The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition

A Comparative Perspective

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Apocalypticizing Warfare: From Political Theology to Imperial Eschatology in Seventh- to Early Eighth-Century Byzantium

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1 Introduction

Medieval Eastern Orthodox attitudes to the problems of warfare, and of just and holy war in particular, offer important parallels to and differences from the respective Western Christian attitudes, but have not received the more or less exhaustive treatment of the corresponding attitudes to the same phenomena in Western Christianity. Yet, lately, an interesting debate has developed among Eastern Orthodox theologians and scholars centred on the historical development and transformations of the notions of "justifiable war" and "just war" or the categorization of war as a "lesser good" or "lesser evil" in Eastern Orthodox Christianity.[1] It is worth mentioning at this stage that it is still difficult to present a definitive reconstruction of the evolution of the notions of just and/or justifiable war in Eastern Orthodox thought and societies, since some of the main relevant works in its classical representative tradition, Byzantine Christianity, have either not been edited and published or, when edited, have not been translated into modern Western European languages and thus remain inaccessible to the larger scholarly audience.[2]

As in Western Christianity, the roots of the prevalent attitudes to war and peace in Eastern Orthodoxy can be easily traced back to the New Testament and its well-known passages concerning the use of force, violence, Christ's moral teaching and its emphatic pacifistic perspective (Mt 5–7, 26:52; Lk 2:14, 3:14, 6:29; etc.). At the same time Eastern Orthodoxy inherited the potential for a non-pacifistic and even militaristic exegesis of the New Testament passages containing military imagery (e.g., 1Thes 5:8; Eph 6:10; 1Cor 9:7; 2Tim 2:3–4; etc.), Jesus's "sword" allusions (Mt 10:34; Lk 22:35–38) and the heavenly war imagery

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1 One of the recent issues of *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 47(1), 2003, has been entirely devoted to these debates.

2 See, for example, the brief and cautious overview of this field in Miller 1995, 11–12; cf. the comments in Haldon 1999, 2–7, passim.

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in Rev 20, which, as in Western Christianity, in suitable circumstances and through suitable literalist interpretations, could be used to sanction the use of force. Eastern Orthodoxy inherited also the evident tensions between the ideas of war and peace respectively in the Old and New Testament, which despite the continuity between the notions of the ultimate universal eternal peace in some trends of Jewish prophetic and messianic thought and early Christian messianism, diverged substantially in other areas.

Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313, his conversion to Christianity and the legitimization and institutionalization of the Church in the Roman Empire inevitably led to various patterns of rapprochement between the State's and the Church's attitude to war and war ethics. This rapprochement is exemplified by Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–c.340) but occurred against the protests and opposition of anti-militarist Christian groups such as the Donatists. The newly evolving concord between secular and clerical authorities followed somewhat differing patterns in the West and East Roman Empire, conditioned by the contrasting ways in which church-state relations developed in the Latin West (which amid the "barbarian" invasions and the formation of the Germanic states could also provoke frequent secular-ecclesiastic rivalries) and the Greek East (in the framework of the crystallization of Byzantine political theology within a centralized imperial state). In the specific political and religious conditions in the Latin West (where the very survival of the Christian empire, forced to wage defensive wars, was at stake) St. Ambrose (c.339–397) and St. Augustine (354–430) eventually laid the foundation of the medieval Western Christian just war tradition, which through a process, well explored in western scholarship, was systematized in the commentaries/syntheses of Gratian (d.c. 1160), Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–74), etc. Adhering to a different corpus of patristic writings and a different set of relationships with the East Roman (Byzantine) state and ideology, the Eastern Orthodox Church retained important elements from pre-Constantinian Christian attitudes to war and its morality, while the Byzantine state itself inherited and retained core elements of the secular just war tradition of the pre-Christian Roman Empire and Greek antiquity.

In the East Roman world the pacific tendencies of pre-Constantinian Christianity could be brought into the framework of the newly evolving Christian imperial ideology by figures such as Eusebius, St. Cyril of Alexandria (376–444) and St. John Chrysostom (345–407), who argued that the establishment of the Christian empire fulfilled a providential design to pacify the world and put an end to humanity's violent conflicts and strife. Such notions drew to a certain degree on some earlier patristic views that, even in the pre-Constantinian period, the Pax Romana had in effect provided favourable

conditions for the dissemination and internationalization of Christianity. Such views may show some general indebtedness to earlier Stoic speculations about the pacifying role of the pre-Christian Roman Empire. Not all of the Eastern Christian Fathers of the late East Roman/early Byzantine period, however, were prepared to identify unequivocally the earthly Roman Empire with the "empire of Christ." The co-existence between the pacific and pacifistic theological and social attitudes, transmitted from early to Byzantine Christianity, on the one hand, and the political and military needs of an imperial state (which retained important features of pre-Christian Roman military structures, machinery and its ethos), on the other, was not always easy and unproblematic.

A succession of canons in the Apostolic Canons and those of the Ecumenical and Local Councils which entered Eastern Orthodox canon law, spell out explicitly the prohibitions for Christian clergy and monks on entering military service or receiving positions in the secular state administration and government.[3] Stipulating further the prerogatives of clerical and monastic non-resistance to violence, these canonical regulations delineate the phenomenon that has been aptly defined as a "stratification of pacifism"[4] in the early medieval Church, applicable in various degrees to the different Church activities both in the Greek East and Latin West. The subsequent developments of the inherited canon law of the patristic and early medieval periods followed differing trajectories during the High Middle Ages in western and eastern Christendom. Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries Catholic canonists, theologians and clerics introduced various innovations in Catholic canon law to accommodate and specify the role of the Church in the evolving Catholic just and holy war doctrines. These innovations were based generally on selective exegesis of the scriptural sources, the principal notions in Augustine's Christian justification of warfare and definitions of just war as well as Roman law and the juridical theory of the crusade. No comparable contemporary developments, however, can be detected in Eastern Christian canon law, although Byzantine canonists were becoming increasingly acquainted with crusading ideology in the era of the crusades. At the same time, debates striving to define the limits and various dimensions of Christian involvement in warfare in the sphere of canon law, and speculations on what should be the correct, adequate or acceptable Christian response to the reality of war and affirmation of peace remained an important area in Eastern Orthodox theology, ethics and anthropology throughout the medieval period.

3 See the texts of some of the relevant canons in Swift 1983, 88, 92–3.

4 See the discussion of this approach in Harakas 1981, 85ff.

Indeed while pacifistic and pacific currents in Eastern Orthodoxy may have maintained their currency in the medieval Byzantine world, the existing rapprochement between State and Church in the late Roman and early Byzantine period meant that the Byzantine Church frequently found itself in situations in which its support for and justification of Byzantine military campaigns was seen as highly significant and necessary. With or without imperial pressure, the Byzantine Church could be involved in the mobilization of popular endorsement for Byzantine troops and inevitably was entrusted with ensuring that they observed their religious obligations properly and entered battle, to face danger and death, spiritually pure and in a pious frame of mind. As in Western Christendom, the involvement of Eastern Orthodoxy in the realm of medieval warfare found expressions in military religious services, the early entrance of military chaplains in the field army (who could also serve in the fleet), the celebration of Eucharistic liturgies in the field, the use of Christian religious symbolism and relics for military purposes, blessings of standards and weapons before battles, services for fallen soldiers after the cessation of fighting and thanksgiving rituals to celebrate victory.[5] While focusing in great detail on the different aspects of warfare tactics and strategy, the various Byzantine military manuals such as the *Strategikon* attributed to Emperor Maurice (582–602) and the tract ascribed to Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912) also stipulate at some length the religious services that need to be performed in military camps and the religious duties of soldiers and priests.[6] Following on the paradigmatic use of the cross-shaped sign (the *labarum*) during Constantine the Great's victory over his rival Maxentius in the battle at the Milvian Bridge in 312, crosses, either depicted on flags or carried instead of or alongside standards, were widely used during Byzantine military campaigns. A number of reports recount the use of relics and well-known icons before and during battles between the imperial troops and their adversaries. The wide-spread popularity and evolution of the cult of military saints such as St. George, St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, St. Theodore Teron, St. Theodore Stratelates, etc., and their adoption as patrons by the Byzantine military aristocracy highlight another symptomatic dimen-

5 On the military religious services in the Byzantine army, see McCormick 1986, 238–51; Dennis 1993, 107–18; on the late Roman period, Bachrach 2003, 13–19.

6 The *Strategikon* ascribed to Maurice is translated in Dennis 1984; the tract attributed to Leo VI is edited in Vári 1917–22; on the religious practices prescribed in the Byzantine military tracts in general, see Vieillefond 1935.

sion of the role of Eastern Orthodoxy in shaping the ethics and practice of warfare in the Byzantine Empire.[7]

A thought-provoking debate has developed lately among Byzantinists focused on the religio-historical problem of whether Byzantium ever conceptualized and put into practice its own brand of wars fought for ostensibly religious purposes comparable to the contemporaneous *jihād* in Islam and the crusading warfare of Western Europe. This debate has brought to the attention of a wider audience some important but less well-known and often neglected evidence of the interrelations between Byzantine Orthodox Christianity on the one hand, and Byzantine political-military ideology and warfare, on the other. Deriving from diverse secular and ecclesiastical records, this composite evidence highlights the various intricate ways by which Byzantine Orthodox Christianity permeated and contributed to important aspects of Byzantine military-religious traditions.

The debate on whether Byzantium developed its own version of religious war or a crusading ideology, and the role of the Byzantine Church in this development can be traced to the early stages of modern Byzantine studies: for instance, in the well-known works of Gustave Schlumberger on tenth-century Byzantine history.[8] According to Schlumberger, the campaigns of Nikephoros Phokas and John I Tzimiskes (969–976) against the Arab Muslim powers in the Levant had a religious character and can be qualified as proto-crusades, all the more that the latter emperor aspired to re-conquer Jerusalem for Christendom. Schlumberger's views were followed by medievalists such as René Grousset[9] and George Ostrogorsky. The latter argued that Emperor Heraclius's (610–641) campaigns against Sassanid Persia in 622–628 can be identified as the actual forerunner of the Western crusades, whereas some of John Tzimiskes's anti-Arab campaigns betray a "veritable crusading spirit."[10] At the other extreme, in his influential publication on the idea of holy war and the Byzantine tradition, Vitalien Laurent argued that in contrast to the medieval Islamic and West European versions of holy war, due to their inherent inertia and fatalistic attitudes, the Byzantines failed to develop a proper holy war tradition and thus, unlike Latin Europe, could not manage to find an active military response

7 On the rise and evolution of the cult of military saints in Eastern Orthodoxy, see Delehaye 1909; Webster 1980.

8 Schlumberger 1890; Schlumberger 1896–1905.

9 Grousset 1934–36, I:15.

10 Ostrogorsky 1957, 90, 263.

to Islamic expansionism.[11] The view that the notion of a "holy war," as developed in the Islamic and West European holy war ideologies, remained alien and incomprehensible to the Byzantines has since been upheld and supported with more arguments and evidence in a succession of important studies.[12] However, the supporters of the position that when Byzantine ideology and practice of war are judged on their own terms, and not only in the framework of Islamic and West European holy war models, they can exhibit on occasions the traits of a specific Byzantine "holy war" tradition, have also brought new valuable source material and methodological considerations into the debate.[13]

This debate on the existence or non-existence of a Byzantine version of Christian holy war has undoubtedly opened new important venues for the exploration of East Orthodox perspectives on the ethics and theology of warfare in the classical Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. In some of the spheres of this debate and with the present state of published evidence and research, definitive conclusions cannot be reached as yet. Debating Byzantine military history in greater depth, however, has brought about a deeper understanding of some of the specific Eastern Christian and Byzantine approaches to the ethics and conduct of warfare. In an important contrast with the medieval West, for example, in Eastern Christendom and Byzantium the ecclesiastical involvement and participation in warfare with some religious goals was important but not absolutely vital for its promulgation and legitimization. In Byzantine political theology the emperor was extolled as Christ's vicar, God's chosen ruler to preside over and defend the God-elected Christian Roman Empire, itself an earthly replica of the divine heavenly monarchy. As a defender of the True Faith, Orthodoxy, his God-granted mission was to lead his armies against those who threatened the integrity of the universal Christian empire and its providential mission—whose enemies thus were also enemies of Orthodoxy. Given the blending of imperial and religious ideology in Byzantine political theology, most Byzantine wars, even those without ostensibly religious objectives and waged primarily for geopolitical reasons, possess an aspect of "holiness"—at least in the specific Byzantine context. All these wars were waged to defend the integrity of God's empire on earth and recover formerly imperial and Christian lands which also meant restoring and expanding Orthodox Christianity, a notion which could be used to justify offensive warfare.

