Night of Howling (*laylat al-harir*). After it, there was no night battle in al-Qadisiyyah.

A *khabar* narrative with a different *isnad* mentions a successful twilight attack on a Persian cavalry force near al-Basra.[59] However it was probably more often the case that night engagements did not yield enough return on the expenditure of men's lives to make them worth risking, but this does not mean that they never occurred. There is a convincingly early report about

[53] The text is quoted in Lewis, *Islam*, pp. 214-217.
[54] Friedmann, *The History*, p. 132.
[55] *Ibidem*, p. 57.
[56] *Ibidem*, pp. 85, 119, 163, 170.
[57] *Ibidem*, p. 142.
[58] *Ibidem*, p. 115.
[59] *Ibidem*, p. 164.

the Muslims' improvisation of armour in at al-Qadisiyya that corroborates al-Jahiz's low estimate of the early Muslim Arabs' equippage:[60]

> Most Muslims were shielded only with saddle cloths across which they fastened leafless palm branches in order to protect themselves. What they put on their heads was in most cases only saddle girths: a man would bind himself with the girth of his saddle to protect himself

Al-Tabari's sources are accurate to the extent that they attribute the use of stirrups only to the Sasanid cavalry, as for example those on the horse ridden by Persian general Rustam.[61] Al-Jahiz indicates that they used them on camel saddles, evidently because of the size of the animals and consequent difficulty in mounting them, but camels were as a rule not used in combat.[62]

When one turns to the archaeological evidence, the picture remains complex. David Nicolle has assembled a catalogue with iconographic representations of pre-Islamic and Muslim Arab equipment between circa 500-750 A.D. It corroborates al-Jahiz's statements in many ways, but at times suggests a more sophisticated system of equipping depending on the geographical location and cultural contacts of the particular Arab tribes.[63] The difficulty with the material he cites is the uncertainty of finding precise dates for the individual representations and of determining the ethnic identity of the soldiers intended by the sculptor or painter. None of this material has been brought to bear on the period of the Muslim conquest, so a provisional attempt to test its significance is in order.

It seems quite clear that the pre-Islamic Arab fighters of Mesopotamia and the Syrian desert were influenced in favour of certain types of Byzantine and Sasanid equipment throughout the pre-Islamic period. This applies to the third-century evidence from Dura Europos where an iron helmet of two-piece construction with a tall profile was found on the body of an attacking Arab or Iranian warrior.[64] In the 'Battle of Eben-Ezer' wall paintings in the synagogue at Dura Europos (3rd c. AD), possibly 'enemy' soldiers standing in line are depicted with head covers (a common Sasanid motif for representing Arabs, as for example in the late 3rd c. Bishapur rock relief),[65] long- and short-sleeved leaf-mail hauberks, elongated hexagonal

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[60] *Ibidem*, p. 138.
[61] *Ibidem*, pp. 82, 122, 138ff., 140.
[62] Lewis, *Islam*, p. 216.
[63] Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad Era', pp. 9-100. Individual representations are normally cited by Nicolle's catalogue references.
[64] *Ibidem*, no. 171.
[65] *Ibidem*, no. 41A-E.

shields and swords. It is not immediately clear whether the men are Sasanid or Arab attackers, although their use of head-cloths is suggestive of Arabs, or to what extent their equipment is based on Roman models.[66] Similarly, in a carved relief from Rushayda in Syria (5th-6th c.), an infantryman is shown wearing a Romano-Byzantine helmet with cheek pieces, carrying a shield and wielding a Roman-type *gladius*. The work has been identified as 'Ghassanid' or 'early Byzantine'.[67]

We are on surer ground in considering the evidence from South Arabia, which comes from a region with close cultural links to the earliest Islamic community at al-Madina, which had made extensive use of cavalry in the war against the Makkans in 623-627. All of it pre-dates the Muslim conquest. For example, the undated pre-Islamic funerary relief of 'Ajlam ibn Sa'dilat in Yaman has a horseman with a heavy spear, no stirrups, a head cloth and perhaps some form of armour.[68] Another badly damaged relief in the San'a museum indicates a barefooted rider without stirrups.[69] As to infantrymen, there is a relief in Yaman with an infantryman having a spear and single-edged curved sword,[70] and another showing probably a goddess holding a spear and wearing what may be strips of armour.[71] The evidence is problematical because of its early date, but agrees with al-Jahiz to the extent that helmets, stirrups and perhaps mail-shirts are lacking. This is consistent with the mention of the nondescript and perhaps unmilitary styles of clothing worn by Muslim fighters who were present at al-Qadisiyya.[72] An example of this is found in Sayf b. 'Umar's *khabar* story about Rib'i b. 'Amir's being sent as an envoy to the Sasanid general Rustam. It is consistent with the iconographic data:[73]

