THE GOOD CHRISTIAN RULER IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

VIEWS FROM THE WIDER MEDITERRANEAN WORLD IN CONVERSATION

Edited by Philip Michael Forness,
Alexandra Hasse-Ungeheuer and Hartmut Leppin

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The Good Christian Ruler in the First Millennium

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Preface

The present volume has its origins in a conference hosted in Frankfurt am Main in November 2016. The conference brought together scholars of late antiquity and the Early Middle Ages who specialize in vastly different regions and languages. Our common discussion of good Christian rulership highlighted the multilingualism and cultural diversity of this time but also exposed many points of intersection between the different cultures. In regard to the latter, common concepts of monarchical rule surface in a wide array of texts, but it is the texts that Christians considered sacred that proved most influential. Christians' interaction with non-Christian cultures also played an important role, and we have included a few exemplary essays dedicated to non-Christian views on good rulership to this end.

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Introduction: Expanding the Discourse on Good Christian Rulership

Bad rulers make spectacular figures. Infamous Roman emperors – Caligula (r. 37–41), Nero (r. 54–68), and Commodus (r. 177–192) – have always attracted the attention of both scholars and a broader audience. Good rulers, on the other hand, are likable yet also boring and not mediagenic. On first glance, it may seem to be a dull, repetitive task to investigate good Christian rulers. Yet whether a ruler was considered good or bad depends on the individual perspective and the sources: many Romans thought highly of Nero, and many arguably hated Trajan (r. 98–117). This volume, therefore, does not address individual rulers but rather concepts of good rulership.

The individual studies that follow expose many similarities in the ideas of good Christian rulership across a wide range of cultures. But significant differences also emerge in relation to the intended audience of the sources, the time and location in which they were produced, and the individual backgrounds and intellectual traditions of their authors. By attending to the historical contexts of these views, this volume reveals that the first millennium was a time in which ideas of good Christian rulership took root and flourished across the cultures of Europe and the wider Mediterranean world.

This introduction seeks to provide a foundation for the contributions that follow and highlight how these studies point towards productive areas for future research. Section 1 serves as an introduction to the roots of Christian thought on good rulers with an emphasis on the challenge of Constantine I's (r. 306–337) turn to Christianity and the development of thoughts on good Christian rulership within the Roman Empire until Heraclius (r. 610–641). Section 2 summarises the contributions in this volume which reach well beyond the Roman Empire and expose the wealth of ideas of good Christian rulership that developed in a variety of cultures and linguistic communities. Section 3 takes stock of the overall contribution of this volume by examining similarities and differences related to source material, royal titulature, models of good rulership, and virtues.

The essays included in this volume cover a wide range of scholarly disciplines that have different standards for both citations and the spelling of proper nouns. We have sought consistency within each individual essay on these matters rather than privileging the standards of one field of study. While this allows for some minor divergences, it respects the established norms of each discipline represented in the volume. Abbreviations for modern editions, journals, series, and reference works follow the conventions of Millennium Studies, while abbreviations for premodern works come from *Brill's New Pauly*, G. W. H. Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, and the *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*.

1 Traditions of the Good Christian Ruler in the Roman Empire

Roman emperors have played an outsized role in the conceptualisation of good Christian rulership. The legacy of Constantine I as the first Christian ruler of the Roman Empire proved important in a wide range of cultures. Understanding the development of the ideas of Christian rulership within the Roman Empire provides one important foundation for approaching the studies that follow. Therefore, this section first investigates views on Roman emperors in Christian sources before Constantine as well as the foundations of Christian thought on good rulership. It then examines some of the new questions posed by Constantine's conversion and the measures taken to address them up to the reign of Heraclius. Finally, it briefly summarises non-Roman traditions that also proved influential.

1.1 Christian Views on the Roman Emperor before Constantine

Most Christians took the existing monarchical order in the Roman Empire for granted. Many criticised individual rulers, but their *Kaiserkritik* did not necessarily reflect disapproval of the monarchical order as such. Paul, for example, exhorted his audience to be subject to the higher powers (Rom 13:1), which were monarchical at that time. If Paul had to instruct a Christian community in Rome to be obedient, there must have been Christians who were less convinced. But this still does not mean that they questioned the political order as such. The book of Revelation, which is highly critical of Roman rule, does not establish an alternative model to the political order as such. It rather announces that the end of the wicked world is near. Even Christian martyrs, who stated openly before Roman authorities that they obeyed a higher ruler in all matters they defined as religiously relevant, were nevertheless eager to underline that they otherwise felt loyal to Roman rule, behaved orderly, and paid taxes. Christians who confronted political authorities did not demand a new political system. They rather rejected certain practices connected with the imperial order, such as swearing an oath in the name of the emperor or performing a sacrifice.[1]

Very few reflections on good rulership have survived from pre-Constantinian Christians; the emperors were far from the *Lebenswelt* of most.[2] Yet we do know

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[1] Candida R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom. Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions*, Cumberland 2012; Nicole Hartmann, *"Martyrium". Variationen und Potenziale eines Diskurses im Zweiten Jahrhundert* (Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 14), Frankfurt am Main 2013.

[2] Foundational studies on this topic include Stefan Rebenich, *Monarchie*, RAC 24, 2012, 1112–1196; id. (ed.), *Monarchische Herrschaft im Altertum* (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 94), Munich 2017. But see also the earlier and still important study: Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian*

that both Christians and non-Christians hated some of the most notorious Roman emperors such as Nero and Domitian (r. 81–96). But not all odious pre-Constantinian Roman emperors earned the ire of Christians. Commodus, for example, had a reputation as someone who favoured Christians.[3] Hippolytus (fl. c. 200) attributes this tendency to the influence of Commodus's concubine Marcia (d. 193).[4] Before Constantine, Christians likely remained close to the political mainstream and mainly criticised emperors when they engaged in persecutions.

In this time, Christians also knew how to praise an emperor fittingly. Apologies addressed to emperors, for example, use the typical encomiastic formulae. In his *Plea for the Christians*, the second-century apologist Athenagoras praises Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180) and Commodus as ideal rulers:

> And accordingly, with admiration of your mildness and gentleness, and your peaceful and benevolent disposition towards everyone, individuals live in the possession of equal rights; and the cities, according to their rank, share in equal honour; and the whole empire, under your intelligent sway, enjoys profound peace.[5]

Thus, there was certainly common ground between Christian and non-Christian interpretations of good rulership in the first centuries. Although the Roman emperors were not Christians, their reigns could still be presented as God-given.

Early Christians would not have expected a Roman emperor to become a Christian. Tertullian (c. 160/70–after 220) rejects this idea explicitly:

> But even the emperors would have believed in Christ, if either emperors had not been necessary to the world or if it had been possible for Christians too to be emperors.[6]

Tertullian had good reasons to do so. As *pontifex maximus* and as a man who was revered as a god, the Roman emperor was a central figure in the Roman religious system that Christians defined as pagan. Could anyone have anticipated that an emperor would abandon these pillars of his rule? There was, therefore, no specifically Christian concept of rulership at the time that Constantine turned to the Christian God

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and Byzantine Political Philosophy. Origins and Background (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 9), vol. 2, Washington, D.C. 1966, esp. 558–610.

3 Hipp., ref. 9.12.10–12; Euseb., hist. eccl. 5.21.

4 Hipp., ref. 9.12.10–12.

5 Διόπερ τὸ πρᾷον ὑμῶν καὶ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πρὸς ἅπαντα εἰρηνικὸν καὶ φιλάνθρωπον θαυμάζοντες οἱ μὲν καθ' ἕνα ἰσονομοῦνται, αἱ δὲ πόλεις πρὸς ἀξίαν τῆς ἴσης μετέχουσι τιμῆς, καὶ ἡ σύμπασα οἰκουμένη τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ συνέσει βαθείας εἰρήνης ἀπολαύουσιν (Athenag., 1.2; translation slightly modified from that of B.P. Pratten).

6 *Sed et Caesares credidissent super Christo, si aut Caesares non essent necessarii saeculo, aut si et Christiani potuissent esse Caesares* (Tert., apol. 21.24; translation by Alexander Souter).

whom he perceived as a god of victory. At this moment, who could have had the slightest idea what it meant to be a Christian emperor?[7]

1.2 Sources for Christian Thought on Good Rulership

To conceptualise rule by a Christian emperor, non-Christians might have referred to other emperors' preference for gods such as *Sol Invictus*, as promoted by Aurelian (r. 270–275) and by Constantine I himself to a certain degree. For Christians, however, Constantine's unforeseen turn presented a real challenge and led to a range of new questions. What should they hope for from a Christian ruler? Would he support churches financially? Would priests and bishops play an important role in a Christian empire? What kind of authority could the ruler enjoy in religious matters? Would he feel entitled to negotiate dogmatic differences among Christians? How would he manage non-Christian cults? What influence might Christian ethics have on his personal life? Such questions shaped the debates about good Christian rulership for centuries.

The writings of early Christians, whether they later became canonical or not, provided no clear answers to these questions. There was no *Fürstenspiegel* (mirror of princes) embedded in the New Testament.[8] The language of imperial rulership was by no means unknown to early Christians, as the synoptic Gospels hail the kingdom of God from an eschatological perspective. Yet Christian authors used this language primarily to describe the role of Christ. Likewise, ethical discourse among early Christians was highly individualised and rarely delved into how ethical behaviour was embedded within a particular social context. Christians from the fourth century and later could hardly rely on writings by early Christians for addressing the challenges that attended a Christian emperor.

On the other hand, both pagan Romans and Christians could draw on a common cache of ideas of good rulership that had developed since Isocrates, if not since Homer.[9] Already in the second century, apologists highlighted that Christians lived

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7 Armenia forms a special case. There are now good reasons to date the conversion of Trdat III to 315; see Werner Seibt, *Der historische Hintergrund und die Chronologie der Christianisierung Armeniens bzw. der Taufe König Trdats (ca. 315)*, in: id. (ed.), Die Christianisierung des Kaukasus, Vienna 2002, 125–133; Michel van Esbroeck, *Die Stellung der Märtyrerin Rhipsime in der Geschichte der Bekehrung des Kaukasus*, in: Werner Seibt (ed.), Die Christianisierung des Kaukasus, Vienna 2002, 171–179. For Armenian views on Christian rulership, see the contributions by Azuat Bozoyan, Tim Greenwood, and Aleksan Hakobyan in this volume.

8 On the wide range of meanings of the term *Fürstenspiegel*, see Geert Roskam and Stefan Schorn (eds.), *Concepts of Ideal Rulership from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Lectio 7), Turnhout 2018. See also fn. 35.

9 The bibliography on this topic is extensive. A very recent study that discusses concepts and traits of good rulers in the Roman Empire to the end of the third century is Anne Gangloff, *Pouvoir impérial et*

up to Roman values much better than others did. Such commonalities proved extremely helpful in navigating an empire composed of both non-Christians and Christians. A shared political language emerged in the fourth century against this background. Words that traditionally denoted imperial virtues such as *eusébeia*, piety, or *philanthropía*, philanthropy, found a place in both Christian and non-Christian discourses. In that sense they were neutral concepts; by employing them, an emperor did not associate himself with any particular god.[10]

But unlike pagan Romans, Christians also relied on another tradition which they inherited from the Jews. The books of the Old Testament not only contain accounts of foreign kings and passages that reject royal rule on principle but also offer examples of rulers who were counted among the faithful. Unlike the New Testament, they include content similar to *Fürstenspiegel*, among them the so-called "Royal Psalms," which were built on Egyptian and Assyrian traditions and seemingly praise a Jewish king.[11] Kings were expected to conduct war successfully, to establish justice in the world, and to ensure that appropriate cultic practices could be carried out.

More importantly, the historical books of the Old Testament devoted much space to bad kings in Israel and Judah. These narratives became important sources for ideas about rulership. King Ahab of Israel, for example, does not listen to the prophets and behaves in an unjust manner. But there are also more complicated cases of sovereigns who are seen as examples of good kings but nevertheless commit grave sins. King David has an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and causes her husband's death. King Solomon builds temples for foreign gods. Even Josiah, who exhibits many features of an exemplary ruler, dies a sinner.[12] The examples of good and bad monarchs found in the Old Testament formed a productive source for reflection on good Christian rulership alongside other traditions from the Roman Empire.

1.3 The Challenge of Constantine I

When Constantine turned to the Christian God, it became necessary for Christians to reflect on monarchic rule. Few pre-Constantinian Christian writings discussed this

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vertus philosophiques. L'évolution de la figure du bon prince sous le Haut-Empire (Impact of Empire 31), Leiden 2019.

10 See the contribution by Hartmut Leppin in this volume.

11 The term "Royal Psalms" is modern, and the definition of the group is debated; see Markus Saur, *Die Königspsalmen. Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie* (BZAW 340), Berlin etc. 2004, 24 (Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144); Reettakaisa Sofia Salo, *Die judäische Königsideologie im Kontext der Nachbarkulturen. Untersuchungen zu den Königspsalmen 2, 18, 20, 21, 45 und 72* (Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 25), Tübingen 2017.

12 See, for example, Michael Pietsch, *Königtum, König* (AT), in: WiBiLex (https://www.bibelwissen schaft.de/stichwort/23844/); Mark W. Hamilton, *King, Kingship. II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, in: Christine Helmer et al. (eds.), Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception, vol. 15, Berlin 2017, 222–224.

subject explicitly, but the Old Testament and the Graeco-Roman tradition offered a stock of complex and multifaceted views. The challenge of ruling in practice led Christians to draw on these earlier traditions in developing their own views. Christian concepts of good rulership took shape primarily alongside the exertion of Christian rule.

Constantine had no time (and probably no interest) in musing over the complex questions that attended fulfilling his duties as a Roman emperor while maintaining devotion to the Christian God. It is difficult to say how far Christian expectations influenced his rule. Every single one of his activities is disputed among scholars, so we cannot go into details here. It is, however, widely acknowledged that he did not force a total change on his subjects and that he avoided provocations to any side. In the tradition of Roman *pietas*, he had to care for the Christian God. He duly built churches and was praised for that. Yet, he also learnt from experience that a ruler who paid tribute to the Christian God had to give heed not only to orthopraxy but also to orthodoxy. He instituted a new procedure for addressing conflicts, the imperial church council, which was to gain enormous importance over the centuries although it was not successful at first. Nevertheless, his contemporary Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260 – 339/40) already eulogised him as a Christian emperor. Pagans often recalled that Constantine had killed his son and his wife, even as he became the embodiment of an ideal Christian ruler for most Christians.[13]

Eusebius's works already show a high degree of reflection on good Christian rulership. Constantine appears as an exemplary Christian ruler in Eusebius's *Vita Constantini* which he published after the emperor's death. In the *Laudes Constantini* from 336, Eusebius had depicted the emperor as a mediator between God and humankind, as a priest and prophet. His interpretation would later greatly shape ideas about Byzantine political thinking but was of limited influence in its own time.[14]

Constantine's successors had to face the structural problems that attended Christian rule. Early Christians developed specific ideas of ethical behaviour. But how was it possible to transfer Christian ethics based on individual choices to rulers who had to consider the political consequences of their decisions and had to take diverse groups into account? Christian emperors needed to show mercy as Christians, but they also had to maintain the public order demanded by their subjects at large.

Christian authorities who were not integrated into the imperial hierarchy posed another challenge. How could the relationship between the power of the ruler and

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13 See, for example, the polemic in Soz. 1.5. See also Andreas Goltz and Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen (eds.), *Konstantin der Große. Das Bild des Kaisers im Wandel der Zeiten*, Cologne etc. 2008; Noel Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2012.
14 See Hartmut Leppin, *Kaisertum und Christentum in der Spätantike. Überlegungen zu einer unwahrscheinlichen Synthese*, in: Andreas Fahrmeir and Annette Imhausen (eds.), Die Vielfalt normativer Ordnungen. Konflikte und Dynamik in historischer und ethnologischer Perspektive (Normative Orders 8), Frankfurt am Main 2013, 197–223, as well as the contribution by Hartmut Leppin in this volume.

that of Christian authorities such as clerics and monks be defined? Christian leaders were difficult to control since their position did not formally depend on the emperor. Many expected bishops to use *parrhēsía*, that is, to criticise the emperor candidly. Indeed, they enjoyed wide latitude in their interactions with emperors. An emperor could hardly use violence against them, as their death could become dangerous should they be regarded as martyrs. Ambrose of Milan (c. 339 – 397) was a virtuoso in putting pressure on emperors on this basis. Moreover, holy men of all kinds, among them many ascetics, made use of *parrhēsía* whenever they deemed it right. Emperors struggled to control their relationships with individuals who claimed an authority outside of the imperially defined hierarchy.

The contentious debates surrounding orthodoxy posed another major problem for Christian rulers. It became difficult for the emperor to avoid committing to the true Christian faith, and this came to mean to one particular Christian confession. Whichever confession the emperor might choose, he would encounter resistance from other Christians. Emperors must have had an interest in promoting Christian practices that had no confessional inkling and would appeal to all Christians, such as the veneration of saints who could not be claimed as advocates of a particular confession. But late antique Christian emperors also opted for different confessions and explained their actions on this basis. For example, Constantius II (r. 337 – 361) and Valens (r. 364 – 378) opposed the Nicene Creed, while Theodosius I (r. 379 – 395) remained committed to the authority of the Council of Nicaea. Alongside many other questions, the emperor's relationship to the various Christian communities proved to be one of the major questions regarding good Christian rulership sparked by Constantine's turn to Christianity.

1.4 Christian Rulership in Practice from Constantius II to Heraclius

Late Roman Emperors engaged in a variety of activities to meet the expectations of Christians concerning their sovereigns. They not only had to address conflicts between Christian groups but also needed to demonstrate their own faithfulness. In this section, we will glance at the exercise of Christian governance as the concepts of good Christian rulership developed against the background of rule in practice.

Constantius II set out to reconcile his Christian subjects on the basis of a creed that avoided any non-biblical word. He assembled several councils and exiled his most prominent adversaries. The year 360 may have seemed to mark his final success: a council in Constantinople issued a Homoean creed; Eudoxius (r. 360 – 379), a supporter of the creed, finally sat on the episcopal throne in Constantinople;

and the Great Church, the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople, was dedicated. The task of rulership seemed to be fulfilled with this splendid ceremony of unity.[15]

As is well known, the results did not last for a long time. Many stood against Constantius's decisions, including Lucifer of Cagliari (d. 370) who aptly employed polemics from the Old Testament against bad kings to disparage Constantius.[16] More importantly, Constantius's life was cut short by a natural cause. Julian (r. 361–363), who had started as a usurper, took over the whole empire without bloodshed in 361 and made an abortive attempt to introduce a kind of pagan rulership. It is possible that this decision hardened the fronts between Christians and pagans. Subsequent emperors – probably Valens and certainly Valentinian I (r. 364–375) – attempted to avoid the problem of quarrelsome Christians by a policy of non-commitment. This seems to anticipate modern practices of tolerance, but it did not have a long tradition in late antiquity.[17] Theodosius I clearly opted for the Nicene Creed, perhaps for tactical reasons, as he was thereby able to find loyal supporters for his cause in Constantinople where he was virtually unknown when he came to the throne.[18]

The fourth century saw the emergence of new paths for publicly displaying Christian rulership. Gallus (r. 351–354), the Caesar of Constantius II, seems to have been the first ruler to perform piety publicly in the translation of the relics of Saint Babylas to Daphne, a suburb of Antioch.[19] Theodosius I became a virtuoso in public performances of his piety. Most famously he demonstrated *humilitas* in 390 or 391 at the urging of Ambrose of Milan who had confronted him with his responsibility for a massacre in Thessalonica. Ambrose's interpretation of the encounter between two Christian authorities exerted heavy influence on the idea of a good Christian ruler.

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15 See the praise for Constantius for his role in these events in Philost. Anhang VII 321 = Chron. Pasch. ad a. 360; cf. Philost. hist. eccl. 3.2; 5.1. On Constantius II, see Steffen Diefenbach, *Constantius II. und die "Reichskirche". Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von kaiserlicher Kirchenpolitik und politischer Integration im 4. Jh.*, Millennium-Jahrbuch 9, 2012, 59–121; id., *A Vain Quest for Unity. Creeds and Political (Dis)Integration in the Reign of Constantius II*, in: Johannes Wienand (ed.), Contested Monarchy. Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD, Oxford 2015, 353–378.

16 Walter Tietze, *Lucifer von Calaris und die Kirchenpolitik des Constantius II. Zum Konflikt zwischen dem Kaiser Constantius II. und der nikänisch-orthodoxen Opposition (Lucifer von Calaris, Athanasius von Alexandria, Hilarius von Poitiers, Ossius von Córdoba, Liberius von Rom und Eusebius von Vercelli)*, Tübingen 1976, 82–176; Javier Pérez Mas, *La crisis luciferiana. Un intento de reconstrucción histórica*, Rome 2008, 142–148.

17 Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 34), Berkeley 2002; Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner, *Reagieren und Gestalten. Der Regierungsstil des spätrömischen Kaisers am Beispiel der Gesetzgebung Valentinians I.*, Munich 2008.

18 Hartmut Leppin, *Theodosius der Große. Auf dem Weg zum christlichen Imperium*, Darmstadt 2003, 68–77.

19 Ioh. Chrys., pan. Bab. 2.67–69; Sozem., hist. eccl. 5.19.12f. But for a possible translation of relics of Andrew and Luke in 336 (and another translation in 357), see Richard W. Burgess, *Philostorgius, and the Dates of the Invention and Translations of Relics of Sts Andrew and Luke*, AB 121, 2003, 5–36; Bruno Bleckmann and Markus Stein, *Kommentar zur Kirchengeschichte Philostorgs*, Paderborn 2015, 182–185.

The Christian emperor was expected to perform penitence. Such an act would have been humiliating from a traditional Roman standpoint, but for Christian onlookers it recalled King David and was thus praiseworthy.[20] Thereafter, *humilitas* became a very useful imperial virtue. Theodosius paraded his humility on various occasions, such as at the translation of the head of John the Baptist in 391. He then staged himself as a Christian ruler who achieved victory due to his prayer at the decisive civil war battle at the Frigidus against Eugenius in 394. Theodosius's regular public performances suggest that he clearly understood how to use such displays of piety to his advantage.

Theodosius I's successors found other means of self-representation as Christian rulers. Theodosius II (r. 408–450) demonstrated his piety within the palace, and his prayers were regarded as powerful.[21] He was even seen as a kind of priest by some.[22] Marcian (r. 450–457) and his successors desperately tried to unite Christians within the empire and outside – evidently a crucial task for every good Christian ruler. The Council of Chalcedon that he convened in 451 was staged as a glorious celebration; Marcian appeared as a new Constantine. The council failed to unite the competing Christian communities, but Marcian's staging of his effort to reconcile doctrinal differences remained an important feature of imperial representation.[23]

All emperors paid attention to certain religious authorities. They listened, for example, to bishops such as Leo of Rome (r. 440–461) and Acacius of Constantinople (r. 471–489) as well as to stylites like Daniel (409–493), but they did so by their own choice.[24] There was no institutionalised religious authority able to confront the emperor continuously, and the power of the emperors to depose bishops was generally accepted if the rulers respected certain canonical norms. Nevertheless, Christians formed an important, albeit diverse constituency that could be mobilised by religious authorities such as bishops and holy men. Therefore, the emperor always had to strive to show that he was a good Christian ruler.

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20 For a foundational study on these events, see Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan. Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 22), Berkeley 1994, 323–330. See also the contribution by Mikhail Boytsov in this volume.

21 Christopher Kelly (ed.), *Theodosius II. Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity,* Cambridge 2013; Mischa Meier, *Aspekte der religiösen Selbstinszenierung bei Theodosius II. (408–450 n. Chr.)*, in: Andreas Pecar and Kai Trampedach (eds.), Die Bibel als politisches Argument. Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne, Munich 2007, 135–158.

22 Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II. Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret* (Hypomnemata 110), Göttingen 1996, 194–197.

23 Hagit Amirav, *Authority and Performance. Sociological Perspectives on the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451)*, Göttingen 2015.

24 See, for example, Jan Markus Kötter, *Zwischen Kaiser und Aposteln. Das Akakianische Schisma (484–519) als kirchlicher Ordnungskonflikt der Spätantike* (Roma Aeterna 2), Stuttgart 2013; Kai Trampedach, *Daniel Stylites and Leo I. An Uneasy Relationship Between Saint and Emperor*, in: Beate Dignas, Robert Parker, and Guy Stroumsa (eds.), Priests and Prophets among Pagans, Jews and Christians, Leuven, Paris, Walpole MA, 2013, 185–207.

The long reign of Justinian I (r. 527–565) witnessed several innovations in imperial representation as a good Christian ruler. Beginning in the 530s, he endeavoured to assume the role of a holy man including demonstrations of piety and humility. To support this new representation of the emperor, even an account of a miracle connected to the emperor was disseminated.[25] Justinian also claimed to have theological competence, which he exhibited through debates and in his writings. He attempted throughout his reign to bring together rivalling confessions but proved unable to unite them. When he assembled a council at Constantinople in 553, which was defined as ecumenical and which he dominated, the split became even deeper, as the structures of the miaphysite movement got stronger.[26] The innovations in Justinian's reign exhibit some of the multifaceted ways in which ideas of good rulership continued to develop throughout the sixth century.

The reign of Heraclius forms a convenient end to this brief survey of concepts of Christian rulership in late antiquity. Much as in the reign of Theodosius I, the theatre of war became an important place for staging Heraclius's faith. After celebrating Easter in Constantinople in 622, Heraclius sailed to Bithynia in preparation for war in Anatolia. He brought an icon of the Virgin Mary, the *acheiropoíētos*, to mark his military campaign as one undertaken with God's aid. He was portrayed as a glorious victor against the Persians.[27] Heraclius's panegyrists called him a new David and even compared him to Christ. The attention to the representation of Heraclius as a good Christian ruler demonstrates the continued importance and challenge of navigating imperial rule in practice and the emperor's identity as a Christian.

1.5 Looking beyond the Roman Empire

The development of the image of the good Christian ruler was highly complex and regularly changing even within the Roman Empire. This is even more the case when we look beyond the empire's borders. Although many key concepts regarding Christian rulers were formed in the Roman Empire, the contributions to this volume consider how these concepts of Christian rulership compare to those in other regions. Such investigations expose the entanglement of various cultures and languages in the Mediterranean world and beyond.

This volume explores ideas of Christian rulership that emerged in a variety of political settings. Some Christians ruled over large areas, others over very small kingdoms. Still others were set up as the administrators of vassal states that owed

25 Mischa Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n.Chr.* (Hypomnemata 147), 2nd ed., Göttingen 2004.

26 Volker Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, Oxford 2008.

27 Walter Emil Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003; Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernhard H. Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641). Crisis and Confrontation* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 2), Leuven 2002.

their allegiance to non-Christian rulers. Kingdoms in the Caucasus incorporated both Roman and Persian ideas of rulership, while post-Roman kingdoms in the West developed distinct ideas of good rulership. Bulgaria and Nubia drew on Byzantine traditions but also developed their own language and traditions regarding good Christian rulership.

Christians who lived under non-Christian rule form a special topic of interest. Christians in Persia were, on the whole, accustomed to living under Zoroastrian rule. There must have been some tensions between Christian communities and their Sasanian rulers. Martyr acts, modelled on their counterparts in the Roman Empire, became an important genre for Persian Christians. To achieve a variety of purposes, these texts draw on and exaggerate the persecutions that Christian communities supposedly underwent in the Sasanian Empire from the fourth century onwards. However, recent studies have shown how the Church of the East (formerly called the Nestorian church) enjoyed the support of several Persian monarchs and some members were well-integrated into the social fabric of Sasanian society.[28]

The Arab conquests marked an important development in the conception of political power. The Umayyads and ʿAbbasids invested Christian religious authorities with secular prerogatives, whereas the patriarchs of the subdued nations were recognised as the legal chiefs responsible to the Islamic authority. Religious structures were thus the only form of autonomy left for Christians living under Islamic rulers, even if they were deprived of the capacity to give their religion a political dimension. Yet the accumulation of civil responsibilities in the hands of such prelates transformed them into political figures of a type unparalleled in the West. By turning our gaze to communities beyond the Roman Empire, we will catch a glimpse of the great diversity in the concepts of good Christian rulership that developed in the first millennium.

This volume is not intended to be a complete handbook for images of good rulers in the first millennium from a Christian perspective. The appearance of two edited collections on good rulership in late antiquity just in 2018 emphasises the wide range of unexplored avenues for investigating this topic.[29] Although we have sought a representative view from a wide range of cultures, we have not been able to consider all regions from this time. This is especially noticeable for the kingdom of the Franks whose concepts of rulership have been discussed in two relatively recent monographs.[30] Other lacunae include the late antique western and eastern Roman

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28 See recently Richard E. Payne, *A State of Mixture. Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 56), Berkeley 2015.

29 Diederik W. P Burgersdijk and Alan J. Ross (eds.), *Imagining Emperors in the Later Roman Empire* (Cultural Interactions in the Mediterranean 1), Leiden 2018; Sylvain Destephen, Bruno Dumézil, and Hervé Inglebert (eds.), *Le Prince chrétien de Constantin aux royautés barbares (IVᵉ–VIIIᵉ siècle)* (Travaux et mémoires 22/2), Paris 2018.

30 Almut Höfert, *Kaisertum und Kalifat. Der imperiale Monotheismus im Früh- und Hochmittelalter* (Globalgeschichte 21), Frankfurt am Main and New York, 2015; Wolfram Drews, *Die Karolinger und*

tradition itself after the end of the fourth century,[31] various kingdoms in Britain,[32] and the Kingdom of Aksum in Ethiopia.[33] Moreover, this volume does not include a contribution related to late antique Jewish views that seem to adopt a completely different approach centred on the Davidic tradition destined to assert itself at the end of times.[34] For reasons of space, the articles in this volume focus on literary texts, which are extremely rich at this time, and include other sources only occasionally. Deeper engagement with numismatic, epigraphic, and archaeological research would of course enrich the picture significantly. Although this volume is not comprehensive, we hope that it gives an impression of the diversity of concepts that developed in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, up to the tenth century when new stable structures of imperial rulership shaped Europe and the Mediterranean.

2 Similarity and Diversity: Views on Good Rulership Examined in this Volume

The eighteen individual studies in this volume examine ideas of good rulership that extend well beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. Together they offer a multifaceted and transcultural perspective on how Christians (and some non-Christians) conceived of good rulers in the first millennium. We have divided the contributions into four sections organised around particular regions or contexts. The first two sections offer glimpses into discussions of good rulership within two specific geographical areas: (1) the late antique Roman Empire and (2) the Caucasus between Persia and Rome. The third and fourth sections focus on the reception and transformation of

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die Abbasiden von Bagdad. Legitimationsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich (Europa im Mittelalter 12), Berlin 2009.

31 For recent contributions with broad bibliography, see Paul Stephenson, *The Imperial Theology of Victory*, in: Yannis Stouritis (ed.), A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300 – 1204 (Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World 1), Leiden 2018, 23 – 58; Burgersdijk and Ross (cf. fn. 29).

32 King Æthelberht of Kent (r. c. 560/85 – 616) does surface briefly in Florian Hartmann's contribution. Bede (c. 673 – 735) forms one focal point in research on Christian rulership in Britain. For a recent study on Bede's views on kingship and a review of the extensive literature, see Conor O'Brien, *Kings and Kingship in the Writings of Bede*, EHR 132, no. 559, 2017, 1473 – 1498.

33 For a recent contribution with further bibliographic references, see Marie-Laure Derat, *Trônes et sanctuaires. Victoires militaires, donations royales et christianisme dans le royaume d'Aksoum (IVe – VIIIe siècle)*, in: Destephen, Dumézil and Inglebert (cf. fn. 29) 545 – 559.

34 The concept of a limited monarchy found in Talmudic literature stands in stark contrast to contemporaneous ideas, as explored by Ya'ir Lorberbaum, *Disempowered King. Monarchy in Classical Jewish Literature*, London etc. 2011. Two other recent studies demonstrate that Jewish authors were acutely aware of the developments of Roman imperial representation; see Alexei M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity*, New York 2012, and Raʿanan Boustan, *Israelite Kingship, Christian Rome, and Jewish Imperial Imagination. Midrashic Precursors to the Medieval "Throne of Salomon"*, in: Natalie B. Dohrmann and Annette Yoshiko Reed (eds.), Jews, Christians and the Roman Empire, Philadelphia 2013, 167 – 182, 319 – 324.

earlier traditions in specific circumstances: (3) in post-Roman dominions and (4) under Islamic rule. While most of the sources explored in this volume stem from Christians, concepts of good Christian rulership do not represent an isolated phenomenon. They rather emerged through exchange with non-Christian thinkers and communities. We have thus included several studies on traditions from pagan Rome (Leppin), Zoroastrian Persia (Wiesehöfer), and Islamic Andalusia (Toral-Niehoff).

2.1 The Good Christian Ruler in the Roman Empire

The first set of contributions examines representative views on good Christian ruler-ship within the late antique Roman Empire from several cultures and linguistic tra-ditions. The first three studies rethink and reframe classical Latin and Greek sources on good rulership: late antique panegyrics (Leppin), Ambrose's letter to Theodosius I (Boytsov), and the *De civitate Dei* of Augustine of Hippo (354–430) (Preuß). The final two studies turn to sources that have rarely been analysed in this regard: Greek and Coptic historiographies and hagiographies from Alexandria (Camplani) as well as hymns and letters written in Syriac (Forness).

Hartmut Leppin (*Finding a Common Cause: Fourth-Century Greek Discourses on Rulership*) explores how fourth-century Graeco-Roman panegyrists dealt with the un-anticipated development of a Roman emperor becoming Christian. He distinguishes three types of imperial praise that emerged in this context and were inspired both by the Old Testament and the Graeco-Roman tradition of *Fürstenspiegel*: (1) the hiero-cratic discourse, (2) the neutralising discourse, and (3) the penitentiary discourse. Leppin focuses on the former two concepts, since Mikhail Boytsov and Kai Preuß ad-dress the penitentiary discourse in the following two studies. Eusebius of Caesarea's works exemplify the first type of discourse which depicts the emperor's virtues in a Christian and sacralising way. There does not seem to have been a standard sacral-ising discourse at this time. Even Eusebius's three works that praise Constantine show a great deal of variation in their emphases. Eusebius presents the rulership of the emperor on earth as an image of God's reign in heaven. Yet he also portrays Constantine I as a priest, an embodiment of Christian virtues, and a mediator be-tween heaven and earth. The panegyrics of the pagan philosopher Themistius (c. 317–c. 389) exhibit another approach to presenting an emperor before a wider, not exclusively Christian audience. In neutralising discourses, authors like Themis-tius chose to either avoid religious commitments or employ terms acceptable to both Christians and pagans alike, including virtues like mildness and philanthropy. This study identifies two approaches taken by orators to address the challenge of praising emperors who were Christians in a traditional Roman form.

As Leppin points out, the penitentiary discourse proved more influential. Under the paradoxical title *The Good Sinful Ruler: Ambrose of Milan and Theodosius I*, Mi-khail A. Boytsov's contribution highlights the importance of *humilitas* as an imperial

virtue and discusses its origins in the times of Theodosius I. He focuses on a letter written by Ambrose of Milan to the emperor in which he encourages Theodosius to repent for the massacre in Thessalonica committed by imperial troops. Boytsov offers a careful interpretation of the biblical allusions in this text, which to this point have been largely neglected in scholarship. In his funeral oration on the emperor, Ambrose almost goes so far as to depict Theodosius in a sanctified state, not despite but because of his penance and the humility displayed through it. King David – famous for his own acts of repentance – becomes the model for the Christian ruler in this work. The image of a good Christian ruler now includes self-depreciation following a sinful act. In this way, sinfulness when coupled with repentance becomes part of the Christian idea of good rulership.

While the Roman Empire still existed in the East and the West, Augustine analysed the role of the emperor against the backdrop of the fall of Rome in 410. A chapter of *De civitate Dei* (5.24) that is devoted to the concept of Christian rulership has nearly become canonical in western thought on good rulership. Kai Preuß (*The Emperor's Two Cities: Augustine's Image of the Good Christian Ruler in* De civitate Dei *5.24*) offers a close reading of this passage focusing on its intellectual context. He emphasises both Augustine's individualised ethic based on a pastoral perspective and the distinction between *civitas terrena* and *civitas Dei*. In this passage, Augustine addresses Christians who happen to be rulers, not rulers as such. All rulers are bound to the limits of humankind, and it is thus extremely difficult for them to reconcile Christian and political virtues. The existence of a good ruler does not mean that his rule will be successful by secular criteria. In this sense, Augustine reinterprets the meaning of *felicitas*. Although many of Augustine's arguments appealed to later generations, Preuß makes clear that his ideas are deeply embedded in ancient perspectives. As a whole, the first three contributions demonstrate that returning to classical sources with fresh eyes can offer many new insights into the understanding of good Christian rulership in the Roman Empire.

The next chapter marks a turn to sources that have received less attention for their views on good rulership. Alberto Camplani (*Pious and Impious Christian Rulers According to Egyptian Historiography and Hagiography: A First Survey of the Evidence*) discusses historiographical and hagiographical sources in Greek and Coptic from the fourth to the ninth century that provide evidence for the changing perspective of the Alexandrian Patriarchate on Roman rulers. Despite Constantine I's occasional outbursts of anger, the authors of these works consistently praise him as a good ruler who supported the activities of the church and combatted both the error of paganism and the danger of heresy. They also emphasise that support for the building activities of the church is a mark of good Christian rulers. The adherents of Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria (r. 328–373), ascribe the grave mistake – on their view – of the rehabilitation of Arius of Alexandria (d. 336) to Constantius II. But Jovian (r. 363–364), who favoured the patriarch, appears in these sources as a good ruler. Alexandrian sources portray the era of Theodosius I and Theodosius II during the patriarchates of Theophilus (r. 385–412), Cyril (r. 412–444), and Dioscorus (r. 444–451; d. 454)

as a golden age, when relations between church and state were prosperous. Both parties cooperated with each other, and emperors accepted the guidance of the church in ecclesiastical matters. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 heralded by Emperor Marcian (r. 450–457) was a breaking point for most Egyptian Christians. Starting with the elevation of Timothy II Aelurus (r. 457–477) to the patriarchal throne, the Coptic Church took an ever more pronounced anti-Chalcedonian stance. As a consequence, these sources depict Marcian and several of his successors as bad rulers. They even portray Marcian's wife Pulcheria (398/9–453) as a whore. Such memories remained intact into the period of Islamic rule. Although some suggested that the Roman Empire with its support of the Council of Chalcedon rested on shaky foundations, the empire remained an important point of reference for Alexandrian authors.

The next study turns our attention to Syriac sources written from the eastern border of the Roman Empire. Philip Michael Forness (*Faithful Rulers and Theological Deviance: Ephrem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh on the Roman Emperor*) examines two Syriac authors who praised emperors with whom they disagreed theologically: Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373) with Constantius II and Jacob of Serugh (d. 520/1) with Justin I. Ephrem wrote a series of hymns on the Emperor Julian shortly after the emperor died and Ephrem was forced to leave Nisibis as part of the treaty between Rome and Persia. As an avowed supporter of Nicaea, Ephrem surprisingly describes Constantius as a good emperor in contrast with Julian, despite Constantius's support for Homoeans. Jacob of Serugh, an advocate for anti-Chalcedonian, miaphysite Christology, praises the pro-Chalcedonian Justin for allowing Paul, the bishop of Edessa (r. 510–522), to return to his episcopal throne. Justin had previously forced Paul to flee Edessa when he would not sign the pro-Chalcedonian *Formula of Faith.* As Forness points out, the ability of an emperor to provide protection seems to be more important than an emperor's theological orthodoxy in these sources. The texts should therefore not be read as authentic pieces of political propaganda but must be seen in the context of the authors' rhetorical strategies. In addition, the loyalist attitude of Christians also has its limits: Ephrem does not hesitate to call Julian, the pagan emperor, a tyrant, that is, an illegitimate Roman emperor. Although most Christians did not claim that Julian's rule was illegitimate, Ephrem's response shows that a non-Christian emperor now seems completely inacceptable for Christians. The latter two contributions in this section represent the range of sources and perspectives on good Christian rulership from within the Roman Empire that have yet to receive serious scholarly attention.