11 Laurent 1946, 71–98.

12 See, for example, Lemerle 1955, 617ff.; Oikonomidès 1995; Dennis 2001; Dagron 1997; Laiou 1993; Laiou 2006.

13 Kolia-Dermitzakē 1991; Kolbaba 1998. See also the re-assessment of this thesis in Haldon 1999, 13–34, passim.

The conceptualization of Byzantine warfare may have been in essence a continuation of the largely secular late Roman just war tradition, but the latter inevitably underwent Christianization in the Byzantine period. It was now inextricably linked to the perceived divinely ordained mission of the Christian Romans (the new "chosen people") to safeguard Constantinople, seen as both the "New Rome" and the "New Jerusalem," and its single universal Christian empire, the "New Israel", against the encroachments of the new "barbarians"—pagans, Muslims, and on occasion, West European Christians. This Christianized "just war" tradition became a fundamental part of Byzantine imperial ideology, closely interwoven with the re-interpreted and ever actualized Romano-Byzantine paradigms of God-guidedness in battle and imperial victory ("Victoria Augustorum").

Furthermore, East Christian medieval military-religious ideologies shared with their Western counterparts a dependence on and exploitation of the Old Testament narratives and pronouncements of the God-commanded and -ordained wars of the Israelites against the "heathen" and "idolatrous" Canaanites. As the new "Chosen People," the Byzantines (and their Western Christian counterparts) could draw on these models to depict their wars as God-guided campaigns against the new "infidel" or "God-fighting" enemies. Accordingly, successful warrior-emperors and commanders could be compared to the kings of Israel or to paradigmatic figures in the Old Testament Israelite "holy" wars such as Moses, Aaron, Joshua and David. The enemies of Byzantium could be "recognized" as new versions of the Old Testament adversaries and oppressors of the Israelites such as the Assyrian king Sennacherib, acting again as instruments of God's punishment, provoked by the sins of the Byzantine emperors or the Byzantine Christians in general.

In this providential framework Byzantine military defeats and setbacks that were traditionally interpreted as God's punishment for Byzantine sins eventually could be seen as crucial stages in the unfolding of the God-guided eschatological drama determining the fortunes of the universal empire. Indeed, the use of intense religious rhetoric and apocalyptic notions to create such an eschatological scheme formed part of the politico-military agenda of Heraclius's court during the protracted Byzantine-Persian wars in the early seventh century.

Much of the debate on the presence and evolution of the notions of just and holy war in the medieval Byzantine world has focused on the religious motives and sentiments underlying Byzantine military endeavours such Heraclius's anti-Persian warfare, the anti-Arab offensives of Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes or some of the Komnenian campaigns in twelfth-century Anatolia. The reign of Heraclius and the seventh century in general witnessed an influential synthesis of Christian Roman political theology and imperial

eschatology, aspects of which seem especially relevant to the above debate; a re-assessment of this process can contribute also to a deeper understanding of the provenance and fortunes of important currents in apocalyptic eschatology in Byzantium and the Byzantine Commonwealth.

2 Heraclius, the New Constantine

The seventh century presented Byzantium with a series of major crises: its beginning brought internal turbulence and insecurity, and throughout much of its duration the empire found itself under sustained military pressure virtually on all fronts. By the end of the century, Byzantine defensive warfare, counter-attacks and short-lived reconquests failed to reverse the massive loss of imperial territory and prestige. The seventh century witnessed, too, a marked increase in Byzantine secular and ecclesiastical concerns with the Jews and Judaism which unavoidably affected also the contemporaneous transformation of Byzantine apocalypticism, both developments being triggered by the intense religious sentiments and rhetoric stirred by the protracted Byzantine-Persian wars in the first three decades of the century.

Exploiting the political instability in Constantinople after an imperial coup d'état in Constantinople in late 602, the Sassanid ruler Khusrau II (590–628) intervened militarily in the ensuing political struggles. His intervention was to expand into a full-scale invasion of imperial territory, advancing towards Byzantine Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Asia Minor. The enthronement of Heraclius (610–641), the son of the Exarch of Africa, as a new emperor, following another coup d'état that brought down the usurper Phocas (602–610), initially failed to turn the tide of the Persian invasion: after taking Damascus in 613 and Jerusalem in 614, the Sassanid armies proceeded to occupy Egypt between 616 and 621. In the Anatolian theatre Persian troops approached the Bosphorus. The stage was set for a direct frontal assault on Constantinople, made all the more dangerous since it was planned in alliance with the Turkic Avar Khaganate whose power base lay to the north of the Danube, but whose forces meanwhile had been pursuing far-ranging incursions across the imperial Danube frontier and deep into the Balkans. These plans for a joint attack on Constantinople proved, however, abortive, and the failure of a Persian-Avaro-Slav military offensive against the imperial capital in 626 resulted not only in the withdrawal of Persian and Avar forces but also marked a turning point in the war. By that time Heraclius's adroit tactic of outmanoeuvring Persian forces in Anatolia and (with the assistance of the forces of his ally, the Western Turkic Khaganate) Transcaucasia as well as bringing the war deep into

Sassanid territory was bearing fruit. After defeating a Persian army at Nineveh in late 627, Heraclius began threatening manoeuvres in relatively close proximity to the Sassanid capital Ctesiphon, pillaging the area and the deserted royal castles there. As political turmoil in Persia began to mount, Khusrau was deposed and assassinated and, amid the Sassanid dynastic crisis and ceaseless aristocratic conspiracies, Heraclius was able to procure a victorious truce, providing for the Persian evacuation of the occupied imperial territories and to begin negotiations for the exact delineation of the Byzantine-Sassanid frontiers.

With all its vicissitudes and reversals of fortune, the prolonged and crippling military conflict between Heraclius's and Khusrau's armies represented the concluding dramatic episodes of the four centuries of intermittent warfare between the Sassanid monarchy and the Roman, and later, the East Roman and Byzantine Empire. The military and political collisions between the two empires were also marked by a visible religious rivalry, which intensified during the gruelling Byzantine-Sassanid hostilities under Heraclius and Khusrau.[14] Christians throughout the empire were alarmed and dismayed by the news of the Persian conquest and sack of Jerusalem and stories of the apparent ensuing profanation and destruction of its churches, the most emblematic of which, the Holy Sepulchre, was reportedly set aflame. The Persian expatriation to Ctesiphon of church treasures and relics, including the reliquary of the "True Cross" on which Jesus was supposed to have been crucified and whose discovery was commonly attributed to St. Helena (and by then associated by Christians and non-Christians alike with Roman Christian imperial victory ideology), were inevitably highly traumatic for Christian sensitivities. While

14 For Byzantine sources for the war which present the conflict with overt religious connotations see, for example, *Chronicon Pascale* 1832, 728/4–12, 729/1–14 (tr. *Chronicon Pascale* 1989, 183–4); George of Pisidia, *Expeditio Persica* (Pertusi 1959, 84–136; and Tartaglia 1998, 71–141); Theophanes 1883–85, 1:303.12–304.13, 307.2–12, 310.25–311.2 (tr. Theophanes 1997, 435–6, 439, 442–3); on Heraclius's strong emphasis on and meticulous exploitation of the religious dimension of the war, see Howard-Johnston 1994, 81–2, 84–5; Howard-Johnston 1996, 36–41 (according to Howard-Johnston, Heraclius's desecration and destruction of Adur Gushnasp, one of the most important Zoroastrian fire temples, at Takht-i Sulaiman in 624 was intended to demonstrate that his Persian campaign represented a "a holy war of Christian against Zoroastrian," Howard-Johnston 1996, 39). On George of Pisidia's presentation of the Byzantine-Persian war in religious terms, see Frendo 1986, 53–62; Olster 1994, 51–72, passim; Whitby 1998 253–4; Haldon 1999, 20–1; Huber 2008, 162–92. See also the discussion of the presentation of the last Byzantine-Sassanid war as a struggle between Christianity and Zoroastrianism and waged with a "holy war" ethos in the East Syrian *Khuzistan Chronicle* (c. 660–680) in Watt 2002, 67–72.

differing occasionally in detail and in their chronology of events, the Christian accounts of the Sassanid capture of Jerusalem[15] furnish vivid and graphic accounts of Persian destruction of churches and monasteries in Jerusalem and its environs, large-scale massacres of the Christian population and the deportation of large groups of Christian survivors, led by the Jerusalem Patriarch, Zachariah, to Ctesiphon. Given the inevitable bias and polemics in the seventh-century Christian texts (the later Christian accounts are mostly derivative), it is difficult to access the extent of the reported damage to Christian buildings and anti-Christian atrocities during the Persian sack of Jerusalem, all the more that the archaeological evidence remains rather uncertain.[16]

The Byzantine counter-offensive in Sassanid-controlled territory resorted to some retaliatory destruction of Zoroastrian fire-temples[17] and was accompanied by sustained anti-Sassanid religio-political propaganda targeting (especially in Transcaucasia) the Christian subjects of the Persian state. Khusrau was himself castigated as "God-abhorred and execrated," an "opponent of God," who blasphemed against Jesus Christ[18] and cruelly dismissed Heraclius's peace overtures in 615/616, stating that he would spare the emperor only if he renounced the "Crucified One" and adopted sun-worship.[19] While taking advantage of the Sassanid dynastic strife and court factionalism in the wake of Khusrau's death in 628, Heraclius's designs on Persia may have included the

15 The contemporary Christian sources include the treatise on the capture of Jerusalem by the Mar Saba monk, Strategius (see Strategius 1960 and Strategius 1973 and 1974, extant in Georgian and Arabic versions as well as Greek fragments), and anacreontic poems by Sophronius, a monk of the St Theodosius monastery and would-be Patriarch of Jerusalem (Sophronius 1957); later sources include the Armenian chronicle attributed to Sebēos, Bishop of the Bagratuni (Sebēos 1999), Theophanes's *Chronographia* (Theophanes 1883–85) and several Syriac chronicles. On the "historicity" of the Christian sources for the Persian conquest of Jerusalem, their rhetorical strategies (including the generous use of biblical typologies), theological and ideological agendas, see, for example, Wilken 1992, 218–33; Wheeler 1991, 77–85; Stemberger 1999, 261–5; Cameron 2002, 58ff.

16 See, for example, Ben-Dov 97–101; Magness 1992; Schick 1994, 33–40; Schick 2007, 179–81; Reich 1994; Russell 2001. For an up-to-date archaeological re-assessment of the Persian conquest of Jerusalem and conclusions that it did not cause any large-scale damage or destruction in the residential quarters, ecclesiastical compounds, infrastructures and hinterland of the city, see now Evni, "Sack of Jerusalem."

17 Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Breviarium Historicum*, 12:41–3 (tr. Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople 1990, 55).

18 *Chronicon Pascale* 1832, 729/1–14 (tr. *Chronicon Paschale* 1998, 183–94).

19 Theophanes 1883–85, 1:301.20–5 (tr. Theophanes 1997, 433).

Christianization of its defeated Zoroastrian monarchy and aristocracy[20] with whom he negotiated the recovery of the True Cross, "the treasure of the whole world," as well as other church relics.

The "glorious and precious" True Cross was restored to Jerusalem and reinstalled in the Church of Holy Sepulchre by Heraclius (reportedly in March 630) in what appears to have been carefully staged solemnities, replete with symbolic and ideological significance. The rescue and exaltation of other sacred relics from the Holy Land such as the Holy Sponge and Holy Lance had already been staged in Constantinople, while Heraclius himself had undertaken a triumphant return to the imperial city during which liturgical procedures were incorporated into the traditional victory parades for the first time in the history of the Christian Roman Empire.[21] This sequence of ceremonial displays showed that the warrior-emperor and his court publicists seemed well prepared to embellish his growing stature as a defender of Christendom and vehicle of divine will and salvation with further religio-political acts. In 629 he formally adopted the Greek *basileus* (which earlier had acquired its full royal significance through its use by Alexander the Great and his Hellenistic successors) as his main imperial title in a Christianized version of "faithful *basileus* in Christ," overshadowing the traditional Latin *imperator Caesar Augustus*. Heraclius thus became the first Christian Roman emperor to invoke the name of Christ in his titulature to legitimize his imperial dignity, revealing a new enhanced focus on the emperor's divine election and the inextricable unanimity of the spiritual heavenly monarchy and its earthly replica, the Byzantine Empire. Heraclius's revision of imperial titulature in the wake of the Persian wars, with their perceived and overtly declared religious significance (at least on the Byzantine side), also betrays a stronger emphasis on Old Testament Davidic royal ideology, as appropriated and refashioned in Byzantine imperial political theology, and a possible eschatological orientation.[22] Indeed the timing of Heraclius's restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem and the manner in which it was enacted and propagated in Byzantium (with all the inevitable

20 For the evidence suggesting such designs, see Mango 1985; cf. the more recent analyses of the relevant events in Whittow 1996, 80–81; Kaegi 2003, 181–2, 187–8; Panaino 2004, 824–34; Panaino 2010.