> Rib'i came in on a hairy, short-legged mare, having with him a polished sword whose scabbard was made of shabby cloth. His spear was bound with a strap of sinew, and he had a shield made of cowhide, whose exterior was of bright color ... He also had with him a bow and arrows ... He had a shield shining like a pond, and his coat was the cover of his camel, in which he made a hole, used it as a shield, and tied it to his waist with a bark of reeds. He was the hairiest of the Arabs, and *he tied to his head a piece of cloth which was the girth of his camel.*

[66] *Ibidem*, no. 32A-E.
[67] *Ibidem*, no. 45; *idem*, *Yarmuk*, p. 62 (photo).
[68] Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad Era', no. 36.
[69] *Ibidem*, no. 38.
[70] *Ibidem*, no. 37.
[71] *Ibidem*, no. 39.
[72] Cf. Friedman, *The History*, p. 68ff.
[73] *Ibidem*, p. 66.

The coats of mail worn by the Sasanid cavalry did not necessarily give it a clear advantage in individual engagements. This may be seen by comparing passages from Sayf b. 'Umar and al-Jahiz. Writing in the early ninth century the latter observes:[74]

> Regarding what they said about the Arabs' lances, this matter is not as they imagine. There are different types of lance, such as the *nayzak* [a short Persian throwing spear], the *marbu'* [a four-foot spear], the *makhmus* [a five-foot spear], the *tamm*, and the *khatil. The last is the one that is unsteady in the hand because of its excessive length* ... What proves the quality of his strength is that if a horseman sees a man in this guise, the man is stronger because the horseman is overawed.

A *khabar* of Sayf b. 'Umar indicates that the Muslims at al-Qadisiyya were poorly trained in using spears against the Sasanid cavalry, being ignorant of the fact that only spears, and not swords, could break through the enemy's mail coats:[75]

> A fully armed Persian unit (*katiba*) was in front of [the tribe of] al-Ju'i on the day of 'Imas. They moved toward the Persians and fought them with the swords, but they saw the swords had no effect on the [Persian armor made of] iron, and they retreated. Humayda said: 'What is the matter with you?' and they replied, 'The weapons do not penetrate into them'. Humayda said: 'Stay where you are till I show you, look!' and he attacked a Persian and broke his back with a spear. Then he turned to his companions and said: 'I am confident that they will die and you will survive'. So they they attacked the Persians and drove them back to their lines.

The experience of a well-trained Armenian noble Smbat in the service of Khusrau II also reveals the necessity of using a lance against chain-mail (*vertamut*), in a survival of 'primitive' war (early 7th c.?):[76]

> Between the two battle-lines they fought with each other. They were not able immediately to overcome the other, because they were both men of gigantic strength and *fully covered in armour*. But help came from on high: *the armour of the K'ushan king, chain-mail from Bahl and a solid cuirass, was split by Smbat's lance* ...

[74] Lewis, *Islam*, p. 216.
[75] Friedman, *The History*, p. 122.
[76] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History*, p. 52.

An early seventh-century carved relief at the monastery St. Bartholomeos at Albak near Lake Van shows what is certainly an Armenian cavalryman in helmet using his lance to defeat a horse-archer wearing stirrups, who could be a Turkic steppe soldier.[77] It is clear from this and the sculptures at the Mren cathedral in Turkey (c. 640) that the stirrup may not have been in universal use in the Armenian cavalry that rode with Heraclius against the Muslim Arabs at al-Yarmuk.[78]