2.2 The Good Christian Ruler between Persia and Rome

The next set of articles address concepts of rulership farther east, both in Persia and in the Caucasus. The opening article presents an emic understanding of Persian rulership based mostly on Zoroastrian sources and thus forms a necessary counterpart to the focus on Roman perspectives in the first section of the introduction (Wiesehöfer).

The remaining five papers in this section examine views of rulership that emerged between Rome and Persia in the Caucasus. Despite the attendant geo-political terminological problems, we have divided them into studies on Armenia (Greenwood, Bozoyan), Georgia (Jeck), and Caucasian Albania (Hakobyan, Dorfmann-Lazarev). The first of these studies approaches the topic of good rulership from a foundational level by focusing on Armenian terminology used for rulers (Greenwood). The following three studies examine how particular rulers or dynasties came to assume an important element in the representation of good Christian rulership in each of the three major kingdoms in the Caucasus (Bozoyan, Jeck, Hakobyan). The concluding paper offers insight into a rather underexplored area of research on the former region of Caucasian Albania in the eighth through tenth centuries. Innovative new approaches to good rulership continued to develop in this area throughout the first millennium in response to new demands and circumstances (Dorfmann-Lazarev). Comparative studies often fail to include the Caucasus despite its strong, relatively well-documented tradition of Christian rulership deeply embedded both in local practices and in Greek, Syriac, and Persian traditions. The case studies in this volume on Persia and the Caucasus seek to draw these regions into broader conversations on good rulership.

Joseph Wiesehöfer (*Images of the Good Ruler in Sasanian Iran: An Emic View*) focuses on Zoroastrian sources to uncover an emic perspective on the good ruler in Sasanian Persia from the third to the seventh century. Persian sources clearly articulate the characteristics of good rulers: Persian kings had to be of Sasanian origin, ascend the throne in the right manner, demonstrate certain virtues such as justice, be free from physical infirmity, have a close affiliation to the gods, and promote the right religion. Among aristocratic circles in Sasanian Persia, there must have been room for criticism both of the monarchy itself and individual rulers. Non-Persian sources often portray Persian rulers as arrogant, extravagant, and cowardly. But Persian ideas of rulership had a lasting influence in regions such as Armenia and a positive reception in the Islamic tradition. This essay exposes the complexity of political thinking in Persia, which influenced the ideas of several Christian communities and especially in the Caucasus.

The five contributions that focus on the concepts of good rulership in the Caucasus begin with Armenia. Tim Greenwood (*Representations of Rulership in Late Antique Armenia*) focuses on four works of Armenian historiography: the *Buzandaran Patmut῾iwnk῾* (from the last quarter of the fifth century), the *History* of Łazar P῾arpec῾i (c. 500), the *History* of Ełišē (from the last third of the sixth century) and the *History* attributed to Sebēos (655, with scholia inserted in 661). These sources do not clearly demarcate different terms used for rulers, even if certain patterns such as the use of particular titles for Roman emperors do emerge. The terminological choices also betray influence from both Greek and Persian sources. Armenia had no king of its own after the fall of the kingdom in 428. The three earlier texts thus focus on the Persian ruler and reveal an expectation that he be accessible and permit them to cultivate their own religion. Certain differences between the historiographers emerge. Ełišē

is much less disposed to acknowledge Persian superiority than Łazar. In Sebēos's *History*, the Roman emperor assumes a more prominent role since Roman engagement in the Caucasus intensified from 590 onwards. Sebēos does not sympathise with all Roman emperors; theological and liturgical differences shape his judgement. By the seventh century, the Roman emperor could serve as a model for good Christian rulership as such, as demonstrated by P'ilon Tirakac'i's revision of the Armenian translation of the Greek *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates (c. 380–after 439) in 695 or 696. Armenian historiographical sources contain a wide range of views on good rulership that reflect Armenia's geographical location between the Roman and Persian empires.

The next chapter also considers Armenia and marks a transition to three studies on the reception of dynasties or individual rulers in the representation of good Christian rulership in the Caucasus. Azuat Bozoyan (*The Depiction of the Arsacid Dynasty in Medieval Armenian Historiography*) focuses on the importance placed on the Arsacids in the concept of rulership in the Armenian tradition. The Arsacids ruled Armenia both before and after Christianisation. Their lineage was said to stretch back to figures of the Old Testament, and their heirs included members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This dynasty served as a point of connection between Armenia and Persia and, in later times, between Armenia and the Byzantine Empire. The rule of the dynasty in Armenia came to an end in 428, when the Sasanian rulers appointed marzbans to administer the region. The *History of the Armenians* by Movsēs Xorenac'i, whose dating remains a matter of debate, portrays the Arsacids as ideal Christian rulers. Xorenac'i underlines that they had embraced Christianity early on, at least from the time of Trdat III (r. 287 or 298/9–330) who adopted Christianity around 315 and was regarded as Armenia's Constantine. The importance attached to this dynasty extends to such an extent that Xorenac'i even ascribes Christian virtues to non-Christian Arsacid rulers. Well after the fall of the Arsacids in Armenia, their dynasty continued to play an important role in apocalyptic and historiographic works that envision or discuss the restoration of Armenian rulership. This dynasty became part and parcel of the image of good Christian rulership in Armenia.

The next contribution maintains a focus on the figures who became seen as ideal rulers but turns our attention to a ruler of Georgia, ancient Iberia. Udo Reinhold Jeck (*Vakhtang I Gorgasali (r. 447–522) as a Christian Monarch in Georgia: His Depiction in the* Life of Kartli) investigates an extremely difficult and historically problematic source known as the *Life of Kartli*. This diverse collection of texts written by various authors at different times found its current form around the eleventh century and includes a work entitled the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali*, which itself dates to the late eighth or early ninth century. Vakhtang appears in this work as an ideal king who has to navigate between Christianity, Zoroastrianism, as well as other traditions. A speech attributed to Vakhtang in this work shows a certain degree of engagement with the philosopher Plato's allegory of the cave. It thereby portrays the philosopher-king, embodied in Vakhtang, as the ideal Christian ruler. The narrative surrounding Vakhtang found in the *Life of Kartli* offers little in the way of historical in-

formation about late antiquity. But this source still offers valuable insight into a representation of the good Christian ruler that circulated in medieval Georgia.

The final two chapters in this section turn to Caucasian Albania, a kingdom that was located in the territory of modern-day Azerbaijan and the southern part of the Republic of Dagestan. Although the kingdom ceased to exist in the fifth century, it held an importance in the imagination of good rulership within the Caucasus for a long time thereafter. Aleksan Hakobyan (*The Creation of a "Pious" Image of King Vačʻagan II* (*r. c. 485 – 523*) *of Caucasian Albania in the* Tale of Vačʻagan *(Early Sixth Century)*) examines another figure who became seen as an ideal king. He focuses on the *Tale of Vačʻagan*, a late-fifth- or early-sixth-century hagiographical account used by the tenth-century Armenian author Movsēs Dasxurancʻi (or Kałankatuacʻi) in his *History of Albania*. This work does not provide a narrative of the reign of Vačʻagan II but rather presents his Christian virtues and deeds. The virtues attributed to him include his piety, courage, intelligence, and prowess in fighting zealously against heresies. Vačʻagan emerges in this work as an exemplary Christian king able to cope with Sasanian predominance, and he is seen as comparable to Constantine I and the Armenian King Trdat III. Although Vačʻagan was a ruler of Caucasian Albania, he enjoyed a long legacy as an ideal Christian ruler within medieval Armenia. The *Tale of Vačʻagan* marks the beginning of his transformation into a legend.

The final essay in this section goes further into the history of territory of the former kingdom of Caucasian Albania in an even less well-documented time. Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev (*Concerning Four Kings from the Land of 'Deep Ravines, Dense Forests and Dark Thickets'*) discusses the rise and conception of the rule of the so-called lords of Albania, who were of Armenian and Georgian origin and reigned in the former territory of Caucasian Albania between the end of the eighth and the end of the tenth century. Four sons of Prince Išxananun Sewaday (born c. 910) can be discerned from the *History of the Albanians* by Movsēs Dasxurancʻi (or Kałankatuacʻi) and the correspondence with the ecclesiastical writer Tiranun (tenth/eleventh centuries). These kings ruled over a fragmented and often changing territory. Dorfmann-Lazarev focuses on the Armenian-Albanian marchlands stretching along the right bank of the middle Kur River and discusses the implication of the geographical position of the kings' territory and their interactions with Muslim rulers. The biblical tradition played an important role in the understanding of rulership: Adam, as the first human being, served as an image of and model for a new Christian king. Throughout his study, Dorfmann-Lazarev demonstrates how the sources on these little-known rulers touch on concepts of good rulership found throughout the essays in this volume, including legal aspects of kingship, the justification for rule and territory based on patterns of inheritance, and the adoption and adaptation of royal titulature.

2.3 The Good Christian Ruler in Post-Roman Traditions

While the previous set of papers revealed the diversity of views on good rulership within a specific region, the third section offers glimpses into the concepts of good rulership that developed in diverse geographic regions in post-Roman times. This set, therefore, begins with two chapters on developments in the West after the Western Roman Empire had fallen. The first article discusses papal perspectives on rulership. It begins in the fourth century and ends in the eighth, building a bridge between the time under direct Roman rule and the aftermath (Hartmann). The second focuses on the Visigoths in the seventh century (Drews). The next two papers examine concepts of good Christian rulership in kingdoms after the Byzantine Empire had lost much of its territory. One discusses concepts of good rulership in the Balkans around and directly after Christianisation (Ziemann), while the other analyses representations of rulers in Nubia until the thirteenth century (Łajtar/Ochała). For practical purposes it was not possible to cover each of these topics and regions as extensively as the Caucasus. We offer these studies as representative examples of the types of investigations possible for a wider range of regions than is possible within the confines of this volume.

Florian Hartmann (*The Good Ruler from a Papal Perspective: Continuities and Discontinuities in Papal Letters from the Fourth to Eighth Centuries)* discusses the image of the good ruler in the former centre of the Roman Empire from a papal standpoint. The canonical collections examined here mostly consist of letters, and the texts under question do not therefore devise a systematic theory of good rulership but react to concrete challenges. Nevertheless, there is a high degree of coherence in regard to the virtues demanded of a good ruler. Popes expected that rulers would defend the true faith as an outgrowth of their responsibility to care for the salvation of their subjects and that they would listen to the advice of good counsellors. Other qualities of rulers appear less often, including justice and charity. There seem to have been some developments over time in the concept of good rulers. For example, the responsibility of the good Christian ruler to carry out missionary work does not appear in letters to emperors from the fourth to the sixth century, even as this became a prominent theme in later correspondence. Likewise, the expectation that rulers would protect the popes militarily depended on particular circumstances and seems to have been most prevalent in papal engagement with Frankish kings. On the whole, the papal letters identify a select set of virtues on a regular basis against the background of a wide spectrum of virtues that could be called upon according to the particular circumstances.

The next contribution in this section focuses on a particular post-Roman successor state in the West. Wolfram Drews (*The Image of the Christian Ruler in Catholic Visigothic Spain: Julian of Toledo's* Historia Wambae) analyses how Julian of Toledo (c. 640 – 680s) depicts King Wamba (r. 672 – 680) as an ideal Christian ruler in stark contrast to his Septimanian opponent Paul. In Julian's work, Wamba appears to follow the tradition of the Old Testament kings and Roman rulers; he is certainly

not depicted as a barbarian ruler. His qualities are visible in his victories as well as in his control of his own troops, whereas his religious credentials are based on his inauguration, including his anointment as king, the restoration of church property, and his anti-Jewish measures. Significantly, neither his role as legislator nor his relations with the bishops receive much attention. Instead, in some passages of the *Historia Wambae*, King Wamba seems to be similar to a priest. Thus, Wamba proves to be a king in a transhistorical sense, the leader of God's chosen people without any need to refer to the Roman Empire. This represents one way that post-Roman kingdoms reconceived reference points for good rulership in the wake of the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

With the third essay in this section, the conversation turns to a region that needed to develop an understanding of good rulership after its own Christianisation. Daniel Ziemann (*Goodness and Cruelty: The Image of the Ruler of the First Bulgarian Empire in the Period of Christianisation (Ninth Century)*) discusses the changes that Christianity brought to the concept of rulership in the First Bulgarian Empire. Pagan Bulgarian rulers such as Krum (c. 803 – 814) or Omurtag (c. 815–c. 831) are depicted as counter-models to Christian emperors by Greek sources, the latter even as a persecutor of Christians. Omurtag is also known from Bulgarian sources close to his time in which his generosity and justice are objects for praise. The representation of the first Christian ruler Boris (r. 852 – 889; d. 907), called Michael after his christening, however, can only be grasped on the basis of Western and Byzantine sources. Although the Western church wielded influence on the image of a Christian ruler in Bulgaria for a time, the Bulgarian concept of Christian rulership was ultimately shaped by Byzantium. Some expectations of good Christian rulers remained unchanged from the time of pagan rulers: they were expected to be victorious in war, and cruelty remained connected to the imperial office. But the Christian ruler was also expected to build churches and to suppress heretics in order to demonstrate his Christian disposition. The example of Bulgaria shows a kingdom drawing on Roman traditions – whether from the East or the West – in its own attempt to develop a concept of good Christian rulership, but also asserting and maintaining local traditions.

The final study in this section turns to a region that has until this point received very little attention in regard to its understanding of good rulership. Adam Łajtar and Grzegorz Ochała (*A Christian King in Africa: The Image of Christian Nubian Rulers in Internal and External Sources*) bring the study of the good Christian rulership across the Mediterranean and up the Nile. They discuss sources regarding the image of the good Christian ruler in Nubia, which was Christianised in the sixth century. In contrast to other Christian cultures, Nubia appears to lack historiography. Although most relevant sources are late – from the eleventh to the fifteenth century – they seem to preserve earlier material. Christianisation brought Graeco-Roman traditions with it. Constantine was regarded as a model ruler and Graeco-Roman titles were added to the Coptic and Nubian designation of rulers, even though Nubian kings did not adopt the names of Roman emperors. The virtues of the kings comprised piety,

care for the subjects, especially the marginal ones, and the status of being a fear-inspiring warrior. Kings were regarded as being chosen by God, and external sources sometimes depict them as all-powerful. Yet, nobles as well as the king's mother wielded considerable influence, and there are also examples of bishops legitimately criticising the king. In a situation when non-Christian rulers came to dominate North Africa and the Middle East, the Nubian kings gained superregional importance not only in North Africa but also in the apocalyptic literature of Syriac and Coptic Christians. From this viewpoint, the Nubian king was portrayed as the successor to the Byzantine emperor. The image of good Christian rulers in Nubia serves as a reminder of what binds the four studies in this section together. They all discuss authors and kingdoms that were heirs to Roman traditions and shaped this inheritance in distinct ways.

2.4 The Good Ruler under Islamic Rule

The last set of articles discusses how images of the good ruler developed under Islamic rulers. The concepts of rulership that emerged in the early caliphates shaped the Mediterranean world at a foundational level. The first essay in this section sets the stage for the others by examining the development of ideas of good rulership within an Islamic context. It focuses on an Islamic *Fürstenspiegel* composed in Islamic Andalusia (Toral-Niehoff). The second and third essays then consider how Christians living within Islamic regimes approached the question of good rulership. The second contribution thus addresses interaction between Christian and Islamic concepts of good rulership in Egypt in the Umayyad Caliphate (Booth). The third and final article looks at how Christian communities under Islamic rule formed ideals of rulership by considering a chronicle written by a Syriac author from the Melkite (Rūm Orthodox) Church (Conterno).

The first contribution forms one of the important few studies in this volume that focus on non-Christian views on good rulership (see also Leppin and Wiesehöfer). Isabel Toral-Niehoff (*Justice and Good Administration in Medieval Islam: The* Book of the Pearl of the Ruler *by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860 – 940)*) considers a text from the periphery of the early Islamic world in Andalusia. The *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* is representative of one strand of Islamic thought on rulership that spanned the Islamic world, namely, early Islamic mirror literature. This work emphasises that all true Muslim rulers – whose titles are carefully differentiated – have been invested with their power by God. They are expected to protect their subjects and care for their welfare; their subjects, for their part, should behave orderly. Good Islamic rulers should show decisiveness, choose advisors well, and display humility. They must also rule justly and be willing to accept advice from ministers and helpers. The *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* is based on Sasanian, Hellenistic, Christian, and even Indian traditions and thus shows a transcultural character. It evidences how

these traditions continued to come together and develop into new concepts of good rulership through the end of the first millennium.

The following two essays present case studies on how good rulership in the Christian and Muslim world were in dialogue with one another. Phil Booth (*Images of Emperors and Emirs in Early Islamic Egypt*) shows how Christian notions of good rulership were being transposed from the emperor at Constantinople to the emir at Fusṭāṭ. He argues that the persecution under the Emperor Heraclius as described by Severan (anti-Chalcedonian) sources never happened in a meaningful sense. Rather, the image of Heraclius as the persecuting emperor, which provided a marked contrast with the subsequent toleration of an Arab governor, was developed in pursuit of three goals: to obfuscate the actual ambiguities created during the Persian occupation and Roman restoration; to enable the later reintegration of fractured confessional communities; and to sanction a simultaneous transposition of the image of the good ruler from Christian to Muslim.

The Melkites (Rūm Orthodox) were among the Christians who lived under non-Christian rulers. They were adherents of Chalcedon and therefore close to the Byzantine emperor even if they increasingly used the Arabic language. Maria Conterno (*Shaping the Good Christian King under Muslim Rule: Constantine and the Torah in the Melkite Arabic Chronicle of Agapius of Mabbug (Tenth Century)*) discusses the chronicle of the tenth-century Melkite author Agapius of Mabbug, named the *Kitāb al-ʿunwān*. Agapius saw an expansion of Byzantine power in Syria, his home region, but lived under non-Christian rule. His chronicle nevertheless addresses Christian rulers, and his discussion of emperors of the past has strong implications for contemporary issues. An episode in the chronicle concerning Constantine I – who had risen to new importance in Byzantium during the Macedonian dynasty (867–1056) – is based on a hagiographical tradition but has direct connections to the religious debates of Agapius's time. Agapius reacts to criticisms of Constantine by Muslim authors and includes the story of the finding of the Septuagint to refute what Agapius refers to as Jewish lies. An anti-Jewish attitude seems to be an important trait of the Christian ruler in this work, even though King Josiah serves as a model for Constantine. The work also attests to some doubts regarding the necessity of a Christian ruler. Agapius's chronicle forms a fascinating testimony to discourse regarding good Christian rulership among a community who lived under Islamic rule.

As a whole, the papers assembled in this volume offer insight into the diverse images and conception of good rulership from the fourth to the tenth century. They include new interpretations of classical sources, but also push beyond to consider texts rarely incorporated into discussions of good rulership. The five essays on the Caucasus show how diverse concepts of good rulership could coexist within one geographical region, while the essays on the post-Roman West, Bulgaria, and Nubia serve as a reminder that other regions deserve further investigation. The final section on views of good rulership under Islamic rule as well as the two essays that incorporate pagan Roman and Zoroastrian Persian views serve as a reminder that Christian views on

good rulership did not emerge in a vacuum but were deeply influenced by other traditions and also influenced later traditions. The following section in the introduction seeks to take stock of the contribution of the volume as a whole and look forward to new avenues for research.

3 Initial Results and Outlook for Future Research

How did communities in the first millennium conceive of a good Christian ruler? Views on good rulership that developed within the Roman Empire exerted great influence throughout this era. Yet other traditions proved equally significant. The kingdoms that emerged in the Caucasus in late antiquity, for example, drew on both local and Persian ideas in identifying their expectations of kings. Writings from post-Roman societies of the West and kingdoms in Bulgaria and Nubia show a similar dynamic. After the rise of Islam, both Muslims and Christians developed ideas of rulership related to but departing from the late antique heritage. There was no single image of a good Christian ruler within and beyond the Roman Empire. The different concepts of good Christian rulership that emerged over the course of the first millennium reflect a shared inheritance but also demonstrate the importance of local traditions as well as regular exchange with other Christian and non-Christian communities. Given the complexity and diversity of representations explored in this volume, the final section of the introduction will examine four themes that enable a comparison of the articles collected here: (1) source material; (2) titles used for sovereigns; (3) models for good rulership; and (4) virtues expected of rulers.

3.1 Sources

Some of the articles in this volume examine a wide range of types of sources in order to gain insight into views on good Christian rulership in individual regions. But, for most contributions, literary sources seemed to offer the most complete and nuanced view on Christian rulership. This subsection will highlight the literary genres that proved particular productive in this regard before turning to other types of sources that yielded insights when literary sources were fewer in number.

Very few examples of Christian advice literature appeared in the first millennium that anticipated the genre of *Fürstenspiegel* which became popular across a number of cultures in the Middle Ages.[35] This is all the more remarkable given the presence of

35 See recently Regula Forster and Neguin Yavari (eds.), *Global Medieval. Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered* (Ilex Series 15), Cambridge, MA 2015; Mariano Delgado and Volker Leppin (eds.), *Die gute Regierung. Fürstenspiegel von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Studien zur christlichen Religions- und Kulturgeschichte 24), Fribourg and Stuttgart 2017; Roskam / Schorn (cf. fn. 8) and especially Matthias Haake, *Across All Boundaries of Genre? On the Uses and Disadvantages of the Term Mirror for Princes*

texts with similar content in the Hebrew Bible,[36] in Persian *andarz* literature,[37] and in the early Islamic tradition.[38] Yet four essays in this volume do discuss writings often designated as *Fürstenspiegel*. Three different works by Eusebius of Caesarea and the orations of Themistius show how orators developed different strategies to praise Christian emperors, incorporating but also transforming the classical panegyrical tradition (Leppin). A chapter in Augustine of Hippo's *De civitate Dei* (5.24) was received as a *Fürstenspiegel* in later times, but this section of the *De civitate Dei* is wanting in terms of the practicalities of ruling. Glimpses into the expectations of rulers can be gleaned from it, yet Augustine himself does not seem to have been interested in quotidian matters of rulership. It is far richer in terms of political theory (Preuß). Daniel Ziemann's contribution contrasts the two types of advice literature that the first Christian ruler of Bulgaria Boris/Michael received. Pope Nicholas I (r. 858–867) offered a series of answers to specific questions, while Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople (r. 858–867, 877–886) sent Boris/Michael a response that can rightly be called a *Fürstenspiegel*. Likewise, the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *Unique Necklace* displays the characteristics of a *Fürstenspiegel*. It offers clear concepts of both the authority and purpose of rulership and instructs its readers how to understand their place in society (Toral-Niehoff). Despite the similarities of these works, there are no clear lines of development between the fourth-century panegyrics, Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Photius's letter, and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler*.

Most of the essays cull information about the expectations of Christian rulers from different types of literary sources. Historiographical writings form the most common source consulted for investigating perspectives on good Christian rulers in this era (Booth, Bozoyan, Camplani, Conterno, Drews, Greenwood, Jeck, Leppin). Letters also play an important role in several contributions. Ambrose rebukes Theodosius I for the massacre at Thessalonica in a letter that marks a major innovation in the representation of rulers by incorporating the virtue of *humilitas* (Boytsov). The papal perspective on good rulership can be examined almost exclusively from their letters to Roman emperors (Hartmann). A letter of a miaphysite bishop in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire offers insight into the concepts of good rulership during a time of doctrinal conflict (Forness). Several letters from an ecclesiastical writer named Tiranun help reconstruct the faint traces of a distinct form of king-

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in Graeco-Roman Antiquity – Critical Remarks and Unorthodox Reflections, in: Roskam / Schorn (cf. fn. 8) 293–327.

36 See fn. 11 above.

37 Shaul Shaked and Zabiholla Safa, *Andarz*, in: Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), Encyclopædia Iranica, vol. 2.1, London 1985, 11–22 (available online at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/andarz-precept-instruction-advice). See also Josef Wiesehöfer's contribution in this volume.

38 Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, in: id. (ed.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 7, Leiden 1993, 984–988; Louise Marlow, *Advice and Advice Literature*, in: Kate Fleet et. al. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam (3rd ed.), Leiden 2007.

ship that developed in the former territory of Caucasian Albania in the eighth through tenth centuries (Dorfmann-Lazarev). Historiographies and letters represent promising sources for future investigations.

Sacred writings and hagiographies prove valuable in investigating several disparate cultures. In addition to historiographical sources, Tim Greenwood's essay on late antique Armenia mines the Armenian Bible to examine terminology used for rulers. Translations of the Bible form early literary relics of several languages used by Christian communities in the first millennium (Anglo-Saxon, Armenian, Caucasian Albanian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, Gothic, Sogdian, Syriac, etc.). They thereby offer insight into the earliest traceable concepts of rulership in these linguistic communities. Sacred Zoroastrian texts which were orally transmitted in Sasanian Persia and only recorded later offer insight into an emic view on good rulership from pre-Islamic times (Wiesehöfer). Hagiographical accounts of rulers from the Caucasus contribute to an understanding of the ideals of rulership that developed in kingdoms such as Armenia and Georgia (Hakobyan, Jeck). Coptic hagiographies on Roman emperors from the fourth century represent important sources for tracing representations of political power at the time of their composition (Camplani). Accounts of the reign of Khan Omurtag, seen as a persecutor of Christians, reveal important aspects of how writers in the First Bulgarian Empire framed the reigns of khans who ruled before the Christianisation (Ziemann). The sacred texts examined in this volume offer insight into early views on rulership; hagiographies help identify transitions in perspective.

Although pragmatic reasons made it impossible to consider fully other types of sources, their importance is made clear in essays on cultures where art and inscriptions serve as some of the main sources for examining ideas of good rulership. The contributions on Persia and Nubia show how both inscriptions and iconography help expose perspectives on good rulership. An inscription of the Persian Shah Narseh (r. 293–302) proves important for uncovering a pre-Islamic Persian perspective of rulership, as it contains an imagined dialogue between a pretender to the throne and imperial magnates (Wiesehöfer). Inscriptions in Nubia provide insight into the adoption of Coptic, Greek, and Latin titles and epithets for local rulers (Łajtar/Ochała). Art in Persia likewise offers vital information. Scenes of investiture in Sasanian relief art reveal that the perspective that the king's rule has divine approval. These reliefs as well as hunting bowls display the virtues expected of rulers (Wiesehöfer). In Nubia, wall paintings in churches and other cult places depict Jesus, Mary, or an archangel standing behind the king as a sign of his protection and blessedness (Łajtar/Ochała). There are not direct lines of influence between Persia and Nubia here. The similarity emerges rather from the approaches that scholars of these regions have needed to take to gain insight into the perspectives on good rulership when other, more traditional literary sources remain unavailable. The essays in this volume may serve, in this way, as a model for future investigations even in traditions that are less well-documented.

3.2 Titulature

A second common theme exposes the diversity of the concepts of rulership that developed in the first millennium. The titles assigned to rulers not only reflect a common heritage from late antiquity but also honour local traditions. Royal titulature appears in almost all of the entries in this volume, and it forms a focal point in several (Greenwood, Łajtar/Ochała, Toral-Niehoff). The following examination of titulature draws on these contributions and fills in some gaps, although only a sketch of these intricate developments is possible here.

The main languages of the later Roman Empire's administration – Latin and Greek – developed distinct words to refer to the emperor. The Latin title *augustus* (Greek *aúgoustos* or *sebastós*) was adopted by the first Roman emperor, while *imperator* (Greek *autokrátōr*) appears already in the first century CE. *Caesar* (Greek *kaísar*) was used as an epithet of the principal emperor but also came to designate subordinate coregents under the Diocletianic tetrarchy and became a court title under Heraclius. The more generic terms *basileús* and *rex* also found usage in administrative texts, and the former became attached to the principal emperor under Heraclius. The Latin title *princeps*, hearkening back to beginning of the Roman Empire, continued to find unofficial use in Latin texts through the eighth century (Hartmann, Drews). The Latin title *dominus noster* "our lord" (Greek *despótēs hēmṓn*), which recalled the absolute sovereignty of the emperor, became mandatory in the fourth century. At the same time, the somewhat weaker Greek title *kúrios* was abandoned only to become part of official imperial titulature again under Justinian I.[39]

Other linguistic communities within the Roman Empire found different ways to refer to rulers. In Coptic writings, the Egyptian word *pᵉrro* is used to refer to kings (Camplani). Syriac writers regularly used a word of Semitic origin for king: *malkā/malko*.[40] Communities of the Syriac heritage that accepted the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon were termed *malkāyē/malkoyē* "Melkites" (Greek *melchítai*) by their opponents because of their association with the imperial Byzantine church (Conterno). The loan word *ṭronā* "tyrant" from Greek *túrannos*, usually meaning

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39 The literature on Roman imperial titulature is legion. This sketch is based on Gerhard Rösch, *ONOMA BAΣIΛEIAΣ. Studien zum offiziellen Gebrauch der Kaisertitel in spätantiker und frühbyzantinischer Zeit*, Vienna 1978, 33–40. Further foundational studies include Franz Dölger, *Die Entwicklung der byzantinischen Kaisertitulatur und die Datierung von Kaiserdarstellungen in der byzantinischen Kleinkunst*, in: George E. Mylonas and Doris Raymond (eds.), Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson on his Seventieth Birthday, vol. 2, Saint Louis 1951, 985–1005; Klaas A. Worp, *Byzantine Imperial Titulature in the Greek Documentary Papyri. The Oath Formulas*, ZPE, 1982, 199–223; Michael Peachin, *Roman Imperial Titulature and Chronology, 235–284* (Studia Amstelodamensia ad epigraphicam ius antiquum et papyrologicam pertinentia 29), Amsterdam 1990.

40 This term was applied very widely to the sovereigns of kingdoms and regions, including the rulers of Babylon and Persia, caliphs, emirs of Baghdad, dukes of France, Sultan Bogril Beg, among others. For these and other applications of this term, see Robert Payne Smith (ed.), *Thesaurus syriacus*, Oxford, 1879, 2:2142–2143.

"usurper," was also available to Syriac writers. But as in the Greek language it seems to have carried the valence of "illegitimate rule" as already evidenced in a Syriac Bible translation and in the works of the fourth-century poet Ephrem the Syrian (Forness). Gothic texts attest the loan word *kaisar* for the Roman Emperor and the Germanic word *þiudans* "king" applied to Jesus and Herod.[41] The latter is derived from *þiuda* "people" and related to the terms *þiudinassus* "kingdom, reign" and *þiudangardi* "kingdom."[42] The title *þiudans* was carefully distinguished in the Gothic Bible translation from *reiks* "ruler," which is applied regularly to Satan but also used more generally to refer to religious and other authorities.[43] But the valence of rulership in *reiks* appears clearly in the names of Gothic rulers such as Alaric ("ruler of all") and Theodoric ("ruler of the people").[44] Thus, even within the borders of the Roman Empire, imperial titles both saw development in Latin and Greek and reflected different cultural-linguistic communities.

Quite different royal titulature emerged in the Persian Empire. Sasanian sovereigns changed their titles several times.[45] The first Sasanian ruler Ardashir I (d. 242) adopted the epithet *šāhān šāh* "king of kings," taking on the title established by the preceding dynasties, the Arsacids and Achaemanids.[46] This title reflects an intercultural milieu, as it was not spelled phonetically but rather with an ideogram based on the Aramaic word for king *malkā* (MLKAn' MLKA is the transliteration of the title *šāhān šāh* in Pahlavi).[47] Later Sasanian emperors used the title *kay* to entwine their history with the mythological Kayanid dynasty that predated even the

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41 D. Gary Miller, *The Oxford Gothic Grammar*, Oxford 2019, 3n5; 558 – 559. References to the Roman Empire as *kaisar* appear in Mark 12:14, 16 – 17; Luke 2:1; 3:1; 20:22, 24 – 25; John 19:12. For *þiudans*, see for example Matthew 27:11; Mark 6:14. For the Gothic biblical text, see Willhelm Streitberg and Piergiuseppe Scardigli (eds.), *Die gotische Bibel*, Band 1, *Der gotische Text und seine griechische Vorlage*, 7th ed. (Germanistische Bibliothek 3), Heidelberg 2000.

42 Carla Falluomini, *The Gothic Version of the Gospels and Pauline Epistles. Cultural Background, Transmission and Character* (Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung 46), Berlin 2017, 81.

43 Miller (cf. fn. 41) 477. For references to Satan as *reiks*, see John 12:31, 16:11; Ephesians 2:2; for other authorities, see Matthew 9:18, 23; Luke 18:18; John 7:26, 48; 12:42; Romans 13:3.

44 Ibid. 3.

45 For a brief overview, see M. Rahim Shayegan, *Sasanian Political Ideology*, in: Daniel T. Potts (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran, Oxford 2013, 805 – 813. The contribution by Josef Wiesehöfer in this volume touches on Sasanian titulature as well.

46 Touraj Daryaee, *Kingship in Early Sasanian Iran*, in: Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (eds.), The Sasanian Era (The Idea of Iran 3), London 2010, 64 – 65; M. Rahim Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians. Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia*, Cambridge 2011, 39 – 331.

47 On the phenomenon of Aramaic ideograms in Persian texts, see Prods Oktor Skjærvø, *Aramaic in Iran*, Aram 7, 1995, 283 – 318; Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic. From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1. The Near and Middle East 111), Boston 2015, 276 – 278.

Achaemenids.[48] In the late Sasanian Empire, rulers were called *abzōn* "increase" and later *xwarrah abzūd* "whose royal glory is increased," connecting these rulers to the concept of *xwarrah* "royal glory" that represented the divine legitimation of their rule.[49]

Christian kingdoms in the Caucasus drew on both Persian and Roman traditions in their titulature. Very little has survived of the Caucasian Albanian language, but the fragmentary Bible and lectionary use the title *üwx* as a generic term for kings as well as for specific rulers.[50] This title also appears in the liturgical designation for a biblical passage "from the feast of the kings" which likely relates to a feast in honour of Constantine I or Theodosius I.[51] There are distinct patterns in the use of the titles of rulers in Armenia (Greenwood). On the one hand, Armenian historians use specific terms only for foreign rulers: the loan word *kaysr* for Roman emperors; *tēr Areacʿ* "lord of the Aryans" and *arkʿayicʿ arkʿay* "king of kings" for Persian emperors. Yet the two regular words for "king" in Armenian – *arkʿay* related to Greek *árchōn* and *tʿagawor* from both Armenian and Middle Persian roots – are applied to both Armenian and non-Armenian rulers. This equivocation seems to indicate the equality of these sovereigns. Armenian writings on the princes who claimed to rule the former territory of Caucasian Albania in the tenth century were termed *išxan*, meaning dynastic ruler, or *tēr*, designating the head of a noble patriarchal family. Yet the roots *arkʿay* and *tʿagawor* also surface in works about these rulers of Albania (Dorfmann-Lazarev). In the region of modern-day Georgia, a title with etymological roots in the Georgian language *mepʿe* or *meupʿe*, meaning "monarch" without gen-

48 Touraj Daryaee, *The Construction of the Past in Late Antique Persia*, Historia. Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 55, no. 4, 2006, 500–501. On the Kayanids, see Prods Oktor Skjærvø, *Kayāniān*, Encyclopædia Iranica 2016 (available online at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/kayanian-parent).

49 Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Sacral Kingship in Sasanian Iran,* Bulletin of the Asia Institute 2, 1988, 36–37; Maneck F. Kanga, *Abzōn*, in: Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), Encyclopædia Iranica, vol. 1.4, London 1990, 412 (an updated version is available online at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/abzon-mid dle-persian-tsrm-meaniag-prosperity-increase-in-zoroastrianism).

50 On this term, see Jost Gippert et al. (eds.), *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mt. Sinai* (Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi. Series Ibero-Caucasica 2), vol. 1, Turnhout 2008, IV-40. This term is used as a generic term for kings in Matthew 10:18 (ibid., 1:III-23) and 1 Timothy 2:1–2 (ibid., 1:III-44); for Herod in Acts 12:1 (ibid., 1:III-30); for pharaoh in Hebrews 11:23 (ibid., 1:III-42); and for Jesus as the king of the Jews in John 18:33, 37; 19:21 (ibid., 1:III-17–18).

51 For this rubric, see ibid., 1:III-29. As the editors note, the biblical passage is Luke 1:1–10 which in some calendars is assigned for the commemoration of Theodosius on January 19th and Constantine on May 22nd. Some Georgian calendars simply have a feast for all kings, which seems to be reflected in the Caucasian Albanian lectionary. On the liturgical commemoration, see ibid., 2:VI-1. This rubric is the only non-biblical evidence for the use of this term in Caucasian Albanian. The known Caucasian Albanian inscriptions do not contain such titles: Jost Gippert, *The Albanian Inscriptions Revisited*, in: Religions in the Caucasus. A Collection of Essays and Articles, Baku 2016, 75–87 (see the corrected version with images at http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/personal/jg/pdf/jg2014t.pdf).

der, was used for rulers.[52] After the reestablishment of the kingship in Georgia, Gurgen I (r. 994–1008) took the title *mepʿetʿmepʿe* "king of kings" upon his accession to the throne.[53] Titular innovation continued in Georgia into the early second millennium.[54] The titles of rulers in these kingdoms reflect a confidence regarding local traditions and an engagement with the two empires that bordered the region.

Christian sovereigns in places as diverse as Bulgaria, Nubia, and Ethiopia assumed both local titles and drew on other traditions. Both pagan and Christian Bulgarian rulers had the local title *khan* or *kana*. But Khan Terval (r. c. 701–721) received the Greek title of *kaîsar* from Emperor Justinian II (r. 685–695, 705–711). Later, Khan Omurtag used the Byzantine title "ruler by the grace of God" (*ho ek theoú árchōn*). In inscriptions during his reign and those of his successors, this title usually appears alongside the somewhat enigmatic Slavic phrase *kana sübigi*, meaning "the khan appointed by heaven" or "ruler from (by) God/Heaven" (Ziemann). In the reign of the first Christian ruler of Bulgaria, Boris/Michael, the title *khan* seems to have been abandoned in favour of the Slavic title *knyaz* "prince."[55] The title *tsar* "emperor" – a loan word from Latin *caesar*[56] – was likely used in Bulgaria first by Simeon I (r. 893–927).[57] In Nubia, terminology divides along the lines of the language of the texts in question. Greek and Coptic texts both use the Greek word *basileús*, but Coptic texts also use the Egyptian word *pᵉrro*. Old Nubian sources make use of the native word for ruler: *ourou*. Loan words such as *aúgoustos*, *kaîsar*, *ánax*, and *rex* also appear in certain contexts. There was also a high-ranking office in Nubia held either by the king's mother or sister who received the Old Nubian title *ŋonnen* (Łajtar/Ochała). In Ethiopia, the standard term for rulers, *nəguś*, is first attested in the reign of the Axumite ruler ʿEzana (r. c. 330–365/70).[58] Imperial coinage from ʿEzana's reign, who became famous for his conversion to Christianity, also uses the Greek term *ba-*

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52 Cyrille Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington, D.C. 1963, 91n130; Stephen H. Rapp Jr., *Sumbat Davitʿis-Dze and the Vocabulary of Political Authority in the Era of Georgian Unification*, Journal of the American Oriental Society 120, no. 4, 2000, 574n25.

53 Robert W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation* (Oxford Oriental Monographs, n.s., 3), Oxford 1996, 307n52; Rapp (cf. fn. 52) 576.

54 Rapp (cf. fn. 52) 576.

55 Georgi Bakalov, *Quelques particularités de la titulature des souverains balkaniques au Moyen Âge*, (Études balkaniques 13, no. 2), 1977, 72; Mikhail Raev, *The Emergence of the Title Velikii Knìaz' in Rus' and the "Povest' Vremennykh Let"*, Зборник Радова Византолошког Института 51, 2014, 48.

56 Gyula Moravcsik, *Zur Geschichte des Herrschertitels "caesar > царь"*, in: id., Studia Byzantina, Budapest 1967, 267–274; Ljubomir Maksimović, *Zar I. Bulgarien und Serbien*, LexMA, vol. 9, Stuttgart 1999, 475.

57 Bakalov (cf. fn. 55) 73–74; Maksimović (cf. fn. 56) 475; Peter Schreiner, *Zur Entstehung des Namens "car" im Balkanraum aus historischer Sicht*, Byzantina 21, 2000, 364.