21 See the analysis of the incorporation of liturgical processions in Heraclius's victory celebrations in Constantinople in McCormick 1986, 70–3, 391–2.

22 See, for example, Shahid 1972, 302f. According to Shahid, the adoption of the title may have been related to Heraclius's hopes that "he was opening the last phase of the millennium as a *praeparatio* for the Second Coming," Shahid 1972, 308; cf. Alexander 1977, 232–3; Magdalino 1993, 19. On the ideological and theological connotations of Heraclius's assumption of the title of *basileus* generally, see also Dagron 2003, 28–9.

miracle stories that came to be associated with the event) can been interpreted as "a deliberate apocalyptic act."[23] Elaborating with carefully constructed biblical and classical typologies (and a linked rich array of exempla, allusions, and metaphors) the image of Heraclius as the "deliverer of the world" and a model Christian warrior, his imperial propagandist, George of Pisidia, compares his entry into Jerusalem to restitute the True Cross with Jesus Christ's arrival in the holy city on Palm Sunday. The "triumphant" cross is itself likened to Ark of the Covenant because of its power to overpower its adversaries and is extolled as the holy weapon with which the "emperor with God's aid" finally vanquished Khusrau who had blasphemed against it.[24] The analogy between the True Cross and the Ark of the Covenant (which had been similarly captured and kept in enemy custody to be installed later by David in Jerusalem) was intended to fortify Heraclius's status as a "new David." In such rhetorical celebrations of Heraclius's feats, his "Davidic" pedigree was intended to appear even more compelling and relevant in the context of his God-aided wars against no less an enemy than Khusrau (portrayed as a Goliath-like "destroyer of the world") and his armies of warlike "enemies of God,"[25] seen against the backdrop of the emperor's vital connection with Jerusalem and even his marital life.[26]

Concerted efforts were made, moreover, to associate Heraclius's restoration of imperial order and victorious wars in the name of Christianity with the analogous deeds of Constantine the Great, bringing to the fore the message of imperial renewal and re-establishment of Constantine's Christian empire. While following the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the East Roman/Byzantine emperor was in principle conceptualized as a "new David" and "new Constantine," Heraclius's reign re-focused on the use of the Constantinian cult and nomenclature in a more significant and pointed way, triggering a "Constantinian" momentum in the imperial ideology and propaganda of his own Heraclian dynasty, as well as of succeeding Byzantine dynasties between the seventh and tenth centuries. Building on the Constantinian model of Christian emperorship, Heraclius's programme of imperial renewal was inter-

23 Mango 1990 205; cf. Flusin 1992, 2:214–15; Magdalino 1993, 18–19; Drijvers 2002, 186–8.

24 George of Pisidia, *In Restitutionem Sanctae Crucis*, 27–38, 54–60, 64–8 (Pertusi 1959, 226–8; Tartaglia 1998, 253–5).

25 See Theophanes 1883–85, 1:303.29–30, 308.25 (tr. Theophanes 1997, 436, 440).

26 On the perceived analogies between the marital misdeeds of David and Heraclius (the latter's second marriage to his niece was widely seen and criticised as incestuous), see, for example, Nikephoros, *Breviarium Historicum*, 27:4–10 (tr. Nikephoros 1990, 77); see also Alexander 1977, 230–1; for arguments that Heraclius restored the True Cross to Jerusalem to suppress the wide-spread criticism of his incestuous marriage and justify his moral integrity, see Frolow 1953, 101–5.

twined with his energetic endeavours in the 630s to achieve religious uniformity and ecclesiastical unification in the empire in view of the antagonism between the Byzantine Neo-Chalcedonian Orthodox church establishment and the non-Chalcedonian monophysite churches in the regained eastern provinces.

After the increasing eschatological concerns and speculations in Byzantium over the course of the sixth century,[27] the duration and vehemence of the Persian-Byzantine wars in the early seventh century, the Persian capture of Jerusalem and the real threat of a Persian conquest of Constantinople brought a new intensity and pertinence to such eschatological trends. Late Roman Christian reactions (eschatological or not) to natural and political cataclysms or military defeats were commonly based on a theodicy which attributed these adversities to divine punishment of the depravity or fatal flaws of the particular emperor during whose reign they occurred, or of the sins of the citizens of the empire who could not always live up to the elevated ideal of the "new Israel." Amid the spiritual turmoil provoked by the fall of Jerusalem, the "Holy City of Christ," the calamity could be blamed on the sins of its inhabitants generating contamination which could be purified only by the fire and sword of the invading Persians.[28] Despite being portrayed as "evil beasts," "mad dogs," and "ferocious serpents," the Persian conquerors thus could be perceived as a vehicle of divine wrath.[29] Christian attitudes to and interpretations of the Persian conquest of Jerusalem could also fall back on the rhetorical strategies of Christian biblical typology as developed in the various genres of Byzantine literature, which viewed the fortunes of the empire and its imperial and ecclesiastical figures through the prism of paradigmatic Old Testament events and their protagonists. Christian Jerusalem could thus be re-discovered as the navel of the earth (Ezek 5:5), its Persian capture seen as the realization of the divine punishment to be unleashed on the city on account of its "abominations," pronounced in Ezekiel 16, whereas the travails of its Christian inhabitants could be depicted as being presaged by Israel's Babylonian captivity and bondage in Egypt.[30]

27 See Alexander 1967, 116–20; Scott 1985, 107–9; Mango 1980, 204–5; Magdalino 1993, 5–11.

28 Strategius, *On the Fall of Jerusalem* (Arabic version C), 6:9–11 (ed. Strategius 1974, I:120; tr. Strategius 1974, II:80).

29 Sophronius 1957, 18.25. However, see also Sophronius's poem 14, in which he dwells on the saintliness of Jerusalem's Christian citizens in sharp contrast to their treatment in Strategius's treatise; see the comments of Couret 1897, 146; Stemberger 1999, 263–4.

30 Sophronius 1957, 20.29; 23. Strategius, *On the Fall of Jerusalem* (Arabic version C), 18:8–11 (ed. Strategius 1974, I:135; tr. Strategius 1974, II:91).

3 The Heraclian Synthesis of Imperial and Eschatalogical Ideologies

The recovery of Jerusalem and the Holy Land was naturally to be seen in Byzantium as a sign of divine forgiveness and another indication of the divinely-ordained destiny of the "New Israel," following on and confirming the trajectory of the anticipated restoration of Christian imperial order. Heraclius's restitution of the True Cross clearly marked the symbolic climax of his Persian campaigns (won with "God's aid") as a victory for Roman/Byzantine Christianity. Heraclius's famed *restitutio crucis*, which later both in Eastern and Western Christendom was to be seen as the high point of his reign, appears also to have been the vital element of a religio-political programme underpinned by the evolving synthesis of late Roman/Byzantine eschatology and imperial ideology. The canonical sources of this synthesis comprised the eschatological teachings of the New Testament (developed further in the patristic period) and selective use of Old Testament apocalyptic and eschatological material from Daniel and Ezekiel: the prophetic vision of the four successive world kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7, the vision of the weeks in Daniel 9 and the prophecy of the onslaught of the northern allied hordes of Gog from the realm of Magog on the land of Israel in Ezekiel 38–39. Its extra-canonical sources included Christian and Jewish-Christian pseudepigrapha from the early Christian and Christian redactions of earlier Jewish pseudepigraphic apocalypses (all of which were still in circulation in the Christian East) as well as the revived apocalyptic Sibylline tradition (dependent on and re-working the genre of earlier historical apocalypses). Themes, imagery and protagonists from this flexible complex of traditions could coalesce in new eschatological prophecies, visions and pronouncements focused on the contemporaneous and future fortunes of the Christian empire and the succession of its emperors, updating inherited and borrowed eschatological material in accordance with the ever changing historical circumstances.

Beginning with Tertullian (c.160–220), earlier Christian exegesis of New Testament eschatological notions already recognized the Roman Empire as the enigmatic "restraining force" (2Thes 2:7–8) whose disappearance would set the stage for the eschatological manifestation of the Antichrist. The fourth and final world kingdom in Daniel 2 and 7, the one with legs of iron and feet of iron and clay which was to be replaced after the last judgment of the nations with the God-established universal and eternal kingdom of the "holy ones of the Most High" (Dan 2:40–45, 7:9–28), predictably attracted continuous Christian eschatological interest. From the early patristic period onwards Christian interpretations of Daniel (and the resultant historico-apocalyptic schemes) commonly identified it with the Roman Empire, a portrayal which could naturally

generate largely pessimistic eschatological scenarios, especially in times of crises and political turbulence. Building on an exegetical trend initiated by the political theology of Constantine the Great's imperial apologist, Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–c.340), other Byzantine (as well as some Syriac Christian) readings of the Danielic four kingdoms' historical incarnations advanced an alternative schema (on the basis of the millennial kingdom theme in Rev 20:1–7) envisaging Christ's thousand-year reign on earth to be manifested through the Christian Roman Empire which thus was to merge with the divinely-founded ultimate kingdom of the Danielic schema.[31]

This latter Byzantine reading of Daniel 2 and 7 was naturally much more attuned to (and may have been promoted to) meet the needs of Byzantine imperial political theology in which, moreover, Christ was conceptualized as a co-emperor of the earthly emperor. It opened the way to imperial millenarian politics and manoeuvring, allowing also for continuous re-computations of eschatological and chiliastic events in circumstances either calling for such updated revisions of the future or in which they could be strategically useful. The progression and route of Heraclius's religio-political displays following his victory in Persia, which culminated in his advent in Jerusalem (and he was the first Christian Roman emperor to enter the "Holy City") suggest not only a dedicated campaign of imperial restoration of the Constantinian model but also a conscious imperial millenarian agenda. This agenda can be best understood in the framework of a "realized eschatology":[32] in the dawning new imperial era (itself, one of the central messages of imperial propaganda) the expected Second Coming would initiate the joint rule of Christ and the "faithful *basileus* in Christ" over the empire which was finally to be assimilated to the eschatological thousand-year kingdom.

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31 On these Byzantine readings of Daniel's four kingdoms scheme, see Podskalsky 1972, 11–12, 38–9; Podskalsky 1984, 440–2; Magdalino 1993, 10–11, 25–6; Reinink 2002, 83–4 (and the more optimistic imperial eschatology which remained based on the recognition of the Danielic fourth kingdom as the Roman Empire in the *Syriac Alexander Legend*, discussed ibid., 85–6). On Cosmas Indicopleustes's interpretation of the Roman Empire as transcending the Danielic four kingdoms' scheme and as representing the eternal kingdom established by the God of heaven, as prophesized in Dan 2:44 (*Christian Topography*, 2.lxix–lxxv), see also Casey 1989. For parallel attempts in Syriac Christianity to associate the Christian Roman Empire with the Danielic everlasting kingdom and the eschatological kingdom of Christ (Aphrahat and Ephrem Syrus), see further Podskalsky 1972, 15–16; Griffith 1986; Morrison 2004.

32 Magdalino 1994, 9; Magdalino 1993, 10–11, 19; Flusin 1992, 2:214–5; Whitby 1992, 73; Reinink 2002, 83–4; Drijvers 2002, 187–8.

Jerusalem and the Holy Land were naturally anticipated to play a vital role in the thus inaugurated new imperial age and Heraclius sponsored and secured further finance for the gradually progressing work on the restoration of damaged and destroyed Christian sacral architecture in the "Holy City". It has been argued, moreover, that Heraclius planned and embarked on building projects at the Temple Mount complex intended to repossess it for Christianity in the new religio-political conditions after the fall and recovery of Jerusalem.[33] While finding some support in circumstantial evidence, these arguments have not been corroborated as yet by solid archaeological data and their assumptions need to be tested by further archaeological investigations. Later Christian traditions recounting Heraclius's erection of or entry through the Temple Mount's Golden Gate or building activities in the abandoned area of the destroyed Second Temple area seem to reflect popular Christian pilgrims' lore which acquired new relevance in the context of the Christianization of the complex in the wake of the First Crusade (1095–1099) and the establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.[34]

4 Anti-Jewish Propaganda and Jewish Eschatological Expectations

Heraclius's restitution of the True Cross had an anti-Judaic potential which was promptly put to use by him during his stay in Jerusalem and its aftermath. Christian sources for the Persian conquest of Jerusalem and the Holy Land allege a large-scale Jewish collaboration with the invaders, ranging from welcoming and assisting them in certain areas to supporting them militarily and indulging in the burning of Christian churches and anti-Christian violence in Jerusalem.[35] The extent to which these accounts can serve as a trustworthy source to such Jewish collaboration with the Persian armies and anti-Christian

33 Peters 1986, 87–9, 95, 119n54; Peters 1983, 119–38. For arguments that the extant archaeological and historical evidence makes Heraclius the likely builder of the Golden Gate to the Temple Mount, see Mango 1992; Bahat 1999, 254–6; for arguments that the Golden Gate was built in the late Byzantine period and restored during the latter part of Heraclius's war against the Sassanids, see Creswell 1969, 1:317–18.