The advantages of wearing proper armour would have been obvious even in undeveloped local cultures, as for example the Midianite Arabs who used to raid Palaestina III as far as the Sinai peninsula even in the early seventh century. An embroidered Coptic textile (7th c.) depicts the boy Joseph being to taken to Egypt by a dark-skinned Midianite nomad. He rides without stirrups, but over his headcloth he wears a pointed cap similar to the helmets of the period and is armed with a mace.[79] It is possible that the Midianites' frequent contact with Byzantine frontier troops convinced them of the need to wear helmets. How far this technological norm may have penetrated into the early Islamic Hijaz will await further analysis. In this connection one must note a tradition reported by al-Jahiz that some of the first *ansar* – Muhammad's 'helpers' in al-Madina – adopted certain Persian usages, including stirrups, but gave them up after adhering to Islam. He also relates that stirrups made from non-ferrous materials were known in the early Islamic period.[80]

The wall paintings in the reception hall and bath at Qusayr 'Amra in Jordan are usually taken as examples of how well-equipped Muslim guards infantry would have turned themselves out in the late Umayyad period, the paintings dating from c. 724-744 A.D. Some of the technological features are consistent with al-Jahiz's statements, but others reflect a progression towards Byzantine and Sasanid types of arming. The older style of cavalry fighting with spear and no stirrups is seen,[81] but the soldiers are otherwise equipped in a more advanced style, with chain mail, mail coif, large round shield, weapons comparable to late Sasanid swords and early Byzantine harnesses for horses.[82] The Qusayr 'Amra wall paintings depict a style of equipment that was not adopted until long after the Muslim conquest of the Greek and Iranian Orient.

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[77] Nicolle, *Yarmuk*, p. 87.
[78] Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad Era', nos. 94A-B, 95. *Idem*, *Yarmuk*, p. 73 (photo).
[79] Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad Era', no. 46A-C.
[80] Noted by Nicolle, *ibidem*, p. 18ff.
[81] Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad Era', no. 1C-D.
[82] *Ibidem*, nos. 1A-B, 3A-C, 3D-E, 6C.

In reviewing the failure of Heraclius' armies to stop the advance of the Muslim armies in the 630s, one must recognise that the latter were quite often fighting reasonably skilled Byzantine and Sasanid formations with inferior weapons and tactical training, but still somehow prevailed main-battle engagements. One must therefore look elsewhere to explain Muslim military effectiveness in this important period of transition.

Conclusions

It can be seen that it is a practical enterprise to construct an anthropology of warfare and society for the Greek Orient in the reign of Heraclius. This is to a large extent because of the richness of the source materials. One of the central difficulties is reconciling the different genres of non-Arabic evidence with that found in the *futûh* narratives. Even where clear parallels are found, as for example the Sasanid practice of protecting their forces with a ditch (*khandaq*), avoiding the risk of battle by incessant delay and the organisation of the army into three divisions, the possibility of anachronistic redaction work by the Arab transmitters of the narratives cannot be excluded. There are thus still many open questions about the military side of the Muslim conquest of the Near East. Although it is clear that a globalised weapons culture existed in the reign of Heraclius, it was not entirely accepted by the Arabs; it is possible that the Arabs' organisational methods of fighting are not retrievable from the *futûh* narratives at this stage of research, but it will require much source criticism to identify *hadîth* with authentic seventh-century content.

Neverthless it does seem possible to come to some conclusions. Byzantine tactical organisation was undoubtedly configured in a manner like that found in the *Strategikon* all through the reign of Heraclius, but underwent simplification because of the loss of veteran soldiers in the course of the fighting and the increasing use of non-Greek ethnic allies. Demographic attrition was thus a serious problem from the standpoint of Byzantine military practice. To judge from the surviving evidence it seems doubtful that Heraclius was a successful military reformer, much less an innovator. His military achievement, great as it was in the 620s, was mainly a response to the challenge of particular circumstances.[83] There was direct continuity in weapons technology: on the Byzantine and Sasanid sides, there seems to have been very little change in this area between the sixth to eighth centuries. Christian and Muslim Arabs seem gradually to have gone over to the heavier Byzantine model only where local cultural conditions and technological possibilities made it seem expedient. It seems likely that

[83] Consistent with Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian campaigns', p. 42ff.

only new methods of synthesis outside the traditional historicist and geopolitical models will be likely to yield new results *vis-à-vis* military affairs.

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