58 Gianfranco Fiaccadori, *Nəguś*, in: Siegbert Uhlig (ed.), Encyclopedia Aethiopica, vol. 3, Wiesbaden 2007, 1163. A related term for ruler, *nägaśi*, is attested already in the second century CE for an earlier Axumite ruler and thus before the Christianisation of Ethiopia.

sileús,[59] and the title *nəguśä nägäśt* "king of kings" occurs in his inscriptions.[60] These three kingdoms display the dynamic between the reception of the earlier traditions as well as the perseverance of local traditions.

The early Islamic tradition developed distinct ideas of rulership as reflected in the proliferation of terminology. For example, the *Unique Necklace* of Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih uses four different terms for rulers (Toral-Niehoff). *Sulṭān* referred both to political authority as well as to the person who embodies this power. *Khālifa* was used to emphasise the ruler as the Prophet's vicar on earth; *imām* shares this meaning but had even stronger religious connotations and highlighted a ruler's moral responsibilities. The term *malik* "king" was reserved for sovereigns before the rise of Islam as well as for contemporary non-Muslim rulers. Some of the implications of these Arabic titles match those known from Christian communities. Yet the development of specifically Islamic titles for early Muslim rulers emphasises the general trend of a dynamic between a reference to the past with attention to the present needs of communities and local traditions.

3.3 Models

A third topic that enables a comparison of the diverse articles in this volume comprises the individuals that came to serve as models for good Christian rulership. The idea of pious rulers that followed God's will went back to the time of the Hebrew Bible. Stories about David, Solomon, and Josiah provided complicated examples of good kings who followed the same God as Christians yet nevertheless had shortcomings. Figures such as Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus showed the risks and advantages of rule by kings who believed in other gods. The use of individual biblical figures was multifarious. The figure of Adam as the first human being served as a type both for the kings who restored the Armenian kingship and for the princes who claimed to rule the former territory of Caucasian Albania (Dorfmann-Lazarev). In his *Vita Constantini*, Eusebius shows how Constantine's life paralleled that of Moses (Leppin). David became a model for repentance in Ambrose's rebuke of Theodosius I (Boytsov), while he seems to have served as a model for the anointing of the Visigothic King Wamba (Drews). Even a less common figure such as the king of the Ninevites from the book of Jonah appears in a couple studies. The Syriac poet Ephrem the Syrian referenced his famous decree to put on sackcloth from Jonah 3:7–9 in his praise for the emperor Constantius II (Forness). The Bulgarian ruler Boris/Michael, perhaps in imitation of this Ninevite king, is said to have declared a three-day fast for repent-

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59 For example, see the coins depicted in Wolfgang Hahn, ʿ*Ezana*, in: Siegbert Uhlig (ed.), Encyclopedia Aethiopica, vol. 2, Wiesbaden 2005, 479–480.
60 Fiaccadori (cf. fn. 58) 1163.

ance to call on God for help (Ziemann).[61] Finally, Eusebius of Caesarea drew parallels between Constantine and Christ in his *Church History*, especially through the acclamation *sōtḗr*, and between Constantine and the Logos-Christ in the *Laudes Constantini* by linking earthly rule and the cosmic order (Leppin). These figures provided a common reference point across communities.

Celebrated sovereigns also became models for later rulers. Eusebius portrayed Cyrus the Persian and Alexander the Macedonian as deficient models for Constantine I in the *Vita Constantini* (Leppin), and Constantine served as a model for Christian rulers in places as diverse as Armenia (Bozoyan), Caucasian Albania (Hakobyan), Egypt (Camplani), Georgia (Jeck), Nubia (Łajtar/Ochała), and Persia.[62] As Maria Conterno explores in her article, a debate over the legacy of Constantine was waged in the early Islamic period in which Constantine was received as a model ruler but also criticised. His legacy was debated by the Macedonian dynasty in Byzantium, Melkite Christian communities, and Muslim authors. But other figures also were seen as exemplary sovereigns within more localised settings. Abgar of Edessa was honoured in both the Syriac and the Armenian traditions (Bozoyan, Forness),[63] while Vakhtang I was portrayed as a model ruler in the Georgian tradition (Jeck).[64] In Armenia, the Caucasian Albanian ruler Vačʻagan II the Pious became a celebrated figure (Hakobyan), and the dynasty of the Parthian Arsacids served as a common point of reference in Armenia as well as in Byzantium (Bozoyan). During attempts to restore the kingship in the territory of Caucasian Albania in the ninth and tenth centuries, an early Caucasian Albanian ruler, Vačʻagan I the Brave (fourth century) as well as more recent figures, such as the restorer of the Armenian kingship, Ašot I Bagratuni (r. 884–890), were seen as exemplary (Dorfmann-Lazarev). The models of good rulership thus reflected both a transcultural and a local nature.

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61 In the Hebrew Bible, Jonah proclaims that the city of Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days (Jon 3:4). The Greek Septuagint, used by the Byzantine church, changed this to "three days," hence the association of a three-day fast with the Ninevites found in some eastern Christian traditions.
62 On the image of Constantine in Persia, which is not covered in this volume, see Kyle Smith, *Constantine and the Captive Christians of Persia. Martyrdom and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 57), Berkeley 2015.
63 The reference to Abgar of Edessa likely refers to one of two Abgarid kings: (1) Abgar V (r. 4 BCE –5 CE, 13–50 CE) who according to a legend corresponded with Jesus or (2) Abgar VIII (r. 177–212) who reportedly converted to Christianity. See Timothy Scott Wardle, *Abgarids of Edessa*, in: Sebastian P. Brock et al. (eds.), Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage, Piscataway, NJ 2011, 5–7.
64 The reign of Vakhtang I is very difficult to reconstruct. The dates given here come from Stephen H. Rapp Jr., *New Perspectives on "The Land of Heroes and Giants". The Georgian Sources for Sasanian History*, E-Sasanika 13, 2014, 1. For a short introduction to the problem of dating his reign, see Bernadette Martin-Hisard, *Das Christentum und die Kirche in der georgischen Welt*, in: Luce Pietri (ed.), Der lateinische Westen und der byzantinische Osten (431–642) (Die Geschichte des Christentums 3), Freiburg im Breisgau 1998, 1238–1239.

3.4 Virtues

The essays in this volume also expose a fourth common thread that shows a significant degree of similarity among the various concepts of Christian rulership that developed in the first millennium: the virtues expected of Christian rulers. Most Christian thinkers expected Christian sovereigns to display the same virtues as non-Christian rulers, such as courage, justice, mildness, and piety, even if they understood these virtues in a specifically Christian way. The inherited catalogue of virtues remains relatively stable throughout the studies on Christian rulers in this volume and extends also to the contributions on Sasanian and early Islamic views on good rulership (Toral-Niehoff, Wiesehöfer). These standard virtues undergo a distinct transformation in Augustine of Hippo's *De civitate Dei*. Augustine calls emperors *felices* not due to their success in battle, orderly succession, or virtues, but rather because they adhere to God. Augustine's portrayal of the Christian ruler emphasises a general trend that Christians had to be good rulers not only in terms of politics, but also in respect to ethics. In Augustine, regal virtues are related to the expectations placed on all Christians (Preuß). Yet even here the catalogue of virtues expected of sovereigns remains largely intact.

These virtues changed, however, under specific circumstances. For example, rulers were expected to be just and to defend their subjects against the enemy. But justice from a Christian viewpoint could mean giving preference to Christians, such as when Ambrose forced Theodosius I to condone the actions of the Christians who destroyed a synagogue.[65] Furthermore, the expectation for Christian sovereigns to be pious and support the orthodox faith played a large role already in the time of Constantine I. However, certain aspects of their promotion of the Christian faith, such as building churches, might be sidestepped in neutralising discourses seeking to find concepts acceptable to both pagans and Christians (Leppin). The demand for the ruler to support the true faith mirrors traditions concerning Zoroastrian rulers of the Sasanian Empire (Wiesehöfer) and the notion that rulers were divinely elected in the Islamic tradition (Toral-Niehoff). In this regard, Roman emperors such as Constantine I, Constantius II, and Justinian I set out to exert their influence on creeds. Yet many Christians also had to live under rulers whom they considered heretics, especially in view of the high number of doctrinal divisions. This resulted in heavy criticism of individual rulers. Nevertheless, most Christians remained loyal to the Roman state and still praised emperors whose views they held as heterodox when they acted mildly (Booth, Forness, Leppin). Such contexts changed how Christian communities evaluated their rulers.

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65 On this episode, see McLynn (cf. fn. 20) 298–315; Kirsten Groß-Albenhausen, *Imperator christianissimus. Der christliche Kaiser bei Ambrosius und Johannes Chrysostomus* (Frankfurter althistorische Beiträge 3), Frankfurt am Main 1999, 113–119; John Hugo Wolfgang Gideon Liebeschuetz and Carole Hill (trans.), *Ambrose of Milan. Political Letters and Speeches* (Translated Texts for Historians 43), Liverpool 2005, 95–123.

Christians who lived under non-Christian rulers developed different means of evaluating the virtues of their sovereigns. For example, the Persian Empire included many Christian subjects, and a separate church hierarchy began forming by 424. The resolution of the Council of Ephesus in 431 to condemn the thought of Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428) isolated the Church of the East even more, as it honoured Theodore as an authority.[66] On the whole, the Church of the East easily accommodated to circumstances under a non-Christian empire. Yet these communities also produced hagiographical literature that propagated a narrative of persecution under their Zoroastrian rulers.[67] Nevertheless, some clerics became close to the imperial court,[68] and they developed their own ideals for good rulership.[69] After Armenia came under the control of the Persian Empire in 428, Armenian Christians accepted Persian rulers who allowed them to be observant and listened to their petitions (Greenwood). Similarly, non-Melkite Christians fared particularly well under Islamic rule and perhaps even better than they had under emperors who did not share their theological views. Some even imagined the time of Roman rule as a time of persecution in contrast to the times in which they lived (Booth). These communities adapted to life in non-Christian regimes by altering their expectations of rulers.

Three specific virtues feature in a wide range of the essays below. First, the wisdom of rulers remained a common trait even if it took a variety of forms. Knowledge was important in the Persian (Wiesehöfer) and Islamic traditions (Toral-Niehoff). It seems to have played a less prominent role for Christian rulers, with exceptions such as Vač'agan II in Albania (Hakobyan) and Justinian I.[70] The absence of this virtue may relate to the role of Christian bishops who both wielded religious authority

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66 For brief histories of the Church of the East in the Persian Empire, see Nina G. Garsoïan, *Die Kirche des Ostens*, in: Pietri (cf. fn. 64) 1161–1186; Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East. A Concise History*, London 2003, 7–41.

67 For recent studies of this literature, see Joel Thomas Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 40), Berkeley 2006; Payne (cf. fn. 28); Smith (cf. fn. 62). Annotated translations of a number of these texts have recently appeared, most substantially in the series *Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac. Text and Translation* by Gorgias Press.

68 Payne (cf. fn. 28) shows that Christians were not merely marginal figures in the administration of the empire.

69 For Christian views of good rulership in the Persian Empire, see Scott McDonough, *A Second Constantine? The Sasanian King Yazdgard in Christian History and Historiography*, Journal of Late Antiquity 1, no. 1, 2008, 127–140; Christelle Jullien, *Christianiser le pouvoir. Images de rois sassanides dans la tradition syro-orientale*, OCP 75, no. 1, 2009, 119–131; Smith (cf. fn. 62).

70 On Justinian I as a religious expert, see Eduard Schwartz, *I. Vigiliusbriefe; II. Zur Kirchenpolitik Justinians* (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Abteilung, Jahrgang 1940, Heft 2), Munich 1940; Karl-Heinz Uthemann, *Kaiser Justinian als Kirchenpolitiker und Theologe*, Augustinianum 39, no. 1, 1999, 5–83; Hartmut Leppin, *Zu den Anfängen der Kirchenpolitik Justinians*, in: Hans-Ulrich Wiemer (ed.), Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit (Millennium-Studien 10), Berlin 2006, 187–208.

and were theologically adept.[71] Related to the virtue of wisdom, many contributions identify the expectation that rulers listen to advisers whether they were religious authorities or not. Eusebius and Themistius along with other orators followed the classical panegyric tradition of praising emperors but also implicitly criticising them (Leppin). Popes recommended themselves as advisors to post-Roman western kings and to the Byzantine emperor (Hartmann) as well as to the newly established Christian kingdom of Bulgaria (Ziemann). As the case of Ambrose of Milan shows, male advisors were often inclined to stage themselves as the successors of the prophets which allowed them to reprimand the rulers strongly (Boytsov). As recent work on Roman empresses has demonstrated, women related to male rulers formed an important group of counsellors.[72] The texts explored in Alberto Camplani's article contain polemical attacks on women close to the emperor. Yet the authors of these works nevertheless recognised Theodosius II's wife Eudocia and his sister Pulcheria as advisors. Women close to rulers appear in an even more prominent role in the Nubian materials where the ruler's mother consistently served as an advisor (Łajtar/Ochała). Good Christian rulers were expected either to be wise in their own right or to listen to their advisors.

A second virtue that connects these studies is the ability to defend an empire or kingdom, which was normally in the interest of Christians and non-Christians alike. Since the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, some Christians had portrayed the Christian God as an ally of the Roman Empire in time of war. Yet this became more pronounced during the reign of Theodosius I, as marked by the battle of Frigidus in 394. This battle was later interpreted as a religious victory, as the emperor's piety towards God seemed to have guaranteed the victory. The emperor's righteous actions towards God could now lead to victory in battle.[73] The war against the Persians in 421 and 422 was similarly celebrated as a religious act.[74] Religious conflict took on a new character when sacred buildings were deliberately destroyed during campaigns, cul-

71 On bishops in late antiquity, see especially Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church. The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, MA 2004; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 37), Berkeley 2005.

72 Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 3), Berkeley 1982; Anja Busch, *Die Frauen der theodosianischen Dynastie. Macht und Repräsentation kaiserlicher Frauen im 5. Jahrhundert* (Historia – Einzelschriften 237), Stuttgart 2015.

73 Werner Eck, *Vom See Regillus bis zum flumen Frigidus. Constantins Sieg an der Milvischen Brücke als Modell für den Heiligen Krieg?*, in: Klaus Schreiner and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds.), Heilige Kriege. Religiöse Begründungen militärischer Gewaltanwendung. Judentum, Christentum und Islam im Vergleich (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs 78), Munich 2008, 71–91.

74 Holum (cf. fn. 72) 121–123; Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ. Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39), Berkeley 2005, 196–197.

minating in the war between Heraclius and Khosrow II (r. 590 – 628).[75] Related developments occurred in the Mediterranean and surrounding regions. Papal letters reveal an expectation for Christian rulers to engage in mission, and after the sixth century this mission appears to be also of a military nature (Hartmann). The *Historia Wambae* portrays the Visigothic King Wamba as a general who leads his troops into battle like the kings of the Old Testament (Drews). In Bulgaria, both pagan and Christian rulers used military victories to legitimise their rule. Indeed, the Bulgarian ruler's conversion to Christianity seems to have changed very little in this regard (Ziemann). These studies reveal how Christian thinkers navigated the expectation of sovereigns to defend their realms with their Christian identity.

Third, the portrayal of the Christian ruler as the eschatological king appears in five contributions across a wide geographical area. In the *Laudes Constantini*, Eusebius of Caesarea equates the beginning of the fourth decade of Constantine's reign with the fourth beast or kingdom from Daniel 7:1 – 8 (Leppin). In late Roman North Africa, Augustine of Hippo relativised the effectiveness of rulers in this world against the backdrop of an eschatological future in which Christians would individually have to account for their pursuit of salvation (Preuß). In Armenia, the Arsacid dynasty became an important model for kingship and found its way into apocalyptic materials that emphasised their role in the restoration of the Armenian kingship (Bozoyan). In Nubia, King Kyriakos (eighth century) came to be seen as the fourth and last world king whose reign would usher in the end of the world (Łajtar/Ochała). And, finally, in Bulgaria, several sources depict a certain Michael as this eschatological king, perhaps alluding to the first Christian ruler of Bulgaria Boris/Michael (Ziemann). The hope associated with such eschatological thought became projected onto good Christian rulers in these realms.[76]

4 Conclusion

Views on good Christian rulership shared much in the first millennium even as they reflected the different circumstances under which specific sovereigns ruled. The diverse views on rulership explored in this volume are bound together by their efforts to navigate between local traditions and a multifaceted common heritage. Traditions from the Roman and Persian Empires, authoritative and sacred texts, and later Islamic traditions all proved influential. Each community had to acquire what it inherited from its forebears in order to retain it. Variation between perspectives on good ruler-

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75 James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford 2011.
76 See also the individual studies on this topic in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen* (Millennium-Studien 16), Berlin 2008; Wolfram Brandes, Felicitas Schmieder, and Rebekka Voß (eds.), *Peoples of the Apocalypse. Eschatological Beliefs and Political Scenarios* (Millennium-Studien 63), Berlin 2016.

ship can be found on almost every point: the source materials, the titles used for rulers, the models for good rulership, and the expected virtues. The idea of good Christian rulership proved to be very flexible as it was under constant pressure to adapt to new circumstances.

The articles assembled here stem from scholars who specialise in a great variety of cultures and languages both within and outside the Roman Empire. We hope that they lay groundwork for and contribute to a transepochal and transcultural approach to political orders in Europe and the wider Mediterranean world.

A. The Good Christian Ruler in the Roman Empire

Hartmut Leppin

Finding a Common Cause: Fourth-Century Greek Discourses on Rulership

1 Introduction: The Unexpected Christian Ruler

No Christian or pagan would have expected, hoped, or feared that a Roman emperor who served as a pagan priest would become a Christian. Could anyone have anticipated that an emperor, often revered as a god, might tear down the very foundations of his rule? As a result, no specific Christian concept of rulership existed when Constantine did the unexpected and turned to the Christian God. Under those circumstances, nobody could easily define what it meant to be a Christian emperor.[1]

Christian concepts of Roman rulership drew on two sources. The first was the Hebrew Bible, which Christians appropriated as their Old Testament. Its historical books depicted many cruel, obstinate foreign rulers who fought against God's chosen people. But there were also many Israelite rulers who did not listen to God's commands; such famous kings as David and Solomon were shown in their sinfulness. Not even Josiah, who was perhaps closest to perfection, stayed free from errors. The prophetic books were full of criticism of Jewish kings as well, who regularly deviated from the way of God. How a pious ruler was expected to behave could be seen *ex negativo*. Moses represented another type of ruler who did not bear the title of a king but was a prophet and even acted as a lawgiver in the name of God; yet, not even his record was stainless.[2] Apart from the narrative books, the so-called "royal psalms" included verses of praise for good rulership in the tradition of ancient Mesopotamian kingdoms. Nevertheless, the deeply embedded idea, especially in the prophetic tradition, that a ruler could err and should listen to advisers who spoke in the name of God in order to avoid sinful behaviour became an important element in the concept of Christian rulership.

A second source of Christian concepts of Roman rulership could have been *Fürstenspiegel* (mirrors of princes). Educated Christians were aware of the tradition of the Graeco-Roman *Fürstenspiegel*, which went as far back as Isocrates in the fourth century BCE. Such texts defined the virtues expected of a ruler. Thousands of panegyrics must have been recited for multiple occasions all over the Hellenistic and Roman empires year after year, if not more often. They followed certain rules laid down in rhetorical textbooks and normally avoided any open criticism of the emperor. Menander Rhetor's (third c. CE) textbooks on epideictic speeches suggest the form most panegyrics must have taken. Nonetheless, it would be misleading to interpret

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1 See the introduction to this volume.
2 Andreas Lehnardt, Mose I. In: RAC 25 (2013) 58–102.

the panegyrics as mere flattery; the public ascription of certain virtues could also have an adhortative function. Lacunae could be meaningful if, for example, a subject of praise recommended in the handbooks was circumnavigated.[3]

Some Christian apologies addressed to the Roman emperors offered words of praise in the panegyric tradition, but they were not specifically Christian. Justin, for example, extolled Marc Aurelius and Lucius Verus for their interest in education, not without distinguishing nicely between the two.[4] But a specific Christian concept of imperial praise did not emerge during the first centuries.

Thus, when Constantine the Great professed that he wanted to show his gratitude to the Christian God after his God-given victory in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, he confronted his panegyrists with a formidable task: How should they praise a Christian emperor?[5] They had grown up in a tradition of praise that glorified the god-like qualities of the emperors. This was based on a concept of divinity that made no clear distinction between gods and men. Men could become heroes, emperors were revered as gods, and they expected to be deified after their death. Christian theology, by contrast, held that only one man, Jesus, was both God and man – even if the dispute about the two natures of Christ was to disrupt the churches for centuries.

Elites remained divided about religion. Some members of the traditional elites were Christians, some pagans. Some Christians were more consistent than others, and the same was true for pagans.[6] In addition, bishops formed a new elite that felt entitled to praise and (even more so) to criticise the emperor.

At least three discourses of imperial praise developed in the fourth century Roman Empire: the hierocratic discourse, which eulogised the sacral position of the ruler in a Christian sense, the neutralising discourse that avoided religious commitments and often employed ambiguous language, and the penitentiary discourse, which accepted and sublimated the sinfulness of the emperor in a Christian sense.[7] These distinctions are mainly heuristic but may help to map the field. I will expound

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3 Gunnar Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians: Herrschaftsdarstellung im Principat* (*Hermes. Einzelschriften* 91), Stuttgart 2004.

4 Iust., apol. 1.1. The words on Lucius Verus have been expunged by Volkmar and Markovich in their editions. But this passage is also attested in Euseb., hist. eccl. 4.12.

5 See the introduction to this volume.

6 Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, Oxford/New York 2011.

7 Hartmut Leppin, Kaisertum und Christentum in der Spätantike: Überlegungen zu einer unwahrscheinlichen Synthese. In: A. Fahrmeir and A. Imhausen (ed.), Die Vielfalt normativer Ordnungen. Konflikte und Dynamik in historischer und ethnologischer Perspektive (Normative Orders 8), Frankfurt am Main 2013, 197–223, 211–214. In this contribution I distinguished between a Christocentric, a penitentiary, and a hierocratic discourse, which I have slightly modified here. Although I criticise him on some points, the best overview on late antique political thinking is still Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background 2* (DOS 9), Washington, D.C. 1966, 610–850. For some observations on Eusebius, see Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium,* Cambridge 2003, 131–135.

on sacralising discourses in the second section and on neutralising discourses in the third, using a few examples from imperial panegyrics. Mikhail Boytsov and Kai Preuß explore penitentiary discourses more deeply in their contributions to this volume.

2 The Perils of Hierocratic Discourses: Eusebian Models

Eusebius of Caesarea (264/5 – 339/40) was a provincial, if well-educated, bishop from Palestine who claimed to be a confidant of Constantine. There is no doubt that the two men met on various occasions, but it is not clear whether Eusebius was as close to the emperor as he suggests. Although certainly not the official voice of Constantinian propaganda, he was an important voice, especially for later generations. And, for pragmatic reasons, he could not deviate too much from Constantine's official position. Therefore, he is a significant source for how Christian orators navigated the role of the emperor after Constantine inaugurated a tradition of imperial support for and the promotion of Christianity. He also embodies an important development in the social history of imperial praise. Traditionally, the individuals authorised to express a public judgement about living emperors were philosophers and rhetoricians who claimed *parrhesia* to also criticise them; historians felt entitled to judge only deceased emperors. Eusebius, however, is a bishop who commented on the emperor both during his lifetime and after his death.[8] He was familiar with the technical expressions for Roman rulers, but, following the tradition of the panegyrics, he normally uses the word βασιλεύς with some exceptions where he prefers graecised Latin expressions for the sake of clarity.[9]

Three of his works reveal how Eusebius reacted to the Constantinian challenge: The *Historia ecclesiastica*, the final version of which was probably published in its present form in about 323,[10] the *Laudes Constantini* of 336 and his *Vita Constantini*, which was published after Constantine's death.

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8 Still foundational is Raffaele Farina, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea: La prima teologia politica del Cristianesimo*, Zurich 1966, who, however, underlines much more the unity of Eusebius's concept than I intend to in this contribution. Cf. Dvornik (cf. fn. 7) 614 – 622. Martin Wallraff, Eusebs Konstantin. Geschichte, Theologie und keine Geschichtstheologie? In: Delgado, Mariano (ed.): Gott in der Geschichte: Zum Ringen um das Verständnis von Heil und Unheil in der Geschichte des Christentums. Fribourg/Stuttgart 2013, 85 – 98 warns against reading the texts with a predominantly theological perspective.

9 E. g. Euseb., hist. eccl. 2.23.1; Euseb., vita Const. 1.1.3; 1.18.1; 1.22.2; 3.43.4. It goes without saying that the Latin titles appear in the official documents quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia ecclesiastica*.

10 For an introduction to the work, see Sébastien Morlet and Lorenzo Perrone, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire ecclésiastique. Commentaire I. Études d'introduction*, Paris 2012. More recently, see V. Bradley Lewis, Eusebius of Caesarea's Unplatonic Platonic Political Theology. In: Polis. Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought 34 (2017) 94 – 114.

The final version of the last three books in Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*[11] describe the history of his own age. The eighth book graphically depicts Diocletian's and Galerius' persecutions,[12] the ninth hails the triumphs over the two persecutors (in Eusebius' eyes) Maxentius and Maximinus Daia, and the tenth praises the new rule and the final victory of Constantius, who is bringing about an age of peace. After some brief mentions, Constantine is formally introduced when he intervenes in the civil wars, and Eusebius makes his role clear immediately: he is elected by God, the son of a ruler, and a pious man (9.9.1) – piety is the only virtue mentioned at this stage.

Eusebius strongly highlights the legitimacy of the ruler because Constantine's acclamation as emperor directly contradicted the system of the tetrarchy, which did not envisage hereditary succession. In the course of the narration, Constantine shows mercy (φειδώ) to the inhabitants of Rome under tyrannical rule – a good reason to fight for their old freedom, we are expected to believe. Maxentius perishes like Pharaoh (9.9.5–8). This parallel likens Constantine to Moses, who was perceived as an ideal leader by early Christians.[13] He is received by the senate and the people of Rome and greeted as liberator, saviour and benefactor (λυτρωτής, σωτήρ, εὐεργέτης: 9.9.9). These were traditional acclamations with a long pagan tradition, yet, they must have reminded Christians of Christ, especially the title σωτήρ (saviour).

In his narrative, Eusebius praises Constantine on the basis of Roman traditions – highlighting the senate's role and Roman liberty (a motive also present in contemporaneous panegyrics and on his coins) along with biblical references. Eusebius takes for granted that both traditions converge easily although Christianity prevails. Constantine shows no arrogance attributing his success to Christ alone. Consequently, he issues legislation in favour of the Christians (9.9.10–12).

The tenth book begins with a prayer of thanksgiving. Furthermore, it celebrates the reestablishment of the churches and the building of new churches, especially the

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11 For the stages of the genesis of the books and their meanings, see Valerio Neri, Les éditions de l'Histoire ecclésiastique (livres VIII–IX). Bilan critique et perspectives de la recherché. In: Morlet and Perrone (cf. fn. 10) 151–183; Matthieu Cassin, Muriel Debié and Michel-Yves Perrin, La question des editions de l'Histoire ecclésiastique et le livre X, ibid. 185–207. Most recently, see Patrick Andrist, La dernière édition Eusébienne del'Histoire Ecclésiastique: Une nouvelle proposition. In: Scriptorium 69 (2015) 217–235.

12 This is also described in Eusebius' *De martyribus Palaestinae*.

13 Bernd Isele, Moses oder Pharao? Die ersten christlichen Kaiser und das Argument der Bibel. In: Andreas Pečar and Kai Trampedach (ed.), Die Bibel als politisches Argument. Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne (HZ Beihefte 43), Munich 2007, 103–118. Finn Damgaard, Propaganda against Propaganda: Revisiting Eusebius' Use of the Figure of Moses in the *Life of Constantine*. In: Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott (ed.), Eusebius of Caesarea. Tradition and Innovations (Hellenic Studies 60), Cambridge MA 2013, 115–132; Lehnardt (cf. fn. 2) 89–100.

church of Tyre (see the unusually long chapter 10.4),[14] reproduces various pro-Christian imperial laws and reports the final victory over Licinius who wages war against all Christians (a passage, which Eusebius added in his final revision after praising Licinius as a worthy partner of Constantine in previous versions). The final paragraphs celebrate Constantine as victor, God-fearing, and the creator of a unified empire full of splendour that he rules with laws full of philanthropy. The last sentences of the *Historia ecclesiastica* indicate the spirit that shapes the passages on Constantine:

> There were promulgated in every place ordinances of the victorious emperor full of love for humanity, and laws that showed munificence and true piety. Thus verily, when all tyranny had been purged away, the kingdom that belonged to them, was preserved steadfast and undisputed for Constantine and his sons alone; who, when they had made their very first action to cleanse the world from the hatred of God, conscious of the good things that He had bestowed upon them, displayed their love of virtue and of God, their piety and gratitude towards the Deity, by their manifest deeds in the sight of all men.[15]

Constantine, as characterised in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, is first and foremost a pious and, consequently, successful ruler. This continues the tradition of classical concepts of good rulership. But justice, which is so important elsewhere, has no prominent position here; instead, the emperor creates a situation in which everybody (or rather, every Christian) can lead a life of spiritual fulfilment. Eusebius' Constantine fosters the Christian church by every means available. The bishop does not offer a reflection on the limits of rulers as human beings; instead, the reader has the chance to contemplate the materialisation of a perfect world (although he learns that Satan is always looking at it invidiously). The reader will find no distinctively Christian virtues, but Eusebius uses the instrument of typology to illustrate Constantine's role in the salvific history of Christianity.

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14 On this passage, an oration of Eusebius on the dedication of the cathedral of Tyre, see Jeremy M. Schott, Eusebius' Panegyric on the Building of Churches (Euseb., hist. eccl. 10.4.2–72): Aesthetics and the Politics of Christian Architecture. In: Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (ed.), Reconsidering Eusebius. Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 107), Leiden/Boston 2011, 177–197.

15 Ἥπλωντο δ' οὖν κατὰ πάντα τόπον τοῦ νικητοῦ βασιλέως φιλανθρωπίας ἔμπλεοι διατάξεις νόμοι τε μεγαλοδωρεᾶς καὶ ἀληθοῦς εὐσεβείας γνωρίσματα περιέχοντες. οὕτω δῆτα πάσης τυραννίδος ἐκκαθαρθείσης, μόνοις ἐφυλάττετο τὰ τῆς προσηκούσης βασιλείας βέβαιά τε καὶ ἀνεπίφθονα Κωνσταντίνῳ καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ παισίν, οἳ τῶν πρόσθεν ἁπάντων ἀποσμήξαντες τοῦ βίου τὴν θεοστυγίαν, τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ πρυτανευθέντων ἀγαθῶν αὐτοῖς ᾐσθημένως τὸ φιλάρετον καὶ θεοφιλὲς τό τε πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβὲς καὶ εὐχάριστον δι' ὧν εἰς προὖπτον ἅπασιν ὑτοῖς ᾐσθημένως τὸ φιλάρετον καὶ θεοφιλὲς τό τε πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβὲς καὶ εὐχάριστον δι' ὧν εἰς προὖπτον ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις παρέσχον ὁρᾶν, ἐπεδείξαντο (Euseb., hist. eccl. 10.9.8–9, translation after J. E. L. Oulton).

The *Laudes Constantini* pay tribute to the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's rule celebrated on July 25, 336 – which highlighted the unusual length of his reign.[16] They betray the rhetorical tradition of the panegyrics and do not completely avoid allusions to classical mythology (Praef. l. 2).[17] But in contrasting himself to other rhetoricians, Eusebius uses his status as a cleric to offer something different, as he claims, a spiritual dimension that focuses on the *godlike virtues and pious acts* of the emperor. In fact, he sets out to demonstrate how theology and imperial representation can be reconciled with one another. He thus starts by praising God while at the same time embedding Constantine in the cosmological order, in which God's Logos acts through the emperor. Constantine is dear (φίλος)[18] to God and changes the world in order to make it worthy of God.

> He who is dear to Him, like some interpreter of the Logos of God, summons the whole human race to knowledge of the Higher Power, calling in a great voice that all can hear and proclaiming for everyone on earth the laws of genuine piety.[19]

Constantine does not adorn the jubilee with pagan sacrifices; his sacrifices are his own person and his subjects (2.5). He appears like a priest and is even called ἱεροφάντης (3.1), which was a prestigious title used for the initiating priest at Eleusis, Roman *pontifices* or Jewish High Priests (LSJ 823). Both Christ-Logos and Constantine appear as ὕπαρχοι, governors, of God (3.6; 7.13). The ruler is the image of God and imitates the Logos-Christ at the same time.[20] The concept of correspondence between

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16 The second part of the text as it is edited now is often quoted as LC 11–18. I follow Drake in quoting it as SC (*De sepulchro Christi*), but for pragmatic reasons I start with ch. 11. For the background, see Hal A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine. A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebias' Tricennial Orations*, Berkeley/Los Angeles 1976, 30–45. Drake argues that SC was delivered in 335 in Jerusalem (42f.). Contra Pierre Maraval, Introduction. In: Id. (ed.), Eusèbe de Césarée, La théologie politique de l'empire chrétien: Louanges de Constantin (triakontaétérikos), Paris 2001, 29–34 argues that the speech was given in Constantinople which seems more probable. For the philosophical background apart from the rich study of Farina 1966 and the two translations quoted, see Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2003, 145–151. For ideological background, see Johannes Wienand, *Der Kaiser als Sieger. Metamorphosen triumphaler Herrschaft unter Constantin I.* (Klio Beiheft 19), Berlin 2012, 421–437.
17 For the mocking of classical education, see SC 11.4.
18 Drake translates *friend* (see his note 1 on p. 158); yet it seems obvious that Eusebius wants to evoke the word θεόφιλος here.
19 Ὁ δὲ τούτῳ φίλος οἷά τις ὑποφήτης τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπινον ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ κρείττονος ἀνακαλεῖται γνῶσιν, ταῖς πάντων ἀκοαῖς ἐμβοῶν μεγάλῃ τε φωνῇ τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς ἅπασι τοὺς τῆς ἀληθοῦς εὐσεβείας ἀνακηρύττων νόμους (Euseb., vita Const. 2.4). For Hellenistic influences on this passage, see Drake (cf. fn. 16) 158, n. 4.
20 For the theological background, see Winfried Löhr, Logos. In: RAC 23 (2010) 327–435, at 406–411. For scepticism under theological aspects, see Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche I*, 3rd ed., Freiburg 1979, 300–326. For underlining the inventive character of Eusebius' work, see Devin Singh, Eusebius as Political Theologian: The Legend Continues. In: HThR 108 (2015) 129–154; especially 139–152.

earthly rule and cosmic order, as well as the idea that a good man and good ruler can become similar to God dates back to Plato (e.g., resp. 10, 613a/b; leg. 4, 715e–716d). Eusebius demonstrated that is was possible to rearticulate this idea in a Christian way, which then allowed Themistius to neutralise the concept, making it acceptable both to pagans and Christians.

Eusebius establishes an intimate connection between piety and the reign's duration, the reliable order of succession, and the divinely inspired rule over the whole world (3.1–4); indeed, no Roman Emperor after Augustus had reigned for as long a period as Constantine. The monarchy on earth mirrors the heavenly order and is justified in this way (3.5–6). From the orator's perspective, the whole political system has become sacralised even under an eschatological perspective (3.2 with Dan 7:18).

The emperor's Platonic virtues such as wisdom, goodness, justness and prudence are presented as evidence of his connection with God (5). His mastery of the passions proves that he is a true ruler, which even earns him the title of philosopher-king (5.4). He knows of the precariousness of his reign and prays to God night and day (5.5). Furthermore, he despises the customary symbols and resources of power (5.6f.). After narrating the salvific history of mankind, Eusebius describes Constantine as elected by God to put an end to persecutions and to become the ruler of the whole world, converting the barbarians to Christianity. He suppresses outrageous pagan cults (8–9.8) and remains true to the Christian faith, erecting churches (9.8–19). He is a teacher of the true faith to his soldiers (9.9f.). Constantine has "found in Him the Saviour and Guardian of his house, his kingdom and his line."[21] Eusebius ascribes to him an immediate connection with God. He is the "interpreter of the All-Ruling God" (10.4).[22] There is no need for clerical intervention. Military success does not play an important role here:[23] Eusebius belonged to non-military elites who could not have doubted the necessity of military successes for imperial representation but show an interest in placing non-military achievements in the foreground. It is therefore not necessary to assume that this mirrors a change in the imperial representation as such.

The *Laudes Constantini* have, as it seems, been transmitted together with another very similar work, the *Oration on the Holy Sepulchre* in Jerusalem. Although the problem of kingship is not discussed extensively in the latter, the same idea of the relationship between God, Logos and emperor prevails. Thanks to providence, the Mediterranean world is united when Christianity emerges, and victory is granted to Constantine (16). The saviour approaches him during sleep (18.3) as he had done before the battle at the Milvian Bridge. He duly praises Constantine as the donator of the church and defends his church buildings against pagan detractors (11.2–4).

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21 Εἰκότως αὐτὸν οἴκου, βασιλείας καὶ γένους σωτῆρα καὶ φρουρὸν εὕρατο (Euseb., vita Const. 9.19).
22 Ὑποφήτης τοῦ παμβασιλέως θεοῦ (Euseb., vita Const. 10.4).
23 Noel Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics Cities*, Pennsylvania 2016, 44.

Although many passages mirror ideas of ancient philosophy, especially Platonic and Stoic concepts, the image of the good ruler given by Eusebius is fundamentally new. In the *Laudes Constantini*, the emperor appears as an embodiment of Christian virtue who, like the Logos, mediates between heaven and earth. He imitates God's rule and does not depend on the advice of any cleric whose role is reduced to defining the emperor's position adequately. Christ's suffering is conspicuously absent from this oration. Theological reasons might be invoked to explain this omission or the wish to present an understandable and purely monotheistic religion,[24] but in doing so Eusebius also eschewed any commitment regarding the theological controversies that raged at this time.

In his classic article, Norman H. Baynes defined this text as shaped by Hellenistic traditions and fundamental to Byzantine imperial ideology, in the sense that the existence of one true God meant that there could be only one true ruler on earth.[25] Baynes' description probably presupposes a much too homogeneous idea of Byzantine imperial ideology. In any case, Eusebius was obviously not very influential among his contemporaries or in the next generations of the late antique empire.[26] The next generations of Christians who knew Christian emperors would often view them as heretics; the experience of conflicts and exiles redefined the role of the emperor. Although there was no doubt that the emperor was ordained by God, his personal, human weaknesses were highlighted, which made it much more difficult to identify him with Christ.

Eusebius composed the so-called *Vita Constantini* (which had, to a greater extent, the character of an *encomium*) after the emperor's death; it is already more guarded than his previous works with respect to a Christocentric interpretation of Constantine's role.[27] From the onset, Eusebius makes clear that Constantine is an emperor beloved by God. He draws a strong connection between the emperor's Christian belief and his successes. Constantine is moved to opt for the Christian God by his observation that this God has, in contrast to others, given victory to his father Constantius I (1.27.3). He appears as an exemplary Christian emperor:

> This is... what God whom Constantine honoured, by standing helpfully at Constantine's side at the beginning, the middle and the end of his reign, confirmed by his manifest judgement, putting forward this man as a lesson for the fear of God to the human race. As the only one of the widely renowned emperors of all time whom God set up as a huge luminary and loud-voiced

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24 Drake (cf. fn. 16) 47–58.

25 Norman H. Baynes, Eusebius and the Christian Empire. In: Mélanges Bidez 1934, 13–18 = Id., Byzantine Studies and Other Essays, London 1955, 168–172.

26 The low number of manuscripts is highlighted in Wallraff (cf. fn. 8) 89 f. The *Laudes* have only been transmitted together with some manuscripts of the *Vita*.