34 See, for example, some of the medieval Christian descriptions of visits to Jerusalem and its monuments assembled in Peters 1985, 302, 315 and 320.

35 For the Christian reports of Jewish involvement in the Persian conquest of Palestine and Jerusalem and the problem of their credibility, cf. Schäfer 1983, 221–2; Wilken 1992, 202–7, 218–32; Leder 1987, 64–6; Flusin 1992, vol. 2, 162–4, 310f.; Dagron 1991a, 22–8; Schick 1994, 20–48, passim; Olster 1994, 79–84; Cameron 1994, 80–2; Cameron 2002, passim; Fishman-Duker 1996, 114–15.

aggression has become one of the most convoluted and controversial problems related to the history of seventh-century Palestine.[36] To read these texts as authentic records of Jewish hostility to Christians and Christianity resulting from a supposed increase in Jewish-Christian animosities in Palestine prior to the Persian invasion would be certainly wrong. On the contrary, the archaeological data from excavated churches and synagogues of the Byzantine period suggest a largely peaceful co-existence and socio-cultural exchange between the Jewish and Christian communities in Palestine from the fifth to the seventh centuries (especially against the background of troublesome Christian-Samaritan interrelations).[37] It appears that the continuing and evolving inter-religious rivalries between the Christian and Jewish religious elites, which naturally intensified over the course of the multiplying anti-Jewish discriminatory measures of the imperial authorities, had a more limited impact on Jewish-Christian inter-communal relations on the ground in Byzantine Palestine than in other provinces of the empire. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence of Persian and indeed Jewish destruction of and damage to Christian sacral architecture, as alleged in Christian source material for the Persian conquest, in many cases remains non-existent, problematic and inconclusive (at least until the relevant excavations are properly published).[38] This again demonstrates that the hostile and tendentious Christian reports of Jewish involvement in the Persian invasion of Palestine, with their amalgamation of historical fact, polemical stereotyping, and dramatic biblical typologization, need to be treated critically and with extreme caution.

On the other hand, it is hardly surprising that as Sassanid-Byzantine hostilities expanded to Palestine, the local Jewish communities may have reacted in accordance with their inherited and current pro-Persian sympathies. For these communities the Sassanid advance on Jerusalem inevitably evoked reminiscences of the events in 539–538 BCE when the Persian capture of Babylon under the founder of the Achaemenid monarchy, Cyrus the Great (559–530 BCE), led to the restoration of the exilic Jewish community to Jerusalem and Zion and the rebuilding and consecration of the Temple, completed under the patronage of Darius I the Great (521–486 BCE). The role of Persia in this paradigmatic Second Exodus (and First Return to Zion) was enshrined in the canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah and, during the successive eras of Achaemenid,

36 On the modern historiographic debates and controversies regarding the reported Jewish anti-Byzantine alliances and collaboration with the invading Sassanid armies in Palestine, see Horowitz 1998; Cameron 1996, 249–57.

37 See Ribak 2007, 14–21, 77–83.

38 Schick 1994, 22, 24–5, 28–30, 34, 44; Evni "Sack of Jerusalem".

Parthian and Sassanid ascendancy in the Iranian world, Irano-Jewish coexistence in the Near East was characterized by periods of close contacts, social and cultural exchange (including cases of ideological and political rapprochement) and far fewer conflicts and antagonisms than in Roman-Jewish relations. Later authoritative pronouncements from the rabbinic period could state that Rome was destined to be ultimately vanquished by Persia, although at the same time, the advent of Messiah ben David could be expected only after a final brief period of the hegemony of the "evil" empire of Rome over the world (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 10a). Symptomatically, a tradition of utterances in aggadic midrashic literature (ascribed to no less a figure than the second-century sage Simon ben Yohai) figuratively prophesized a future Persian military occupation/invasion of the Holy Land as foreshadowing the advent of the Messiah (Lamentation Rabbati 1.13, Song of Songs Rabbah 8.10; see also Babylonian Talmud, Sanhendrin 98a).

Simultaneously, in periods of dramatic Roman-Jewish confrontation such as Hadrian's suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132–135 CE. The imperial prohibitions and restrictions imposed on the Jewish communities by the Christian Roman emperors in the Constantinian and immediate post-Constantinian periods deepened Jewish anti-Roman sentiments and provoked messianic reactions among some Jewish circles.[39] In general, Jewish perception of the Christian Roman Empire continued to be dominated by the biblical typology identifying Rome with Israel's biblical antagonist, Edom, the violent and aggressive realm associated with Esau, "blessed" to live by the sword in Genesis 27:40.[40] Jewish historico-apocalyptic and eschatological readings of Daniel 7 also recognized Rome as the fourth kingdom of its schema which was to be ultimately overthrown and succeeded by the everlasting kingdom of the Israelite "holy ones of the Most High."

When within three years of the enthronement of Heraclius the seemingly unstoppable Persian advance reached Damascus and Jerusalem, the Sassanid obliteration of Byzantine authority in Palestine predictably stirred messianic and eschatological sentiments among some local Jewish communities to whom the prophesied destruction and desolation of Edom (Isa 34; Jer 49:7–11; Ezek 25:12–15; 35; Amos 1:11–13 and Obad 1), now incarnated in Byzantium, must have seemed to be approaching fast. It may be surmised from the sources for the Sassanid capture of Jerusalem that the new Persian overlords of the Holy City passed it to Jewish control or that the Jews came to enjoy initially a

39 See, for example, van Bekkum 2002, 97–8.

40 On Jewish perceptions of the Roman Empire and its associations with Edom and Esau, see de Lange 1978; de Lange 2005, 418–20; van Bekkum 2002, 101–3.

privileged status among its population but such a turn of events, while conceivable, remains conjecture.[41] Some circumstantial but inevitably abstruse evidence from the highly influential Jewish apocalyptic work *Sefer Zerubbabel*[42] and apocalyptic allusions in Jewish liturgical hymns from this period[43] suggest the resumption of some kind of Jewish cult observances and even sacrifices on the Temple Mount in the wake of the Persian annexation of Jerusalem. Any such Jewish attempts to resacralize and reclaim Judaism's holiest locus could have been only short-lived, as in 617, only three years after the Sassanid conquest of Jerusalem, the Persian pro-Jewish policies in the city were radically overturned. With their intricate synthesis of historical allusion, biblical, messianic and eschatological material, *Sefer Zerubbabel* and the apocalyptically-oriented Jewish liturgical hymns of the period represent a problematic guide to the actual historical events and realities of Palestine during the first three decades of the seventh century. They reflect, however, through their historico-apocalyptic prism the dramatic religio-political and military vicissitudes of this period, including the Jewish disenchantment with the reversal of the Persian pro-Jewish stance in Jerusalem in 617. These documents are pervaded, moreover, by expectations of imminent eschatological conflicts in which the two traditional Jewish messianic figures of Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David, will confront Israel's enemies to bring about the restoration of Jewish rule in Jerusalem, the renewal of the Temple cult and the establishment of Israel's everlasting kingdom in the messianic age.

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41 For the view that the Persian capture of Jerusalem was followed by a period of Jewish ascendancy in the city, see Baron 1957, 22–3, 238–9 and n. 25; Avi-Yonah 1984, 265–9; Peters 1985, 172–3; Peters 1986, 87–8; Stemberger 1999, 260; cf. also van Bekkum 2002, 103–4; for a balanced criticism of this view see Wilken 1992, 212; Cameron 1994, 80; Cameron 2002, 63.

42 See the edition of one of the recensions of the apocalypse in Lévi 1914–20, 129–60; English translation in Himmelfarb 1990, 67–90, and Reeves 2005, 51–66. On the provenance of the historical allusions, eschatological and messianic notions in the apocalypse, cf. Israël Lévi's studies collected posthumously in Lévy 1994 and the subsequent occasionally differing views of Bamberger 1940; Wilken 1985, 454–8; Wilken 1992, 209–14; Berger 1985, 141–64; Wheeler 1991, 73–7; Dagron 1991a, 27ff., 41ff.; Stemberger 1999, 266–9; Speck 1997a, 183–90; Dan 1998; van Bekkum 1992, 104–8; Himmelfarb 2002; Reeves 2005, 40–51. For the related messianic and eschatological material in *Sefer Eliyyahu* (another Jewish apocalyptic work from the late Roman/early Byzantine period), see Krauss 1902; Wilken 1985, 457–60; Wilken 1992, 207–9; English translation in Reeves 2005, 31–9.

43 The relevant liturgical hymns (*piyyutim*) have been published by Fleischer 1984–85, and Yahalom 1979. On the apocalyptic and eschatological material in these *piyyutim*, see Stemberger 1999, 268–71; van Bekkum 2002, 108–10.

In the eschatologically loaded atmosphere in which Heraclius celebrated the re-assertion of Byzantine authority over Jerusalem and the Holy Land, the real and perceived Jewish role in the Persian conquest seemed bound to have repercussions for the immediate fortunes of the communities in the empire. Christian reports of rising Jewish-Christian inter-confessional tensions in the period when Heraclius made his victorious pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Persian forces were withdrawing from Syria and Palestine suggest that the emperor encountered in various areas (at least among the Christian religious elite) a strong anti-Jewish hostility and calls for anti-Jewish retaliation. Heraclius's first reactions to the reported outbursts of Christian anti-Jewish violence do not seem to indicate that initially he followed a conscious and systematic anti-Judaic agenda.[44] However, following his restoration of the cross in Jerusalem, Heraclius's policies and attitudes to the Jewish communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land hardened and he reportedly allowed or authorized violent repressions against the Jews in Jerusalem who were subsequently expelled again from the Holy City.[45] In 632 Heraclius's anti-Jewish measures reached their culmination when in a landmark edict he decreed the forcible conversion of all Jews in the empire.[46]

Heraclius's decree was clearly conditioned by the new religio-political realities and concerns shaped in the aftermath of his Persian wars such as his attempts to enforce the religious centralization of the empire and the imperial government's rising suspicions of Jewish loyalty to the Christian empire and readiness to collaborate with its external enemies. These suspicions deepened during the recent wars with Persia and the Sassanid threat to Byzantium's eastern provinces, a threat that was to be supplanted in the 630s by the swiftly escalating menace of the Muslim-Arab conquests in the Near East. Imperial Christian anti-Judaism was further reinforced by the new sense of the magnitude of Jewish-Christian rivalries over the Holy Land and Jerusalem, as

44 On Heraclius's policies towards the Jews during the initial period of his stay in the Holy Land and before his arrival in Jersualem, cf. Avi-Yonah 1984, 270–1; Sharf 1955, 101–2; Cameron 2002, 64–5.

45 Theophanes 1883–85, 1:328.24–8 (tr. Theophanes 1997, 459); Eutychius 1985, 129 (Alexandrian recension).

46 The decree is referred to in the chronicle of Michael the Syrian 1899–1910, II:414; plays a significant role in the anti-Judaic polemical work, *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* (c. 634–645)—recent publication, *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* 1991; and is discussed in a letter written by Maximus Confessor in 632 (Maximus Confessor 1937). The authenticity of the passage referring to Heraclius's decree in Maximus Confessor's letter is questioned by some scholars—cf. the views of Starr 1940, 192–6; Dagron 1991a, 30f.; Laga 1990, 183–8; Speck 1997b, 441–67; Brandes 1992, 38–9.

re-defined during and after the Constantinian period and intensified during the recent Sassanid occupation of Palestine.