27 For commentary, see Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (ed.), Eusebius. Life of Constantine. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary, Oxford 1999 and the excellent *Einführung* by Bruno Bleckmann, Eusebius of Caesarea, De Vita Constantini. Über das Leben Konstantins (Fontes Christiani 83), Turnhout 2007, 7–106.

herald of unerring fear of God, he is the only one to whom God gave convincing proofs of his fear of God by the benefits of every kind which were accorded to him: He honoured his imperial reign with three complete decades, and circumscribed his human life with twice that number. Making him the image (εἰκών) of his own monarchical reign, he appointed him victor over the whole race of tyrants and destroyer of the God-battling giants, who in mental frenzy raised weapons against the Sovereign of the universe himself.[28]

Θεοσέβεια is defined here as Constantine's central virtue. Standard dictionaries translate the word as fear of God, worship of God, religiousness and the like. In Christian contexts it can simply mean right belief or Christianity;[29] in any case, it is clearly different from the idea of similarity to God.

Eusebius' work has a roughly chronological structure. The first two books describe Constantine's triumphant way to sole rule. The third and fourth books feature his achievements as a ruler and the well-being of his subjects while the last chapters of the fourth book describe his death and his burial in detail. Consequently, Eusebius does not enumerate Constantine's virtues and merits systematically and does not even always name them explicitly; instead, he often dedicates entire chapters or a group of chapters to individual deeds that evoke certain virtues which are then hinted at or evoked again or made explicit in passages elsewhere in the *Vita*. In the following, I attempt to systematise the ideas in this seemingly uneven work.

Eusebius' Constantine perfectly embodies the traditional virtues of a ruler. He is a successful general who conquers the whole world (1.46). As a young man, he is excellent in body and soul even arousing envy (1.19 f.). His body remains strong and healthy throughout his life (4.53).

The young man ascends his throne as his father's legitimate successor (1.21 f.) and is at the same time chosen by God (1.24). He proves to be victorious against domestic enemies and against barbarians, often by peaceful means and on a civilising mission.[30] He cares for justice, exemplified by his passing laws and dispensing justice (4.2 f.), and displays generosity (1.9). He cares for the poor and for orphans, be they Christians or not (1.43). Philanthropy is the pinnacle of his virtues (4.54).

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28 Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ θεὸς αὐτός, ὃν Κωνσταντῖνος ἐγέραιρεν, ἀρχομένῳ καὶ μεσάζοντι καὶ τελευτῶντι τῆς βασιλείας αὐτῷ δεξιὸς παραστάς, ἐναργέσι ψήφοις ἐπιστώσατο, διδασκαλίαν θεοσεβοῦς ὑποδείγματος τὸν ἄνδρα τῷ θνητῷ γένει προβεβλημένος· μόνον γοῦν αὐτὸν τῶν ἐξ αἰῶνος ἀκοῇ βοηθέντων αὐτοκρατόρων οἷόν τινα μέγιστον φωστῆρα καὶ κήρυκα μεγαλοφωνότατον τῆς ἀπλανοῦς θεοσεβείας προστησάμενος, μόνῳ τὰ ἐχέγγυα τῆς αὐτοῦ θεοσεβείας διὰ παντοίων τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν κεχορηγημένων ἀγαθῶν ἐνεδείξατο, χρόνον μὲν βασιλείας τρισὶ δεκάδων περιόδοις τελείαις καὶ προσέτι λῷον τιμήσας, τούτων δὲ διπλάσιον τοῦ παντὸς αὐτῷ βίου τὴν ἐν ἀνθρώποις περιορίσας ζωήν· τῆς δ' αὐτοῦ μοναρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὴν εἰκόνα δούς, νικητὴν ἀπέδειξε παντὸς τυραννικοῦ γένους θεομάχων τ' ὀλετῆρα γιγάντων, οἳ ψυχῆς ἀπονοίᾳ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἤραντο τὸν παμβασιλέα τῶν ὅλων δυσσεβείας ὅπλα (Euseb., vita Const. 1.4 – 5.1, translation according to Cameron and Hall [cf. fn. 27]).

29 See, e. g., Lampe, 634 f. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall's translation of θεοσέβεια et sim. with *godliness*, however, is misleading.

30 Euseb., vita Const. 1.8; 1.25; 4.5 – 14; 4.50.

God's grace becomes evident in Constantine's having three sons as co-rulers and successors (4.40) and his ability to be their instructor in the art of ruling (4.52).

In the panegyric fashion, Eusebius evokes exemplary rulers of the past: Cyrus the Persian and Alexander the Macedonian (1.7). Yet, Eusebius' Constantine goes far beyond the pagan model; his peaceful death at an advanced age evidences how God loves him in contrast to them (1.6 f.).

Eusebius' general tendency in his *Vita* is to show that Constantine has outperformed non-Christian rulers in respect to traditional virtues such as courage, mildness, munificence or wise legislation because he believes in the true God and follows his laws. Clarifying that their heroes surpass all the previous rulers was a time-tested technique of panegyrists, but Eusebius accentuates this in a special way: Constantine surpasses any ruler because he believes in God. Thus, he compares Constantine not only to classical models of rulership, but again to Moses in various aspects.

In comparison to the *Historia ecclesiastica,* the *Vita Constantini* interprets Moses much more as a *typos* of Constantine. Moses had lived as a hostage of a tyrant as Constantine did at Diocletian's court and became a liberator of his people (1.12; 1.19.1; cf. 1.39.2). Both had to flee the court (1.20.2). But he is equal to Moses even as a military leader: he defeats Maxentius in the same manner as Moses beat Pharaoh (1.38.2–39.1). He behaves like Moses during the war against Licinius whereas his enemy is obdurate like Pharaoh (2.11 f.).[31] In an image unique to this work, Constantine even appears like an angel during his dazzling *adventus* to the Council of Nicaea (3.10.3).

Eusebius specifies deeds that are characteristic for a Christian ruler: his Constantine suppresses pagan cults.[32] In Eusebius's depiction, Palestine is emblematic for Constantine's anti-pagan measures, especially his purge of the place where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was to be built (3.62.5) and of Mamre (3.52–53). He favours Christianity and Christians wherever possible issuing laws to this intent and writing letters that teach and help Christians.[33] He grants privileges to clerics, builds churches in Jerusalem, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Antioch and in other places (1.42,2; 3.29–53), and he has holy books distributed to the churches. He furthers the churches economically, which also entails helping the poor (4.44.2; 4.28). His Christian attitude is even visible in his foreign policy, as he acts as a protector of Persian Christians (4.8–13).

On the occasion of his *vicennalia*, Constantine distributes donations across his empire. But this jubilee is also connected with the Council of Nicaea, which Eusebius

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31 On the assimilation of Moses to Christ, see Euseb., dem. evang. 3.2.1–30; Lehnardt (cf. fn 2) 93–95. For Moses in the *Praeparatio* and *Demonstratio*, see Sabrina Inowlocki, Eusebius' Appropriation of Moses in an Apologetic Context. In: Axel Graupner and Michael Wolter (ed.), Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 372), Berlin/New York 2007, 241–255.
32 Euseb., vita Const. 2.23–61.1; 3.54–58; 4.23; 25.
33 Euseb., vita Const. 3.24; 4.18–20; 4.34.

describes in all its splendour, and thus has an ecclesiastical aspect (3.22). He pays respect to clerics, even if they look shabby in their attire, and wants to be surrounded by them (1.42.1; cf. 2.4.1); he knows that their prayers can help him (4.14) and shows a keen interest in a sermon of Eusebius (4.33), which might even astonish modern readers.

As a Christian emperor, Constantine faces new and difficult challenges such as the never-ending quarrels among Christians. Eusebius repeatedly mentions his efforts to reconcile rival Christian groups and to establish peace within the church.[34] The climax is the Council of Nicaea, where he leaves no doubt that the emperor is the leading figure on this occasion (3.6–23; for the emperor especially 3.12f.). In general, Constantine energetically fights heresies (3.63–66). But he cannot ignore the fact that disputes continued to torment Christians and makes envy responsible for them, which has its origins in Satan.[35]

Constantine's achievements are deeply connected with certain virtues: he leads a holy, pure life, again in imitation of Moses (2.12.1), but also in accordance with Christian ethics (2.14; 4.22).

Although Eusebius glorifies Constantine extensively, he also adopts the semantics of humility:

> As a loyal and good servant, he would perform this and announce it, openly calling himself a slave and confessing himself a servant of the All-sovereign, while God in recompense was close at hand to make him Lord and Despot, the only Victor among the Emperors of all time to remain irresistible and unconquered....[36]

This again evokes Moses who is called a great servant (μέγας θεράπων) in 1.39.1.[37] But it also reminds Christian readers of the servant of God in Deutero-Isaiah, which they interpreted as a prophecy regarding Jesus Christ. Another virtue is *parrhesia*, the old catchword of the Athenian democracy, which in a Christian context means the frank

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34 Euseb., vita Const. 1.44; 2.61.2; 3.59 f.; 4.41–47.

35 Euseb., vita Const. 2.61.3; 2.73.1; 3.1.1; 3.59.1; 4.41.1.

36 Ὁ μὲν οἷα πιστὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς θεράπων τοῦτ' ἔπραττε καὶ ἐκήρυττε, δοῦλον ἄντικρυς ἀποκαλῶν καὶ θεράποντα τοῦ παμβασιλέως ὁμολογῶν ἑαυτόν, θεὸς δ' αὐτὸν ἐγγύθεν ἀμειβόμενος κύριον καθίστη καὶ δεσπότην νικητήν τε μόνον τῶν ἐξ αἰῶνος αὐτοκρατόρων ἄμαχον καὶ ἀήττητον (Euseb., vita Const. 1.6) – the chapter continues this way; cf. 1.3.1.

37 The same word is in Euseb., hist. eccl. 1.2.6; 9.9.8. For humility as a self-designation, see Euseb., vita Const. 1.5.2; 1.47.2; 2.55.1; 3.5.2; 4.14.1. 2.71.4. For humility for other servants of God such as clerics, see 1.17.1; 2.2.3; 2.71.2; 4.7.1. Eusebius avoids the word ταπεινός and its derivatives in the *Vita*, apart from ταπεινόφρων, which, however, occurs only in a letter written by Constantine and not related to his own person (4.10.3). For passages that accentuate the limits of human life in Eusebius, see Farina 1966, 220 f. I do not think that this is specific enough to be interpreted as an expression of humility.

confession of trusting in God and therefore speaking freely before him and any worldly authority.[38]

The virtue of philanthropy, mentioned above, automatically carries Christian connotations in Eusebius' works (2.20.1). The emperor shows mildness towards his enemies in war (2.13). Eusebius could have derived this from within the tradition of Roman thought in the sense of Caesarian *clementia*, but he frames it in a Christian way.

This means that Eusebius' Constantine is not only the Roman emperor par excellence but also embodies all the different Christian roles. The virtue of *parrhesia* brings him close to martyrs and other defenders of Christian confessors, teachers, prophets and bishops. Humility is an elite Christian virtue highly distinctive from traditional ideas that put honour centre stage.

Despite his ostensible respect for clerics, Constantine has his own relationship with God, not only praying himself (4.22), but also reading the Holy Scripture (4.17). Fittingly, he receives visions from God not only before the battle of the Milvian Bridge.[39] As a good orator (4.55), he does not shy away from teaching theology (4.29–31).

It comes as no surprise that Constantine is depicted as an almost perfect emperor. Eusebius goes so far as to compare him with the sun because of his manifold qualities (καλοκαγαθία) (1.43.3). There are few critical accents. The failure of his attempts to reconcile Christians is implied in the narration. Speaking about philanthropy, Eusebius concedes that the emperor could have been misled by it to trust deceivers (4.54.3). But these are rare exceptions.

Perfection sounds boring. Nevertheless, it is important to look at what remains unsaid. In contrast to the earlier texts, the *Vita Constantini* does not provide an eschatological perspective and the character of sacralisation is different. Eusebius compares Constantine to Moses and to an angel, but not to Christ or the Logos. On the other hand, the aspect of humility is more prominent. There is no single Eusebian concept of monarchy; rather, it changes in the course of his works. The image of Constantine was to become a crucial feature of the idea of good Christian rulers, as can be seen in many contributions of this volume, but their viewpoints seem to have been mainly influenced by his *Historia ecclesiastica* and by other idealising traditions about Constantine rather than by Eusebius' most nuanced work, the *Vita Constantini* (which then was used by the so-called synoptical Greek church historians).

Although there is not one unitary concept of the good Christian ruler in Eusebius' works, Constantine appears throughout the three texts discussed so far as a man in direct contact with God and receiving his own visions.[40] Although he

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38 Euseb., vita Const. 1.8.4; 1.41.1; 3.2.2. To read it in another context (a letter of Constantine), see 1.32.2.

39 Euseb., vita Const. 1.28; 2.12.2; 3.3.3; 3.25.

40 This was a central element of Constantine's self-representation. See Lenski (cf. fn. 23) 56–60 who underlines that this idea was familiar to pagans.

shows respect to clerics, he does not depend on them. The well-known parallel between monarchy and monotheism also turns up in the *Vita Constantini*:

> And he, famous for every virtue of God-fearing, the Emperor Victor (he created this title personally for himself as his most appropriate surname because of the victory God had given him over all his enemies and foes)[41] took over the east. He brought under his control one Roman Empire united as of old, the first to proclaim to all the monarchy of God, and by the monarchy himself directing the whole of life under Roman rule.[42]

With all his pious language, Eusebius is aware of the limits of this concept. Constantine rebukes a cleric who says that he will reign alongside the Son of God:

> When all these things were being done by the Emperor, and his great valour on God's behalf was being praised by the mouths of all, one of God's ministers in an excess of boldness declared in his presence that he was "Blessed," because in this present life he had been judged worthy of universal imperial power, and in the next he would rule alongside the son of God. He was annoyed on hearing these words, and told him he should not say such rash things, but should rather pray for him, that in both his life and the next he might be found worthy to be God's slave.[43]

This is also a clear theological message. The *Laudes Constantini* could be read in the sense that Constantine was a second Christ. This is the idea the cleric expresses who went too far according to Eusebius' Constantine. It must have been in the air at this time, but Eusebius clearly rejects it in his text that is primarily directed at Constantine's sons.

Eusebius' depiction of the perfect, successful, and modest Christian ruler Constantine in his so-called *Vita Constantini* attests to his imaginative power. The traditional role of the emperor is not supplanted, but enlarged by his Christian commitments, which, however, are more important since they are decisive for the wellbeing of the world. In contrast to the *Laudes Constantini*, the emperor is not assimilated to Christ and the Logos; instead, he is a loyal servant, which implies an attitude of humility towards God.

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41 S. Wienand (cf. fn. 16) 486.

42 Ὁ δ'ἀρετῇ θεοσεβείας πάσῃ ἐμπρέπων νικητὴς βασιλεύς ταύτην γὰρ αὐτὸς αὐτῷ τὴν ἐπώνυμον κυριωτάτην ἐπηγορίαν εὕρατο τῆς ἐκ θεοῦ δεδομένης αὐτῷ κατὰ πάντων ἐχθρῶν τε καὶ πολεμίων νίκης εἵνεκα τὴν ἑῴαν μένης αὐτῷ κατὰ πάντων ἐχθρῶν τε καὶ πολεμίων νίκης εἵνεκα τὴν ἑῴαν ἀπελάμβανε, καὶ μίαν συνημμένην κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν ἐποιεῖτο, μοναρχίας μὲν ἐξάρχων θεοῦ κηρύγματος τοῖς πᾶσι, μοναρχίᾳ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ Ῥωμαίων κράτους τὸν σύμπαντα πηδαλιουχῶν βίον (Euseb., vita Const. 2.19.2).

43 Καὶ δὴ τούτων βασιλεῖ συντελουμένων, ἀνὰ στόμα τε πάντων ἀνυμνουμένης αὐτοῦ τῆς κατὰ θεὸν ἀρετῆς, τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ λειτουργῶν τις ἀποτολμήσας εἰς αὐτοῦ πρόσωπον μακάριον αὐτὸν ἀπέφαινεν, ὅτι δὴ κἂν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ τῆς κατὰ πάντων αὐτοκρατορικῆς βασιλείας ἠξιωμένος εἴη κἂν τῷ μέλλοντι συμβασιλεύειν μέλλοι τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ. ὁ δὲ ἀπεχθῶς τῆς φωνῆς ἐπακούσας μὴ τοιαῦτα τολμᾶν παρήνει φθέγγεσθαι, μᾶλλον δὲ δι' εὐχῆς αἰτεῖσθαι αὐτῷ κἂν τῷ παρόντι κἂν τῷ μέλλοντι τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δουλείας ἀξίῳ φανῆναι (Euseb., vita Const. 4.48).

It is easy to see that Eusebius' depiction of Constantine not only idealises him but is meant to be a stylisation of Constantine's rule (which was perfectly legitimate in this genre of writing).[44]

Eusebius tries to eschew the question of Constantine's doubtful legitimacy within the tetrarchic system that conceded no privileged position to the natural sons of tetrarchs. Eusebius does not mention Hannibalianus and Dalmatius, both of whom had an important role in Constantine's plans for his succession but were murdered on the order of his sons who are duly praised as rightful rulers (1.1.3). Eusebius must have been aware of the accusations against Constantine that included debauchery or murder within his own family, which are documented in the works of Zosimus and even of the church historian Sozomen.[45] But he does not deem it necessary to refute them.

In his *Laudes Constantini*, Eusebius brilliantly developed a Christocentric discourse of rule – whether on the behest of Constantine or not remains unclear. Yet, his *Vita Constantini* already shows its limits. The following generations of Christians discussed the question of the sacral character of the emperor under various aspects. Was he a superhuman being? Should he be defined as a priest? What could his role be in church?[46] Hierocratic discourses grew in importance especially during the sixth and seventh centuries. Justinian (r. 527– 565) staged himself as a holy man, but also acknowledged his own sinfulness. Both Christian discourses came together in this case.[47] George of Pisidia attributed Christ-like qualities to Heraclius (r. 610 – 641). When he helps his soldiers during a ship-wreck, light emanating from Heraclius reminds Christian readers of the transfiguration of Jesus as described in the synoptic gospels; like Jesus in Gethsemane, he loses sweat while praying.[48] The hierocratic discourses were extremely influential, but they existed in multifarious variations.

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44 In another study, I have discussed how Eusebius, in the same work, frames Constantine's actions through his description of his palace: Hartmut Leppin, Zwischen Kirche und Circus: Der Palast von Konstantinopel und die religiöse Repräsentation Constantins des Großen. In: Joachim Ganzert and Irmgard Nielsen (ed.), Herrschaftsverhältnisse und Herrschaftslegitimation. Bau und Gartenkultur als historische Quellengattung hinsichtlich Manifestation und Legitimation von Herrschaft (Hephaistos. Sonderband 11), Berlin 2015, 129 – 140.

45 Sozom. hist. eccl. 1.5.1; Zos. 2.29.

46 E. g. Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.: Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret (Hypomnemata 110)*, Göttingen 1996.

47 Mischa Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Hypomnemata 147), Göttingen 2003, 608 – 638.

48 Hartmut Leppin, George Pisides' *Expeditio Persica* and Discourses on Warfare in Late Antiquity. In: Anna Lefteratou and Fotini Hadjittofi (eds.), Generic Debates and Late Antique Christian Poetry. Between Modulations and Transpositions (Trends in Classics. Suppl. Vol. 86), Berlin/Boston 2020, 293 – 309.

3 Neutralising Discourses: The Case of Themistius

Eusebius focused on Christian audiences. Most Roman panegyrists of the fourth century, however, gave speeches at the court, in the senate or before other public bodies and had to consider that their audiences were complex and religiously mixed. Thus, there were pagans and Christians whose degree of religious commitment differed within both of these groups. There were people whose identity was shaped by their religious position (for example bishops), others whose personal convictions were strong, but many who did not put religion centre stage and were more interested in their personal advancement and/or in the unity of the Roman Empire. Most of them would have avoided contacts with the Christian church and were pagans in that sense; but a growing number consisted of people who were at least open to Christian teachings (although only a tiny fraction would have been baptised). Religion was an important factor. But one should not take for granted that religion was the subject that shaped every discourse. Often this issue was sidestepped or simply regarded as less relevant. A neutralising discourse that avoided commitments to either side helped to reduce tension between Christians and pagans.

Significantly, the collection of *Panegyrici Latini*, which comprises 12 panegyrics, spans the time from Pliny's panegyric on Trajan (100) to Pacatus' speech on Theodosius (389). The collection was probably compiled in Gaul and seems to have served the purposes of rhetorical schools. Five speeches praise Constantine, three of them were composed before 312 (no. 5 in 311/2, no. 6 in 310, no. 7 in 307) and two afterwards (no. 12 in 313 and no. 4 in 321). The fact that the collection includes speeches from both before and after 312 demonstrates that rhetoricians did not feel that the Christianisation of imperial rule caused an unbridgeable gap.

In addition, given the diversity of the audience, there were good reasons to compose speeches that were neutral in terms of religion. Neutrality in the sense used here[49] has an aspect of avoidance, but also includes certain concepts acceptable to both pagans and Christians. Avoidance means not addressing the building of either temples or churches or other acts that implied a clear religious commitment. When, for example, Themistius quoted the Hebrew Bible he referred to Assyrians,

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[49] On the concept of neutralisation, see Hartmut Leppin, Christianisierungen im Römischen Reich. In: ZAC 16 (2012) 245–276, especially 259–265. The term "neutralisation" goes back to Carl Schmitt, who, however, has a very critical stance on the subject. I interpret it as a means of creating peace in societies riddled with fundamental conflicts. However, I deliberately avoid Schmitt's term 'political theology,' which has spurred a long debate, since it seems too loaded with contemporary issues and does not take account of the nuances of political thinking in antiquity. Schmitt, Die europäische Kultur in Zwischenstadien der Neutralisierung. In: Europäische Revue 5.8 (1929) 517–530. For a recent overview, see Singh (cf. fn. 20).

which was a classical as well as a neutral word (or. 7.89d; 11.147b/c; 19.229a).[50] On the other hand, ambiguous concepts, such as the praise of piety appealed to pagans and Christians alike; likewise, as mentioned before, philanthropy could be understood in both a general or specifically Christian sense.

To that effect, the Latin panegyrics claim Constantine was divinely protected, without elaborating on who this God/god was. They used general expressions in a vague monotheistic sense such as *that force, that majesty that distinguishes right and wrong* or *this supreme majesty*[51] and extolled virtues acceptable to everybody such as accessibility, clemency, the ambition to win glory (which some Christians might have found disturbing). There are some more passages of which meticulous theologians would not have approved, but they were certainly not intended to be provocative.

It is curious to see how the panegyrists dealt with Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge, the event many Christians praised as being decisive for Constantine's conversion. As early as 313, an unknown orator dedicated a speech to this event (12[9]), especially 14–18.[52] He makes clear that this victory was God-given, mostly dwelling on abstract religious expressions in respect to a single divinity. He mentions *dii minores* (2.5) and an abstraction such as *Fortuna* (2.5; 6.2; 15.6; 22.6). Nevertheless, Constantine's success is not based on his adherence to certain religious practices, but he has been selected by (a) god. Yet, there is no mention of a vision or of an intervention of the Christian God.

Nazarius' panegyric on Constantine, dated to 321 (4[10]) strives even harder to reach neutrality in its language. The speech discusses the Battle of the Milvian Bridge before the Roman Senate, an audience of which the majority would have been pagan, though not necessarily committed pagans.[53]

It comes as no surprise that Nazarius extolls Constantine's military successes, among them his victory at the Milvian Bridge (27.5–30.3), which leads to the liberation of Rome. Nazarius' description of the battle centres on the military qualities of Constantine. He does not mention the intervention of any God/god, be they Christian or pagan. He speaks of the role of Fortuna (26.1) and mentions *Mars* (7.1) but leaves it up to the reader whether to understand this to mean a divinity or an abstract principle.

I do not think it is helpful to speculate on whether or not Nazarius was a Christian. On the one hand, there were many variations of more or less committed forms of

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50 For a possible allusion to Christian theology in or. 1.8b, see Michael Schramm, *Freundschaft im Neuplatonismus. Politisches Denken und Sozialphilosophie von Plotin bis Kaiser Julian*, Berlin/Boston 2013, 201 f.

51 Pan. Lat. 4(10).7.4: *illa vis, illa maiestas fandi et nefandi discriminatrix* (taking up Verg., Aen. 1.543); 4(10).16.1: *summa illa maiestas*.

52 Christian Ronning, *Herrscherpanegyrik unter Trajan und Konstantin* (Studien zu Antike und Christentum 42), Tübingen 2007, 291–379; Wienand (cf. fn. 16) 246–253.

53 On this speech and its political background, see Wienand (cf. fn. 16) 281–287.

Christianity; on the other, Nazarius had to take his audience into account, which consisted of both Christians and non-Christians. Using a neutralising language was the most obvious way to navigate this course.

The avoidance of religious commitments in panegyric texts is part of a wider phenomenon of neutralisation in the fourth century Roman Empire. In this context, I am focusing on political connotations as they were a general feature of imperial representation, but neutralisation also affected the perception of the intellectual tradition of the Mediterranean world.[54]

Themistius (ca. 317–after 388), perhaps the most famous orator of his age, embodies an attitude that brought together loyalty and neutrality. He celebrated emperors in religious semantics but circumvented concepts that were either specifically Christian or specifically pagan. The philosopher-rhetorician has perplexed many scholars. He was a pagan but served Christian emperors loyally and did his best to praise their achievements without directly mentioning their efforts to foster Christianity – which were, however, crucial from the perspective of many Christian authors. Themistius was a highly educated Grecophone author based in Constantinople.[55] Like many philosophers of his time, he set out to harmonise Aristotelian and Platonic philosophical concepts. His paraphrases of Aristotle's works were translated into Latin, Hebrew and Arabic.[56]

Another significant portion of his oeuvre is made up of his orations, among them a group called the political orations because they were intended to be performed before political institutions. Eighteen political orations have been transmitted[57] – they praise Constantius II, Jovian, Valens, Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius. Although it is difficult to gauge to what degree they have been edited, there is no doubt that they are close to the original since they were clearly tailored to specific historical circumstances.

All the emperors were Christians, but Themistius was able to glorify them without relying on specifically Christian concepts. No oration of his on Julian is attested

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54 As a *locus classicus*, see Greg. Nyss., Mos. 2.112–115.

55 John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, Ann Arbor 1995; Peter J. Heather, Themistius: A Political Philosopher. In: Mary Whitby (ed.): The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity, Leiden 1998, 125–150. Robert M. Errington, Themistius and His Emperors. In: Chiron 30 (2000) 861–904. For the philosophical context, see Schramm (cf. fn. 50) 182–299, especially 200–228. Dvornik (cf. fn. 7) 622–626 sees the Hellenistic influence as the common denominator between Eusebius and Themistius. The fact that Themistius does not mention minor gods betrays Christian influence in his view (626).

56 For translations and transmissions, see Aburraḥmān Badawi, *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe*, Paris 1987, 115–117; Robert B. Todd, Themistius. In: Virginia Brown (ed.), Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries, Bd. 8, Washington, D.C. 2003, 57–102.

57 Numbered as or. 1–11; 13–19. The 12th is an early modern forgery.

with certainty,[58] which is remarkable since Themistius exchanged letters with Julian and certainly did not oppose him. He may have abhorred the emperor's uncompromising stance towards Christianity and his Neoplatonic philosophy, but perhaps he simply lacked the opportunity to give a speech on Julian who spent only a few months in Constantinople during his brief reign. It could also be a matter of transmission.

In many regards Themistius' speeches follow the tradition of earlier orators, such as Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides who discussed ideas of good kingship, and draws upon the rules for panegyrics known from Menander Rhetor. Themistius has often been condemned as an opportunistic flatterer, which is an anachronistic judgement given his function as an official orator. But he certainly adapted to the requirements of individual rulers. Therefore, each of his orations retains its own character.

Nevertheless, he sticks to certain philosophical concepts, which he hammers home to his audiences again and again. The emperor is encouraged to demonstrate by his rule that he is imitating God, who has chosen him, even assimilating himself to God through his virtues. Although in contrast to God he is not eternal and does not possess a superabundance of power, he can display his resemblance (ὁμοίωσις) to God:

> But virtue towards mankind, gentleness and goodwill...are those not much more accessible for him who shares in our common nature? For this is what makes him godlike, this is what makes him divine; it is thus that a king becomes divinely nourished, thus divinely born, and we will not be lying when we attribute divinity to him on these terms.[59]

In this way, the emperor can be described as a reflection of the peaceful well-ordered cosmic rule of God.[60]

An important neutralising concept is the idea of philanthropy, which was a core value of late antique rulership. In Themistius' view it was mainly this virtue that connected humanity, especially the emperor, and God.[61] Philanthropy was a royal virtue early on and was highlighted by Hellenistic philosophers. This concept could be understood in the sense of Christian charity as well as in the tradition of Roman *clementia*. Other aspects include that rulers are invested with their power by God and em-

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58 On the *Risâlat* (which is only preserved in two Arabic manuscripts) as a speech of Themistius for Julian, see Vanderspoel (cf. fn. 55) 115 – 134; 241 – 249.

59 Ἡ δὲ εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἀρετὴ καὶ πρᾱότης καὶ εὐμένεια (...) μὴ καὶ μᾶλλόν ἐστιν ἐγγυτέρα τῷ κοινωνοῦντι τῆς φύσεως αὕτη ποιεῖ θεοείκελον, αὕτη θεοειδῆ, οὕτω διοτρεφὴς γίνεται βασιλεύς, οὕτω διογενής, οὕτως αὐτῷ τὴν θειότητα ἐπιφημίζοντες οὐ ψευσόμεθα (Them., or. 6.79a/b).

60 In her dissertation, Simone Mehr (Frankfurt am Main) will show in detail how Themistius addresses individual issues within the imperial political platform as proof of the emperor's divine legitimisation.

61 Boris Maslov, The Limits of Platonism. Gregory of Nazianzus and the Invention of *theōsis*. In: GRBS 52 (2012) 460 – 468, especially 466 – 468. See also Schramm (cf. fn. 50) 211 – 228.

body the law (νόμος ἔμψυχος), the latter also being a well-known Hellenistic concept. In later orations, Themistius alludes to biblical passages but in passing side by side with quotations from Plato and Aristotle. He certainly did not define the Bible as the most authoritative text as Christians would have. In contrast to Neoplatonic thinkers of his time, he sees the active involvement of philosophers teaching their audiences about imperial virtues in politics as crucial – they are, however, surpassed by the emperor who can actively make a difference and is closest to God.[62]

As an illustration of his attitude I will discuss the fifth oration, perhaps his most famous work since it pleads for forbearance with deviant religious attitudes.[63] In this speech, Themistius addresses Jovian who had come to power under difficult circumstances. When Julian, his predecessor, died in Persia, the troops acclaimed the new emperor unexpectedly. Ammianus even suggests that some hailed him erroneously, because of the similarity of his name with Julian's (25.5.6). He had to come to terms with Persia (which entailed territorial losses) in order to safely lead his troops back to the Roman Empire, which was afflicted with religious conflicts. Representatives of the conflicting parties streamed to the new emperor in the hope of winning him over to their concerns. On the 1st of January 364, while he was in Ancyra, Jovian assumed the office of the consul together with his infant son Varronianus. This was the occasion for which Themistius gave his oration.

The panegyric starts in a way typical of Themistius, underlining from the first paragraph the importance of philosophy for good rulership. During the festivities for a consulship the task of the philosopher is not to entertain the audience, but to contribute something useful, albeit in a pleasing manner. Jovian is a worthy emperor since he has decided to restore philosophy to the palace once more. Thus, Themistius duly starts his counselling, underlining that the emperor embodies the law and what this implies:

> (The philosophy) declares that the king is law embodied, a divine law which has come down from on high at last, an outpouring of the everlasting Good, a providence of that nature closer to the earth, (a law) which looks in every way towards Him (God) and strives in every way for imitation.[64]

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62 O'Meara (cf. fn. 16) 206 – 208. There was another line of philosophy at his time that relied on theurgic practices. Its importance to Themistius will be demonstrated in detail by Simone Mehr. For a foundational study on pagan identities in late antiquity, see Jan Stenger, *Hellenische Identität in der Spätantike: Pagane Autoren und ihr Unbehagen an der eigenen Zeit* (UALG 97), Berlin 2009.

63 Vanderspoel (cf. fn. 55) 138 – 154; Stenger (cf. fn. 62) 371 – 377; Hubert Cancik and Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier, Religionsfreiheit und Individualisierung von Religion. In: Martin Wallraff (ed.), Religiöse Toleranz. 1700 Jahre nach dem Edikt von Mailand (Colloquium Rauricum 14), Berlin 2016, 193 – 222; Peter van Nuffelen, *Penser la tolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive*, Paris 2018, especially 57 – 59.

64 (Φιλοσοφία) νόμον ἔμψυχον εἶναί φησι τὸν βασιλέα, νόμον θεῖον ἄνωθεν ἥκοντα ἐν χρόνῳ τοῦ δι' αἰῶνος χρηστοῦ, ἀπορροὴν ἐκείνης τῆς φύσεως, πρόνοιαν ἐγγυτέρω τῆς γῆς, ἁπανταχοῦ πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ὁρῶντα, πανταχοῦ πρὸς τὴν μίμησιν τεταμένον (Them., or. 5.64b).

This passage is full of Neoplatonic semantics and therefore deeply embedded in a non-Christian (and in that sense pagan) tradition. However, it is articulated in such an abstract way that most Christians could accept it as an adequate description of a ruler trusting in God and invested by God. Themistius praises the circumstances of Jovian's election and does not conceal how unexpected his ascension to the throne was. From Constantine to Julian, dynastic succession had prevailed. Therefore, Jovian's elevation to the throne was a significant break. But Themistius defines him as a dynastic relative in soul and therefore as a worthy successor as he excels in virtue: "But our voters and soldiers preferred spiritual to physical kinship and declared as heir to the imperial purple the heir of his virtue"[65]. Even the Persians were impressed and threw away their weapons as a sign that the Romans had elected the best emperor – East and West concurred in deeming him the rightful Roman emperor. He proved himself worthy of the task as he took an office that was "unstained with blood" (ἀναίμακτον: 66d) – this is how Themistius described the humiliating peace treaty he made with the Persians, which had been concluded without acts of violence thanks to Roman concessions. Another point of praise is Jovian's generosity to his former comrades whom he does not treat arrogantly. He also makes a good choice of courtiers.

But the longest passage is dedicated to his policy of forbearance. It starts on a high semantic and intellectual level:

> Hence your legislation on the divine has become a prelude for your care for mankind. And now my speech has arrived at the point of departure to which I have long been tending. For it seems that you alone are not unaware that a king cannot compel his subjects in everything, but that there are some matters which have escaped compulsion and are superior to threat and injunction, for example the whole question of virtue and, above all, reverence for the divine and that it is necessary for whoever intends that they should exist naturally to take the lead in these good things, having realised most wisely that the impulse of the soul is unconstrained, and is both autonomous and voluntary.[66]

Themistius puts forward various reasons for his conviction. Jovian knows that he cannot compel his subjects when it comes to religion. Another argument is that competition between religions is beneficial; he compares religious diversity with a race to one arbiter (68d). Jovian follows Plato's legislation in allowing traditional cults to be observed and prohibiting magical practices. At the end of the speech the orator makes a slightly detracting remark: Themistius deplores that the festivities for the

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65 οἱ δὲ ἡμέτεροι ψηφηφόροι καὶ στρατιῶται τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἀγχιστείας τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς προεξήτασαν, καὶ ἀπέφηναν κληρονόμον τῆς ἀλουργίδος τὸν κληρονόμον τῆς ἀρετῆς (Them., or. 65c).

66 Εἶτά σοι προοίμιον γέγονε ἡ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιμελείας ἡ περὶ τοῦ θείου νομοθεσία. καὶ δῆτα ἐμβέβηκεν ὁ λόγος εἰς ἣν πάλαι ὡρμήμην ἀρχήν. μόνος γάρ, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐκ ἀγνοεῖς ὅτι μὴ πάντα ἔνεστι τῷ βασιλεῖ βιάσασθαι τοὺς ὑπηκόους, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἃ τὴν ἀνάγκην ἐκπέφευγε καὶ ἀπειλῆς ἐστι κρείττω καὶ ἐπιτάγματος, ὥσπερ ἥ τε ἄλλη ξύμπασα ἀρετὴ καὶ μάλιστα ἡ περὶ τὸ θεῖον εὐλάβεια, καὶ ὅτι χρὴ προηγεῖσθαι τῶν ἀγαθῶν τούτων ὅτῳ μέλλει μὴ πεπλασμένως ὑπάρξειν ἀβίαστον τὴν ὁρμὴν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ αὐτοκρατῆ καὶ ἑκούσιον πάνυ σοφῶς κατανοήσας (Them., or. 67b/c).

consulship do not take place in Constantinople. This is a common theme in Themistius' works and criticising the emperor in this aspect was part of the game; nobody could take offense if Themistius did so as a local representative. At this time, it was reasonable to expect Jovian to arrive in Constantinople soon – nobody could foresee his sudden death caused by the poisonous fumes of a warming fire.

Other orations by Themistius add further imperial virtues and achievements: self-control, education, mildness even towards offenders, generosity (which can materialise in tax-reductions as in or. 8), and justice. Only the incessant claim that the emperor should show interest in the affairs of Constantinople is a more parochial element of Themistius' rhetoric, for obvious reasons.

As mentioned before, Themistius was able to adjust his manner of praise according to his subject. Constantius II, for example, appears to be a philosopher on the throne (especially or. 1). It would have come as a real surprise to the audience if Themistius had ascribed education to Valens who had a rural and military background; nonetheless, Themistius underlines his respect for philosophy (or. 6) and describes him as a practitioner of philosophy (or. 9). In a sense, emperors were better philosophers than Themistius could be as he says modestly. They had better opportunities to enact their philosophy in active life, which Themistius preferred to mere contemplation (which, however, took precedence for many Neoplatonists).[67]

Military victory against domestic and foreign enemies is praised repeatedly, even more so peaceful victories, like Vetranio's renunciation of power in the time of Constantius (or. 2–4) or Theodosius' treaty with the Goths who had invaded the Roman Empire and were permitted to settle there (or. 16). Barbarians should be convinced to become loyal subjects of the emperor, not killed (or. 10; 15). This attitude ties in well with the praise of Jovian for his peace treaty – it is obvious that a panegyrist such as Themistius was closer to administrative than to military elites. He knew how to face special challenges. The eighth oration underlines not only the importance of brotherly love between the siblings Valens and Valentinian but also reforms in taxation. He duly praised military successes, but still more peace treaties (or. 16). And he does not mention any event comparable to Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge that was interpreted as the decisive step to Christian rule.

None of the virtues extolled by Themistius were offensive to Christians or pagans. There is, however, no passage in which Themistius praises the emperors for their support of the Christian religion or their fight against paganism. This aspect is obviously side-stepped. Every thought, every argument in Themistius' writings is shaped by what he deems philosophy.[68] His philosophy is rooted in the classical tradition and draws on classical concepts of virtue. Yet, he defines the corresponding values in a way that was acceptable, even familiar to many Christians, especially

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67 For the distance between Themistius and Neoplatonic philosophers, see O'Meara (cf. fn. 16) 207.
68 Simone Mehr will explore this in more detail in her doctoral dissertation.

to those who had devised a theology imbued with Platonic concepts. Thus, Christians could be depicted as philosophers, at least in practice.

Themistius, the pagan orator at Christian courts, was a virtuoso in using neutralising discourses. The passages on forbearance in his fifth oration can be read as justifications of a neutralising attitude which does not force anybody into dishonest confessions and allows for the free competition of ideas. This seems to have been the emperor's attitude at a time when he was not strong enough to disappoint any group and when many inhabitants of the Roman Empire were disaffected by Julian's partisan policy. Perhaps most importantly for the ruling classes, this attitude dodged conflicts. It comes as no surprise that this justification was not very influential in its time since neutralisation was the result of a compromise and took shape as a set of practices. Although the influence of Stoic thinking about individual liberty is visible, this policy was not the result of political theorising or the consequence of certain values highlighting human dignity, as is the case with the idea of tolerance in modern times.[69] This is the only oration in which Themistius explicitly sets out to (indirectly) justify the neutralising discourse he uses in all his political speeches. It remains an almost isolated case.

Themistius was a master in ambiguity and thus able to use Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of good rulership without offending his Christian audience. He was not the only orator who followed those lines. Libanius' 59th oration, probably of 344/5 during the co-rulership of Constans and Constantius II, steers clear of any religious commitments although it alludes to the consequences of confessional conflicts.[70] He is considerably more aggressive against Christians in other speeches such as in his Julianic orations (12–18; 24) and his *Pro templis*.[71] The panegyrics composed by Julian as crown prince on Constantius II and on Eusebia point in a more neutralising direction.[72] While the first speech is very formal,[73] the second (viz. third) speech con-

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69 A similar idea occurs in Symm., relat. 3.8, but he argues not from a philosophical standpoint, but from a historical and religious one. For more detail, see Cancik and Cancik-Lindemeier (cf. fn. 63) 216.
70 For the date, see Werner Portmann, Die 59. Rede des Libanios und das Datum der Schlacht von Singara. In: BZ 82 (1989) 1–18; Karin Mosig-Walburg, Zur Schlacht bei Singara. In: Historia 48 (1999), 330–384. The suppression of mantic practices as praised in § 167 might be viewed as a religious measure but is not interpreted as antipagan by Libanius.
71 Lieve Van Hoof (ed.), Libanius: A Critical Introduction. Cambridge 2014, especially Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, Emperors and Empire in Libanius, 187–219; Heinz-Günther Nesselrath et al. (ed.), Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz. Libanios' Rede für den Erhalt der heidnischen Tempel. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays versehen, Tübingen 2011.
72 Klaus Bringmann, *Kaiser Julian. Der letzte heidnische Herrscher*, Darmstadt 2004, 49–52; Stenger (cf. fn. 62) 140–152. See also Schramm (cf. fn. 50) 300–443. On the contributions on the individual speeches, see Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (ed.), Emperor and Author. The Writings of Julian the Apostate, Swansea 2012: Shaun Tougher, Reading between the Lines: Julian's First Pangyric on Constantius II., 19–34; Hal A. Drake, 'But I digress...' Rhetoric and Propaganda in Julian's Second Oration to Constantius, 35–46; Liz James, Is there an Empress in the Text? Julian's Speech of Thanks to Eusebia, 47–59.

forms much less to rhetorical rules and seems to exhort the emperor using very general terms to not neglect the cult of gods (86a). This should not be taken as a clear indication of Julian's paganism; whether this speech was given in public remains to be answered.[74] Like Themistius, Julian performs the role of a philosopher on this occasion and like him, he does not mention Christianity. He had not yet revealed his pagan convictions at this time, but this rhetorical tradition must have appealed to him.

At the turn of the century, Synesius of Cyrene (who would later become bishop) avoided a clear religious commitment in his speech *Peri basileias,* which unmistakeably betrays Themistius' influence. This text exhorts Emperor Arcadius (395–408) to return to Roman traditions of military prowess and to suppress the influence of barbarians. The orator argues with unusual frankness using the literary guise of a panegyric. It was probably not delivered before the emperor but possibly to another audience.[75] Even in the time of Justinian, writers such as Agapetus and the author of the *Dialogue on Political Science* can be seen as upholding a neutralising tradition. Although some hints at Christianity may be heard, such as quotations of Psalm 111 (110):10 or Proverbs 1:7 in Agapetus 17, the works are dominated by a Platonising tradition.[76] But these were exceptions. Most concepts of rulership put Jewish-Christian traditions centre stage. It must therefore have been a conscious decision to stick with a tradition that was not specifically Christian but could be easily accepted in an educated Christian context.

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73 Alan J. Ross, The Constantinians' Return to the West. Julian's Depiction of Constantius II in Oration I. In: Diederik Burgersdijk and Alan J. Ross (ed.), Imagining Emperors in the Later Roman Empire (Cultural Interactions in the Mediterranean 1), Leiden/Boston 2018, 183–203 interprets this speech as a revision of Libanius' account.

74 Stefan Schorn, Legitimation und Sicherung von Herrschaft durch Kritik am Kaiser. Zum sogenannten zweiten Panegyrikos Julians auf Kaiser Constantius (or. 2 [3] Bidez) (243–274). In: Thomas Baier (ed.), Die Legitimation der Einzelherrschaft im Kontext der Generationenthematik (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 251), Berlin 2008, 243–274 argues that Julian plante to integrate pagan elites with this approach. On the debate of the seriousness of the oration, see Schramm (cf. fn. 50) 359 f. On the possibility of a parody, see Drake (cf. fn. 72). Stenger (cf. fn. 62) 142–147 interprets the Homeric allusions as subversive in themselves.

75 Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius*, Berkeley 1993 are doubtful. For an argument in favour of a select private audience, see Alexander Petkas, The King in Words: Performance and Fiction in Synesius De Regno. In: AJPh 139 (2018) 123–151. On a performance before the emperor, see Hartwin Brandt, Die Rede peri basileias des Synesios von Kyrene – ein ungewöhnlicher Fürstenspiegel. In: François Chausson and Etienne Wolff (ed.), Consuetudinis amor. Fragments d'histoire romaine (IIe–VIe siecles) offerts à Jean-Pierre Callu (Saggi di storia antica, 19), Rome 2003, 57–70.

76 Patrick Henry III, A Mirror for Justinian. In: GRBS 8 (1967), 281–308; O'Meara (cf. fn. 16) 171 f.; Peter N. Bell (ed. and transl.), Three Political Voices from the Age of Justinian, Liverpool 2009. O'Meara rightly states that there is little Platonic philosophy in a rigid sense in the text but the philosophical attitude is similar to that of Themistius.

4 Go-Betweens, Saints and Sinners: Conclusions and Outlook

The fourth century was an age of experiments. Christians and non-Christians pondered about how to cope with the unexpected advent of a Christian emperor. The rulers themselves were forced to decide what being a Christian meant to their personal behaviour; Constantius II, by the way, seems to have taken this much more earnestly than Constantine. Christian Roman officials had to decide to what degree they were obliged to fight paganism – under Theodosius (379–395) the legislation became much tougher although in practice it seems to have been relatively mild. They had to ask themselves to what degree they would side with one of the confessional groups and which role synods should play. In addition (and certainly more importantly), they waged wars against domestic rivals, but also against foreign enemies. They had to deal with economic problems, collect taxes, issue laws, and dispense justice in the Empire. Every single emperor differed in their approach to Christian rulership. Julian (361–363), in fact, decided to demonstratively act as a non-Christian ruler although his rulership exhibited many Christian influences.

This ever-changing situation made it even more difficult for panegyrists to fulfil their task. They drew on various sources in praising the ruler, they took different ideological stances, and they had to react to the more or less explicit demands of individual rulers. Therefore, acclaiming the good Christian ruler must have been anything but monotonous.

In order to chart the map, I have drawn a heuristic distinction between neutralising and hierocratic discourses on the praise of imperial rule during the fourth century. Whereas the former avoided religious commitments and was intended to appeal to Christians and non-Christians alike, the latter extolled the person of the emperor in view of Christian concepts. There was, however, no unitarian Christian concept of rulership. Even within the works of a single author, such as Eusebius, many differences are visible despite having certain semantics in common regarding the traditional virtues of the emperor. Consequently, they made use of certain ambiguous 'buzzwords,' among which philanthropy is probably the most important. With all their religious and ideological differences, Christians and pagans had a common cause, which went beyond identifying with the Roman Empire against foreign enemies and included basic values that were not only based on *paideia*.

As I have said, Christian discourses could vary considerably. The extreme form would have been a Christocentric discourse that identified the emperor with Christ, which was rare. By way of contrast, the idea of the emperor as the perfect embodiment of virtues was extremely popular. It included traditional as well as Christian virtues, while some Christian virtues for their part could easily be identified with the traditional ones. This distinction can therefore only be heuristic. The Christianising discourse did not exclude the possibility of the well-intentioned Christian emperor making mistakes or even experiencing defeat. The penitential discourse even put

humility centre stage, and this had an important consequence in terms of authority. Doing penance meant accepting the bishop's pastoral responsibility as Theodosius had to accept Ambrose's role as intermediary between himself and God.[77]

An important feature in the development of the idea of rulership was criticism of the ruler, especially of perceived heretical ones. Authors could resort to invective as taught by rhetoricians; in addition, the Old Testament provided rich material in this regard. The Latin author Lucifer of Cagliari, a sharp critic of Constantius II, was perhaps the most aggressive user of this rich source of antagonistic language.[78] *Ex negativo*, critical remarks could not but enrich the discourse on the good ruler.

The fourth century left a complex heritage. Although Christianity became ever more important at this time, there was no linear development. Even neutralising discourses survived throughout late antiquity as we have seen, and Christocentric discourse could be rejuvenated. Nor was there one dominant Christian discourse; nevertheless, Christian discourses became predominant and a growing number of Christian authorities were inclined to disambiguate such concepts as philanthropy in order to give them a specifically Christian meaning. This volume demonstrates that Christianity prompted many more discourses, which are part of the polyphony of late antique Christianity.

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77 See Boytsov and Preuß in this volume.

78 Walter Tietze, *Lucifer von Calaris und die Kirchenpolitik des Constantius II: Zum Konflikt zwischen dem Kaiser Constantius II. und der nikänisch-orthodoxen Opposition (Lucifer von Calaris, Athanasius von Alexandria, Hilarius von Poitiers, Ossius von Córdoba, Liberius von Rom und Eusebius von Vercelli)*, Diss. Tübingen 1976, 82–76; Javier Pérez Mas, *La crisis luciferiana: un intento de reconstrucción histórica*, Rome 2008, 142–148.

Mikhail A. Boytsov

The Good Sinful Ruler: Ambrose of Milan and Theodosius I

The first major innovation in imperial representation inspired by Christianity surfaced more than half a century after the death of Constantine.[1] The actions of two prominent figures from this time jointly led to this change. Ambrose (c. 339–397) – the bishop of the imperial residence Milan – was certainly the initiator of this influential political development.[2] However, Theodosius I's (347–395) own role in establishing this new element of imperial representation should not be underestimated.[3] The emperor's act of repentance which he had to perform publicly in 390 or 391

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1 This study was conducted within the framework of the project "'Centers' and 'Peripheries'" in Medieval Europe as part of the program for foundational research at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow) for the year 2017.

2 Among the copious amount of research literature, see especially: *Wirtz R*. Ambrosius und seine Zeit. Trier, 1924; *Campenhausen H.v.* Ambrosius von Mailand als Kirchenpolitiker. Leipzig, 1929; *Palanque J.-R.* Saint Ambroise et l'empire romain. Paris, 1933; *Dudden F.H.* The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose. Vol. 1–2. Oxford, 1935; *Paredi A.* Sant'Ambrogio e la sua età. Milano, 1940; *Morino C.* Chiesa e stato nella dottrina di s. Ambrogio. Rome, 1963 (English Translation: *Morino C.* Church and State in the Teaching of St. Ambrose. Washington, D.C., 1969); *Courcelle P.* Recherches sur saint Ambroise. "Vies" anciennes, culture, iconographie. Paris, 1973; *Gottlieb G.* Ambrosius von Mailand und Kaiser Gratian. Göttingen, 1973; *Storoni Mazzolani L.* Ambrogio vescovo. Chiesa e impero nel IV secolo. Milano, 1992 (= Il Cammeo, 229); *McLynn N.B.* Ambrose of Milan. Church and Court in a Christian Capital. Berkeley. Los Angeles 1994 (= The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 22); *Williams D.H.* Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflict. Oxford, 1995; *Ramsey B.* Ambrose. London, 1997; *Moorhead J.* Ambrose. Church and Society in the Late Roman World. London / New York, 1999; *Sordi M.* L'impero al tempo di Ambrogio. Milano, 2000 (= Collana La zattera, 2). Also: *Diesner H.J.* Kirche und Staat im ausgehenden vierten Jahrhundert: Ambrosius von Mailand, in: Idem. Kirche und Staat in spätrömischem Reich. Berlin, 1963. p. 22–45; *Schneemelcher W.* Kirche und Staat im 4. Jahrhundert. Bonn, 1970; *Barnes T.* Religion and Society in the Age of Theodosius, in: Grace, Politics and Desire: Essays on Augustine / Ed. by Hugo A. Meynell. Calgary, 1990. p. 157–175; *Dassmann E.* Ambrosius von Mailand: Leben und Werk. Stuttgart, 2004.

3 In addition to the numerous articles in encyclopaedias and other general reference works, see especially: *Güldenpenning A., Ifland J.* Der Kaiser Theodosius der Große, ein Beitrag zur römischen Kaisergeschichte. Halle, 1878; *Dölger F.J.* Kaiser Theodosius der Große und Bischof Ambrosius von Mailand in einer Auseinandersetzung zwischen Predigt und Meßliturgie, in: Antike und Christentum. Vol. 1. Münster, 1929. p. 54–65; *Egger R.* Der erste Theodosius, in: Byz. Vol. 5. 1930. p. 9–32; *Enßlin W.* Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Theodosius des Großen. Munich, 1953; *Greenslade S.L.* Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius. London, 1954; *King N.Q.* The Emperor Theodosius and the Establishment of Christianity. Philadelphia, 1960; *Lippold A.* Theodosius I, in: RE Supplementband 13. Munich, 1973. p. 837–961; *Idem*. Theodosius der Große und seine Zeit. Munich, 1980 (= Urban-Bücher, 107); *Mellon D.B.* Theodosius and the Conversion of the Roman Pagan Aristocracy. Michigan, 1984; *De Giovanni L.* La politica religiosa di Teodosio I, in: Rassegna di diritto romano. Vol. 40. 1994. p. 102–111; *Klein R.* Theodosius der Große und die christliche Kirche, in: Eos. Vol. 82. 1994. p. 84–121; *Williams St., Friell G.* Theodosius. The Empire at Bay. L., 1994; *Lizzi Testa R.* La po-

became a very important precedent that has remained firmly embedded in ecclesiastical history and has become a point of reference in various political contexts even into the early modern period.[4] This episode in Milan influenced Ambrose and Theodosius' contemporaries and their descendants to such a degree that the demonstration of *humilitas* has ever since that time become one of the cardinal virtues of a true Christian ruler.

Although scholarly literature on the repentance of Theodosius is extensive, some important aspects of this politically symbolic act and its transmission have, surprisingly, received little attention. The following pages will attempt to highlight facets of this episode that have so far not been sufficiently discussed and scrutinised. The first part discusses if Ambrose can really be seen as a spokesman for outrageous "public opinion": the stance he obviously intended to take. Parts two, three and four focus on Ambrose's famous letter to Theodosius. Although most modern scholars have seen the "theological" sections of this work as a less important assortment of biblical quotations, this article will demonstrate that they actually constituted the political core of Ambrose's message. The fifth part revisits an old question: What might the emperor's penance have looked like? Or, at the very least, how did his contemporaries or their descendants imagine it? Finally, the sixth part will attempt to explain how and to what end Ambrose transformed his own public image of Theodosius as a penitent into the model of the perfect ruler, a model that would remain influential for centuries.

1 Manipulating the Church Synod

The trigger for the bishop of Milan's ground-breaking initiative was the rather brutal retaliation against the inhabitants of Thessalonica following a riot in the spring or perhaps summer of 390. Exactly what occurred and to what extent the emperor was personally responsible for the massacre cannot be accurately reconstructed due to vague, conflicting and for the most part highly biased accounts. A new analysis of the transmission of the dramatic events in Thessalonica would require its own comprehensive study that is beyond the scope of this paper. The following assumption will suffice for the present study: unlike ecclesiastical historians of the fifth century, modern scholarship tends to regard the excesses of 390 as the result of highly

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litica religiosa di Teodosio I. Miti storiografici e realtà storica, in: Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell'Accademia die Lincei. Ser. 9. Vol. 393. 1996. p. 323 – 361; *Ernesti J.* Princeps christianus und Kaiser aller Römer. Theodosius der Große im Lichte zeitgenössischer Quellen. Paderborn; Munich; Vienna; Zürich, 1998 (= Paderborner Theologische Studien, 25); *Leppin H.* Theodosius der Große. Auf dem Weg zum christlichen Imperium. Darmstadt, 2003; *Maraval P.* Théodose le Grand (379 – 395); le pouvoir et la foi. Paris, 2009; *Lançon B.* Théodose. Paris, 2014.

4 See foremost: *Schieffer R.* Von Mailand nach Canossa: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der christlichen Herrscherbuße von Theodosius d. Gr. bis zu Heinrich IV, in: DA. Vol. 28. 1972. p. 333 – 370.

unfortunate circumstances, perhaps even random chance, rather than an outcome of a direct imperial order.[5]

In scholarly literature, Ambrose always appears as a bold representative of public opinion, alarmed by the events in Thessalonica. A synod was in session in Milan at the time, and Ambrose states that among the bishops of northern Italy at the synod "there was no one who did not lament, nobody who took it (the news of the massacre – *M.B.*) lightly."[6] This was because nobody could recall anything comparable to what had happened in Thessalonica.[7] This is the perspective on these events found in the most important source: Ambrose's well-known letter to Theodosius.[8] It had been aptly noticed that this letter "is not an account of the events but is itself an important part of them."[9] While the transmission of the letter is problematic, its authenticity is not in doubt.[10] However, the question of whether the original text

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5 *Larson C.W.R.* Theodosius and the Thessalonian Massacre Revisited – Yet Again, in: Studia patristica. Vol. 10. 1970. p. 297–301; McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 315–330; *Groß-Albenhausen K.* Imperator christianissimus. Der christliche Kaiser bei Ambrosius und Johannes Chrysostomos. Frankfurt a.M., 1999 (= Frankfurter althistorische Beiträge, 3). p. 113–114; *Just P.* Imperator et Episcopus: Zum Verhältnis von Staatsgewalt und christlicher Kirche zwischen dem 1. Konzil von Nicaea (325) und dem 1. Konzil von Konstantinopel (381). Stuttgart, 2003 (= Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge, 8). p. 200; Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 154–155; *Kelly Ch.* Ruling the Later Roman Empire. Cambridge (Mass.), 2009. p. 223; *Doležal S.* Rethinking a massacre: What really happened in Thessalonica and Milan in 390?, in: Eirene. Vol. 50 (1–2). 2014. p. 89–107.

6 *Quando primum auditum est, propter adventum Gallorum episcoporum synodus convenerat, nemo non ingemuit, nullus mediocriter accepit* [...] – Ambr., epist. 11(51).6. Cited following the edition of: Sancti Ambrosi Opera. Pars X. Epistulae et acta / Rec. O. Faller et M. Zelzer. T. 3. Vienna 1982 (= CSEL 82/3). English translation according to: Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches / transl. by J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz with the assist of C. Hill. Liverpool, 2005.

7 *Factum est in urbe Thessalonicensium quod nulla memoria habet.* – Ibid.

8 The surviving text does not contain a date. It is generally assumed that the letter must have been composed around the 10th of September 390. There are two reasons for this assessment: Firstly, the text refers to a comet that was visible from the 22nd of August until the 17th of September. Secondly, the emperor could not have returned to Milan until after the 8th of September, as this is the date recorded on his last edicts from Verona (VI id. Sept). See, Palanque (cf. fn. 2) 538. This reasoning has not convinced everyone. Later attempts have again dated the incidents at Thessalonica to the spring of 390: Lippold (cf. fn. 3) 888.

9 Schieffer (cf. fn. 4) 339: "nicht einen Bericht über die Ereignisse darstellt, sondern selber ein wesentlicher Bestandteil des Geschehens [...] ist."

10 Ambrose originally decided not to include this letter – and the 15 others – in the collection of *Epistulae* he was preparing for publication. Otto Faller and later Michaela Zelzer developed the hypothesis that Ambrose modelled his collection on Pliny's *Epistulae*, which is why he set aside the "political" letters for the tenth and last book. For the justification, see Zelzer's introductions to volumes 2 and 3 of the standard edition: Sancti Ambrosi Opera. Pars X. Epistulae et acta / Rec. O. Faller et M. Zelzer. T. 1–4. Vienna 1968–1996 (CSEL 82/1–4), as well as an array of articles published by the authors in the Anzeiger der philologisch-historischen Klasse der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Vienna and the Wiener Studien. Richard Klein supported this idea and connected the publication of the tenth book to Theodosius' death in 395: *Klein R.* Die Kaiserbriefe des Ambrosius. Zur Problematik ihrer Veröffentlichung, in: Athenaeum. N.S. Vol. 48. 1970. p. 335–371, here p. 364–365. Howev-

was retrospectively edited by the author or not has been a regular point of debate.[11] When was the letter published? Did Paulinus – Ambrose's secretary – succeed in publishing the letter shortly after the bishop's death?[12] Or did the letter caused by the dramatic events at Thessalonica remain hidden even from him, not resurfacing until the ninth century?[13] In any case, the letter is included in only few manuscripts and was very rarely cited until the nineteenth century.

A close reading of the letter allows us to ascertain that Ambrose's role was far more important than merely that of an advocate or spokesperson of church dignitaries. Contrary to all previous scholarship, he appears to have been the very person deliberately suggesting the "correct" opinion to the other bishops. The introductory passage of the letter in which Ambrose narrates how he himself acquired knowledge of the dramatic events in Thessalonica has so far received surprisingly little attention. The emperor had forbidden others to pass on any information concerning the discussions within his *consistorium* to Ambrose. (Historians agree that he placed this restriction on Ambrose as a direct consequence of their dispute about the destruction of the synagogue of Callinicum two years earlier.)[14] However, Ambrose continues: *nihil esse occultum, quod non manifestetur* – nothing is hidden that shall not

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er, other scholars doubt the assumption that Ambrosius tried to imitate the structure of Pliny's *Epistulae* and assume that his intentions must have been quite different. See: *Mazières J.P.* Une principe d'organisation pour le recueil des Lettres d'Ambroise de Milan, in: Ambroise de Milan. XVIᵉ Centenaire de son élection épiscopale. Études augustinniens. 1974. p. 199–218; *Idem.* Les Lettres d'Ambroise de Milan à Irenaeus, in: Pallas. Vol. 26. 1979. p. 103–114; *Savon H.* Saint Ambroise a-t-il imité le recueil de lettres de Pline le Jeune?, in: Revue des Études Augustiniennes. Vol. 41. 1995. p. 3–17. The hypothesis that Ambrose's collection of letters was influenced by that of Pliny seems to have gained acceptance in spite of these contradictions, see, e. g., Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches / transl. by J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz with the assist of C. Hill. Liverpool, 2005 (2nd ed. 2010). p. 31–36. Page 39 of this publication contains a surprising argument for the authenticity of the letter: "Its extremely diplomatic formulation does suggest that it is a real letter, which was actually sent to the emperor."

11 Zelzer assumes that the letter remained unchanged, as Ambrose had not wanted to publish it. By way of contrast, Klein makes the case that while Ambrose did edit the text, he then decided not to publish it: Klein (cf. fn. 10) 353–355.

12 Klein (cf. fn. 10) 355, 367–370. Similar Schieffer (cf. fn. 4) 346.

13 *Zelzer M.* Prolegomena, in: Sancti Ambrosi Opera... T. 3. P. CXV; *Zelzer K., Zelzer M.* Befunde und Probleme lateinischer Tradition, in: Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum. Vol. 8. 2004. p. 107–126, here p. 125.

14 Palanque (cf. fn. 2) 223; Enßlin (cf. fn. 2) 62–63, 67–68. A plausible reconstruction of the events at Callicinum can be found in older literature: *Barth G.* Ambrosius und die Synagoge zu Callinicum, in: Theologische Zeitschrift aus der Schweiz. Vol. 6. 1889. p. 65–86; *De Labriolle P.* Saint Ambroise et l'affaire de Callinicum, in: Revue des Cours et Conférences. Vol. 16. 1898. p. 76–86. On this point, Moorhead (cf. fn. 2) 192–193 is misleading. The authors of more recent literature do not exclude the possibility that the order not to inform Ambrose of important political affairs was given a year later, after the argument about the Altar of Victory (389): Liebeschuetz (cf. fn. 10) 225; *Schulz F.* Ambrosius, die Kaiser und das Ideal des christlichen Ratgebers, in: Historia – Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte. 2014. Vol. 63. H. 2. p. 214–242, here p. 225.

be made manifest.[15] He had had an informant in the imperial council, whose name he did not wish to divulge, so as to protect him from potential danger.[16] The emperor's wrath could conceivably have even threatened the informant's life. The bishop speaks openly of wanting to prevent bloodshed by his silence.[17]

What "public opinion" is indicated here? Ambrose thought it necessary to explain to the emperor how he came to be informed of something that had been discussed in the *consistorium*. The council had not been held in Milan, as Theodosius himself resided elsewhere at this time (probably in Verona).[18] Ambrose's personal "agent" in the emperor's entourage must have sent his secret messenger to Milan with great haste to be able to inform the bishop of the proceedings. The only plausible interpretation is that Ambrose was at first the only person in Milan who knew of the massacre in Thessalonica. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that Ambrose wanted to use the church synod to put the emperor under political pressure in order to regain at the very least easy access to the ruler. Neither official messages, nor rumours could have reached the assembled bishops without Ambrose's initiative; the affair was being kept strictly secret. It seems obvious that Ambrose took the liberty of presenting the message in a way that seemed most suitable to him.

He did not merely inform his colleagues of the dramatic events in a neutral manner – far from it. He had to manufacture a "public opinion," to recruit factioneers for his impending confrontation with the emperor and to obtain rhetorically a justification so that he could refer not only to his own opinion but to that of the synod – essentially the opinion of the church. This is echoed by Rufinus: according to him Theodosius was not condemned by Ambrose alone but by the "bishops of Italy."[19] Ambrose certainly had good reasons to expect the support of the bishops of northern

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15 Ambr., epist. 11(51).2.

16 [...] *ne eos qui in suspicionem proditionis venerint dedam periculo.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).2.

17 *Sed quod in tuis iussis timerem, in meis verbis deberem cavere, ne quid cruentum committeretur.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).3.

18 *Seeck O.* Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n.Chr. Stuttgart, 1919. p. 277–278. Frank Kolb's assumption that the emperor only left Milan so as to escape the pressure Ambrose was putting him under probably goes too far: *Kolb F.* Der Bußakt von Mailand: zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der Spätantike, in: Geschichte und Gegenwart: Festschrift für Karl Dietrich Erdmann / Ed. by Hartmut Boockmann. Neumünster, 1980. p. 41–74 here p. 49. However, it has been adopted by scholars: Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 157 (the conflict between bishop and emperor was also dated differently: before, rather than after Theodosius was in Verona). It seems more realistic that Theodosius was either occupied in Verona with Alemannic issues or – as his predecessors had done – was merely escaping the summer heat of Milan: McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 323, note 112.

19 *Ob hoc cum a sacerdotibus Italiae argueretur, agnovit delictum.* – Rufin. 2(11).18. (Cited according to the edition PL. Vol. 21. Paris, 1878). Augustine, who had left Milan in 387, of course received news from the city with an "Ambrosian" spin, mirrored in his own note on Theodosius' penitence (Aug., civ. 5.26). The "Ambrosian" position is also generally adopted by recent scholarship. E.g.: Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 155.

Italy, insofar as they recognised him as their unofficial leader on other issues.[20] The question remains: were his expectations met?

Contrary to Ambrose's account, most bishops' reactions to his demand were probably more cautiously guarded than supportive. In any case, we know of no voice in their circle that supported Ambrose's position. The bishops did not, for example, decide to wait a few days for the imminent return of the emperor to deliver a more powerful admonition together. Neither did they compose a joint appeal to Theodosius in which they could have expressed their concerns in careful and courteous words. The synod was apparently calmly disbanded and left the bishop of Milan behind to wait alone for the return of his imperial spiritual son. In this context it is easier to understand why Ambrose felt compelled to fall back on his usual "last resort" when in conflict with any of his rulers: to simply leave the situation behind. Ambrose then left Milan, justified by the completely fictitious grounds (as he himself admits) of having fallen ill, and escaped to Aquileia two or three days before Theodosius' arrival in Milan.[21] Aquileia was the second most important episcopal see in northern Italy and its powerful bishop Chromatius was Ambrose's friend.[22] It is likely that he actually supported Ambrose in this precarious political matter, unlike perhaps most of his colleagues. It was in Aquileia that Ambrose composed his letter to the emperor, partially dictated, partially in his own hand.

2 Admonishing the New David

Despite all this, Ambrose starts his *epistula* with the "memory of old friendship [that] is sweet" that connects him to Theodosius.[23] Scholarship cannot confirm whether there ever was such an affectionate relationship between Ambrose and his addressee. Ambrose did not even gain entry to the circle of intimate imperial councils.[24] The old "friendship" was probably mentioned for rhetorical reasons only. Both in medieval and ancient times, the word *amicitia* was often used to describe a relationship between unequals. Ambrose however, as Jörg Ernesti has brought to light, developed his own understanding of *amicitia*. He speaks of an equal status (*aequalitas*) among friends, even if they have different social positions, and of it being imperative

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20 For Ambrose's dominant role among northern Italian bishops, see especially: *Lizzi R.* Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianisation of Northern Italy, in: JRS. Vol. 80. 1990. p. 156 – 173; McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 276 – 290.

21 *Praetendi aegritudinem corporis revera gravem et nisi a viris mitioribus vix levandam vel emori tamen maluissem quam adventum tuum biduo aut triduo non expectaram.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).5.

22 Lizzi (cf. fn. 20) 165.

23 *Et veteris amicitiae dulcis mihi recordatio est* [...] – Ambr., epist. 11(51).1.

24 On this, see: Groß-Albenhausen (cf. fn. 5) 115. "Zu keinem Kaiser hatte Ambrosius ein wirkliches Vertrauensverhältnis" – Schulz (cf. fn. 14) 226.

to return wayward friends to the right path through admonition (*monitio*).[25] In his letter to Theodosius, Ambrose could have been referring to this very concept of friendship, in which the inferior party within the official hierarchy is empowered to point out the superior party's mistakes and to admonish him in private.

Ambrose remembers with gratitude the favours Theodosius had often bestowed upon various persons following the bishop's intercession.[26] (However, this sentence could also be understood to mean that Ambrose felt he himself had never profited from the emperor's favours on account of either his own unselfishness or the emperor's reserve towards his person.) Theodosius should understand that it was not ingratitude that induced the bishop to be absent on the emperor's arrival. In fact, his presence had always been much desired by the bishop.[27] It has rarely been remarked in scholarly literature that this probably referred to the *adventus domini*, the formal arrival ceremony in which the local bishop was almost obliged to take part.[28] Ambrose's absence during this official act of state would have been understood by many as a public act of protest. He admits as much in his letter and promises to explain his reasons in the subsequent lines.[29]

Then Ambrose addresses Theodosius as a shepherd might his sinful congregant: "If the priest will not admonish the wrongdoer, the wrongdoer will die in his guilt but the priest will be liable to punishment because he did not warn the wrongdoer."[30] By taking the conversation to this level ("Listen to this, august emperor!")[31] he changes Theodosius' would-be political misstep into a sin he is compelled to call out in his

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25 Ernesti (cf. fn. 3) 175–176. Vgl. Ambr., off. 3.22.133. The standard edition: Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis opera / Ed. Gabriele Banterle. Vol. 13. Milano; Rome, 1977. p. 354. On this work, see: *Zelzer K.* Randbemerkungen zu Absicht und Arbeitsweise des Ambrosius in De officiis, in: ΣΦΑΙΡΟΣ. Hans Schwabl zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet. Vienna, 1994/1995 (= WSt. Bd. 107/108. 1994/1995). T. 2. p. 481–493, including further bibliographical information.

26 [...] *beneficiorum, que crebris meis intercessionibus summa gratia in alios* contulisti —Ambr., epist. 11(51).1.

27 *Unde colligi potest quod non ingrato aliquo affectu adventum tuum semper mihi antehac exoptatissimum decliner potuerim.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).1.

28 For more detail, see: *Dufraigne P.* Adventus Augusti, Adventus Christi. Recherche sur l'exploitation idéologique et littéraire d'un cérémonial dans l'antiquité tardive. Paris, 1994; *Lehnen J.* Adventus principis. Untersuchungen zu Sinngehalt und Zeremoniell der Kaiserankunft in den Städten des Imperium Romanum. Frankfurt a. M. etc., 1997 (= Prismata, 7). The *adventus* ceremony is not identical to the Roman triumph, despite many similarities. As an example for recent scholarship on the later Roman triumph, see: *Pfeilschifter R.* Der römische Triumph und das Christentum, in: Der römische Triumph in Prinzipat und Spätantike / Ed. by Fabian Goldbeck, Johannes Wienand. Berlin; N.Y., 2016. p. 455–486. McLynn rightly points out that Ambrose must have meant a public ceremony: McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 326. However, he regards it as no more than a purely formal act at court, which could not have had any public meaning.

29 *Sed qua causa hoc fecerim breviter expediam.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).1.

30 *Si sacerdos non dixerit erranti, is qui erraverit in sua culpa morietur et sacerdos reus erit poenae, quia non admonuit errantem.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).3.

31 *Accipe illud, imperator auguste.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).4.

function as bishop. The cause of this sin was the imperfection inherent to Theodosius' human nature: he was too impulsive and irate.[32] (Here we find the roots of that "psychologising" rationalisation of the Thessalonian catastrophe of which later church historians continuously try to persuade their readers.)

And what is more: Ambrose stylises the punitive action following the riot in Thessalonica as a rebellion against God, meaning Theodosius now urgently needed to seek reconciliation with God.[33] He must do this without his bishop's council or mediation. Ambrose leaves the emperor to stand alone before the countenance of his irate God – a very precarious position. However, the bishop offers the emperor an appropriate example of a sinner who finally reconciled with God: King David. The political instrumentalisation of David is one of Ambrose's greatest theoretical and rhetorical achievements. "Contemporary" rulers had previously not been compared regularly to Old Testament kings. Whether this was due to the anti-Jewish attitude of the first Christian emperors, as has been suggested by Eugen Ewig,[34] remains to be seen. In any case, it is thanks to Ambrose that David gradually became a universal topos in the description of Christian rulers. (Later Ambrose may even have dedicated a treatise with the title *Apologia David* to the emperor, which he probably wrote in 386 or 387.)[35]

Ambrose had previously compared Theodosius to David during their earlier conflict on the synagogue of Callinicum on the Euphrates. In the letter he wrote on this event, the bishop asks the emperor: "And what will Christ say to you after this? Do you not remember the instructions he gave to the holy king David through Nathan the prophet?"[36] Immediately afterwards, Ambrose appealed to his addressee in his *own* passionate speech in the style of the Old Testament prophet (2 Sm 7:8–16). The roles had been clearly assigned even then. Theodosius was compared to King David while Ambrose practically merged himself with Nathan, so that the emperor would hear the words of none other than Jesus Christ in the bishop's letter.

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32 [...] *sed habes naturae impetum, quem si quis lenire velit cito vertes ad misericordiam, si quis stimulet in maius exsustitas ut eum revocare vix possis.* – Ibid.

33 [...] *dei nostri reconciliationem fore necessarium.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).6.

34 *Ewig E.* Das Bild Constantins des Großen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters, in: HJb. Vol. 75. 1956. p. 1–46, here p. 5.

35 For its dating see: *Leppin H.* Das Alte Testament und der Erfahrungsraum der Christen: Davids Buße in den Apologien des Ambrosius, in: Die Bibel als politisches Argument: Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne / Ed. by Andreas Pecar, Kai Trampedach (= HZ / Beihefte NF, 43). Munich, 2007. p. 119–133, here p. 131–133. For previous dating attempts see ibid. p. 125 fn. 25. On account of the date it was written the treatise cannot be connected to the episode at Thessalonica: (ibid. p. 131). The authenticity of the dedication to Theodosius is also debated. See also Schulz (cf. fn. 14) 226.

36 *Et quid tecum posthac Christus loquetur? Non recordaris quid David sancto per Nathan prophetam mandaverit?* – Ambr., epist. 74.22. Of course, it was not Christ who spoke to David through Nathan but Sabaoth; however, Ambrose equates these two persons of the Christian Trinity.

In his letter from Aquileia in 390, Ambrose further develops the theme of David the Sinner in a long section with abundant biblical quotations. It is especially interesting to see how the bishop interpreted this theme and which features he chose to highlight. David had to do penance humbly on two occasions. The first occasion occured after he took the beautiful Bathsheba for himself while sending her husband Uriah to his death (2 Sm 11–12; Ps 51). The second time was after he evoked the Lord's anger by trying to conduct a census in Israel and Judah (2 Sm 24:1–10; 1 Chr 21:1–9). However, David's subsequent remorse did not protect him from having to pay a high price for his misdeeds. In the first case, his and Bathsheba's firstborn son died. In the second, 70,000 Israelites fell victim to a plague.

Ambrose begins the long "biblical" part of his letter with the question of whether Theodosius can bring himself to do what David did. For the latter had confessed: "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sm 12:13). However, Ambrose does not describe the circumstances of David's confession. He mentions neither the adultery (which would not really have been fitting in this instance),[37] nor the murder of Uriah the Hittite, deliberately provoked by David (which would have been quite suited to the occasion). Instead, Ambrose retells the parable Nathan used to open David's eyes to his injustice: A rich man had owned many flocks but had taken and slaughtered a poor man's only sheep to prepare and serve for his guest.[38] What does this parable have to do with the events at Thessalonica? Why does Ambrose assert "you have done what the prophet had told King David that he had done"?[39] The bishop of Milan's version is slightly more dramatic than the one later included in the Vulgate: Ambrose says the rich man *occidit* the sheep, whereas in the Vulgata he first *tulit viri pauperis* and then *praeparavit cibos*.[40] In Ambrose's version, the sheep somehow needed to be comparable to the inhabitants of Thessalonica. An attempt of explaining this passage is possible under the assumption that the execution of punitive mea-

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37 Theodosius married Galla the daughter of Emperor Valentinian I in 387. It would have been in Ambrose's interest to avoid any parallels between Bathsheba and Galla, so as not to cast the suspicion of adultery on the latter. This would have been a grave accusation which could have cost Ambrose too much.

38 *An pudet te, imperator, hoc facere quod rex propheta auctor Christi secundum carnem prosapie fecit David? Illi dictum est quia dives qui haberet plurimos greges unam pauperis ovem propter adventum hospitis eripuit et occidit […]. –* Ambr., epist. 11(51).7.

39 *Tu fecisti istud quod David regi dictum est a propheta. –* Ambr., epist. 11(51).7.

40 Ambrose used different early Latin versions of the Scriptures, but also followed the text of the Septuaginta and other Greek translations of the Bible. *Mannix M.D.* Introduction, in: Idem. Sancti Ambrosii oratio de obitu Theodosii. Text, Translation, Introduction and Commentary. Diss. Washington, D.C., 1925. p. 6–7. In one place, he even mentions that, for him, Greek manuscripts have greater authority (*potior auctoritas*): *Hušek V.* The True Text: Ambrose, Jerome, and Ambrosiaster on the Variety of Biblical Versions, in The *Process of Authority*. The Dynamics in Transmission and Reception of Canonical Texts / Ed. by Jan Dušek, Jan Roskovec. Berlin; Boston, 2016, p. 319–336, here p. 323. The bishop was fluent in Greek, perhaps even as a second native tongue: his family had possibly moved to Rome from the East.

sures in Thessalonica was entrusted to troops of Goths.[41] In this case, those very Goths could be equated to the *hospes* for whom the sheep was killed. Assuming this interpretation is correct, this passage could be understood as Ambrose's protest not only against the punitive action in Thessalonica but also against the entirety of the emperor's friendly politics towards the Goths, whom Ambrose considered heretical Arians.

3 Placing Demands on the Emperor

Immediately after the charge of murder, Ambrose unveils the path to "reconciliation with God" to the emperor:

> For if you listen to this attentively and say: *I have sinned against the Lord*, if you repeat that royal and prophetic saying: *O come, let us worship and fall down before him, and let us weep before the Lord our maker* [Ps 95:6], you too will be told: 'Because you have repented, *the Lord will forgive your sin and you shall not die*.[42]

The last sentence is also borrowed from Nathan's words to David (2 Sm 12:13) but not completely. Ambrose added the conditions for forgiveness – this was obviously especially important to him: *quoniam poenitet te*. But then he discontinues the quotation for reasons easily discerned. Nathan continues: "Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the enemies of the LORD, the child that is born to you shall die."[43] Openly threatening the emperor with the death of one of his three sons would, of course, have been imprudent. Could Ambrose, however, have assumed that Theodosius would know the scripture well enough to perceive its macabre context?