The polemical and hagiographic genres of Byzantine Christian literature presented characteristic narratives of Jewish conversions to Christianity, some of which may have reflected actual occurrences, but on the whole were meant to maintain the conviction in Christianity's supersession of Judaism. This theological supersessionism could be incorporated in learned and popular Christian end-time beliefs and speculations in which the ultimate Jewish conversions to Christianity accordingly could be expected to take place in the eschatological age. Thus it does not seem coincidental that Heraclius's anti-Jewish decree followed on and effectively served as the concluding deed of a series of public imperial acts which appear to have been intended to enact (or to be seen as enacting) an eschatological scenario, all the more that two of the later Byzantine emperors who re-enacted the decree, Leo III (717–741) and Basil I (867–886), also shared to some extent his eschatological preoccupations.[47]

The extent of the implementation of the decree, its immediate effects on Jewish communities in the empire (including the scale of the ensuing repressions and forced emigrations) and its parallels to (and even postulated links with) comparable and roughly contemporary anti-Jewish measures in western Christendom have been a matter of intense debate.[48] The only two relatively credible reports of an implementation of the decree locate it in North Africa.[49] Thus the measures through which the decree may have been enacted and their course remain uncertain and in any case any such measures were soon rendered abortive in the Byzantine eastern provinces by the Muslim-Arab advance into these territories which began in earnest in 633–634. But although the decree apparently was not applied systematically and vigorously, it created a new precedent and the threat of enforced mass Christianization of the Jewish communities across the empire. It represented a direct legal assault on Judaism's hitherto guaranteed status of a permitted religion within the Pax Romana and sought to transform the inherited *modus vivendi* between Byzantine imperial Christianity and Judaism.

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47 See the analysis in Magdalino 1994, 8–9; Magdalino 1993, 20, 24.

48 See, for example, G. Brătianu 1941; Sharf 1971, 53–5; Sharf 1955; Yannopoulos 1975, 243–51; Bachrach 1977, 39; Rouche 1979, 105–24; Dagron 1991a, 28–38; Stemberger 1993; Cameron 1996, 257–8; Cameron 1994, 80–1; Haldon 1990 and 1997, 346; de Lange 1992, 23; Speck 1997b; Kaegi 2003, 216–17.

49 These reports are furnished in the letter of Maximus Confessor and the anti-Judaic work, *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*, see n.46 above.

Some of the chronicles recounting the progress of the Muslim-Arab conquest in the Near East and alleging Jewish collaboration with the earlier Persian invaders also implicate the Jews with involvement in the Arab military effort, occupation of imperial territory and religious and political designs.[50] Against the backdrop of these perceptions of Jewish association with the Persian and Muslim-Arab invasions it is hardly surprising that Byzantine polemical anti-Judaic literature enjoyed a substantial growth in the seventh century.[51] During this period Byzantine anti-Judaic discourse in general was affected by the perceived theological necessity to vindicate the use and veneration of figural religious images and the cult of the Cross which received an enhanced religio-political role in the wake of the Persian wars and the restoration of the True Cross in Jerusalem.[52] The customary arsenal of topics and arguments of the Byzantine *Adversus Iudaeos* genre was enriched with new aggressively charged themes and stereotypes which, in the observations of Averil Cameron, after blaming the Jews of Palestine for the non-Christian takeover of Christian holy places in Palestine, also made them to some extent forerunners of the victorious Muslim-Arab adversaries of the empire.[53]

The sheer multiplication and heightened rhetoric of Christian anti-Judaic tracts during the Muslim-Arab conquest of Byzantine Palestine, Syria and Egypt (the chronology of which remains difficult to reconstruct) has sometimes been interpreted as an indication that, given the shared ideological and religious notions of Judaism and Islam vis-à-vis Christianity, at least some of these tracts represent a veiled refutation of the latter.[54] While this view has

50 See, for example, Theophanes 1883–85, 1:333.1–12, 342.22–28 (tr. Theophanes 1997, 464, 476); see also the Armenian chronicle attributed to Sebēos (Sebēos 1999, ch. 42, 95–6). On Sebēos's views on what the chronicle depicts as a vital Jewish role in the rise of Islam, see Cook and Crone 1977, 6–8; Hoyland 1995, 89–102.

51 On the development of the *Adversus Iudaeos* literature in the seventh century and early eighth century and the debate concerning the dating of the relevant polemical works, see Williams 1935, 135–67; Krauss 1996, 162–4; Schreckenberg 1990, 442, 444, 447, 465–8; Waegeman 1986; Déroche 1986; Déroche 1991; Déroche 1994; Déroche 1999; Dagron 1991b, passim; Cameron 1995; Cameron 1996, 258–65; Kaegi 1992, 220–7, 231–5; Olster 1994, 99–179; Külzer 1999, 95–220 (a discussion of the main sources of this genre of Byzantine polemical literature, including the seventh- and eighth-century tracts); Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 268ff.; Albert 2008, 171–3.

52 See the analysis in Baynes 1951, 230–8; Déroche 1991, 278–80; Cameron 1992; Cameron 2002, 69ff; Thümmel 1992, 127–49, 231–40, 246–52, 340–64.

53 Cameron 1994, 90.

54 Olster 1994, 123–5, 180–2.

been criticized as being far too sweeping,[55] the Islamic conquests exercised an undeniable effect on the development of seventh-century Byzantine anti-Judaic literature, which in turn contributed themes and arguments to later Byzantine anti-Muslim polemics. The actual role of individual Jewish figures, groups, and communities (military, political and religious) in the Byzantine-Arab wars in the seventh century is beyond the scope of this article. But it has to be said that in the Chrsitian sources for these wars, Jewish involvement is often obscured by their obvious indebtedness to the anti-Judaic charges and stereotypizing generated during the escalation of Jewish-Christian tensions and conflicts in the course of the earlier Byzantine-Persian war. Following the vicissitudes which disturbed the religio-political balance of power in the Holy Land and Jerusalem during this war, the subsequent Muslim-Arab conquest of Byzantine Palestine seemed bound to stir Jewish apocalyptic ferment. The Arab victories over Byzantium-Edom, customarily seen as the fourth and last kingdom in the Danielic vision, following the striking but ephemeral recovery of Byzantine authority in the Holy Land after the Persian invasion, reignited Jewish messianic and eschatological expectations that the Muslim-Arab conquests actually set the scene for the closing stages of the God-directed historical drama, leading to the final messianic era. In such expectations and speculations the Arab "kingdom of Ishmael" was seen as divinely chosen and unleashed on Rome-Byzantium-Edom to bring about the absolute destruction of Israel's long-lasting Roman oppressor.[56] This eradication of "universal" Byzantine rule was anticipated to precede the advent of the Messiah and the establishment of the world dominion of the indestructible Israelite kingdom envisaged in Daniel 7, a vision which received further dramatic elaborations in rabbinic and midrashic literature.

Following the surrender of Byzantine Jerusalem to the forces of Caliph 'Umar in 638 and the ensuing return of Jewish communities to the holy city, such Jewish messianic agitation inevitably included the assumption that the long-awaited time for the re-sacralization of the Temple Mount and the rebuilding of the Temple was finally drawing nearer. During the first two decades of

55 See Déroche 1991, passim; Cameron 1996, 250–1; 270f.; Cameron 2002, 77–8; Hoyland 1997, 82–3, 539.

56 The exact dating of Jewish apocalyptic traditions which refer to the initial periods of the Muslim-Arab conquests of Syria and Palestine remains a difficult and controversial problem because of the process through which they have been re-worked and integrated into later Jewish apocalyptic texts. On these traditions, cf. Marmorstein 1906; Lévi 1914; Bamberger 1940; Lewis 1950; Lewis 1974; Fleischer 1971; Yahalom 1992; van Bekkum 1993;van Bekkum 2002, 110–12; Hoyland 1995, 90–2; Hoyland 1997, 307–21, 526–31.

Islamic rule in Jerusalem actual Jewish designs for restoring (or building new) sacral structures on the Temple Mount and renewal of cultic observances there were evidently put into motion amid re-ignited Jewish-Christian tensions in the city.[57] Any such designs were frustrated by the advance of the grandiose Umayyad building programme in Jerusalem from 661 onwards that eventually re-sanctified and transformed the Temple Mount into the elaborate Islamic sacral enclosure of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Yet in the perceptions of Jewish and Christian circles, a certain ambiguity persisted for some time regarding the raison d'être of the new Islamic structures on the al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf such as the Dome of the Rock, the erection of which could be seen as yet another sign of the unfolding messianic drama in the Holy Land.[58]

5 The Islamic Expansion and Apocalyptic Adjustments

The establishment and expansion of the Caliphate and its victories over the empires of Byzantium and Sassanid Persia (with the latter finally conquered by Muslim-Arab forces c. 656) were seen in some Eastern Christian theological circles as heralding the advent of the Antichrist. The ensuing dramatic shifts in the balance of power in the Middle East also forced a revision of some Christian apocalyptic appropriations of the Danielic four kingdoms' schema in which the Caliphate (the "kingdom of Ishmael") now came to epitomize the fourth beast/empire.[59] Similar re-arrangements of the Danielic schema

57 See the episodes of Jewish-Christian strife related to the Temple Mount recounted in Sebēos 1999, ch. 43, 102–3, and Theophanes 1883–85, 1:342.22–28 (tr. Theophanes 1997, 476).

58 See the analysis in Hoyland 1997, 311–12; Stroumsa 2008, 292–3. See also the suggestion in Busse 1987, 281 n. 7, that Sebēos's account of Jewish-Christian rivalries over the Temple Mount may reflect the Jewish-Christian tensions in Jerusalem in the aftermath of the Persian conquest of the city in 614 rather than real events in the first decades after its surrender to the Muslim Arabs.

59 Such an equation of the fourth beast of the Danielic schema with the Islamic Caliphate was already advanced in Sebēos 1999 (ch. 44, 105–106; ch. 52, 152–3) and developed in apocalyptic works such as the Syriac *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* (c. 692–705, see *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* 1900 and 1985) and partially in the Armenian *Vision of Enoch the Just* (see *Vision of Enoch the Just* 1901). On these revisions of the Danielic scheme, cf. the comments of Kaegi 1969; Kaegi 1992, 214; Drijvers 1992a, 211–13; Hoyland 1997, 533–5; Thomson 1999, 301–2. On the fundamental importance of the Danielic schema of four world empires for seventh-century Syrian apocalypticism and the related underlying necessity to re-visit and reconceptualise the schema vis-à-vis the conquests and entrenchment of

eventually affected some of its Jewish apocalyptic treatments, "updated" in the eighth century (and on occasion afterwards), once it transpired that the seventh-century Arab victories over Byzantim did not obliterate the "sinful kingdom of Edom" and usher in the expected messianic era and restoration of Israel. In such adapted new Jewish readings of the four kingdom schema the Arab "kingdom of Ishmael" was recognized as the fourth and last empire destined to endure until the eschatological age.[60]

The military defeats inflicted on Byzantium by the Persian and Arab armies were separated by only a brief period of Byzantine reconquest and recovery, and this seemingly unending series of crises had a profound effect on all levels of Byzantine society and serious repercussions on the ideological and religious plane. The sequence of disastrous and expensive wars, and the ensuing extensive shrinkage of Byzantine territory in the Levant and the Balkans, inevitably affected the Christian Roman triumphalist discourse of God-ordained imperial victory, provoking also a shift towards the assumption of enhanced sacerdotal status and powers by the imperial office.[61] Finding religio-political explanatory scenarios for the Byzantine retreat in the face of the expanding Islamic Caliphate presented far more challenges than any previous East Roman imperial predicament.[62] The traditional attribution of defeats on the battlefield or natural calamities to the emperors' or citizens' sins needed to be integrated into a more appropriate and elaborate interpretative framework—although in the case of Heraclius the military reverses at the hands of the Arabs still could continue to be blamed on his "sinful" incestuous marriage to his niece or on his support for and official promulgation of Monothelete Christology as a doctrinal compromise between the Chalcedonian and Monophysite positions. Apart from being often expounded in eschatological terms, in contemporary and later non-Chalcedonian Eastern Christian milieux the Muslim-Arab conquests of Byzantium's eastern provinces could also be presented as a punishment for the "heretical" Chalcedonian views of its ecclesiastical establishment and its attempts to impose them throughout Eastern Christendom.[63]

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the Caliphate in the formerly Christian imperial territories in the Near East, see Martínez 1987, esp. 350–1.

60 See, for example, the apocalyptic verses of the *piyyutim* edited in Yahalom 1992, 9, 18–22; cf. the treatment of the theme in the later *Prayer of Shimon bar Yohai* (see *Prayer of Shimon bar Yohai* 1915; tr. in Lewis 1950, 311–20; Reeves 2005, 90–105); see further the comments of Hoyland 1997, 530–1, 535; van Bekkum 2002, 110–12.