Regardless, the bishop immediately proceeds to David's second act of repentance. This time, he describes the reason in detail and even explains why conducting a census was a sin against God (because that knowledge should belong only to the Lord). He narrates how David was offered the chance to choose his own punishment and how the one he chose was indeed carried out. However, in his letter Ambrose simply changes the prophet Gad, through whom God disclosed his will to King

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41 A couple of decades ago, Frank Kolb explained both the conflict in Thessalonica and Ambrose's position with the fact that the massacre must have been committed by the Goths: Kolb (cf. fn. 18) 49 – 50. This opinion has since been widely adopted, see Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 153. However, Stanislav Doležal recently emphasised that it is basically pure speculation: Doležal (cf. fn. 5) 102 – 103.

42 *Noli ergo impatienter ferre, imperator, si dicatur tibi: Tu fecisti istud quod David regi dictum est a propheta. Si enim hoc sedulo audieris et dixeris:* Peccavi domino, *si dixeris regale illud propheticum:* Venite, adoremus et procidamus ante eum et ploremus ante dominum nostrum qui fecit nos, *dicetur et tibi: Quoniam poenitet te, dimittet tibi dominus peccatum tuum et non morieris.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).7.

43 2 Sam 12:14. In the Vulgata this passage is phrased as: *Verumtamen quoniam blasphemare fecisti inimicos Domini, propter verbum hoc, filius qui natus est tibi, morte morietur.*

David in this Bible passage, into Nathan, thereby underlining the deliberate parallel-ism between himself and this prophet.[44]

He again carefully quotes David's confessions while silently skipping over other, obviously irrelevant details of the biblical text. First, when David confesses his trans-gression the first time: "I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly" (2 Sm 24:10; 1 Chr 21:8). This last part is phrased slightly more dramatically by Am-brose than in the Vulgate: "because I have sinned exceedingly."[45] Was this how the passage appeared in the Vetus Itala Ambrose used or did he himself change the quote to have the desired effect?

Ambrose subsequently quotes David's second confession, made when he saw the angel annihilating his people:

> Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against the house of my father. (2 Sm 24:17; 1 Chr 21:17).

Ambrose breaks off the citation at this point, even though the passage in Chronicles continues: "but not on thy people, that they should be plagued." Without this miti-gating ending the threat against "the house of my father" must have seemed even more impressive.

In his elaborate depiction of both of David's acts of repentance, Ambrose is ob-viously phrasing his own demands of the emperor: Theodosius must confess his sin and repent. The next section differs strongly in style from what Ambrose had written previously. Instead of a more or less detailed depiction of moralising episodes four(!) passages of three(!) different Old Testament books are cited in succession without the slightest explanation of their respective contexts. The first passage has absolutely nothing to do with David and is a loose (perhaps too loose) paraphrase of two verses from the Book of Job (31:33–34): "I have not hidden my sin but declared it before all the people."[46] Then, without any transition the author abruptly returns to the theme of David who is now, however, presented in a completely different light. David no longer appears as villain and sinner. He is, on the contrary, first and foremost the possible victim of a crime and then also the very person judging a murder. Ambrose cites the words Jonathan spoke to his father, the "barbaric" King Saul (1 Sm 19:4–5): "Do not sin against your servant David" and "why do you sin against innocent blood

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44 *Iterum cum plebem numerari iussisset David, percussus est corde et dixit ad dominum:* Peccavi ve-hementer quod fecerim hoc verbum, et nunc, domine, aufer iniquitatem servi tui quod deliqui vehe-menter. *Et missus est iterum ad eum Nathan propheta qui ei trium optionem conditionum offerret ut quam vellet eligeret* […] *Culpa autem erat quoniam voluit scire numerum totius plebis que secum erat, quod scire deo soli debuit reservare.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).8–9.

45 *Ego peccavi et ego pastor malignum feci et hic grex quid fecit? Fiat manus tua in me et in domum patris mei.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).9.

46 *Iob sanctus et ipse potens in saeculo ait: Peccatum meum non abscondi sed coram plebe omni an-nuntiavi.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).10.

to slay David without a cause?"[47] This is directly followed by Ambrose's explanation: "For though he was king he would nevertheless sin if he slew an innocent man." However, the author does not elaborate on his comment and instead proceeds straight to a new example: David was king by this time and heard of the death of the innocent Abner by Joab's hand (2 Sm 3:28). David said: "I and my kingdom are now and forever innocent of the blood of Abner, son of Ner" – *et ieiunavit in dolore* (and he fasted in grief) Ambrose added in his own words.[48]

This section is an inconsistently composed "patchwork" that can only be comprehended in light of the hypothetical reconstruction of the bishop of Milan's method. But the reverse is also true: the inner logic of these few lines must be understood first to be able to arrive at a hypothetical reconstruction. Apparently, Ambrose composed his argument in a first step and only then – in the second step – started to look for the "suitable" passages and examples in the Scriptures. These were not merely illustrations but also powerful arguments. Even though nothing about this method was original or individual, the morphology of the letter to Theodosius enables us to trace this rhetorical practice in a more nuanced manner.

Thus, it seems Ambrose daws up three (veiled) requirements for the emperor in the "biblical part" of his *epistula*. First, a ruler who has sinned against God must admit his guilt and repent. This assertion is, as has been shown above, supported by a succession of Bible passages. Second, the ruler's repentance must be public. (The passage about Job who was relentlessly tested serves as the only argument here.) Third, Ambrose defines exactly what Theodosius should repent of: the emperor's sin is the murder of innocents, as even kings are forbidden to spill innocent blood.

Considering these three requirements, framed with the help of Bible passages, the sections just examined (7–10) must be counted among the most central. This core of the letter has so far been largely ignored by scholarship, because the "biblical part" seems at first glance to be merely a chaotic mixture of quotations from the Bible. The letter has primarily been mined for "specific historic events," mostly in the preceding or following passages in which the author does not hide behind the lines of the Old Testament. For example, a recent study devoted a total of four-and-a-half pages to this famous letter to Theodosius. The "biblical part" of the letter warranted no more than the following statement in the eyes of the author: "Theodosius should not be ashamed to do what David had also done. He should confess that he has sinned and show his remorse, for he is likewise only a human being."[49]

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47 *Ipsi immani regi Saul dixit Ionathas filius suus: Noli peccare in servum tuum David, et: Ut quid peccas in sanguinem innocentem occidere David sine causa?* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).10.

48 *Denique etiam David cum iam regno potiretur et audisset Abner innocentem occisum a Ioab duce militiae suae ait: Innocens sum ego et regnum meum amodo et usque in aeternum a sanguine Abner filii Ner, et ieiunavit in dolore.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).10.

49 Groß-Albenhausen (cf. fn. 5) 116: "Theodosius sollte sich nicht schämen, das zu tun, was auch David getan habe: Er solle bekennen, dass er gesündigt habe, und bereuen, denn er sei auch nur

4 Veiled Threats

The sentence "You are a man and temptation has come your way. Conquer it!"[50] already belongs to a new section in which Ambrose describes how the emperor must fulfil his demands.

> I have written these things [i.e., including the three requirements presented before – *M.B.*] not to embarrass you but so that these examples involving kings[51] may induce you to lift this burden of sin from your kingship; and you will lift it by humbling your soul before God.[52]

Pointing to the fact that the emperor is human, Ambrose further asserts that "Sin cannot be abolished otherwise than by tears and penitence,"[53] which unambiguously means that the personal repentance of the emperor is the only possible solution in this case. No one can plead or intercede with God on Theodosius' behalf in this precarious affair, not even an angel or archangel (*nec angelus potest nec archangelus*).[54]

It cannot easily be determined whether Ambrose merely threatened the emperor with excommunication,[55] or whether Theodosius was in fact excommunicated when Ambrose refused to give him the Eucharist.[56] The fine differences in ecclesiastical law

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ein Mensch." Similarly McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 325–326 and even more briefly: Klein (cf. fn. 10) 354. Anm. 42; King (cf. fn. 3) 69, *Banterle G.* Due momenti di crisi nei rapporti tra Teodosio e S. Ambrogio, in: Atti e memorie della Accademia di agricoltura, scienze e lettere di Verona. Anno 1984/1985. Serie VI. Vol. 36. p. 243–252, here p. 249 ("Ricorda l'esempio di Davide, che si pentí delle sue colpe e le parole di Gionata a Saul per esortarlo a non macchiarsi di sangue innocente..."). More emphasis is placed on the "biblical part" in a different study, however, the scholar tends to be searching for parallels with the *Apologia David:* Ernesti (cf. fn. 3) 179–181.

50 *Homo es et tibi venit temptatio, vince eam.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).11.

51 Ernesti has quite rightly pointed out that this passage simply concerns kings in general, without specifying the "Kings of Israel." However, he takes his hypothesis too far: "Indem Theodosius mit diesen verglichen wird, wird er in gewissem Sinne mit ihnen auf eine Stufe gestellt, in die Reihe der biblischen Könige eingeordnet." – Ernesti (cf. fn. 3) 181.

52 *Haec ideo scripsi non ut te confundam, sed ut regum exempla provocent ut tollas hoc peccatum de regno tuo; tolles autem humiliando deo animam tuam.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).11.

53 *Peccatum non tollitur nisi lacrimis et poenitentia.* – Ambr., epist. 11(51).11.

54 When Roger Gyson cites this passage as part of Ambrose's "general theory on repentance," he fails to take into account that this assertion that the angels and archangels would be powerless should by no means be understood in abstract theological terms, but rather in the context of specific and charged political events: the bishop of Milan did not want to fulfil his pastoral duties and act as Theodosius' advocate before God. *Gryson R.* Introduction, in: Ambroise de Milan. La Pénitence. Paris, 1971 (= Sources chrétiennes, 179). p. 37–38.

55 Campenhausen (cf. fn. 2) 238; King (cf. fn. 3) 69; Diesner (cf. fn. 2) 444; McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 326; Moorhead (cf. fn. 2) 193; "Es handelt sich lediglich um die Gewissensentscheidung des Bischofs." – Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 156.

56 *Koch H.* Die Kirchenbuße des Kaisers Theodosius d. Gr. in Geschichte und Legende, in: HJb. Bd. 38. 1907. p. 257–277, here p. 264. Anm. 1; Palanque (cf. fn. 2) 232, Larson (cf. fn. 5) 298; Ernesti (cf. fn. 3) 175; more cautiously worded: Dassmann (cf. fn. 2) 189 – "Ambrosius hatte zwar keine för-

for which historians continuously search were probably not defined with such precision until the Carolingian period. The word *excommunicatio* does not appear in connection to the events in Thessalonica neither in any of Ambrose's own nor in any other approximately contemporary authors' writings.[57] On the other hand, excommunication in the early church meant no more than exclusion from participation in the liturgy and the sacraments. In this way, Paulinus related the heart of the matter correctly when he wrote that Ambrose refused the emperor *coetus ecclesiae uel sacramentorum communio.*[58] The urge to mark the expulsion of a sinner from the church with some kind of ritual in which candles would be extinguished emerged much later – probably not until the Carolingian period.[59] There is, however, another reason excommunication was less formidable around the year 400 than during the High Middle Ages: it did not automatically entail the withdrawal of the official rank of the excommunicated person. The kings on whom an interdict was imposed in the eleventh or thirteenth centuries were essentially relieved of their throne through this action alone (even if they themselves, as is well-known, never wanted to accept this dismissal automatically). Ambrose, however, did not question Theodosius' right to continue ruling even without taking part in communion. What he did do was to leave the emperor alone before the countenance of his irate God in such a way that might lead to severe political and perhaps also familial catastrophes.

Ambrose utters no direct threats, but perhaps he implies between the lines that both the emperor's military successes and his offspring could be struck by God's wrath. Hartmut Leppin is right in surmising that the last lines of the letter, in which Ambrose wishes that the emperor and his children may enjoy lasting peace, contain "a threat regarding family misfortunes that had to be taken seriously."[60] It has been shown above that there are at least two further passages in the text in which it can be assumed the author hints at possible risks to the emperor and his family – not by what he says, but by what he leaves in silence.

Furthermore, the bishop's strongly articulated *amor* towards Gratian seems especially significant. At this time Gratian, the youngest of Theodosius' three sons and the first born of his second wife, must have been one and a half or two years old.[61] If mentioning Gratian was really meant as a threat, then it was in fact fulfilled, even if this was a mere coincidence: Gratian would die three or four years after the

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mliche Exkommunikation ausgesprochen, aber daß die Übernahme der Buße Bedingung für eine Wiederzulassung zur Eucharistie sein würde, daran ließ der Brief keinen Zweifel."

57 Schieffer (cf. fn. 4) 350.

58 [...] *nec prius dignum iudicauit coetu ecclesiae uel sacramentorum communione* [...] – Paulin., v. Ambr. 24.

59 *Jungmann J.A.* Die lateinischen Bußriten in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Innsbruck, 1932 (= Forschungen zur Geschichte des innerkirchlichen Lebens, 3/4). p. 44–74. Especially p. 63–64.

60 Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 156–157: "sehr ernst zu nehmende Drohung mit Unglücksfällen in der Familie."

61 *Rebenich S.* Gratian, a Son of Theodosius, and the Birth of Galla Placidia, in: Historia – Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte. Vol. 34. 1985. p. 372–385. Unlike in much early scholarship, Gratian was here correctly identified as Theodosius' son: Dassmann (cf. fn. 2) 248.

dispute over the massacre at Thessalonica. Thus, the same thing happened to Theodosius as had previously happened to his "model" David.... Perhaps this was the reason for the harmonious relations between the emperor and the bishop during the last years of Theodosius' reign. Perhaps after such a brutal proof the emperor had to accept the fact that he in fact was the new David, while Ambrosius was the new Nathan.

Even if the significant emphasis on Gratian was a later addition during Ambrose's final years while he was, as some historians believe, preparing his letters for publication and editing them in the process, this assertion nevertheless illuminates the author's thought. In this case, the bishop who already knew the tragic fate of Gratian would have used the name of the child to depict himself retrospectively as a prophet, as the new Nathan, who had reproached his new David and shown him the right path with rather drastic measures. This would be a very convincing indicator that scholars do not err when they assume that veiled threats were hidden between Ambrose's pious lines.

Irrespective of whether the letter is authentic or was considerably changed by the author *post festum*, the bishop's demand for the emperor to recognise his sin and repent did not elevate Theodosius above other Christians in the eyes of the bishop or his contemporaries. Its goal was simply to restore the lost "normal" status of the sinner within the Christian community. The fact that the repentance had to be publicly observed did not guarantee the emperor any advantages. On the contrary, he had to expect hefty sacrifices that the irate God would demand of him.

5 Witnessing the Emperor's Repentance

As is generally known, the emperor decided to yield and comply with the Bishop of Milan's demands. What might Theodosius' penance have looked like? Theodoret of Cyrrhus who probably wrote shortly after the year 444,[62] provides a detailed but fanciful account, in which he mainly expresses his own complicated relations to Emperor Theodosius II. He does however mention the *eight months* the emperor had spent mourning in his palace before he finally decided *at Christmas* to reconcile with Ambrose and the church. These chronological details have had a hypnotic effect on scholars: almost no other word of Theodoret's account is trusted – and with good reason – but an exception is made for either the "eight months" or "Christmas." As these two statements are difficult to reconcile, scholars are split into two parties. Proponents of the first assume that Theodosius must have spent eight months in penance (even though in Theodoret's report the emperor did not spend this time re-

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62 *Chesnut G.* The Date and Composition of Theodoret's Church History, in: VCHr. Vol. 35. 1981. p. 245 – 252 (attempting to date this text by Theodoret between the years 441 and 449) and *Croke B.* Dating Theodoret's Church History and the Commentary on the Psalms, in: Byz. Vol. 54. 1984. p. 59 – 74.

penting but rather slowly realising that he could not avoid public penance).[63] The second party views Christmas as the time of reconciliation following repentance.[64] However, some scholars point out that the custom of the Milanese Church was not to readmit people concerned into the sacramental community until Holy Thursday.[65] Others speculate that Ambrose could have made an exception for the emperor admitting him to communion earlier at Christmas.[66]

Whether it was eight or three months of penance, would either have been considered a long or short period for repentance? On the one hand, it was surely too little as the canons of the church on the sin of homicide require 5, 7, 10, 20 years or even lifetime penance.[67] On the other hand, this particular act of repentance did not concern an ordinary person, but the ruler of the whole Roman Empire.[68] Modern scholars like to speculate on how much time would have been sufficient for the emperor's repentance, but they have done so without taking a source into consideration which provides a nearly contemporaneous view on this much debated issue. The highly popular "hagiographical novel" about emperor Constantine's conversion, the *Actus Silvestri* – the "Deeds of Sylvester" – was probably written in Rome between 390 and 500.[69] The long-promised critical edition of the two original versions has un-

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63 McLynn (cf. fn. 2) 328 indicating a further mention of the eight-month period in a different letter of Ambrose. See, Ambr., epist. 76(20).27.

64 For a relatively recent example, see: *Bellen H.* Christianissimus Imperator. Zur Christianisierung der römischen Kaiserideologie von Constantin bis Theodosius, in: E fontibus haurire. Beiträge zur römischen Geschichte und zu ihren Hilfswissenschaften. / Ed. by Rosmarie Günther, Stefan Rebenich (= Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums. NF. 1. Reihe. Bd.8.). Paderborn etc., 1994. p. 3–19, here p. 17–18.

65 *Frank H.* Ambrosius und die Büßeraussöhnung in Mailand. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der mailändischen Gründonnerstagsliturgie, in: Heilige Überlieferung. Ausschnitte aus der Geschichte des Mönchtums und des heiligen Kultes (Festschrift für I. Herwegen). Münster, 1938. p. 136–173. This paper concluded the long-running debate whether the reconciliation of sinners in Milan was conducted on Holy Thursday or Good Friday. This question is of a more general significance than it seems at first glance. If it took place on Good Friday, the liturgical practices of Milan would have been in stark contrast to those of Rome, as the latter forbade the consecration of bread and wine on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. See also: Jungmann (cf. fn. 59) 7, 74–109 for evidence about the Roman church, however most of it concerning the fifth through twelfth centuries. For the compromise solution: either Christmas or Holy Thursday, see Leppin (cf. fn. 3) 158.

66 Gryson (cf. fn. 54) 42, Anm. 2.

67 Koch (cf. fn. 56) 275. Anm. 2; Campenhausen (cf. fn. 2) 240.

68 Groß-Albenhausen (cf. fn. 5) 135.

69 *Pohlkamp W.* Textfassungen, literarische Formen und geschichtliche Funktionen der römischen Silvester-Akten, in: Francia. Bd. 19. Teil 1. 1992. p. 149. Concerning the dating of the episode on Sylvester binding the dragon to roughly 400, see: *Idem*. Tradition und Topographie: Papst Silvester I. (314–335) und der Drache vom Forum Romanum, in: RQ. Vol. 78. 1983. p. 35, 38, 40. Contrary to the opinion of Pohlkamp, Garth Fowden insists on an oriental (Greek) origin of the principle motifs of the *Actus Silvestri* on account of Armenian analogies. He also put forward a suggestion of how Eusebius the bishop of Nicomedia, who really christened Constantine, became Sylvester, bishop of Rome, in the *Actus: Fowden G.* The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and Their Influ-

fortunately not yet been published,[70] but the main elements of the story are known well enough for our purposes from outdated editions.[71] The anonymous author of the *Actus Silvestri* expresses his own conception of how a penitent emperor should behave. This notion is in itself valuable, and it cannot be ruled out that it was even shaped by real events. The literary Constantine in the *Actus Silvestri* had to atone for the brutal persecution (including executions) of Christians, basically the same grave sin as the historical Theodosius.[72] It would have been difficult to write about the repentance of an emperor without considering the only historical instance of such an act of repentance either consciously or subconsciously. This act would have taken place merely several decades before and was probably generally known not only in Milan but also in Rome: In its time it caused a genuine sensation. Both of the earliest versions of the "Deeds of Sylvester" name the same period for Constantine's penance: *seven days*. Of course, it does not follow that Theodosius penance necessarily lasted the same length of time. However, it could be deduced from this account that a one-week repentance was, in the eyes of Theodosius' younger contemporaries, or those of the next two generations respectively (the exact time in which the *Actus Silvestri* was written is still unknown) enough for a ruler – even for an emperor who had spilled innocent blood.

The way a sinful emperor should spend his days of repentance is also described in the *Actus Silvestri*. He should withdraw into his palace, fast and exchange his purple clothes and diadem for sackcloth. He should also pray continuously, occasionally prostrate himself on the ground *in sacco et cinere* – in sackcloth and ashes.

Ambrose himself remembered with satisfaction four years later that Theodosius had also laid down his imperial regalia.[73] Both Rufinus[74] and Sozomenos[75] later

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ence, in: JRS. Vol. 84. 1994. p. 146–170. In a more recent work on the *Actus Silvestri* it is asserted that the principle motifs of the work were already circulating by the beginning of the fifth century, mainly in the Eastern Empire. Among them, the new account of the christening of Constantine must have been most important, as it exonerated him from the accusation of having been an Arian. Nevertheless, both of the earliest texts must have originated in Rome around the year 500. *Canella T.* Gli *Actus Silvestri*. Genesi di una leggenda su Costantino imperatore. Spoleto, 2006 (= Uomini e mondi medievali, 7).

70 For more detail, see: *Pohlkamp W.* Textfassungen, literarische Formen und geschichtliche Funktionen der römischen Silvester-Akten, in: Francia. Vol. 19. Part 1. 1992. p. 115–196.

71 De probatis sanctorum historiis, partim ex tomis Aloysii Lipomani..., partim etiam ex egregiis manuscriptis... / Collectis per F. Laurentium Surium Carthusianum. T. 6. Coloniae Agrippinae, 1575. p. 1052–1065; *Mombritius B.* Sanctuarium seu Vitae sanctorum. T. 2. Paris, 1910. p. 508–531.

72 [...] *et poenitere multos sanctos dei occidisse* [...] see: Mombritius (cf. fn. 71) 512.

73 Ambr., obit. Theod. 34: *Stravit omne, quo utebatur, insigne regium.* Cited according to: *Sanctus Ambrosius.* Opera. Pars VII / Rec. Otto Faller. Vienna, 1955 (= CSEL, 73). p. 388. (see also: Mannix M.D. Sancti Ambrosii oratio de obitu Theodosii. Text, Translation, Introduction and Commentary. Diss. Washington, D.C., 1925.).

74 [...] *et in hoc sibi tempus adscriptum absque regali fastigio patienter implevit.* – Rufin. 2(11).18.

spoke of this episode in the same way. Whether the emperor also refrained from ruling during this period remains uncertain. The literary Constantine in the *Actus Silvestri* published new edicts daily. Why should the historical Theodosius not have done the same?

The ascetic practices the emperor carried out behind the walls of his *sacrum palatium* are not, however, of great interest to historians, but rather the concluding public ceremony, which was remembered for generations and ultimately greatly influenced the political culture of Christian Europe. Our informants – Ambrose, Rufinus and Augustine – convey more of an emotional impression of the ceremony than its actual details. How much of the general public might have witnessed the emperor's penitence? The emperor would probably have wanted to do penance in a palace chapel,[76] whereas it was in the interest of the bishop to insist on the action taking place in the cathedral, the (at this time) newly-built *Basilica Maior* or *Basilica Nova* (the future, but no longer existent, *Santa Tecla*). Only in this location could the "entire populace" properly witness the emperor's penitence and Ambrose's triumph. Ambrose probably also was victorious in this regard: The whole of Milan must have observed the emperor's humiliation. Otherwise there would have been no need for the bishop to return to the episode on Sunday February 25, 395 during his eulogy at Theodosius' coffin.

6 Elevation through Humiliation

Thousands of people listened to the speech known to us as *De obitu Theodosii:* courtiers, clerics, the elites of Milan and military personnel. During this time – only a few months after Theodosius' bloody victory over the "usurper" Eugenius[77] – the largest and most experienced army of the Roman Empire was stationed in Milan. To whom the throne of the western part of the Empire, or even in Constantinople itself, would belong was dependant on the whim of these troops.[78] Theodosius' sudden death had

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75 [...] πάντα τὸν ὁρισθέντα αὐτῷ χρόνον εἰς μετάνοιαν, οἷά γε πενθῶν, βασιλικῷ κόσμῳ οὐκ ἐχρήσατο· – Sozom. 7.25.7. Cited according to: *Sozomenos*. Historia ecclesiastica – Kirchengeschichte / Ed. by Günther Christian Hansen. Teilbd. 1. Turnhout, 2004 (= Fontes Christiani, 73/1).

76 Should the new dating of San Lorenzo to the time of Stilicho's rule become established, this enigmatic church could of course no longer be considered a possible stage for the unprecedented scene of imperial penitence. See *Löx M*. Die Kirche San Lorenzo in Mailand: Eine Stiftung von Stilicho?, in: MDAI(R). Vol. 114. 2008. p. 407–438.

77 *In detail, see: Szidat J*. Die Usurpation des Eugenius, in: Historia – Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte. Vol. 28. 1979. p. 487–508.

78 On Ambrose's funeral oration, see: *Bonamente G*. Potere politico e autorità religiosa nel 'De obitu Theodosii' di Ambrogio, in: Chiesa e Società dal secolo IV ai nostri giorni. Studi storici in onore del P. Ilarino da Milano. Vol. 1. Rome, 1979 (= Italia Sacra, 30). p. 83–133; *Consolino F. E*. L'*optimus princeps* secondo S. Ambrogio. Virtù imperatorie e virtù cristiane nelle orazioni funebri per Valentiniano e Teodosio, in: RSI. Vol. 96. 1984. p. 1025–1045; *Eadem*. Teodosio e il ruolo del principe cristiano dal *De*

caused a political crisis whose outcome was at the time, on February 25, 395, not foreseeable.

Ambrose had chosen his side: he wanted to support Theodosius' sons as successors. The elder, Arcadius, resided then as he did later in Constantinople, outside of the bishop of Milan's range of influence. But the younger successor, ten-year-old Honorius, was present in Milan and nobody could be sure at that moment whether the army, court and people would support the child. Ambrose's speech was specifically geared towards making the transfer of power to Honorius possible – or more precisely, to a group of people around Honorius with the commanding general of the imperial army Stilicho at its head. The aims of this funeral oration, delivered in the presence of both the boy emperor and Stilicho, were clear and consistent. Its principle message was the necessary continuation of the Theodosian dynasty.[79] Ambrose's general thrust can be summarised in three statements. First, Theodosius had been a great emperor and was well deserving of heavenly salvation. Second, he had not completely left the world; he had left behind his sons in whom it was possible to recognise and remember him. Third and finally, everybody (but above all the army) should serve these children as loyally as they had done the deceased emperor.[80]

This otherwise coherent image had one dangerous flaw. Ambrose himself had presented the deceased emperor to the "public" of Milan as a sinner only a few years previously. No emperor before Theodosius had had to endure such an outrageous humiliation which could only mean that the deceased's violation of Christian norms must have been especially grievous. Did the emperor's rebellion against God not tarnish his sons, or even his whole kin? Ambrose deployed his entire eloquence to dispel these doubts among his listeners. A large part of the oration (26–38), contrary to the rules determining how such encomia should be worded, is dedicated to Theodosius' sins, but also to his humility – sometimes veiled, sometimes openly.

obitu di Ambrogio alle storie ecclesiastiche, in: Cristianesimo nella storia. Vol. 15. 1994. p. 257–278 (comparing the image of Theodosius in Ambrose's oration with that in the works of fifth-century historians); *Biermann M.* Die Leichenreden des Ambrosius von Mailand: Rhetorik, Predigt, Politik. Stuttgart, 1995 (= Hermes. Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie. Einzelschriften, 70). p. 103–119; 143–150; 178–191; *Corsaro F.* Il trono e l'altare. Da Costantino a Teodosio: *De obitu Theodosii* di Ambrogio, in: Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. In occasione del XVI centenario della consacrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396–1996. XXV Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità Cristiana. Vol. 2. Rome, 1997. p. 601–611; *Sordi M.* La morte di Teodosio e il 'De obitu Theodosii' di Ambrogio, in: Acta classica Debreceniensia. Vol. 36. 2000. p. 131–136. As a relevant preliminary study for the supposed new edition of the oration see: *Zimmerl-Panagl V.* Zu Überlieferung und Textgeschichte von Ambrosius' De obitu Theodosii (und Epistula extra collectionem 1), in: WSt. Vol. 129. 2016. p. 299–330.

79 See, e.g.: Palanque (cf. fn. 2) 293–294: "Cette idée de la perpétuité de la dynastie nous apparait précisément dominante dans le discours que l'évêque de Milan prononce aux obsèques de Théodose… ." Also ibid. 301–302; Klein (cf. fn. 10) 363; Mannix (cf. fn. 40) 3–4 and many others.

80 See in detail: *Bojcov M.A.* (Boytsov) Der Heilige Kranz und der Heilige Pferdezaum des Kaisers Konstantin und des Bischofs Ambrosius, in: FMSt. Vol. 42. 2008. p. 1–69.

Thus, Ambrose returns here *twice* to Theodosius' penitence, arguably because this episode was still fresh in many of the attendants' minds. However, he infuses the event with a completely new meaning.

This time, the emperor does not appear as a sinner. On the contrary, Theodosius had been pious, just, merciful and deeply religious, hence he was about to enter the heavenly Jerusalem – a stark contrast to the contents of the Thessalonica letter. It now emerged that Theodosius "let reprieve forestall punishment,"[81] that "he was more disposed to forgive especially when the passion of his anger had been particularly great."[82] He was so merciful towards the accused that "while holding supreme power over everyone, he would rather remonstrate like a parent than punish like a judge."[83] He had been a fair-minded judge with fair scales, not merely a dispenser of punishment, as he did not deny a pardon to those who confessed.[84] This image of Theodosius totally contradicted the one Ambrose had painted in his letter. The politically charged subtext is clear. Former supporters of the defeated Eugenius did not have to fear possible reprisals. The sons of the emperor were as lenient and merciful as their father had formerly been – another reason why they should eagerly be supported by all present.

What is more, Theodosius was probably at this very moment before Christ, interceding on behalf of his children[85] – surely an assurance that the sons' reign would be prosperous. But Theodosius had also been humble, and humility was a precious commodity.[86] He had humbly acknowledged his sins, giving the orator grounds to invoke a comparison to David. This time the comparison does not serve to criticise but to praise; David had also achieved salvation through humility. In fact, he is presented solely as the devoted head of his community. Ambrose cites the same passage as in his letter to Theodosius (2 Sm 24:17; 1 Chr 21:17), but the difference here is not merely that his translation now follows the Septuagint.[87] More importantly, the passage is given a completely different meaning: "See it is I; I have sinned, I the shepherd have done wrong, and these in this flock, what have they done? Let your hand be against me."[88] Ambrose breaks off at that point and does not continue with "and against the

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81 [...] *cum criminum poenas indulgentia praevenit.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 1.

82 *Et tunc propior erat veniae, cum fuisset conmotio maior iracundiae.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 13.

83 *Hoc erat remedium reorum, quoniam, cum haberet supra omnes potestatem, quasi parens expostulare malebat quam quasi iudex punire.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 13.

84 [...] *aequitatis iudex, non poenae arbiter, qui numquam veniam confitenti negaret* [...] – Ambr., obit. Theod. 13.

85 [...] *speramus, quod liberis suis apud Christum praesul adsisitat* [...] – Ambr., obit. Theod. 16.

86 *Stravit omne, quo utebatur, insigne regium, deflevit in ecclesia publice peccatum suum, quod ei aliorum fraude obrepserat, gemitu er lacrimis oravit veniam.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 34.

87 For the Septuagint as the source for this wording, see: *Sanctus Ambrosius.* Opera. Pars VII... p. 384.

88 *Ecce sum ego; peccavi, et ego pastor male feci, et isti in hoc grege quid fecerunt? Fiat manus tua in me.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 27.

house of my father" which would have been anything but desirable while the transfer of power in Milan to Theodosius' younger son was still hanging in the balance.

At this point Theodosius is indirectly but clearly compared to Christ: "Christ humbled himself in order to raise up all. So he (David – *M.B.)* attained Christ's rest, when he imitated Christ's humility."[89] Ambrose had earlier drawn a parallel between the penitent David and Jesus, the *humilitatis magister*, who is both *uerus humilis* and *aeternitate primus, humilitate ultimus*.[90] But at the time he had not pointed out that the humility of Christ resulted in the salvation of mankind. Here the parallels between David and Christ imply that Theodosius is the one who is prepared to sacrifice himself for his neighbours. A further hidden parallel to the Christological topos is observable in the description of Theodosius' public repentance discussed above, which must have been fresh in the minds of many in Ambrose's audience of 395. Through his humiliation he proved not only his superiority but also his willingness to suffer on behalf of others: Theodosius "threw to the ground all the royal attire he was wearing; he wept publicly in church over his sin which had stolen upon him through the deceit of others."[91] Theodosius thus bore his penance on behalf of others (who had advised him wrongly), which in turn made the analogies to David and Christ suitable. According to this interpretation, the penitence itself shifts from being a punishment – or at the very least an act of reconciliation – into the very embodiment of the emperor's piety, indeed almost the manifestation of his holiness.

The possibility of such a transition was not foreseeable from Ambrose's letter to Theodosius nor from his earlier elaborate work *De penitentia*. Ambrose touches on the subject in the *Apologia David:* the king opted for penitence even though private citizens usually did not wish to demonstrate such exemplary humility. However according to Ambrose's opinion at the time, the reward merely consisted of the immediate forgiveness of David's sins, not in his exceptional elevation or glorification.[92] Essentially the same view is observable in some passages of the eulogy. For example, when it is asserted that "because Theodosius, the Emperor, showed himself to be humble and asked for forgiveness when sin stole upon him, his soul has returned to its rest."[93] This rest of the soul, this *requies sabbati*, is also emphasised in other passages of the speech. According to the bishop of Milan, Theodosius meets many

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89 *Humiliavit se Christus, ut omnes elevaret. Ipse ad Christi pervenit requiem, qui humilitatem fuerit Christi secutus.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 27. The parallel to Christ here as well as a new interpretation of humility as an imperial virtue are also briefly mentioned by Biermann (cf. fn. 78) 111, 113, 115.
90 This is noted in: Leppin (cf. fn. 35) 124 with reference to Ambr., apol. Dav. 17.81, cited according to: *Ambroise de Milan.* Apologie de David / Ed. Pierre Hadot. Paris, 1977 (= Sources chrétiennes, 239).
91 *Quod privati erubescunt, non erubuit imperator, publicam agere paenitentiam* [...] – Ambr., obit. Theod. 34.
92 *Denique dominum dolor intimi mouit affectus, ut Nathan diceret: Quoniam paenituit te, et dominus transtulit peccatum tuum. Maturitas itaque ueniae profundam regis fuisse paenitentiam declarauit, quae tanti errores offensam traduxerit.* – Ambr., apol. Dav. 2.5.
93 *Et ideo, quia humilem se praebuit Theodosius imperator et, ubi peccatum obrepsit, veniam postulavit, conversa est anima eius in requiem suam* [...] – Ambr., obit. Theod. 28.

pious but not necessarily holy people: three generations of his own family, including the Emperors Constantine and Gratian. (Whether he could also communicate directly with Helena or whether she was part of a higher sphere remains unclear in Ambrose's account.) However, Ambrose then begins to approximate Theodosius' uncertain state to that of *sanctitas*. The "perfect" rest mentioned above had been assigned to saints.[94] Theodosius had merited the fellowship of the saints[95] and even now was happily dwelling in their midst,[96] where the company of saints accompanied him.[97] It is necessary, of course, to remember that the concept of holiness had not been completely worked out and standardised by the year 400. Exactly what Ambrose had in mind when he used the term *sanctitas* remains to be examined. It does seem quite clear, however, that the bishop of Milan's audience was presented with an image of Theodosius not as a pardoned sinner but rather as a saint who might already be standing before the throne of Christ as an intercessor on behalf of his two sons.

And so, it was on this day, February 25, 395, that the new notion was born that the humble, public penance of a ruler could not only contribute to the alleviation of his burden of sin but could furthermore lead to his spiritual elevation and almost to achieving religious perfection. For the first time in the context of imperial ideology the Christian *humiliatio* became *exaltatio*. It was certainly not inevitable that the penitence of the sinner in purple would be paradoxically reinterpreted as a moral accomplishment that elevated his person. Ambrose's letter to the emperor does not contain even a trace of the possibility that the repentance he demanded may lead to elevation. The ingenious bishop of Milan must have come up with the idea of making the public humiliation of the emperor an act that elevated the ruler later. The reason for this rather surprising change is not, however, necessarily rooted in Ambrose's theological deliberations, but is instead tied to his secular interests. It thereby seems that the topos of the elevation of a ruler following his humiliation was originally begun as an improvised means to influence the desired outcome of a specific (and fairly precarious) political situation. This new – and almost coincidental – discovery of the symbolism of imperial *humilitas* was, however, to have a grand future.[98]

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94 *Da requiem perfectam servo tuo Theodosii, requiem illam, quam preparasti sanctis tuis.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 36.

95 *Ergo quia dilexit augustae memoriae Theodosius dominum deum suum, meruit sanctorum consortia.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 32.

96 *Manet ergo in lumine Theodosius et sanctorum coetibus gloriatur.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 39.

97 [...] *quem sanctorum turba prosequitur.* – Ambr., obit. Theod. 56.

98 Concerning the further development of imperial humility as a means of both imperial representation and of exercising power, see: *Leppin H.* Power from Humility: Justinian and the Religious Authority of Monks, in: The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity / Ed. by Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski. Burlington, VT, 2009. p. 155 – 164. To bridge the gap to the High Middle Ages, see first: *Althoff G.* Die Macht der Rituale: Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter. Darmstadt, 2013 (2nd ed.). p. 104 – 130. The following study is recommended as an introduction to the late Middle Ages: *Moeglin J.-M.* Pénitence publique et amende honorable au Moyen Age, in: RH. 1997. Vol. 3. p. 225 – 270.

Kai Preuß

The Emperor's Two Cities: Augustine's Image of the Good Christian Ruler in *De civitate Dei* 5.24

When talking about Augustine's image of the good Christian ruler, we should not airily assume that the nature of our subject is understood. While the concept of an image seems to imply a descriptive approach towards reality, the good – if not the Christian – ruler points to a normative perspective on the political phenomenon of the ruler. The image becomes the reflection of a reality hoped for rather than one at hand. Even so, it is not quite clear whether it is the ruler that is supposed to be good or if it is the Christian – if one should even make such a distinction. Questions like these arise in view of a text widely taken as Augustine's most prominent image of a good Christian ruler, chapter twenty-four in the fifth book of his *De civitate Dei*. What we can find here is a characterisation – not quite extensive, but very influential[1] – of what an ideal ruler should be like, what he should do and, of course, what he should refrain from. Because of this, it is sometimes referred to as a mirror for princes. In the German translation by Wilhelm Thimme, "Fürstenspiegel" has even been chosen as the chapter's heading.[2] While this is an anachronistic denotation for antique literature in general,[3] there are several reasons to make at least cautious use of the term, particularly when it comes to this chapter of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*.

Although the metaphor of the mirror[4] is widely used in Augustine's writings and even in his correspondence with political agents,[5] he himself did not call his descrip-

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1 Notably in the High Middle Ages, see Hadot, Pierre: RAC 8 (1972) 555–632, s.v. "Fürstenspiegel", 618.

2 Cf. Aurelius Augustinus, Vom Gottesstaat (De civitate Dei). Vollständige Ausgabe in einem Band. Buch 1–10. Buch 11–22. Trans. by Wilhelm Thimme. Introduction and Commentary by Carl Andresen, Munich, 2007. For the expression in general, see Hadot (cf. fn. 1) and Philipp, Michael/Stammen, Theo: Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik 3 (1992) 495–507, s.v. "Fürstenspiegel", as well as Anton, Hans: LexMa 4 (1999) 1040–1058, s.v. "Fürstenspiegel". For the term and its use for antiquity, see Schulte, Manuel J.: Speculum Regis. Studien zur Fürstenspiegel-Literatur in der griechisch-römischen Antike, Münster/Hamburg/London, 2001, 9–18.

3 The expression first appears in the twelfth century (Godfrey of Viterbo), cf. Hadot (cf. fn. 1) 556. For want of an alternative, it is used nevertheless by Schulte (cf. fn. 2) who claims: "Die Antike kennt die Textgattung des 'Fürstenspiegels' nicht als eigenständige literarische Erscheinung." (17).

4 On which, see Jónsson, Einar Már: Le Miroir. Naissance d'un genre littéraire, Paris, 1995. For Augustine, see especially 107–123 and his assertion on 133: "Saint Augustin fut le dernier écrivain antique à développer d'une facon originale le symbolisme catoptrique." For his influence on later thought (via Gregory the Great), see ibid., 149f. and Anton (cf. fn. 2), 1040f. See also van Geest, Paul: Sed ea quae obscura sund praetermitto (Spec 108). Augustine's Selection of Scriptural Quota-

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tion of a virtuous ruler a "mirror" of any kind. One of the reasons for us to use the term cautiously has to do with the addressee, or rather his absence. Whereas Seneca, who famously uses the image of the mirror in his *De clementia*, had young Nero in mind as the very precise addressee of his admonitions,[6] Augustine's text lacks any hint of a possible recipient and does not seem to be addressed to any person in a ruling position. Being an apologetic compendium, packed with anti-pagan ammunition as well as rich dogmatic thought especially in the second part, the twenty-two books of *De civitate Dei* aim at Christians and non-Christians alike shaken by the events of August 410, when a Gothic Army, led by Alaric, took the city of Rome for the first time in centuries and sacked it for three days.[7] While pagans claimed this catastrophe was due to Christianity's suppression of the ancient cult that had protected the Empire since time immemorial, Christians, pampered by the triumphs of the Church under the early Theodosian dynasty, were unsettled as to why their almighty Lord had forsaken them in times of need, not even sparing his most committed devotees, such as sacred virgins and nuns.[8] The former had to be rejected, the

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tions in his Speculum as Proof of his Desire to Effect a Confrontation, in: Augustinianum LVII, 2 (2017) 493–513 with further literature.

5 The image of the mirror can be found in a letter written by Augustine to the *comes* Bonifatius, where it is clearly used in the sense of moral admonishment, albeit Augustine seems to deny it (Aug., epist. 189.8 (transl. Baxter): "This letter, then, may rather serve as a mirror to you, in which you can behold what manner of man you are, rather than as a lesson to you what manner of man you ought to be." (*ita ut haec epistula magis tibi sit speculum, ubi, qualis sis, uideas, quam ubi discas, qualis esse debeas*). All Latin quotations from Augustine are taken from the latest editions as available in the CAG (either CSEL or CCSL).

6 Sen., clem. proem. 1.1 (transl. Basore): "I have undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of mercy, in order to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror, and thus reveal you to yourself as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures." (*Scribere de clementia, Nero Caesar, institui, ut quodam modo speculi vice fungerer et te tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium*). Notably, it is Seneca himself who serves as a mirror, not his text. The writing itself is merely a display of its author's character that is to be imitated, or mirrored, by the recipient. In this way, Seneca's mirror is not only bound to a specific addressee, but to a specific author as well. As can be seen in fn. 5, Augustine's comparable use of the metaphor alludes to the letter, i.e., the text itself.

7 Cf. Aug., civ. proem. and 1.1 and Aug., retract. 2.69.1. For a general introduction into the work and its composition, see Brown, Peter: Augustine of Hippo. A biography (Forty-Fifth Anniversary Edition), Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000, 297–311; see also Horn, Christoph: Einleitung. In: idem (ed.): Augustinus. De civitate dei (Klassiker auslegen), Berlin, 1997, 1–24, van Oort, Johannes: De ciuitate dei (Über die Gottesstadt). In: Drecoll (ed.): Augustin Handbuch, Tübingen, 2007 and O'Daly: The City of God: A Reader's Guide, Oxford, 1999. That Augustine reacted to more than contemporary events, was already pointed out by F. Edward Cranz: "The De Civitate Dei, though the sack of Rome in 410 A.D. was its immediate occasion, is fundamentally a solution to the older problem of the relation of Rome and Christianity. Augustine's answer is that Roman Empire and Christian ecclesia are not essentially connected." (Cranz, F. Edward: De civitate Dei XV, 2, and Augustine's Idea of the Christian Society. In: Spec, 1950 (25/2), 215–225, here 220).

8 Cf. Aug., civ. 1.16.

latter reassured. As we will see later, Augustine's discussion of the ruler and his virtues must be seen in this context.

The emperor Honorius, the most probable imperial addressee, is unlikely to be among the anticipated readership, although Augustine surely would not mind him reading his works. Since Augustine's image of the good ruler does not aim at an actual or designated ruler, it lacks one of the main characteristics that distinguish a mirror from a more general discussion about virtue or rulership.[9] There is little, if any, connection to the contemporary political landscape in Augustine's political thought. Though this be neglect, yet there is method in't.

Augustine's text shows a particular deviation from another salient feature of mirrors in antiquity and later times, the mirroring correspondence between heavenly and earthly rulership.[10] This has to do with his focus on the person of the ruler and his personal virtues more than on an abstract concept of rulership itself. Although Augustine's text may very well be entitled a mirror for princes out of habit, the examination of the title's inaccurateness leads right to the heart of the peculiarities of Augustine's image of an ideal Christian. In what follows, I will argue, that rather than depicting a Christian ideal of rulership, Augustine looks at the ruler from the perspective of his strongly individualised, religiously grounded ethics.[11] If what we find in *De civitate Dei* is to be called a mirror, it is a mirror for Christians who are rulers, rather than a guide for Christian rulership. As a consequence, Augustine's image of the Christian ruler sets itself apart from the metaphysical structure of contemporary political theology[12] and presents itself as a predominantly pastoral document; we shall see, however, that it never disclaims its deeply ingrained premodern view on the relation between politics and religion, making him a disputable forefather of modern era secularity.[13]

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9 Schulte (cf. fn. 2). 257. See Tornau, Christian: Zwischen Rhetorik und Philosophie. Augustins Argumentationstechnik in De civitate Dei und ihr bildungsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund, Berlin/New York, 2006, 328, with fn. 827: "Die Bezeichnung 'Fürstenspiegel' ist wegen des panegyrischen Tonfalls treffend, wenn auch etwas irreführend, weil Augustinus hier keine pädagogischen Vorschriften gibt, sondern nach dem Glück des christlichen Herrschers innerhalb eines authentischen uirtus-felicitas-Zusammenhangs fragt."

10 Schulte (cf. fn. 2) 255 f.

11 Similarly, Robert Dodaro places emphasis on the person of the ruler (or official), who (ideally) will "bridge the gap between the two cities" (Dodaro, Robert: Ecclesia or Res Publica, in: Boeve (ed.): Augustine and Postmodern Thought, Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA, 2009, 237–271, here 271).

12 This structure primarily means the platonically phrased analogy between a celestial archetype and an earthly image or effigy of kingship. See Peterson, Erich: Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem. Ein Beitrag zur Geschicht der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum, Leipzig, 1935; O'Meara, Domic J: Platonopolis. Platonic political philosophy in late antiquity, Oxford, 2003. For a helpful introduction into the concept, see Assmann, Jan: Herrschaft und Heil. Politische Theologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa, Munich/Vienna, 2000, 15–28.

13 My use of the term is, of course, indebted to the work of Robert Markus, for whom the secular is the sphere of shared values and practices, regardless the religious dissent. While the elements of Roman culture that are perceived as secular are acceptable for Christians (since they are neutral in

Apologetics, Consolations and the Emergence of the Secular

As has been noted above, from the many faces of Augustine's twenty-two books of the *De civitate Dei*, the apologetic one glances most insistently at the reader. This is particularly true for the passages surrounding the chapter in question. According to the disposition Augustine gives us in his later review of his own writings, the *Retractationes*, book five concludes the refutation of "those persons who would so view the prosperity of human affairs that they think that the worship of the many gods whom the pagans worship is necessary for this."[14] Within this book, Augustine asks why God has given the Roman Empire its extent and durability and, of course, concludes that it has nothing to do with pagan gods.[15] This is, however, what those sceptic about the religious transformation of society had blamed Christians for, claiming that it was by no means a coincidence for such a disaster to happen in the *tempora christiana*. It only confirms their suspicion that to risk the well-tried relation between adherence to the traditional imperial cults and the well-being of the empire was a road to ruin. For Augustine the ultimate cause of all political realities lies within God's providence, which can never be fully apprehended by the human mind.[16] This holds also true for the latest events in Italy, where the Roman troops

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a certain sense), the profane comprises all that is seen as opposed to Christianity and hence is to be rejected. See Markus, Robert: The End of Ancient Christianity, Cambridge, 1990, 15; see also idem: The sacred and the secular: from Augustine to Gregory the Great. In: idem: Sacred and Secular. Studies on Augustine and Latin Christianity, Aldershot/Brookfield, 1994, 84–96, 85; idem: The secular in Late Antiquity. In: Rebillard/Sotinel (eds.): Les frontières du profane dans l'Antiquité tardive, Rome, 2010, 353–361, 357 and Markus, Robert: Christianity and the Secular, Notre Dame, Ind., 2006, 5f. et passim, especially chapter 3, where Markus discusses Augustine's thought in the context of modern liberalism and communitarism.

14 Aug., retract. 2.69(43).1 (transl. Green): *quorum quinque primi eos refellunt, qui res humanas ita prosperari volunt, ut ad hoc multorum deorum cultum, quos pagani colere consuerunt.*

15 Cf. Aug., civ. 5, praef. (transl. Green): "Now therefore let us see for what reason God willed that the Roman Empire should be so great and so lasting – God who can also grant such goods as even those men who are evil, and hence unhappy, can possess. For we have already argued at length that the great number of false gods which they used to worship did not do this, and we shall argue further when it seems proper." (*iam consequenter videamus, qua causa deus, qui potest et illa bona dare, quae habere possunt etiam non boni ac per hoc etiam non felices, romanum imperium tam magnum tam que diuturnum esse voluerit. quia enim hoc deorum falsorum illa quam colebant multitudo non fecit, et multa iam diximus, et ubi visum fuerit oportunum esse dicemus*).

16 Cf. Aug., civ. 5.21: "Seeing that these things are so, let us not ascribe the power of granting kingdoms and empires to any except the true God. To the religious alone he grants happiness in the kingdom of heaven, but earthly kingdoms he grants both to the religious and the irreligious according to his good pleasure, which is never unjust. Although I have discussed some points that God has chosen to make clear to me, still it is too great a task, and one far surpassing my strength, to search into the secrets of human affairs and by a clear test to pass judgement on the merits of kingdoms." (*quae cum ita sint, non tribuamus dandi regni atque imperii potestatem nisi deo uero, qui dat felicitatem in regno*

now were defeated even though not long ago the Gothic warlord Radagaisus had been fended off. Augustine cannot ascribe this to an intelligible logic underlying the historical events, but he can nevertheless give a finger wagging explanation: God does not want to encourage idolatry (Radagaisus was a pagan) nor does he want Christians to have the illusion that their faith would necessarily be remunerated on earth (rather than in heaven).[17] It is against the background of this double-sided unsettledness, that Augustine sets forth his image of the good Christian ruler.

So what does he actually say? Augustine starts *ex negativo*, enumerating what Christian rulership is not about:

> If we call certain Christian emperors happy [*felices*], it is not for the reason that they enjoyed a longer reign than others, or died a peaceful death and left sons to reign after them, or that they vanquished the foes of the state, or were able to forestall the attacks of hostile citizens who rose against them, or to crush them. These, and many other rewards or consolations in this life of trouble, were obtained by some worshippers of demons, men who have no part in the kingdom of God, as the Christian emperors have. All this came to pass in accordance with his mercy, to prevent those who believe in him from desiring these boons as if they were the highest good.[18]

Seen in connection with Augustine's insistence on the vanity of temporal goods, the negative approach betrays a positive meaning. The seemingly arbitrary distribution of earthly goods is a means to God's, so to speak, pedagogical scheme (pedagogy of salvation/Heilspädagogik), which disassociates all unambiguous connections between piety and inner-worldly recompense.[19] As is evident from our brief contextu-

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caelorum solis piis; regnum vero terrenum et piis et impiis, sicut ei placet, cui nihil iniuste placet. quamvis enim aliquid dixerimus, quod apertum nobis esse voluit: tamen multum est ad nos et valde superat vires nostras hominum occulta discutere et liquido examine merita diiudicare regnorum).

17 Cf. Aug., civ. 5.23: "Thus the true lord and ruler of the world scourged the Romans with his merciful rod and also showed by the incredible defeat of the worshippers of demons that their sacrifices are not necessary even for safety in this present world. Thus those who are not stubborn in argument, but give prudent attention to facts, will not desert the true religion on account of present tribulations, but will rather hold fast to it in the sure expectation of eternal life." (*ita verus dominus gubernator que rerum et romanos cum misericordia flagellavit, et tam incredibiliter victis supplicatoribus daemonum nec saluti rerum praesentium necessaria esse sacrificia illa monstravit, ut ab his qui non pervicaciter contendunt, sed prudenter adtendunt, nec propter praesentes necessitates vera religio deseratur, et magis aeternae vitae fidelissima expectatione teneatur*).

18 Cf. Aug., civ. 5.24: *neque enim nos christianos quosdam imperatores ideo felices dicimus, quia vel diutius imperarunt uel imperantes filios morte placida reliquerunt, uel hostes rei publicae domuerunt uel inimicos cives adversus se insurgentes et cavere et opprimere potuerunt. haec et alia vitae huius aerumnosae vel munera vel solacia quidam etiam cultores daemonum accipere meruerunt, qui non pertinent ad regnum dei, quo pertinent isti; et hoc ipsius misericordia factum est, ne ab illo ista qui in eum crederent velut summa bona desiderarent.*

19 This does not have to conflict with Augustine's moralizing interpretations of historical events, as he gave with the invasions of Radagaisus and Alaric (or as he would give with the lives and deaths of various Roman emperors). When referring to events of the past, biblical or non-biblical, Augustine is practicing an exegesis of facts that can have various meanings, admonition being one of the most

alisation of chapter twenty-four, this thought is in no way new to the book, but fits well into Augustine's overall (and regularly repeated) argument.

What is new here and, in fact, new to political thought, is the way Augustine transfers his theology of history to the person of the emperor, commencing with his use of the word *felix*. Augustine uses it as an attribution to the emperors he talks about and it serves as a lexical hinge between Augustine and older traditions, pagan and Christian alike.[20] Since the late second and early third century, *felix* was, always in connection with *pius*, part of the imperial title.[21] Augustine explicitly rejects the traditional pagan vision of rulership that relates *felicitas* to earthly achievements,[22] meaning success in political enterprises as well as securing the succession.[23]

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important. The main principle for all exegesis is to serve the double law of love towards God and the neighbour (see Aug., doctr. christ. 1.40: *quisquis igitur scripturas divinas vel quamlibet earum partem intellexisse sibi videtur ita ut eo intellectu non aedificet istam geminam caritatem dei et proximi, nondum intellexit*; cf. Pollmann, Karla: Doctrina Christiana. Untersuchungen zu den Anfängen der christlichen Hermeneutik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustinus, De doctrina christiana, Fribourg, 1996, 124). History, therefore, is a question of hermeneutics (Maier, Franz Georg: Augustin und das antike Rom, Stuttgart, 1955, 168 f.: "Auslegung der Offenbarung auf die Geschichte hin"). When, on the other hand, Augustine insists on the impossibility of predicting future events, he tries to confound any belief in historical necessity, which would result in understanding the ways of God's providence. Past events can and should be explained in a way that strengthens the faith; future events are not ours to foresee, but to be expected in piety and confidence; questions about the future are considered an impertinence (see Aug., civ. 18.53: *inportune omnino*). Augustine's interpretation here is essentially *ex post facto* and primarily of pastoral concern. It is not to be confused with the systemizing reorganisations of the past, characteristic of modern philosophies of history. For a different view, see Horn, Christoph: Augustinus über politische Ethik und legitime Staatsgewalt. In: Fuhrer (ed.): Die christlich-philosophischen Diskurse der Spätantike: Texte, Personen, Institutionen, Stuttgart, 2008, 123–142, 142, who claims that Augustine is justifying God's actions by giving reasons for them and making them intelligible. In my opinion he misses Augustine's pastoral-hermeneutical approach, which aims at making ethically explicable what is in itself not intelligible for mortals, namely God's providential action.

20 On felicity in antiquity, see Gagé, Jean (transl. Winkler): RAC 7, 711–723, s.v. "Felicitas", where on 719 he points out, that for all its pagan implications, the concept was too important for Christians to dismiss. Anton (cf. fn. 2) 1041 speaks of an "Umakzentuierung des heidn. Imperator felix-Konzepts," although "reaccentuation" may be too cautious of an expression. See also Hadot (cf. fn. 1) 618. For the use of *felicitas* in *De civitate Dei*, see especially Tornau (cf. fn. 9) 254–262. I will avoid a translation as far as possible, to keep the oscillating meaning between the spiritual fulfilment of the *beata vita* that is to be sought (and only to be found in God) and the more mundane successfullness (*terrena felicitas*) that is associated with the deeds of an imperator *felix*. Augustine develops his Christianised understanding of *felicitas* in Book 4, rejecting the pagan cult of *felicitas* and *virtus*.

21 Hadot (cf. fn. 1) 618.

22 According to the ThLL, the meaning of *felix* here reaches from the state of being blessed by fortune to rich progeny. *Felix* can also mean 'happiness in the afterlife' (cf. 6.1.443.48sq.), anticipating Augustine's transformation of the word.

23 It should be noted that Augustine seems to place limitations on the emperors whom he would call *felix* at the chapter's beginning by using the limiting phrase *quosdam imperatores*. The term *felix* in

Despite Augustine's own suggestion, this semantical shift of *felicitas* towards a more transcendent meaning is not an exclusively Christian development. In the middle of the fourth century, the self-confidently pagan (soon to be) Emperor Julian in his second oration to Constantius[24] sketches the image of an ideal king based on traditional elements of political philosophy and contemporary neoplatonic theology.[25] In a strikingly similar fashion, he sets out to redefine what it means to be of noble descent (*eugeneia*). He points out that neither power nor extended reign[26] and material riches[27] should define nobility but only the soul and its virtues.[28] Real kingship (*basileia*) stems from virtue, while power and wealth can only provide sheer dominance (*dunasteia*).[29] Since true virtue is inconceivable without the proper relation to the gods, Julian places piety at the top of his catalogue of virtues. Piety, however, does not guarantee earthly well-being, since fate gives wealth, power and other temporal values more often into the hands of people who do not deserve it based on their lack of virtue. Because of this, virtue is a question of character and visible goods tend to mislead.[30]

To find an astonishing degree of resemblance between Julian's and Augustine's rejections of earthly goods, should warn us to narrow down the scope of *De civitate Dei* to apologetics written against tradionalist pagans, especially in the West, who were still trying to fight off the ever more visible Christianisation of the Roman soci-

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this particular moment does not appear to entail the fully Christianised meaning it has later on in which every truly Christian emperor must be called *felix*.

24 For the speech in general, see Bringmann, Klaus: Kaiser Julian, Darmstadt, 2004, 50 f. and 60, who argues that it was probably never delivered. If this is true, it can be read all the more as an openly pagan statement. Against Bringmann's view, see Schorn, Stefan: Legitimation und Sicherung von Herrschaft durch Kritik am Kaiser. Zum sogenannten zweiten Panegyrikos Julians auf Kaiser Constantius (or. 2 [3] Bidez), in: Baier (ed.): Die Legitimation der Einzelherrschaft im Kontext der Generationenthematik, Berlin/New York, 2008, 243–274. See also Perkams, Matthias: Neuplatonische politische Philosophie bei Kaiser Julian? In: Schäfer (ed.): Kaiser Julian 'Apostata' und die philosophische Reaktion gegen das Christentum, Berlin/New York, 2008, 111–117 and Schramm, Michael: Freundschaft im Neuplatonismus. Politisches Denken und Sozialphilosophie von Plotin bis Kaiser Julian, Berlin/Boston, 2013, 359–375.

25 For the relation of both in Julian's political thought, see Perkams (cf. fn. 24) especially 123 f. But as the parallels between Augustine and Julian show, the latter deviates from traditional political thought in his strong insistence on individual ethics and rejection of earthly goods in favour of a transcendent orientation; at least in these paragraphs neoplatonic elements seem to be stronger than Perkams admits. For Julian's concentration on the ethics of the ruler, see Schramm, Michael: Platonic Ethics and Politics in Themistius and Julian. In: Fowler (ed.): Plato in the Third Sophistic, Berlin/New York, 2014.

26 Julian., or. 2(3).79 A–C.

27 Julian., or. 2(3).80 A–B.

28 Julian., or. 2(3).82 A.

29 Julian., or. 2(3).83 C–D.

30 Julian., or. 2(3).92 D–93 A. Julian (like Augustine) draws on Stoic elements here (cf. Tornau (cf. fn. 9)) 167 (with fn. 221); cf. Sen., prov. 5.2).

ety.[31] Augustine's political thought or rather the political consequences[32] of his theology of history place him in a fight on two fronts.[33] He has to oppose traditional pagan ideology, but does not side with its Christian counterpart either. This is not to say, that Augustine in his anti-pagan apologetics did not share his contemporaries' enthusiasm for the rulership of Constantine or Theodosius, to whom he dedicated the final chapters of book five. The latter, especially, represents an exemplary union of imperial rulership and Christian faith and Augustine gives a lengthy account of his victories over enemies and usurpers. This may have personal reasons, since Augustine's generation can relate the prosperous and comparably peaceful times of their youth to the rule of Theodosius and his early dynasty.[34] But it might also have had have literary reasons, as Augustine could find a suitable model for his praise of Theodosius in the histories of Rufinus.[35]

Although the praise of Christian emperors is certainly framed by apologetic intentions,[36] it should still be taken seriously; in no way did Augustine intend to give up on Rome entirely.[37] He clearly states that a Christian emperor is no threat

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31 On the nature of these pagan circles, see the perceptive statement in Markus (cf. fn. 13) 28 f.: "The so-called 'pagan revival' of the fourth century is nothing more than the vague sense of apprehension in the minds of pagan aristocrats congealing, suddenly, into the discovery that Christianity was on the way to becoming more than a religious movement which had been favoured by a number of recent emperors; that it was becoming a threat to much of what their class had long stood for." On the limited use of distinctions like semi- or paganised Christians and their pagan counterparts, see ibid., 33.

32 See Dougherty, Richard J.: Christian and Citizen: The Tension in St. Augustine's De ciuitate dei. In: Schnaubelt/van Fleteren (eds.): Collectanea Augustinia (Augustine: "second founder of the faith"), New York/Bern/Frankfurt am Main/Paris, 1990, 205 – 224, 205: "We do not find anywhere in the Augustinian corpus a didactic and comprehensive political treatise." And Dodaro (cf. fn. 11) 238: "Augustine offers no theory concerning the relationship between the church and the political order."

33 According to Theodor Mommsen, Augustine's main problem is to fight against what Mommsen calls "the Christian Idea of progress," see Mommsen, Theodor: St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the City of God. In: Journal of the History of Ideas 12 (1951) 346 – 374, here 356.

34 Cf. Markus, Robert: Saeculum. History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine, Cambridge, 1970, 30 f.

35 Augustine's dependence on the Church History of Rufinus is shown by Duval, Yves-Marie: L'eloge de Théodose dans la Cité de Dieu (V, 26, 1). In: Recherches augustiniennes 4 (1966) 135 – 179, who states about the chapter (175): "Dès lors, cette page n'est d'abord, ni un panégyrique, ni un écrit apologétique, mais, avant tout, un document théologique." There are also similarities with the praise of Theodosius in the funeral oration (*de obitu Theodosii*) of Ambrose of Milan. For comparison on motives like the revenge for Gratian, the contrast of imperial power and personal humility and the allegation of bad counsel leading to the events in Thessaloniki, that are already apparent in Ambrose's oration, see Dodaro, Robert: Note sulla presenza della questione pelagiana nel De civitate Dei. In: Cavalcanti (ed.): Il De civitate Dei. L'opera, le interpretazioni, l'influsso, Rome, 1996, 245 – 270.

36 Cf. Madec, Goulven: Tempora Christiana. In: Mayer/Eckermann (eds.): Scientia Augustiniana. Studien über Augustinus, den Augustinismus und den Augustinerorden, Würzburg, 1975, 136 und Maier (cf. fn. 19) 204.

37 Brown (cf. fn. 7) 293.

to the Empire but rather a blessing, if he is a skillful ruler.[38] Augustine shares the belief that the triumph of Christianity in the fourth century is the fulfilment of God's prophecies given in scripture[39] and he does not hold back examples of how Christianity has brought improvements in many ways for pagans as well.[40] Besides his more general devaluation of the catastrophe, Augustine also tried to allay the fear of his parishioners – but this was just as much an argument against the pagans – by pointing out the limited damage the Visigoths had actually done to the Empire's institutions. In *De civitate Dei* he attributes the comparably humane treatment of the defeated city and its inhabitants to the *tempora christiana*[41] and in sermons delivered shortly after the event, he ranks 410 among other disasters in Roman history, nothing more and nothing less.[42] He calls into question the idea that the latest crisis should signify the end of the Empire: maybe Rome had just been beaten, but not destroyed.[43] In this way, Augustine refutes pagans who made Christians responsible for the present circumstances, and consoles all the Christian Romans who, understandably enough, clung to their traditional capital of Rome.

As is well known, this attenuating and conciliatory tone does not prevail in Augustine. Goulven Madec has emphasised that Augustine saw no contradiction in holding to a prophetic interpretation of Christian Rome and taking into account the problems of his time extensively.[44] Pointing to biblical prophecies regarding tribulations, he was able to integrate present maladies into a Christian historical horizon, without giving up its prophetic dimension.[45] The disturbing elements of history

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38 Cf. Aug., civ. 5.19: "But if those who are endowed with true religion and live good lives know the art of ruling the nations, there is no greater blessing for mankind than for them, by the mercy of God, to have the power." (*Illi autem qui vera pietate praediti bene vivunt, si habent scientiam regendi populos, nihil est felicius rebus humanis quam si Deo miserante habeant potestatem*).

39 Cf. Aug., civ. 18.50, where he initiates a chapter on the spread of the Church with Isaiah 2:3 and Luke 24:46 f. Cf. Markus (cf. fn. 34) 30 f.

40 Picking up on the arguments of conservative pagans, Augustine asserts that Christianity had led to a rise in public morals, whereas the traditional cults were packed with highly questionable role models (see among many others Aug., civ. 2.29).

41 Cf. Aug., civ. 1.7: "On the other hand, what set a new precedent, the aspect, novel in history and so gentle, that barbarian cruelty displayed, in that basilicas of the most generous capacity were selected and set apart by decree to be occupied as asylums of mercy for the people, where no one should be smitten, whence no one should be ravished, whither many should be conducted by compassionate soldiers for release from bondage, and where none should be taken captive even by ruthless foes." (*quod autem novo more factum est, quod inusitata rerum facie inmanitas barbara tam mitis apparuit, ut amplissimae basilicae implendae populo cui parceretur eligerentur et decernerentur, ubi nemo feriretur, unde nemo raperetur, quo liberandi multi a miserantibus hostibus ducerentur, unde captivandi ulli nec a crudelibus hostibus abducerentur, hoc Christi nomini, hoc Christiano tempori tribuendum*).

42 Cf. Aug., serm. 296.7. See also the sources in Madec (cf. fn. 36).

43 Cf. Aug., serm. 81.9: *Forte Roma non perit, forte flagellata est, non interempta, forte castigata est, non deleta.*

44 Cf. Madec (cf. fn. 36) 123 against Markus.

45 See for example Aug., civ. 18.51, where Augustine quotes 2 Timothy 3:12.

play an important role in the defence of a Christian perspective on history, when Augustine deals with his fellow Christians. Against the background of the intellectual landscape in the fourth century, the antagonists on his own side posed no less of a challenge.

The idea of a Christian emperor was no longer absurd when Augustine wrote his *De civitate Dei*. With the exception of Julian, all imperial rulers since Constantine had been Christians, although not all to the liking of the bishops following the canons of Nicaea and Constantinople. It was not Augustine's primary intention to argue for the possibility of a Christian emperor; he had to prevent its reality from leading Christians astray. Linking the growth of Christianity to political success, writers like Eusebius of Caesarea preserved the earthly meaning of *felix*, when they tried to integrate the rise and ultimately success of Christianity into the history of the Empire.[46] In this way, the Christian faith became a matter of imperial significance, and the emperor evolved into an equally religious and worldly leader; a role he had in fact played throughout, but was now conveyed with reference to leaders from the Old Testament. According to Eusebius, Constantine is a new Moses;[47] Constantine's successors would later use David as a model.[48] Eusebius is an exponent of the mirroring correspondence of heavenly and earthly structures mentioned at the beginning of this essay.[49] The unifying power of empire corresponds not only to the cohesion of the Christian faith (barring the dogmatic struggle within) but also to the theological core of this faith, its monotheism.[50] The marriage of Christianity and empire, according to this political theology, cannot be broken. The ideology of *Roma aeterna* is transposed into a Christian language and thereby Christianity becomes dependent on the political order. Inversely, this means that the end of the Roman Empire signals the end of the world and the second coming of Christ – a thought backed up by elements of Judeo-Christian as well as pagan traditions that forebode a fixed succession of world empires and employ an analogy of the human life-span to structure

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46 Mommsen, Theodor E.: St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress. The Background of City of God. In: Journal of the History of Ideas 12 (1951) 346 – 374, 361 f.

47 Euseb., vita Const. 1.12.2. Cf. Rapp, Claudia: Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as 'Bishop'. In: JThS 49/2 (1998) 685 – 695. See also Euseb., LC 7.12 f. For the relation of Eusebius and Constantine see also Wallraff, Martin: Eusebs Konstantin. In: Delgado/Leppin (eds.): Gott in der Geschichte, Fribourg/Stuttgart, 2013, 85 – 98.

48 Cf. Meier, Mischa: Die Demut des Kaisers. In: Pečar (ed.): Die Bibel als politisches Argument, Munich, 2007, 135 – 158, 155.

49 Hadot (cf. fn. 1) 614: "Der göttliche Logos verhält sich zum höchsten Gott wie der Kaiser zum Logos." See also Dvornik, Francis: Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy. Origins and Background (II), Washington, D.C., 1966, 611 f.

50 Dvornik (cf. fn. 49) 683: "Rome believed in the Empire's role as God's chosen instrument for the spread of the faith, and therefore in its structural solidity." Peterson (cf. fn. 12) 78: "Zum Imperium Romanum, das die Nationalitäten auflöst, gehört metaphysisch Monotheismus." Ando's attempt to understand "the history of religion under the empire as, at least in part, an effect of empire" is critical of Peterson (Ando, Clifford: Subjects, Gods, and Empire, or Monarchism as a Theological Problem. In: Rüpke (ed.): The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean, Oxford, 2013, 85 – 111, 90).

the aeons of history.[51] But in the fourth century, the connection of Christianity with a thriving rulership usually led to an attitude that has sometimes been referred to as Christian triumphalism.[52] This attitude or rather its bitter disappointment forms the intellectual foundation of the disorientation and distress that Augustine encountered among many of his fellow Christians in the aftermath of 410.[53]

In the long run, Augustine's refutation of a Christian faith too intermingled with the history and fate of the Empire led to a new conception of history, one that keeps open the possibility of continuity even without Rome. In contrast to the "Christian Hellenists,"[54] not only did Augustine have a less dramatic estimation of Rome's defeat, he did not even deem it necessary for the Empire to remain Christian ever after or, at least, to do so undisputedly. As he elaborately shows in a few later chapters of *De civitate Dei*, the Church may yet undergo another persecution.[55] Augustine is not talking about the eschatological persecution by the Anti-Christ, but historical ones, like those in the centuries before, of which he lists many; yet to forestall any apocalyptic phantasies, he adds that they might as well be gone for good. Due to man's incapability to ever fully (or even in parts for that matter) comprehend the ways of God's providence, the horizon of history remains open and incalculable.[56] As Robert Markus pointed out, this has to do with a certain theory of prophecy.[57] The prophetic statements within the canonical scriptures do not allow any precise predication about the historical development between the biblical events covered in the New Tes-

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51 Cf. Kötting, Bernhard: Endzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus. In: HJb 77 (1958) 125–139 and Wachtel, Alois: Beiträge zur Geschichtstheologie des Aurelius Augustinus, Bonn, 1960, 57–67.

52 Cf. Madec (cf. fn. 36) 114.

53 For the reflection of the events in Augustine's preaching, see De Bruyn, Theodore S.: Ambivalence Within a 'Totalizing Discourse': Augustine's Sermons on the Sack of Rome. In: JECS 4 (1993) 405–421. See also Momigliano, Arnaldo: The Disadvantages of Monotheism for a Universal State. In: CPh 81/4 (1986) 285–297, 291f., who sees a dissolution of Christianity from the Empire already in the late forth century.

54 Dvornik (cf. fn. 49) chapter 10.

55 Cf. Aug., civ. 18.52: "When I reflect on these and similar things, it seems to me that we ought not to set any limit to the number of persecutions by which the Church is destined to be tried." (*haec atque huius modi mihi cogitanti non videtur esse definiendus numerus persecutionum, quibus exerceri oportet ecclesiam*).

56 Cf. Aug., civ. 18.52: "On the other hand, to assert that there are in store other persecutions by kings besides that final one, about which no Christian is in doubt, is just as rash. So we leave the matter undetermined, contributing nothing for or against either side, but merely sounding a call to abandon the audacious presumption of taking any stand at all on this question." (*sed rursus adfirmare aliquas futuras a regibus praeter illam novissimam, de qua nullus ambigit christianus, non minoris est temeritatis. itaque hoc in medio relinquimus neutram partem quaestionis huius astruentes sive destruentes, sed tantummodo ab adfirmandi quodlibet horum audaci praesumptione revocantes*). With the historical future being unforeseeable, all one can do is interpret what has happened so far in a Christian way (see above fn. 19). This is, basically, what Augustine does in the second part of *De civitate Dei*.

57 Cf. Markus (cf. fn. 34) 43f.

tament and the eschatological vision of the Apocalypse.[58] From Augustine's perspective, this historical agnosticism, as we could call it, serves the purpose of freeing the Church "from dependence on any secular framework."[59]

For political entities sharing the historical time with the Church, this means a loss of metaphysical distinction. Beyond doubt, Augustine sees the Empire of the past, as well as the Empire of the future, steered by God's providential will; but it is not for us to say in what way.[60] With the Empire, its political structure could begin to totter as well. Augustine might not be interested in political theory and questions of political institutions, but he demonstrates that he can at least imagine a political structure very different from the one with which he is acquainted.[61] This is not to be taken as revolutionary sentiment. Following a long tradition of exegesis, Augustine regards loyalty to political powers as obligatory, as long as open contradiction to Christian commandments is avoided.[62] His attitude will not subvert the legitimacy of any existing state, but it will not provide legitimacy through a metaphysical framework either.[63]

From this perspective, it comes as no surprise that Augustine's interest in political institutions is never an end in itself. The heart of classical political philosophy – a consideration of various constitutions in pursuit of the best[64] – is absent and where traces are graspable, they are overshadowed by questions of a different kind. When Augustine opposes monarchy and (a rather radical form of) democracy in his *De libero arbitrio*, he does so firstly, to state that the constitution is dependent on the people's morals and secondly, to point out the finiteness of human law (as opposed to God's law).[65] Far from being a God-given certainty, the constitution is as much a mutational creation as the people living under it. Augustine does not deduce from this

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58 Cf. Markus (cf. fn. 34) 158 f. But note Madec's objection (Madec (cf. fn. 36) 135), that Augustine accepts prophetic predications about the Church and its triumph, especially, as we have seen above, about its tribulations; this is not to say that it will make a coherent reading of Augustine any easier: "C'est peut-être au détriment de la cohérence de sa théologie de l'histoire; c'est peut-être dommage pur la modernité ou l'actualité de sa doctrine; mais c'est ainsi." See Markus' reply to Madec: Markus, Robert: Tempora christiana revisited, in: Dodaro/Lawless (eds.): Augustine and His Critics. Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner, Routledge, 2000, 199 – 211.

59 Markus (cf. fn. 34) 158 and Appendix A.

60 Cf. Brown, Peter: Sozialpolitische Anschauungen Augustins. In: Andresen (ed.): Zum Augustin-Gespräch der Gegenwart II, Darmstadt, 1981, 179 – 204, 189 f.

61 Cf. Aug., civ. 4.15. No matter how serious Augustine's vision of a world filled with peaceful small states is to be taken, it betrays a counterfactual political fantasy, cf. Maier (cf. fn. 19) 121.

62 Cf. Horn (cf. fn. 17) 132 f. See Aug., civ. 19.17: "[Customs and laws are to be obeyed,] provided that there is no hindrance to the religion that teaches the obligation to worship one most high and true God." (*si religionem, qua unus summus et verus deus colendus docetur, non impedit*).

63 See Flasch, Kurt: Augustin. Einführung in sein Denken, Stuttgart, 1980, 379: "Der antike Begriff von Weisheit, Kosmos und Ordnung ist [...] auf die Zeitenfolge der Geschichte nicht mehr anwendbar."

64 See one of the oldest examples in Herodotus' Histories 3, 80 – 82.

65 Cf. Aug., lib. arb. I, 14, 45 f. See also Horn (cf. fn. 19) 130.

that human laws were unnecessary or harmful. Quite the opposite, the depravity of men after the fall made the restriction of sin by force necessary, even physical force if need be.[66] The state and its positive law are accorded some importance, but Augustine gives the specific institutional arrangement short shrift. Despite men's corrupted nature, a temporal peace on earth (*pax terrena*) can and should be obtained not least by political means.[67] The peace of public order and absence of war is a desirable good; in contrast to God's eternal peace, however, it betrays its dependence on humans. Firstly, it is humans who break it, when they wage war against each other.[68]

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66 One of the most impressive depictions of the maladies of power under the conditions of sin is given in Aug., civ. 19.6 concerning the role of the judge, to whom it is impossible to avoid harming innocents while trying to be just. The problem goes deep and Augustine's didactics, too, are shaped by the problem of humanity's sinful nature, see Aug., mus. 6.13.41.

In general, Augustine's ethical thought can be situated between the poles of Stoic natural law and his theory of grace; the former is still valid after the fall, but de facto suspended by original sin. Cf. Flasch (cf. fn. 63) 394. While there is no doubt that it is the sinful nature that makes coercion necessary, it is quite disputed to what extent natural law constitutes social structures. See already Schilling, Otto: Die Staatslehre des hl. Augustinus nach De civitate Dei. In: Grabmann/Mausbach (eds.): Aurelius Augustinus. Festschrift der Görresgesellschaft zum 1500. Todestage des heiligen Augustinus, Cologne, 1930, 301–313, 303–305 and Troeltsch, Ernst: Augustin, die christliche Antike und das Mittelalter. Im Anschluß an die Schrift "De Civitate Dei", Munich/Berlin, 1915 (reprint Aalen 1963) 130–134. See Flasch (cf. fn. 63) 135 f. and 200 f. for an emphasis on the difficulties of Augustine's theory of grace for his ethics. See also Markus (cf. fn. 34) Appendix B.

67 On Augustine's thought on peace, see Weissenberg, Timo J.: Die Friedenslehre des Augustinus. Theologische Grundlagen und ethische Entfaltung, Stuttgart, 2005 with more literature. See also Brown (cf. fn. 60) 197 f. For Augustine, peace is a predominantly metaphysical concept (note the association of *pax* and *ordo*), the breadth of which can be seen in Aug., civ. 19.13: "The peace of the body, therefore, is an ordered proportionment of its components; the peace of the irrational soul is an ordered repose of the appetites; the peace of the rational soul is the ordered agreement of knowledge and action. The peace of body and soul is the ordered life and health of a living creature; peace between mortal man and God is an ordered obedience in the faith under an everlasting law; peace between men is an ordered agreement of mind; domestic peace is an ordered agreement among those who dwell together concerning command and obedience; the peace of the heavenly city is a perfectly ordered and fully concordant fellowship in the enjoyment of God and in mutual enjoyment by union with God; the peace of all things is a tranquillity of order. Order is the classification of things equal and unequal that assigns to each its proper position." (*Pax itaque corporis est ordinata temperatura partium, pax animae inrationalis ordinata requies adpetitionum, pax animae rationalis ordinata cognitionis actionisque consensio, pax corporis et animae ordinata vita et salus animantis, pax hominis mortalis et dei ordinata in fide sub aeterna lege oboedientia, pax hominum ordinata concordia, pax domus ordinata imperandi oboediendique concordia cohabitantium, pax ciuitatis ordinata imperandi atque oboediendi concordia civium, pax caelestis civitatis ordinatissima et concordissima societas fruendi deo et invicem in deo, pax omnium rerum tranquillitas ordinis. ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio*).