61 See the analysis in Olster 2006.

62 See the observations of Kaegi 1969, 143, 149–50; Cameron 1992, 258–9; Olster 2006, 54–5.

63 For some of the relevant West Syrian sources for the early Arab conquests in the Near East, see Palmer, Brock, and Hoyland 1993; see further Brock 1982, passim; Brock 1992;

In Byzantium itself the new confrontations and challenges of the seventh century brought about some noticeable changes in the articulation of Byzantine self-identity whose ideological and religious demarcations became more distinctly delineated vis-à-vis Christian heterodoxies or heresies as well as non-Christian communities such as the Jews and the new religious power of Islam[64] (although Byzantine perceptions of the religious message of Islam were initially rather blurred). As beleaguered seventh- and eighth-century emperors and their governments became increasingly preoccupied with the defence and restoration of Byzantine territory and imperial Christian authority, some trends in Byzantine political theology began to re-conceptualize the perceived interrelation between the earthly empire and its heavenly counterpart as well as its contemporaneous role in the divinely designed providential history which must have seemed to have reached one of its most dramatic and testing stages. The intense exploitation of eschatological notions in Heraclius's religious-military propaganda of the 620s now predisposed the way in which the expansion of Muslim-Arab conquests in the Byzantine Levant and Egypt and the first signs of encroaching Islamization and Arabization of the region were read and explained as events imbued with religious significance, triggering crucial phases in wider apocalyptic processes.[65]

The consequent readjustments of apocalyptic schemes and periodization of eschatological history are evident in the principal works of East Christian (in general) and Byzantine (in particular) historico-eschatological apocalypticism which appeared in the second half of the seventh and eighth centuries, a period often seen as a formative one in the medieval Byzantine development of the genre.[66] The newly-provoked and deepening East Christian preoccupations of the seventh century—the intensifying anti-Judaic polemic, the rapid conquests and expanding borders of the Arab Caliphate, the threat of apostasy to Islam and the crisis of the Christian imperial order—figure as the dominant concerns in these works, shaping new apocalyptic fields of vision and scenarios. Given the political, military, and social cataclysms of the period, it is unsurprising that the main message of these apocalyptic narratives was the prophetic "disclosure" of an impending monumental escalation of the ongoing

Witakowski 1987; Lamoreaux 1996, 13–14; van Ginkel 2006; Hoyland 1997, 116–32, 174–216, 259–78, 376–8, 387–422, 459–80; cf. also Moorhead 1981.

64 See the observations in Haldon 1990, 324–71; Cameron 1991a, 104–8; Cameron 1992, passim.

65 Kaegi 1969, 146–7; Kaegi 1992, 229–30; Whitby 1992, 73–4; Cameron 1992, 258–65; Olster 2006, 54–5.

66 See Olster 1998, 60; cf. Haldon 1990, 367–8, and Magdalino 1993, 30–2.

inter-confessional struggle between Christianity and Islam destined to mark the onset of the turbulent end-times and the Second Coming. In these apocalyptic expositions of the prophesized wars of the eschatological era the Muslim Arabs (portrayed as "Sons of Ishmael" or "Sons of Hagar") were unavoidably assigned the role of Christendom's main apocalyptic adversaries, but the Jews could also be depicted as playing a crucial anti-Christian role in the final chapters of the last days' drama, especially when its central events were foreseen to be enacted in the Holy Land and Jerusalem. The vivid and dramatic accounts of the approaching apocalyptic warfare and culmination of universal history incorporated elements of the constantly evolving Antichrist tradition, the changing emphases of imperial political theology, and the inherited melange of eschatological rhetoric and imagery promulgated during Heraclius's Persian wars.

6 The *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* and the Syriac Apocalyptic Response to Islam

The most influential of these new apocalyptic works was the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* ascribed to the martyred (c. 311) bishop of Patara in Lycia and written in Syriac in the late seventh century, which after being translated early into Greek and subsequently into Latin[67] (as well as into Armenian, Arabic and Old Slavonic) exercised a major impact on the development of later Eastern and Western Christian apocalypticism. The precise date and location of the writing of the work and the Christological orientation (Chalcedonian/Melkite or Monophysite) of its author have provoked continuous debates which have also focused on the provenance of the messianic, apocalyptic, and eschatological notions integrated into its narrative and the theological and ideological raison d'être of the resultant synthesis.[68] The apocalypse offers an idiosyncratic review of world history starting from the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and charts the succession and changing fortunes of kingdoms and rulers (beginning with Nimrod's kingship) in the biblical and more recent past through six "historical" millennia. The narrative of the political and military

67 See the recent edition of the Syriac text based on all extant manuscript evidence, Ps.-Methodius 1993; for full English translations, see Alexander 1985, 36–51; Martínez 1985, 122–54; for the Greek and Latin texts, see now Ps.-Methodius 1998.

68 See Nau 1917; Kmosko 1931; Alexander 1978; Alexander 1985, 13–36; Brock 1982, 18–21; Reinink 1982, 336–44; Reinink 1986; Reinink 1988; Reinink 1990; Reinink 1992a; Martínez 1987; Suermann 1987.

cataclysms of the final, seventh millennium: the destruction of the Persian kingdom and the devastating invasions of the "Sons of Ishmael," the wild ass of the desert (Gen 16:12), is presented as a prophecy of future events that will culminate in the eschatological battles setting the stage for the Second Coming. Having defeated the Persian and Roman Empires, the "Sons of Ishmael" grow in strength and wreak wide-spread havoc throughout the world, provoking, among many other disasters, famine and pestilence in the Promised Land. The text depicts in vivid detail the sufferings and ordeals inflicted on the Christians (on account of their sins) by the Ishmaelite "barbarian tyrants" and "sons of desolation" who also terminate Christian worship in the territories conquered by them, leaving Christian priests without religious roles and duties. Some Christians fail to keep their faith during the Ishmailite-inflicted chastisement and "furnace of testing," and apostasise and deny Christ.

At the ostensible acme of their triumph the Ishmaelites blasphemously declare that no "Saviour" exists for the Christians, but it will be then that a "king of the Greeks" will arise and ferociously fall upon them to desolate their heartlands, impose on them a harsh servitude and annihilate their last remnants in the Promised Land. The campaigns and reign of this warrior king bring terrible retribution to the "Children of Ishmael" and those who have apostasised from Christianity, but deliver redemption, prosperity and peace to Christendom. The re-established Christian order and universal dominion of the Christian empire inaugurates the expected and unprecedented final peace of the last days. The eschatological peace is violated only by the brutal onslaught of the impious northern hordes (as prophesised in the Gog-Magog sections of Ezek 38–39), hitherto imprisoned inside the Gates of the North, but upon their invasion of the Holy Land they are to be completely destroyed by a God-sent archangel.

Following this last outbreak of violence and warfare, the King of the Greeks takes residence in Jerusalem to preside over the concluding ten and a half years of his end-times universal reign. At the end of this reign, the "Son of Perdition," the Galilean-born Antichrist (belonging to the Jewish tribe of Dan) predicted to reign in Capernaum, makes his appearance in readiness to enact his role of a False Messiah in the eschatological drama in the Holy Land. Simultaneously, the King of the Greeks approaches and ascends Golgotha, restores the Holy Cross to the original place of the Crucifixion, and deposits his imperial crown on the top of the cross; he then stretches out his hands to heaven to deliver the universal Christian kingdom to God the Father through these solemn acts, which also marks him as the Last Roman (and world) Emperor. As the Holy Cross and the crown of kingship move upwards and rise into heaven, the King of the Greeks surrenders his soul to God and thus all earthly sovereignty and

power is brought to an end. With the restraining effect of the Christian Roman kingship departing from the earthly sphere in this way, the Antichrist can reveal himself and embark on his career of a False Messiah, deceiving with his pseudo-miracles multitudes in the Holy Land. The Antichrist eventually enters Jerusalem to enthrone himself in the Temple of God, pretending that he is and can act as God-like, but as soon as Christ returns in his Second Coming the Son of Perdition is to be cast into the "Gehenna of Fire" and the outer darkness.

Apart from drawing on the principal prophetic themes of Ezekiel and Daniel and Syrian typological biblical exegesis, the apocalypse's potent blend of history and eschatology weaves together religio-political and apocalyptic notions, imagery, and symbolism extracted from a variety of canonical and extra-canonical sources. Its version of the end-times career of the Antichrist is clearly based on Mt 24:24 and 2Thes 2:2–12 but also relies on other strands of Christian Antichrist lore (such as his postulated Jewish and tribe of Dan pedigree)[69] which developed during the patristic period and predictably was to provoke new historico-eschatological updates and interpretations in apocalyptically-oriented trends in Eastern Christianity in response to the geopolitical turmoil of the seventh century.

The eschatological abdication episode in which the Last Roman Emperor places his crown on the top of the Cross to surrender his kingship to God clearly draws on the scene of the coronation of Julian's short-lived successor, Jovian (363–364), in the late fifth- to early sixth-century Syriac *Romance of Julian the Apostate*.[70] Extolled in the text as a restorer of Christian order and kingship in the Roman Empire after the pagan reign of Julian and likened to Constantine the Great, Jovian is portrayed as being miraculously crowned when the imperial crown he had earlier solemnly deposited on the Roman army's standard cross, descends on his head to mark him as the new Christian emperor. Thus in the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* the period of the "tyrannical" dominion of the "Sons of Ishmael" over subjugated Christians is implicitly represented as a replication of Julian's "anti-Christian" rule,[71] whereas through his end-times wars and triumphs for Christianity, like Constantine and Jovian, the Last Roman Emperor acts as an exemplary bearer of Christian emperorship which, after

69 On the development of the Antichrist tradition in the early Christian and patristic periods, see Bousset 1895; Heid 1993; McGinn 1994, 45–79; Badilita 2005.

70 *Romance of Julian* 1880. On this work, see, for example, Drijvers 1994; Drijvers 2007. On the influence of the Syriac *Romance of Julian the Apostate* on the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, see Sackur 1898, 44f.; Martínez 1987, 349–50; Reinink 1992b; Reinink 1992a, 170–5.

71 See the analysis in Reinink 1992b; Reinink 1992a, 176–8.

the re-establishment of the ultimate world hegemony of the Christian empire, he can finally submit to God.

But in the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* the genealogy of the Last Roman Emperor's kingship and empire extend further back in time than the paradigmatic reign of Constantine. Various trends in the imperial apocalyptic eschatology which developed during the Byzantine-Sassanid warfare of the 620s and its aftermath served immediate propagandist purposes. This is particularly evident in the efforts to link the rule and Persian campaign of Heraclius with those of Alexander the Great through the literary medium of apocalyptic prophecies as evidenced in the Syriac *Alexander Legend* (c. 630).[72] Clearly intended to portray Heraclius as a "new Alexander," this work was certainly composed to furnish further ideological validity for Heraclius's designs to secure and strengthen the loyalty of the non-Chalcedonian communities in his restored empire and bring them again into communion with the Byzantine Chalcedonian church.[73] This work also testifies to important elements of the political theology underpinning Heraclius's ceremonial reclaiming of Jerusalem as the Holy City of Christendom in 630 in which the reinstatement of the True Cross was also meant to re-affirm (after the loss and recovery of the Holy Land) the inextricable link between Christ's heavenly kingship and Roman Christian emperorship. The two apocalyptic prophecies in the Syriac *Alexander Legend* echo the distinct religious and eschatological preoccupations of the imperial propaganda devised to address the struggle with and victory over Sassanid Persia in the 620s, forecasting the ultimate downfall of Persia and its kings and the end-times assimilation of all earthly sovereignty and the imperial office itself by Christ. Symptomatically, these prophecies extol the Roman Empire as the legitimate heir to the kingdom of the "house of Alexander" which will endure until the last days when it will submit the earthly kingdom to Christ, for whose Second Coming and enthronement Alexander bequeathed his royal throne and crown to Jerusalem.[74]

The *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* presents the continuity between Alexander's kingdom and the Roman Empire in a similar apocalyptic framework, reinforcing further the dynastic-eschatological credentials of this imperial succession by portraying Alexander's mother as an Ethiopian/Cushite princess who intermarried with both the Greek and Macedonian royal houses. This Ethiopian-Macedonian-Greek-Roman ancestry of the Last Roman Emperor allows the

72 *Syriac Alexander Legend* 1889.

73 For the date and the religio-political raison d'être of the work, see Reinink 1985; Reinink 2002; Reinink 2003, esp. 151–65.

74 *Syriac Alexander Legend* 1889, 257–8, 270, 275 (text); 146–7, 154, 158 (trans.).

author of the apocalypse to represent his last act of submission of his earthly rule to God as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Ps 68:31 (predicting that Ethiopia [Cush] will "stretch out her hands to God"), seen also through the prism of the eschatological statement in 1Cor 15:24 concerning the end-times delivery of the kingdom to God the Father and the ensuing cessation of all dominion and power.

Jerusalem occupies a focal position in the apocalypse's historico-eschatological schema and is indeed described as being in the centre of the world where Golgotha co-exists with the high and august vocations of kingship and priesthood. Along with prophecy, these two institutions were cultivated in the "kingdom of the Hebrews" which was, however, deprived of them when the Roman Empire of Vespasian and Titus devastated it to its very foundations and destroyed the Holy City. Kingship and priesthood were re-established in Jerusalem by the Christian Roman Empire and along with the Holy Cross at Golgotha they epitomize the "restraining force" of 2Thes 2:6–8, holding back the advent of the Antichrist. The Last Roman Emperor's gesture of yielding his world dominion to God at Jerusalem and the ascent of the Holy Cross into the heavens above Golgotha thus allow the inauguration of the Antichrist stage of the end-times drama.

In the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* Jerusalem and the Holy Land serve, therefore, not only as the epicentre of the eschatological cataclysms but also as Christendom's sacred religio-political centre where Christian Roman emperorship achieves its ultimate consummation in the kingdom of Christ. The overwhelmingly Jerusalem-focused dimension of the apocalypse's political theology, the warrior-saviour raison d'être of the Last Roman Emperor and his semi-messianic aura have attracted scholarly attention and have been seen sometimes as betraying the impact of (as well as Christian polemics against) late Jewish messianism.[75] This approach has been challenged by strong arguments and evidence that the figure of the Last Roman Emperor can be understood entirely in the framework of late Roman/Byzantine imperial ideology and evolving trends in East Christian eschatology, displaying the idealized traits of a triumphant royal defender/restorer of Christian imperial order.[76]

Given the intensity and opposing claims of the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic currents in the seventh century, one cannot dismiss the possibility that

75 See Alexander 1978; Alexander 1985, 174–84; Suermann 1985, 208–12, 234–6; Suermann 1987; Guran 2006, 298; Lerner 1998, 356. Cf. the observations of Wilken 1992, 243–6; Stemberger 1999, 265–6.

76 Reinink 1988; Reinink 1984; Reinink 1992a; Drijvers 1992b; cf. the observations of McGinn 1994, 92; Martínez 1987, 340.

the apocalypse was composed in a Syriac Christian milieu which was aware of and reacted against earlier or contemporaneous Jewish messianic speculations. The possible interaction between late antique/early medieval Jewish messianism and some of the apocalyptic traditions incorporated into the Last Roman Emperor remain one of the problematic areas in the study of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*. Equally problematic is the provenance and dating of the Last Roman Emperor narrative (in which he is named Constans, defeats pagan rather than Muslim enemies, and whose rule leads to the ultimate conversion of all Jews) which appears in the oldest medieval extant (late tenth/early eleventh-century) Latin text of the *Tiburtine Sibyl* but is lacking in its earlier Greek manuscripts. Due to this striking divergence between the Greek and Latin versions of the *Tiburtine Sibyl* various conflicting dates have been proposed for the oldest layer of the Last Roman Emperor legend,[77] raising the possibility that before its systematic treatment in the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* the crystallization of its narrative was a process which took place over some time. These uncertainties have major implications for tracing the apocalyptic pedigree of the Last Roman Emperor's final ceremonial gesture at Golgotha. In the event that (along with other elements of the core narrative) this episode was known in one form or another by the time of the conclusion of the Sassanid-Byzantine war in 628 (admittedly, with the present state of evidence, the less likely possibility), then Heraclius could have selectively enacted it in his restitution of the cross, the culmination of his eschatologically-laden public displays between 628 and 630. Conversely, if the legend was created in its entirety by the author of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, then the Last Roman Emperor Golgotha scene very likely emulated Heraclius's solemn and widely publicised restoration of the True Cross. In that case, along with Constantine and Jovian, Heraclius would have served as another exemplary model of a Christian Roman ruler for the formation of the image of the Last Roman Emperor.

While the anti-Jewish polemic in the apocalypse remains implicit, the Arab Muslim "Sons of Ishmael" are repeatedly condemned as outright and tyrannical enemies of the Christian faith; bent on desolating and desecrating Christian holy places, they defrock priests by force and impose all kinds of cruel afflictions and servitude upon the conquered Christians. Indeed it is very likely the text reflects Christian distress at the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik's census

77 Cf. Sackur 1898, 167 ff.; Konrad 1964, 43–53; Alexander 1971, 60, 66–7 and n. 35; Alexander 1980, 60, 93–4 and n. 9; Alexander 1985, 163 n. 44; Rangheri 1973; McGinn 1979, 43–4; McGinn 1994, 89–90.

and the ensuing (more oppressive for Christians) tax reforms in 691/92.[78] The apocalypse provides, moreover, some indications that its intensely anti-Muslim tenor was further provoked by another contemporaneous development in Jerusalem—the culmination of the Umayyad Islamic re-sacralization of the Temple Mount as the al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf complex in the building of the Dome of the Rock, with its manifest supersessionist and missionary ramifications.[79] The Last Roman Emperor's campaigns against the "Sons of Ishmael" are unequivocally described as a religious war for the recovery of the Christian lands lost to the Muslim adversary, unification of the Christian empire, and re-affirming the fulfilment of Christian kingship and priesthood at the earth's central sacred locus of Jerusalem.[80] Indeed the rise of the Last Roman Emperor and the commencement of his onslaught against the Muslim-Arab "tyrants" appears instigated by their "blasphemous" anti-Christian pronouncement that the Christians do not have a "Saviour."

The author of the apocalypse was determined not only to refute the claims and aspirations of the Umayyad religio-political programme for Jerusalem but also to deny the Caliphate any imperial statehood, especially in view of its own stance that the prerogatives of suzerainty over a defeated kingdom are transferred to those who have overpowered it.[81] The apocalypse is thus *a priori* emphatically opposed to ceding to the Caliphate a place in the Danielic schema of successive world kingdoms, which, as attested in the chronicle attributed to Sebēos, some contemporary East Christian writers/circles were beginning to consider. In sharp contrast to such tendencies (if not polemics against them), the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* re-emphasizes the largely prevalent current in East Christian apocalyptic eschatology which acknowledged that Byzantium eventually was to bring to completion its destiny of being the last world kingdom of the Danielic succession and to set the stage for the tumultuous events of the last days and the Second Coming. In the apocalypse the expected restoration of Christian imperial order in the Muslim-occupied Near East and Byzantium's end-times mission are inextricably linked—the unification and the subsequent universal dominion of the Christian empire

78 See the arguments in Brock 1982, 19; Brock 1976, 34.

79 See the arguments in Reinink 1992a, 178–86; Reinink 1992b, 78–9; Reinink 1993a, 183–5; Reinink 2001; cf. Drijvers 1992a, 69; Cameron 1991b, 297–8.

80 On the presentation of the campaigns of the Last Roman Emperor against the "Sons of Ishmael" as a holy war in response to their anti-Christian excesses, see Reinink 1992b, 81; Reinink 1993a, 183; Reinink 2003, 235.

81 See the observations of Alexander 1985, 57.

represent the necessary prelude to the ultimate culmination of history when it would be subsumed into its heavenly counterpart.

Indeed, continuing endeavours to conceptualize the Muslim Caliphate's establishment in Byzantium's eastern provinces and its unfolding religio-political enterprises in Jerusalem, while retaining a historico-eschatological focus on the received readings of the Danielic four empires schema, apparently proved a powerful apocalyptic catalyst in late seventh-century Syriac Christianity. The so-called *Edessene Apocalypse*,[82] written very shortly after and partially modelled on the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, alters somewhat the chronology and some details of the Antichrist and Golgotha episodes of the Last Roman Emperor legend. The *Edessene Apocalypse* betrays a more pronounced and explicit anti-Judaic stance in its account of the rise and reign of the Antichrist in the Holy Land depicted as being followed by multitudes of Jews who are the first to recognize him as "the Christ." The anti-Muslim rhetoric in the apocalypse is also intensified, enhancing further the religious nature of the Last Roman Emperor's expected war against the "Sons of Ishmael".[83] Another Syriac work composed shortly after and drawing on the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* (c. 692–705),[84] displays similarly intense anti-Judaic attitudes and a strong focus on Jerusalem's centrality for Christendom. The work includes three apocalypses, the last of which, *The Apocalypse of John the Little*, revises the traditional reading of the Danielic schema, identifying the Muslim-Arab realm of Ishmael, whose rise, oppressive dominion, and fall are interpreted through the prophetic prism of Daniel 11 as the last fourth empire. The apocalypse foresees the eventual ruin of the kingdom of Ishmael, which will first implode as a result of its internal conflicts and thus weakened will be then overcome by a Christian emperor, defined in accordance with Dan 11:40ff. as a "man from the North." His role is to unify mankind against the Muslim hegemony and although his warrior functions appear somewhat mitigated, he is expected to overpower the armies of the Ishmaelites and drive them back to their homelands, where they are to endure further calamities, doomed to languish powerless and militarily emasculated.

82 See the edition of the *Edessene Apocalypse* in Nau 1917, 415–2; new edition and English translation in Martínez 1985, 222–46. On its indebtedness to the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, see Palmer, Brock and Hoyland 1993, 243–4; Reinink 1990; Reinink 1992b, 81–6.

83 On the apocalypse's literary and rhetorical ploys to reinforce the religious character of the war against the "Sons of Ishmael," see Reinink 1992b, 82–3; Reinink 2001, 237.

84 On the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, see n. 59, above; for the most likely date of the work, see Drijvers 1992a, 212–13; Drijvers 1992b, 74.

The second apocalyptic section of the work, *The Apocalypse of James*, prophesizes the end-times universal rule of the Christian emperor, perceived as a "New Constantine" ("of the seed" of Constantine), reigning over the earth in complete peace. Clearly, the eschatological Christian kingdom envisaged in the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* transcends the Danielic succession of four world empires, while at the same time the Muslim-Arab "Ishmaelite" kingdom is "granted" an imperial statehood within the Danielic scheme.

Despite all evident lesser and greater differences between the end-times scenarios of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, the *Edessene Apocalypse*, and *the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, these works shared themes, vocabulary and imagery associated with their principal theological and historico-apocalyptic concerns. These concerns focused on the struggle against the rising threat of massive Christian apostasies to Islam, Jerusalem's centrality in Christian salvation history, and expectations of a war invested with explicit religious and eschatological significance against Muslim-Arab adversaries (especially in the first two texts) led by an idealized Byzantine emperor, destined to rule over a restored and pacified worldwide Christian empire in the last days. These three apocalypses yield important clues to the nature of the noticeable interaction between certain traditions of Christian Roman/Byzantine political theology and Syriac apocalypticism and biblical exegesis in a period when the various Eastern Christian communities were striving to conceptualize their response to the rise of Islam and the Caliphate. The patterns of this interaction are not always easily discernible, especially in the context of Chalcedonian-Monophysite theological controversies, hence the debates over the ecclesiastical community behind the author of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*.[85]

Substantial uncertainties surround also the date of the earliest layer and transmission history of the eschatological sermons ascribed to Ephrem Syrus preserved in Syriac, Greek, and Latin versions. The Syriac version[86] depicts in harrowing detail the conquests of the Muslim-Arab "Sons of Hagar" (perceived as rising in the name of the herald of the Antichrist) and the ensuing Christian travails, setting the scene for the last days: the irruption of the northern hordes of Gog and Magog, the restoration and world dominion of the Roman Empire, the advent of the Antichrist and the last judgement. The exact seventh-century

85 See n. 68, above.

86 Edited by Beck (Ephrem 1972, 1:60–71); repr. with German translation in Suermann 1985, 12–33.

date and the nature of the interaction between this Syriac Ps.-Ephrem work and Pseudo-Methodian apocalypticism remains under debate.[87]

The extant Latin Ps.-Ephremean *Sermo de fine mundi*[88] (not related directly to the Syriac Ps.-Ephremean sermon) presents an extensive historico-eschatological scenario in which after the "Adversary" is released and provokes enmity between the Roman and Persian Empires amid multiple signs of the approaching last days, the Roman realm will face numerous adversaries, among whom the Jews will be a prominent force. Warlike and unclean nations will inflict havoc and disorder on the world, but eventually peace will prevail and the time will arrive for the Christian empire to be consummated and surrender itself to God the Father. The end of the Christian empire will make possible the advent of the Antichrist (born of the Jewish tribe of Dan) who will ultimately assume royal powers, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and from there reign tyrannically over all the nations "as if he were God," praised by the Jews for having restored the Old Testament laws, including a prescript for the universal circumcision of all men. After being denounced by Enoch and Elijah, the reign of the Antichrist will be brought to its violent end by the Second Coming (itself preceded by a manifestation of the Cross) and the Last Judgement when he and his servants will be committed to the eternal fire.

This end-time schema, made rather popular in Western Christendom through the early translation of the sermon into Latin, lacks the figure of the Last Roman Emperor and explicit allusions to the Muslim-Arab conquests. At the same time it intensifies the anti-Judaic tenor of seventh-century East Christian apocalyptic eschatology—the Jews appear as both the principal enemies of the Roman Empire and the main eschatological allies (and enthusiastic subjects) of the Antichrist. Sections of the sermon incorporate fragments of varying dates which make the dating of its final composite version very difficult,[89] regardless of the added problem of whether it was written in a Syriac

87 Cf. the arguments of Beck (Ephrem 1972, 1:ix–x, dating it to the second half of the seventh century); Reinink (Reinink 1993b, who dates its composition between 642 and 680/83, 455–62); and Hoyland (Hoyland 1997, 260–3, with suggestions that along with other Syriac apocalypses the text may have been written c. 692 in response to the contemporary 'Abd-al Malik's tax reforms).

88 Earlier edition in Caspari 1890, 208–20 (text), 429–72 (discussion); new edition in Verhelst 1983, pp. 518–28; partial English translation in McGinn 1979, 61.

89 For discussions of some of these problems related to the dating and the language of the original text, see, for example, Caspari 1890, 429–72, passim; Bousset 1895, 20ff; Sackur 1898, 93 n. 3; Alexander 1985, 136–47; McGinn 1979, 60; Reinink 1996.

or bilingual Syriac-Greek environment.[90] The problem is compounded by the sermon's apparent dependency on the Ps.-Methodian descriptions of the consequences of the unclean peoples' eschatological invasions and the consummation of the Christian empire[91]—which would suggest a post-Methodian (late seventh- or early eighth-century) date for its final composition but raises further chronological questions which presently defy immediate solutions.

Notwithstanding all these uncertainties, the Ps.-Methodian and the Ps.-Ephremean traditions clearly represent the interacting currents of seventh-century Syriac (in the case of the *Sermo de fine mundi*, at least Syriac-derived) apocalypticism and share important eschatological notions. There are a number of indications that the seventh-century version of Syriac apocalyptic eschatology developed in the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, the *Edessene Apocalypse* and the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* originally took shape and gained influence in northern Mesopotamia and Syria. Significantly, the Christian communities in these areas were targeted earlier in the century by the religio-political propaganda of Heraclius's court (with its eschatologizing dimension) and among which, following the Muslim-Arab conquests, the perceived menace of large-scale apostasies to advancing Islam was felt particularly acutely.

Outside the Syriac tradition the strong impact of this apocalyptic eschatology was exercised mainly through the *Sermo de fine mundi* and the translations and resultant new recensions and numerous manuscripts of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*. The impact of the concluding narrative of the Ps.-Methodian apocalypse, with its focus on the warrior saviour figure of a last world ruler victorious in his end-times wars over the enemies of Christendom, extended well beyond the period of Byzantine-Arab hostilities in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. One of the early investigators of the apocalypse described it as offering the most consistent of all existing eschatologically-oriented conceptions of the world history process, whose influence was such that it was exceeded only by the canonical scriptures and patristic literature.[92] The legend of the Last Roman Emperor and its *a posteriori* approach to the recent Muslim-Arab conquests (which are "predicted" as episodes of future eschatological scenarios) have been seen as the most significant development in this particularly highly influential type of apocalyptic eschatology since the Christianization of

90 For an assessment of the possibilities whether the sermon was written in Syriac or in Greek in a Syriac-Greek bilingual environment, see Reinink 1996, 320–1.

91 See Reinink 1996, 318–20.

92 Sackur 1898, 6–7; see the comments of Alexander 1980, 55.

the Roman Empire, arguably making the importance of the work as a Christian apocalypse second only to the canonical Revelation of John.[93] The afterlife of the legend was prolonged and intense, as its principal narrative and protagonists allowed for repeated revisions and updates in new historico-political and millenarian contexts.

The alterations, interpolations, and shifts in focus in the historical and apocalyptic narratives of the original Syriac text of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* began as early as the original Greek translation of the work and continued in its later recensions. In its characteristic version of Syriac apocalypticism the work integrated important notions of Byzantine political theology, reflecting also current seventh-century trends such as the intensified focus on the veneration of the Cross and the increased religious significance of the performance of the imperial coronation ceremonial in church.[94] However, the Syriac apocalypse still needed to be adapted to contemporaneous Byzantine literary idioms as well as to political and religious concerns, including the need to redefine the role of Constantinople in the new historico-eschatological schemes emerging under the direct or indirect impact of the work.[95]

The increasing role of Constantinople in these new eschatological scenarios (accompanied by a curious ambivalence towards the eschatological fate of the imperial capital) was conditioned by politico-military collisions, such as the two Arab sieges of Constantinople in 674–678 and 717–718, and to some extent by the reported transfer of the relic of the True Cross (or a major portion of it) from Jerusalem to Constantinople in 635/636 in view of the escalating Muslim-Arab threat to the Holy City. Given the fluctuating and fluid nature of Byzantine political eschatology,[96] the Greek redactions of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* served as a veritable repository for later Byzantine political-historical apocalyptic literature. This literature included the rich and diverse apocalyptica attributed to Daniel and later texts dependent on its corpus[97]

93 McGinn 1994, 88, 90.

94 Guran 2006, 288–92; for attitudes to royal coronation in Syriac concepts of kinghship, see Martínez, 1987, 350–1.

95 On the modifications, omissions, and interpolations in the first Greek redaction of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* and the ideological nature of some of these revisions, see Alexander 1985, 52–61; Olster 1998, 61–4; Guran 2006, 300.

96 See Magdalino 1993, esp. 30–2.

97 On the development of the extra-biblical Daniel apocalyptica in late antiquity and the early medieval period, see now DiTommaso 2005; DiTommaso 2009 (with a discussion of the earlier research on the growing corpus of apocalyptic works attributed to Daniel); and DiTommaso's contribution to Part I of this volume. On the long-term historico-cultural importance of some of the central concepts in one of the most important early medieval

as well as the oracles attributed to Leo the Wise[98] and its derivative oracular literature which continued to be re-edited and updated after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 into the Ottoman period while omitting some of the crucial Pseudo-Methodian material.

The religiously-charged themes and imagery of the Pseudo-Methodian apocalypse were continuously adapted in such works to the changing geopolitical circumstances in and around Byzantium, the recurrent confrontations with the Caliphate, and the increasing Western political challenges to Byzantine imperial ideology and self-definition following the coronation of Charlemagne as *Imperator Augustus* by Pope Leo III in 800. As much of this historico-apocalyptical literature remains unedited and unpublished and the interrelation between its various works are extremely complicated, it is still impossible to trace all of these manifold appropriations, re-interpretations, and modifications of Pseudo-Methodian apocalyptic material which represent a continuous and lengthy process in Byzantium and the Byzantine Commonwealth.

7 Conclusion

Even without being able to reconstruct as yet the full history of the *Nachleben* of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* in Eastern Christendom, some of the far-reaching implications of the cross-fertilization of seventh-century Byzantine political eschatology (which took shape during Heraclius's reign) and the distinctive Syriac apocalypticism (which arose in response to expanding Islam) seem apparent. As the evidence of genuine Byzantine knowledge of Islam's religious doctrines does not predate the early eighth century, strong and lasting tendencies developed which approached the religious and political Muslim-Arab challenge in the pre-conceived apocalyptic and eschatological patterns developed during the Sassanid-Byzantine wars and the attendant Jewish-Christian religious strife in the Holy Land and Jerusalem. The emergent Muslim-Arab power could thus be seen as heralding the eventual advent of the Antichrist (variously, within or outside the context of the Antichrist's perceived Jewish connection) and the establishment of the Caliphate as ushering in the end-times era. Thus both Jews and Muslim Arabs could be identified as

Greek apocalypses, *Diēgēsis Daniēlis* (c. 797–800), extending into the post-Byzantine period, see Zervos 1983, 761–2.

98 See, for example, the editions of the texts in Rigo 1988; Misguich and Vereecken 2000; Brokkaar 2002; on the provenance and continuous editing of the oracles, see Mango 1960.

the main protagonists of the final conflicts of the last days in which they were to act as the principal political and religious adversaries of Christendom and the Christian empire at the culmination of providential history, becoming in this manner the ultimate Christian apocalyptic "other."

This application of eschatological and apocalyptic notions to political and military developments involving the Muslim Arabs and the Jews continued and were further elaborated in the early eighth century,[99] thus exercising an impact on the early Byzantine polemics against Islam, which despite the meagre information about Islamic teachings at that time, were attempting to begin to address some actual Muslim-Christian theological controversies. A further discussion of the continuation and modifications of these perceptions of and approaches to the Muslim Arabs and the Jews in the era of the iconoclastic crisis (c.726/730–843) as well as in the context of the new military hostilities with the Caliphate during this period extends beyond the confines of this article.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the continuing politico-apocalyptic relevance and wide applicability of the Pseudo-Methodian Last Roman Emperor legend found its symptomatic manifestation in the emergence of pro-Frankish prophetic constructions, first in late ninth-century Sicily/Italy and then in the tenth-century West Frankish kingdom, which transferred the eschatological deeds of the Last Roman Emperor from the Byzantine to a Frankish ruler: the ultimate victory over Islam and the laying down of his imperial glory and crown in Jerusalem.[100] These Western appropriations of the Pseudo-Methodian imperial legend were to stimulate similar prophetic traditions applied to Western monarchs during and much beyond the era of the Crusades, generating a long-lasting pattern of Western prophecy-inspired dynastic propaganda, while in high medieval Byzantium apocalyptic creativity of that kind seems to have become more restrained.

Following the geopolitical and religious cataclysms of the seventh century a characteristic dual dynamics came to underlie the perceptions of and attitudes to the Jews in Byzantine mundane and apocalyptic discourses. The "realities" of these two discourses rarely met in a politico-eschatological framework so forcefully as during the period of the build up to Heraclius's edict of 632, decreeing the forcible baptism of all Jews. However, the eschatological reality elaborated in some later Byzantine apocalyptic traditions began to lay a marked emphasis on the "Jewishness" of the Antichrist and his reign vis-à-vis the ideal final Christian empire of the last world ruler, a dichotomy which was enhanced and

99 See, for example, Kaegi 1992, 230.

100 On these earliest Western adaptation of the Pseudo-Methodian Last Roman Emperor legend, see Alexander 1971; Alexander 1980; Alexander 1985, 96–122.

inherited from seventh-century East Christian apocalypticism. In some more radical forms of this eschatological reality, the Jerusalem-based realm of the Antichrist could be represented as a veritable anti-Christian Jewish kingdom. In this manner the biblical and post-biblical Jewish prophecies concerning the restoration of the Jews in Jerusalem and the Holy Land could be "recognized" and integrated into a Christian apocalyptic scenario, but this restoration was transformed into the finite eschatological reign of the Antichrist destined to be terminated by the Second Coming.[101]

Similarly, while from the eighth century onwards the image of the Muslim Arabs may have been variously de-eschatologized from imperial political discourses, they continued to be perceived as the main Christian eschatological enemies in the apocalyptic realm maintained by the transmission and dissemination of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius* and its dependent literature. This parallel apocalyptic image in fitting circumstances could be used to apocalypticize war preparations and campaigns against the Caliphate. Such apocalypticizing procedures are attested, for example, in the well-known tenth-century testimony of Liudprand, Bishop of Cremona (after one of his ambassadorial missions to Constantinople), that the Byzantines sought guidance and inspiration for their campaigns against the Saracens in certain "Visions of Daniel" (a practice shared also by their Muslim adversaries).[102] The material and its analysis presented in this article suggests that behind such apocalyptcizing *jus ad bellum* lies a complex of ideological, prophetic, and apocalyptic attitudes and notions which were brought together in influential trends of seventh-century Eastern Christian political eschatology and bequeathed to medieval Byzantium, its commonwealth and eventually, Western Christendom.

Further study is certainly necessary to explore the patterns of interaction between this politico-apocalyptic complex and Byzantine just war traditions and holy war tendencies, especially in the period of the attempted partial Byzantine *reconquista* in the Near East in the tenth century and the Komnenian counter-offensives in Anatolia against the Seljuq Turks in the twelfth century. At the present state of research it would be sufficient to conclude this article with the observation that while Byzantium may have contributed little to the systematization of holy war theories which took place in high medieval Western Europe, it certainly made a crucial impact on the apocalypticizing of the attitudes to war against religious enemies which remained a recurrent and influential trend in high medieval Christendom.

101 See the analysis in Olster 1998, 67–8.

102 See Liudprand of Cremona 1998, 204 (§39).

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