68 Augustine's emphasis here is on the powerlessness of the old gods, but the appreciation of human responsibility is remarkable. Aug., civ. 3.10: "She [Rome] therefore enjoyed peace, not at the pleasure of the gods, but at the pleasure of her neighbours on every side and only so long as they did not attack – unless your gods are to be so bold as to put up for sale to one man the decision to do or not to do of another man." (*non ergo Roma pacem habuit, quamdiu dii eorum, sed quamdiu*

Secondly, although this peace is not upheld by force alone, it is based on the suppression of conflict by power and therefore precarious.[69] From a Christian perspective, human peace is earthly, because it can be kept, even though the parties involved are not benevolent but citizens of the *terrena civitas* without a transcendent outlook.[70]

From a modern, post-metaphysical perspective, the notion of *pax terrena* might elicit some sympathy; on this view, the qualities rejected in the introductory lines of our very mirror come into their own. What was given there was no image of a bad Christian ruler; it was the image of a secular ruler. With victory over enemies and an orderly succession, he can establish *pax terrena* for his subjects, regardless of their confession. The eschatological contingency of all human politics allows for a concept of peace without a religious foundation.[71] Without question, there is a certain autonomy to the political sphere here;[72] but we should not overemphasise this thought in Augustine. He was not interested in elaborating it, but, as his paragraphs on the emperor show, assigned it little importance in Christian thought. Constantine and Theodosius can enjoy the advantages of the political sphere and this may add to their *felicitas*, but it is not why they are called *felix*. What is more, we shall see that the very basis of Augustine's metaphysical devaluation of politics – his pastorally shaped focus on individual ethics – will make for the collapse of any autonomy of the political.

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homines finitimi circumquaque voluerunt, qui eam nullo bello provocaverunt; nisi forte dii tales etiam id homini vendere audebunt, quod alius homo voluit sive nolvit). Of course, human action is not independent from God's providential will; the passage quoted is nevertheless a fine example of how the epistemical limits as to God's will make way for the acknowledgment of (historical) contingency. Cf. Maier (cf. fn. 19) 135 (with fn. 68).

69 Cf. Markus (cf. fn. 34) 95f. Maier (cf. fn. 19) 186f. stresses the violent genesis of earthly peace. Thereto cf. Aug., civ. 19.7.

70 Cf. Griffiths, Paul J.: Secularity and the saeculum. In: Wetzel (ed.): Augustine's City of God. A Critical Guide, New York, 2012, 33–54, 53.

71 It is not religious in the sense that it follows from the natural desire for peace in every human being (in fact in everything existing; see fn. 67). That this desire is, in the end, related to God is a different issue.

72 For a remarkable passage hereto (admittedly by a rather early Augustine), see Aug., vera rel., 26(48).132, where Augustine admits that someone living in pursuit of temporal goods might attain the wordly happiness of the 'old man,' including a life in a well-ordered state, reigned by princes or law, because even when it is just about earthly goods, a people cannot be constituted properly without such rule. Having been realistic up to this point, Augustine adds: "even so there is a certain [stage of] beauty to it [viz. the well-ordered people]" (*habet quippe et ipse modum quendam pulchritudinis suae*). See also Aug., civ. 5.15: "They [viz. the Romans] stood firm against avarice, gave advice to their country with an unshackled mind and were not guilty of any crime against its laws, nor of any unlawful desire. By all these arts, as by a proper path, they strove to reach honour, power and glory." (*avaritiae restiterunt, consuluerunt patriae consilio libero, neque delicto secundum suas leges neque libidini obnoxii; his omnibus artibus tamquam vera via nisi sunt ad honores imperium gloriam*).

The Emperor and His Soul

The ruler's political, secular virtues, therefore, are not the same as the Christian's, the consequence being, that the ideal Christian and the ideal politician – in terms of successful rule – are not identical. If we now pick up the so-called mirror where we left it and turn to the paragraph where Augustine sets out to describe the emperors that are rightly called *felix*, we shall find it wanting as a political text:

> But we call them happy if they rule justly; if, amid the voices of those who praise them to the skies, and the abject submission of those who grovel when they greet them, they are not exalted with pride, but remember that they are men; if they make their power a servant to the divine Majesty, to spread the worship of God far and wide; if they fear and love and worship God; if they feel a deeper love for that kingdom where they do not have to fear partners; if they are slower to punish, and prompt to pardon; if they inflict punishments as required by considerations of ruling and protecting the state, not in order to satisfy their hatred of private enemies; if they grant pardons, not that wrong-doing may go unpunished, but in the hope of reform; if, as they are often compelled to make harsh decrees, they balance this with merciful kindness and generous deeds; if they practice all the more self-restraint as they gain the means for self-indulgence; if they esteem it more important to rule over their base desires than to rule over any nations, and if they do all this not because of a passion for empty glory, but because they yearn for eternal happiness; if for their sins they do not neglect to offer to their God the sacrifice of humility and mercy and prayer. Christian emperors of this sort we declare happy – happy now in hope, and destined to be happy hereafter in its realization, when that which we hope for has arrived.[73]

What we find here is quite traditional.[74] Justice, mercy, clemency, munificence, the taming of personal desires and rejection of flatterers – all of these can be found in respective portrayals of rulers, pagan and Christian alike. Humility is a specifically

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73 Aug., civ. 5.24: *sed felices eos dicimus, si iuste imperant, si inter linguas sublimiter honorantium et obsequia nimis humiliter salutantium non extolluntur, et se homines esse meminerunt; si suam potestatem ad dei cultum maxime dilatandum maiestati eius famulam faciunt; si deum timent diligunt colunt; si plus amant illud regnum, ubi non timent habere consortes; si tardius vindicant, facile ignoscunt; si eandem vindictam pro necessitate regendae tuendaeque rei publicae, non pro saturandis inimicitiarum odiis exerunt; si eandem veniam non ad inpunitatem iniquitatis, sed ad spem correctionis indulgent; si, quod aspere coguntur plerumque decernere, misericordiae lenitate et beneficiorum largitate compensant; si luxuria tanto eis est castigatior, quanto posset esse liberior; si malunt cupiditatibus pravis quam quibuslibet gentibus imperare et si haec omnia faciunt non propter ardorem inanis gloriae, sed propter caritatem felicitatis aeternae; si pro suis peccatis humilitatis et miserationis et orationis sacrificium deo suo vero immolare non neglegunt. tales christianos imperatores dicimus esse felices interim spe, postea re ipsa futuros, cum id quod expectamus advenerit.*
74 Apart from the generic virtues like justice or mercy, comparable motives can be found in Ambrose's funeral oration (12–34) or in the passages from Julian noted above, see Hadot (cf. fn. 1) 617 f. See also Maier (cf. fn. 19) 137 f. with fn. 81, who sees a return to pre-Constantinian thought in Augustine's portraits of emperors.

Christian virtue,[75] but, in contrast to his account of Theodosius in a later chapter, Augustine here conceives of humility as a thoroughly personal virtue.[76] That he did not use *iustitia* as a starting point for his portrait of ideal rule comes as no surprise. Like most patristic writers, Augustine does not primarily regard justice as the necessary foundation of a well-designed commonwealth, as Plato or Aristotle did.[77] The meaning of justice had shifted from a civic virtue, assigning each to his own place in society, to a personal relationship between the sinful man and his God.[78] Starting with Paul, this relationship moved from a forensic balancing to an asymmetrical gift of grace. Justice, therefore, is part of a pious way of life and will find its reward not in a powerful empire but in eternal salvation. The transcendent nature of this justice makes it impossible to be adequately embodied in the *civitas terrena*.[79] Although the emperor ruling justly enacts a virtue with a social dimension, he is strictly orientated towards his own *felicity*, the justice of God and the citizenship in the *civitas Dei*.

The same holds true for merciful kindness and generous deeds: Augustine takes no pains to display the way in which they would benefit the people. The good of the virtues enlisted here does not lie in their consequences. Clearly, Augustine shows little to no interest in the concrete ramifications of politics and he never develops a po-

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75 Straub, Johannes A.: Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike, Stuttgart, 1939 (reprint Darmstadt, 1964) 141 spots a reinterpretation of humility here, from a negative connotation when practised before humans (*obsequia nimis humiliter salutantium*) to the virtuous humility before God, in which he sees an "Erniedrigung der kaiserlichen Majestät" (140) against the classical ideal of the ruler's *humanitas*.
76 When referring to Theodosius' gesture of humility in Milan in Aug., civ. 5.26, Augustine speaks about the intercession of the bishops and the *ecclesiastica disciplina* the emperor has submitted himself to. The political dimension of the act and its controversial nature concerning the hierarchy of Church and emperor are much more graspable here, although the pastoral element still prevails. For the pastoral element in Ambrose see Leppin, Hartmut: Zum politischen Denken des Ambrosius – Das Kaisertum als pastorales Problem. In: Fuhrer (ed.) (cf. fn. 19) 33–50. While Paulinus of Milan (*v. Ambr.* 24) follows Augustine, compare the account of Theodoret in hist. eccl. 5.18, where the conflict is one between emperor and bishop.
77 Cf. Pl., resp. 433a–434c or Aristot., eth. Nic. 1129b (12)–1130a (14). In book five of *De civitate Dei* alone, *iustitia* can be the justice of God (5.18), a characteristic of the heavenly city (5.16 or 18) or a personal attitude, e.g., the love for enemies (5.19); in any case it is not a political virtue in terms of classical philosophy. Where it comes close to this, justice is the servant of pleasure. See 5.20: "She [viz. pleasure] orders Justice to bestow such benefits as she can, in order to gain the friendships necessary for physical satisfaction, and to wrong no one, lest, if laws are broken, pleasure be not able to live untroubled." (*[voluptas] iustitiae iubeat, ut praestet beneficia quae potest ad comparandas amicitias corporalibus commodis necessarias, nulli faciat iniuriam, ne offensis legibus voluptas vivere secura non possitis*).
78 For example, in Aug., epist. 155 (4.13) he calls justice "not being proud" (*nulla superbia*).
79 Cf. Dvornik (cf. fn. 49) 845: "The second definition – the state based on justice – is, therefore, in some ways hypothetical; but it is characteristic of Augustine to have presented it. In it natural law, which is the basis on which a state is built, is absorbed by divine law, and the notion of justice somehow becomes spiritualized."

litical agenda based on his theology.[80] The advice goes to the ruler, not his rule. That is why this text is best regarded as pastoral rather than political.[81] Though it lacks a concrete imperial addressee, Augustine turns to the emperor as a person. Neither success nor glory nor the relation of the ruler to his subjects are his concern, but only the emperor's felicity, that is, in Christian terms, his salvation; and in this regard the most important rule is the one over oneself. The expectation to tame one's own desires might be particularly hard for the ruler of a world empire, yet in itself, the virtue is not exclusive to the ruler, but pertains to everybody. On the other hand, Augustine implies (and proves with his depictions of Constantine and Theodosius), that it is perfectly possible for a Christian to be an emperor. That answers in part the question why Augustine mentioned the emperor after all, if his behaviour is not to be confronted with normative claims specific to the ruler. The emperor stands for freedom itself, and so the contrast between his various options of worldly commitment and the inner renunciation of them is particularly sharp. And of course, the picture of an emperor caring more for his celestial home than his dominion on earth is a strong refutation of every elevation of politics to the rank of religious significance. From a Christian perspective the Roman Empire is, no less than anything else in the world, a mere object of utility, not of veneration. What we praise in the good emperor, the bishop of Hippo seems to say, is the one thing we all possess or should try to: a soul dedicated to God and nothing else. The bishop's view on the world carries out an immense neutralisation.

Later centuries would have to answer the difficult question of whether the bishop, by this pastoral supervision over the emperor, might gain authority that leads to a politically relevant subordination of the emperor.[82] We have, however, omitted one element that seems pertain exclusively to emperors. Augustine calls them *felices*, "if they make their power a servant to the divine Majesty, to spread the worship of God

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80 Cf. Dodaro, Robert: Between the Two Cities. In: Doody/Hughes/Paffenroth (eds.): Augustine and Politics. Lanham/Boulder/New York/ Toronto/ Oxford, 2005, 99 – 115, 111: "Augustine is not programmatic where political activism is concerned. Although his approach to this activity is theologically principled, he does not seek to implement a particular political plan." By way of contrast, see the comparably lengthy outpouring on magistrates in Julian., or. 2(3).90C–91D; Julian is much more interested in the business of politics than the African bishop. We catch a hint of concrete political reasoning when Augustine mentions the fear of political partners; then again, it serves as an example of the maladies of power and the emperor is said to evade it by faith.
81 Martin, Thomas F.: Augustine and the Politics of Monasticism. In: Doody/Hughes/Paffenroth (eds.) (cf. fn. 80) 165 – 186, 166: "'Augustinian Politics' are pastoral-ascetical-spiritual in their scope and intention."
82 Regarding Augustine, the question of spiritual authority over politicians regardless their rank, is to be answered with the help of his letters. Aug., epist. 220 to Bonifatius, for example, provides us with a case of Augustine trying to exert his pastoral authority over a magistrate and thereby take a hand in his decisionmaking, not only in personal questions but in imperial politics. See Diesner, Hans-Joachim: Die Laufbahn des *comes Africae* Bonifatius und seine Beziehungen zu Augustin. In: idem: Kirche und Staat im spätrömischen Reich, Berlin, 1964, 100 – 126.

far and wide."[83] We can assume that Augustine has his own catholic faith in mind here, and this claim also entails a political dimension – and not an unproblematic one at that. As we can see from his praise of emperors in the neighbouring chapters, an emperor like Theodosius, with his laws against pagans and dissenting Christians, is very much the ideal Augustine has in mind for a good Christian ruler. But we have no reason to agree with Kurt Flasch that Augustine "forgot"[84] his critical distance towards the state, when it came to religious coercion. We cannot treat the problem of Augustine's attitude towards religious coercion in full here; we can argue, though, from the way it is embedded into Augustine's thought, that the expectation of spreading the catholic faith does not exceed the interpretation of the so-called mirror as a predominantly pastoral one. Just as before, Augustine targets the person of the ruler and it is a personal task he reminds him of.[85] As a good Christian, the ruler should engage in spreading his faith to those around him;[86] and as an emperor, his means to do so are incomparably greater than those of an ordinary Christian. This expectation applies to everyone including the emperor,[87] and even more so in

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83 Aug., civ. 5.24: *si suam potestatem ad dei cultum maxime dilatandum maiestati eius famulam faciunt.*

84 Flasch (cf. fn. 63) 391.

85 Cf. Maier (cf. fn. 19) 137, who sums up, "daß das Wirken der Kaiser einen rein personalen Eingriff eines Christen in die Lenkung des Reiches bedeutet, aber keine grundsätzliche Christianisierung des Imperiums."

86 The exhortation to pass on what has been learned about faith is an essential element of Augustine's teaching; he even considers it a part of the proper understanding of the Holy Scriptures. That is why after three books on hermeneutics, he concludes his *De doctrina christiana* with a book on the Christian art of conveying the content of the scriptures. See Pollmann (cf. fn. 19) 226 – 235. It is crucial that the obligation to spread the faith is not limited to people in power. See Aug., vera rel. 28(51): "For this is the law of divine providence, that no one may be helped to acknowledge and accept the grace of God by superiors, who would not help those beneath him to the same with pure affection." (*haec enim lex est divinae providentiae, ut nemo a superioribus adiuvetur ad cognoscendam et percipiendam gratiam dei, qui non ad eandem puro affectu inferiores adiuverit.*) See Aug., doctr. christ. 1.30: "Nevertheless, we ought to desire that they all love God with us, and all the assistance which we either give them or receive from them must be directed toward that one purpose." (*velle tamen debemus ut omnes nobiscum diligant deum, et totum quod eos vel adiuuamus vel adiuuamur ab eis, ad unum illum finem referendum est.*) See also Aug., doctr. christ. 4.63, where Augustine asks the reader of the Bible to teach, what has been understood (for the universality of the teaching, see also Io. ev. tr. 6.10). And as there are limits to these teachings (e. g., to take into account the listener's mental capacities or to spare the common people things scarcely intelligible), the emperor might face certain difficulties of his own, religious coercion being one of them.

87 For Augustine, all interpersonal relations are assessed whether they are orientated towards the aim of true (individual) beatitude transcending the social relations of the visible world. Cf. Flasch (cf. fn. 63) 135 f. See Augustine's rejection of all familiar love as temporal and inferior in Aug., vera rel. 46(88): "For it is more inhuman not to love in a man that he is a man, but to love that he is a son." (*magis enim est inhumanum non amare in homine quod homo est, sed amare quod filius est.*) See also Aug., mus. 6. 14.45 for love understood as being useful to the neighbour (*omnes eas actiones ad utilitatem proximi revocat*), which means orientation towards God, not achievement of personal goals. Social life is not an end in itself, see Aug., serm. 336.2: "He truly loves his friend who loves

his case since he has been appointed to his exalted position by divine providence. The same holds true with the problematic nature of governing. Despite his unsurpassable legitimacy within the political realm, the emperor is a sinner ruling sinful men and more often than not bound to violence; a Christian emperor is, considering the alternative of a pagan on the throne, the least of all evils, but that does not make him a saint.[88] The *necessitas regendae tuendaeque rei publicae*, however, he shares *mutatis mutandis* with every father and every teacher and every judge.[89]

The Pastoral Limits of Secular Politics

From the figure of the Christian emperor, political by title as it may be, not much of a political concept is left. Augustine employs characteristics traditionally used for the image of a good ruler, but neglects their effects, namely good rule (in a worldly sense). As we have seen, the Christian ruler is the better ruler indeed, but the beneficial effects of his rule are not the reason for his distinction. He is a good ruler in the Christian sense if he adheres to God and hopingly gazes beyond his mortal existence into the eschatological future, where his earthly rule is of no concern.[90] Augustine's pastoral image of the ruler largely disregards his imperial identity, or, in Augustine's words, his temporal habitation in the *terrena civitas*. He addresses the good Christian ruler as a citizen of the *civitas Dei* and aligns all his virtues with this very end. Within the eschatological perspective, social relations are eclipsed by the individual pursuit of salvation; ethics prevail over politics. To put it bluntly, all elements of the practice of ruling are to be seen as parts of the emperor's *Lebenswelt* as a Christian who is a

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God in his friend, either because God is in his friend, or that he may be so." (*ille enim ueraciter amat amicum, qui deum amat in amico, aut quia est in illo, aut ut sit in illo*). An extreme example, regarding love of the neighbour as a mere means may be Aug., doctr. christ. 1.20: "We have been commanded to love one another, but the question is: whether man is to be loved by man for his own sake or for another reason. If he is loved for his own sake, we are enjoying him; if he is loved for another reason, we are using him. But, it seems to me that he should be loved for another reason [namely God]." (*praeceptum est enim nobis ut diligamus invicem; sed quaeritur utrum propter se homo ab homine diligendus sit an propter aliud. si enim propter se, fruimur eo; si propter aliud, utimur eo. uidetur autem mihi propter aliud diligendus*). According to O'Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, New Haven/London, 1980, 28 f., this is a problematic statement, later overcome by Augustine; but the duty to love the neighbour is always derived from and dependant on the duty to love God (cf. O'Donavan, 115 f.).

88 Maier (cf. fn. 19) 205, with fn. 37. Augustine stands in stark contrast to contemporaries like Ambrosiaster, for whom the God-given power of the ruler comes with an ethical quality irrespective of the ruler's character. This quality, termed *ordo*, marks a sacralisation of the office alien to Augustine. See Affeldt, Werner: Die weltliche Gewalt in der Paulus-Exegese. Röm. 13,1–7 in den Römerbriefkommentaren der lateinischen Kirche bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte Band 22), Göttingen, 1969, 109.

89 See above fn. 61 and below fn. 97.

90 Theodosius deserves praise exactly because he does not want to rule but yields to ruling as a necessity. Cf. Dougherty (cf. fn. 32) 212 f. and Maier (cf. fn. 19) 137 f. with fn. 81.

ruler, and whose peregrine status will never tolerate a perfect identification of Christian and political identity. The ruler is no longer the object of a political discourse, but rather a special case within individual ethics. The essential humanity of the Roman emperor could scarcely be made clearer.

While the catalogue of virtues, thus interpreted, betrays no political philosophy, Augustine's view on history remains equally silent about institutions and political systems. With the opening of the historical horizon for the possibility of a world without Rome, political structures enter the realm of contingency, at least for human eyes. There is no need for a Christian interpretation of political institutions;[91] which is not to say, that there cannot be any debates about the best constitution anymore. That Augustine did not offer any such speculations about the politics of his nearer future might indicate that, in the end, his confidence in the continuity of the Empire was not so shaken. But most of all, it shows that the emperor as such is no longer a theological problem. The theologically relevant ruler is the king of the heavenly city, not the monarch in Ravenna; his kingship's form must be determined without referring to heavenly archetypes. It is quite conspicuous that Augustine composed his image of the ruler without mentioning the most prominent metaphors in ancient political philosophy: the shepherd and the father.[92] While the shepherd is mentioned, for example, by Julian[93] to characterise the ruler's duties towards his subjects, Augustine uses the image only with respect to the role of the bishop.[94] The designation of the ruler as a father would seem much more likely, since Augustine frequently draws on the father as an example of natural superiority and leadership.[95] In contrast to the purely coercive powers of politics, the father's rule per se is in accordance with natural law; it is only the coercive elements of actual paternal rule, accidental to it and caused by sin, that will be gone in God's kingdom.[96] It is noticeable, that Augustine's image of the father stresses his pedagogical

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91 Leppin (cf. fn. 76) 46; cf. Maier (cf. fn. 19) 137.

92 Schulte (cf. fn. 2) 254 f. For the shepherd in Augustine, see Dodaro, Robert: Augustinus Lexikon 4 (2012) 506 – 510, s.v. "pastor". For a short overview of the motive of the shepherd, see Porter, Lawrence B.: Sheep and shepherd: an ancient image of the church and a contemporary challenge. In: Gregorianum 82 (2001) 51– 85. See also Engemann, Josef: RAC 15 (1991) 577– 607, s.v. "Hirte", with a focus on the shepherd's representation in arts. For the father in Augustine see Bruning, Bernard: Augustinus Lexikon 4 (2012) 510 – 515, s.v. "pater".

93 Julian., or. 2.86D.

94 Cf. Dodaro (cf. fn. 92) 509.

95 Cf. Martin (cf. fn. 81) 182.

96 See. Aug., civ. 19.16: "But those who are true fathers of their households take thought for all in their households just as for their children, to see that they worship and win God's favour, desiring and praying that they may reach the heavenly home where the duty of commanding men will not be necessary" (*Qui autem veri patres familias sunt, omnibus in familia sua tamquam filiis ad colendum et promerendum Deum consulunt, desiderantes atque optantes venire ad caelestem domum ubi necessarium non sit officium imperandi mortalibus*).

responsibility, with the most important teaching being the true faith.[97] Augustine counted the spread of the faith among the Christian ruler's good deeds, which makes it all the more surprising that he did not call him a fatherly teacher.[98] A possible explanation might be that Augustine deliberately left aside all allusions to the natural order of society to stress the unnatural state of political power.[99] The emperor's rule – in contrast to the family – did not exist in paradise and will be gone in heaven and therefore the only thing of importance is the emperor's soul, his personal adherence to God. In this way, the absence of both images – the shepherd and the father – confirms our perception of the text as a mirror of ethics and not of politics.

That the non-political ideal can nevertheless result in political consequences – from laws concerning the true faith to religious coercion – is the most illiberal element in Augustine's image of the Christian ruler; it is, however, not theocratic.[100] As Markus has shown, the dichotomy of the heavenly and earthly city relegates the realm of politics to a sphere of ambiguity, not in itself good or bad, but waiting to be used either way by individuals making ethical decisions.[101] The *civitas Dei* and the *terrena civitas* stand for either utilizing the world or loving it for its own sake. As is every true Christian, the good Christian ruler is a citizen of heaven, condemned for now to live on earth, but always prioritising his celestial identity;[102] and here is what fundamentally separates Augustine's thought from a modern notion of secularisation. Augustine had seen that religion and politics are not to be confused and that, in addition to his institutional role, a Christian politician has a different, tran-

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97 As he regards educational punishment as their principal duty, Augustine can use the father and the teacher interchangeably, e. g., in Aug., epist. 104.2.7. The examples in Bruning (cf. fn. 92) show that the paradigm of paternal leadership is the educational situation, but Bruning does not mention its transference to magistrates.

98 We should not withhold that Augustine does in fact draw on the father in correspondence with magistrates. In Aug., epist. 133.2 Augustine reminds Marcellinus of his *pii patris officium*, when acting as judge; since the emperor's juridical office is mentioned in Aug., civ. 5.24 this could very well be said about him, too.

99 Markus (cf. fn. 34) 204. For a dissenting opinion, see Burnell, Peter: The Status of Politics in St. Augustine's City of God. In: History of Political Thought XIII (1992) 13–29, who is notably silent about Aug., civ. 5.24.

100 For a very helpful summary of the recent trends of so-called neo-Augustinian politics, see Dodaro (cf. fn. 11). To develop "an Augustinian ethic of citizenship for the morally ambivalent conditions of liberal democracy" is the intention of Gregory, Eric: Politics and the Order of Love. An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship, Chicago/London, 2008, here 13, who tries to avoid the totalitarian consequences, always ready to be drawn from Augustinian politics (ibid., 15).

101 Cf. Markus (cf. fn. 34) 55 and Markus (cf. fn. 13) 85. See also Dodaro (cf. fn. 80).

102 Rébillard's description of the quarrel between bishops and average Christians as a conflict of identities is most helpful to understand Augustine's pastoral actions towards his congregation (see Rébillard, Éric: Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity. North Africa, 200–450 CE, Ithaca, N.Y./London, 2012). But I am not sure if this needs to conflict with Markus' concept of the secular, as far as it is applied to Augustine as a theological thinker, which is what Markus did. Cf. Rébillard, 96.

scendent identity; but he surely did not stop – or wish to prevent – the two identities from converging.[103] The modern idea of secular politics not only draws on the separation from religion, but on the protection of this separation, generally by law and basic rights.[104] From that perspective, it is not the emperor being Christian that brings about coercion, but that nothing keeps him from thoroughly subduing the apparatus of the state to his very own belief. Since Augustine's image of the good ruler is entirely based on crossing the border between the emperor's two cities, his heavenly and his earthly identity, it is, for all its seemingly modern focus on the individual, something deeply ancient.[105] It is not until the overcoming of the confessional conflicts in the Early Modern Age that the earthly city will have the means to effectively defend its identity against the heavenly usurpation, only to find itself conquered by economics and new ideology.

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103 Cf. Roth, Klaus: Genealogie des Staates. Prämissen des neuzeitlichen Politikdenkens, Berlin, 2011, 369 – 371. See also Dodaro, Robert: Augustine's Secular City. In: Dodaro/Lawless (eds.) (cf. fn. 58) 231– 260. Augustine's letters provide us with rich examples of the bishop's usage of an office bearer's confessional loyalty. Just as with the emperor, I would argue that this is not theocratic hubris, but an expansion of pastoral intervention into the realm of politics. In lieu of many, see Aug., epist. 134, where Augustine addresses the proconsul Apringius as a fellow Christian (Aug., epist. 134.3: *sed etiam filium christianae pietatis agnoscimus*) to justify his intercession into juridical proceedings. Tornau speaks of "eine Art gnadentheologisch gemilderten (kirchen-)politischen Paternalismus" (Tornau, Christian: Augustinus und die neuplatonischen Tugendgrade. Versuch einer Interpretation von Augustins Brief 155 an Macedonius. In: Karfik/Song (eds.): Plato Revived. Essays on Ancient Platonism in Honour of Dominic J. O'Meara, Berlin/Boston, Mass., 2013, 215– 240, 228). For the 'dissolving' of the spheres in general, see Gotter, Ulrich: Überblendungen. Kaiser, Kirche und das Problem der zivilen Gewalt in der Spätantike. In: Trampedach/Pečar (eds.): Theokratie und theokratischer Diskurs: die Rede von der Gottesherrschaft und ihre politisch-sozialen Auswirkungen im interkulturellen Vergleich, Tübingen, 2013, 165– 195, who, however, assumes a pre-Christian "Neutralität der Institutionen" (184).
104 For an excellent sociological examination of the "Selbstunterscheidung der Kirche von ihrer innergesellschaftlichen Umwelt," see Tyrell, Hartmann: Katholische Weltkirche und Religionsfreiheit. In: Gabriel/Speß/Winkler (eds.): Religionsfreiheit und Pluralismus, Paderborn, 2010, 197– 260, here 235 (original emphasis).
105 Although the political sphere originated in the distance from non-political interests, the lack of an institutionalised distinction between the political and the social put it in constant jeopardy (cf. Meier, Christian: Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen, 1983, Frankfurt/M, 40 f.); we could tentatively say that this infiltration of politics with extra-political norms and interests dates back as far as Socrates' preaching his idealistic ethics to the youth of the polis, against the pragmatic advice of the sophists (exemplarily Plato, Alcibiades I). The modern development of an autonomous sphere of the political is intimately connected to the discovery of the *raison d'état*, cf. Foucault, Michel: Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977– 1978, New York, 2009, esp. Lectures nine and ten. For the differences between Augustine and the modern conception of state (Hobbes) see Schweidler, Manfred: Die politische Philosophie Augustins. In: Böhm (ed.): Aurelius Augustinus und die Bedeutung seines Denkens für die Gegenwart, Würzburg, 2005, 21– 36.

Alberto Camplani

Pious and Impious Christian Rulers According to Egyptian Historiography and Hagiography: A First Survey of the Evidence

An effective way to study the evolving attitude of the Alexandrian patriarchate towards the political power is to trace the image of the good Christian emperor in the multiplicity of its historical representations. In this regard, wide-ranging research is needed on how the see of Alexandria presents itself on the religious and political level over the centuries in the histories and the hagiographical texts produced within the bishopric or in the circles close to it, deeply connected to the institutional and collective dimension of the church.[1] In this context the process should be highlighted that leads from the archival activity of the patriarchate to the production of tales, traditions, stories, which are based on the documentation preserved in the archives,[2] but are also provided with their own life, their own images, their own grammar. The patriarchate produced historiographical works conceived of as a sequence of documents and polemical narratives, here and there provided with short anecdotes. It also created histories of martyrs and saints, normally connected to this same documentation, but marked by a more pronounced tendency to relate episodes or to express a historical assessment through images and symbols. The permanence and the reworking of the same motifs and images through the ages served the function of emphasizing the sense of continuity and eternal orthodoxy of Alexandria.[3]

The texts selected in the present contribution are the expression not simply of an individual author, but rather of a network of church relations, in which multiple voices try to emerge – the voices of different groups defending their interests, their traditions, and their contribution to the life of the Egyptian church, such as the clergy, the monks, and engaged laity. I recently investigated[4] the changing role of historical

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1 For a presentation of the historiography of the episcopate of Alexandria see A. Camplani, "The religious identity of Alexandria in some ecclesiastical histories of Late Antique Egypt", in *L'historiographie tardo-antique et la transmission des savoirs*, ed. Ph. Blaudeau, P. van Nuffelen (Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. 55), Berlin – Munich – Boston 2015, 85 – 119.
2 On the archives of the bishopric of Alexandria see A. Camplani, "Setting a Bishopric / Arranging an Archive: Traces of Archival Activity in the Bishopric of Alexandria and Antioch", in *Manuscripts and Archives. Comparative Views on Record-Keeping*, ed. A. Bausi, C. Brockmann, M. Friedrich, S. Kienitz (Studies in Manuscript Cultures 11), Berlin 2018, 231 – 272.
3 I have studied the figures and symbols of church and political power in the hagiographical production tied to the bishopric in A. Camplani, "La percezione della crisi religiosa calcedonese in alcuni testi storici e agiografici prodotti negli ambienti dell'episcopato di Alessandria", *Adamantius* 19 (2013) 240 – 255.
4 Camplani (cf. fn. 1) 86 – 89.

documentation in fourth-to-seventh-century histories. In it, I described the progressive loss of references to real documents, the growth of pious narratives concerning clerics, monks, members of the élite, and the emperor himself, and a growing emphasis on the cultic buildings, financed by the engaged believers, and their impact on the urban visibility of Christianity.[5]

   These writings reveal not only the patriarchal see's perception of its own evolution,[6] but also its changing evaluation of both its political and religious relationships with the emperor and remaining patriarchates of the Mediterranean world, i.e., Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Rome, thus presenting the outline of the culture and the ecclesiological orientation of a church milieu. For that reason, we will pay the greatest attention to the notion of geo-ecclesiology as proposed by Philippe Blaudeau, which is a particular reworking of some conceptual tools belonging to "geo-politics" applied specifically to that network of congregations which constituted the Christian world of the fourth–sixth centuries. Geo-ecclesiology, in other terms, is the historical approach which considers the patriarchates in their reciprocal relationship, as well as in their connection to the political power, with particular attention paid to issues such as territorial jurisdiction, areas of influence and resistance, self-representation, and propaganda.[7] A few examples of the series of questions which geo-ecclesiology is intended to answer could be the following: Which criteria determined the religious and political importance of a patriarchal see such as Alexandria to be the religious representative of the Empire? Were they apostolicity, martyrdom, orthodoxy, or a privileged connection to the political power? Which tools promoted a Christian metropolis in the context of the Empire: the writing of political and ecclesiological pamphlets? The circulation of dossiers of documents and canonical legislation? The organisation of spectacular manifestations? At the same time, after considering some similarities, Blaudeau warns against believing that there is no difference between geo-ecclesiology and geo-politics: for instance, in the former, the breaking of communion and the use of violence are, at least in theory, not con-

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5 On the role of the *philoponoi* and the rich Christian élite of Alexandria see A. Camplani, "The Transmission of Early Christian Memories in Late Antiquity: On the editorial activity of laymen and *philoponoi*" in *Between Personal and Institutional Religion. Self, Doctrine, and Practice in Late Antique Eastern Christianity*, ed. B. Bitton-Ashkelony, L. Perrone (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 15), Turnhout 2013, 129–153.

6 See A. Camplani, "Tempo delle origini e tempo della storia nella percezione dell'episcopato di Alessandria durante la tarda antichità", in *Tempo e storia in Africa / Time and History in Africa*, ed. A. Bausi, A. Camplani, S. Emmel (Africana Ambrosiana 4), Milano 2019, 3–32.

7 On the notion of geo-ecclesiology, see Ph. Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–491): de l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie* (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 327), Rome 2006, 6–8 and chapter 3; see also A. Martin, "Introduction", in *Histoire "acéphale" et index syriaque des lettres festales d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par A. Martin avec la collaboration pour l'édition et la traduction du texte syriaque de M. Albert (SC 317), Paris 1985, 34–67.

sidered as normal conflict resolution tools as in the latter.[8] From the point of view of the intellectual antecedents of the geo-ecclesiological perspective, it should be asked whether, just as geopolitics refers to Thucydides, geo-ecclesiology could take its inspiration from the complex historical perspective offered by Eusebius in his historical writings.[9]

This paper explores the representation of the good Christian emperor in two sections. The first section discusses the representation of the emperor from Athanasius to Timothy Aelurus: the Christian emperor is outlined in the historical accounts as a person who exercises power in the service of the society and the church. This prerogative can be put at work either in a good and intelligent way or in a bad one, depending on the emperor's religious choices, which in turn are due to his capacity to manage the pressures coming from both his entourage (wife, other members of the family, religious party, group of bishops) and his personality (self-control, emotions, anger).

In the second section, we will trace a re-reading of the fourth- and fifth-century imperial history in post-Chalcedonian sources in order to promote a new model of leadership. Figures like Constantine, Jovian, but also the two Theodosii, and others are subject to revision, which leads to the creation of stories in which a new image of the good Christian emperor emerges: he must support not only orthodoxy, but also the fight against the remnants of paganism, and above all give financial contribution to the cultic buildings in order to promote the urban visibility of Christianity.

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8 See also Ph. Blaudeau, "What is Geo–Ecclesiology: Defining Elements Applied to Late Antiquity (Fourth–Sixth Centuries)", in *Late Antiquity in Contemporary Debate*, ed. R. Lizzi Testa, Newcastle (UK), 156 – 173, at 156 – 157.

9 See Ph. Blaudeau (cf. fn. 8): "If geo-ecclesiology is an intimate part of the discipline of history, it is in some ways conditioned by its intellectual parentage. Just as the specialist in International Relations engages in long, fruitful discussion with Thucydides, because he was the first and he proposed major generalizations about power and imperialism that could lead to a theoretical approach in this regard, so the geo-ecclesiologist is in constant dialogue with the authors of ecclesiastical history, and with Eusebius of Caesarea in particular. Based on extensive original documentation, this remarkable output is indeed a discourse on the Church itself, that is to say, etymologically an ecclesiology with a strong awareness of time (...). So, to him, the true Church is historically guaranteed by the ethics of its members, and by their commitment to their faith to the point of martyrdom. It is still manifested demonstratively and effectively by the communion of the four sees distinguished by apostolic tradition (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), which is also, incidentally, in fundamental agreement with canons 6 and 7 of Nicaea."

1 Athanasius' Influence on the Historiography of the Patriarchate until Timothy Aelurus: Constantine, Constantius, and Jovian

An extraordinarily important event in the fourth century was destined to be influential on the reciprocal representations of the Egyptian church and the empire: On November 7th, 335 Athanasius was exiled to Trier by Constantine – universally considered as the first Christian emperor – because of the condemnation by the bishops convened in the council of Tyre in the summer of 335 and other questions affecting the public order of the empire. After Constantine's death on 22 May 337, Athanasius was immediately recalled to his unoccupied see by Constantine II, one of the emperor's sons and successors (June 337).[10]

From that moment on, one of the main activities of Athanasius, which left deep traces in his writings and in the subsequent historiography, was to elaborate an apologetic version of facts about Constantine. In this version, the emperor – in a momentary break in anger against him when in Constantinople (7 November 335) – exiled Athanasius to save him from persecution by his Arian enemies. This account is questionable from the point of view of historical plausibility,[11] but was influential to the point of affecting the behaviour of Constantine II, as we will see later. After Constantine's death in 337, and in particular in the 350s, Athanasius began to emphasize the difference between him and his son Constantius (who in the meantime had remained the sole emperor). One the one hand, he attributed Constantine's uncertainties concerning Arius not to the weakness of his Christian faith but to the pressures of his ecclesiastical advisors (in particular Eusebius of Nicomedia) and his definitive anti-Arian choice (on whose sincerity and firmness Athanasius hoped to convince his readers) to his wisdom as the legitimate leader of the Christian Empire. On the other hand, he portrayed Constantius as a hidden supporter of Arianism, and accused him of being unable to govern the Empire and contradictory even in his attitude towards Athanasius. A new question was born: that of the orthodoxy of the Christian emperor.

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10 T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian* Empire, Cambridge (Ma.) – London 1993, 20 – 33; A. Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IVe siècle (328 – 373)* (Cahiers des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 216), Rome 1996, 357– 387.

11 Martin (cf. fn. 10) 393 – 394, on the basis of Constantine II's letter preserved in Ath., apol. sec. 87.4.

1.1 Athanasius

Therefore, a brief consideration of Athanasius' works is unavoidable while exploring the historiography of the Alexandrian episcopate.[12] Four writings in particular are relevant to our argument, since they discuss Constantine's and Constantius' role in ecclesiastical affairs:[13] the *Epistula ad Serapionem de morte Arii*,[14] *Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae*,[15] *Apologia secunda contra Arianos*,[16] and *Historia Arianorum*.[17]

The *Epistula ad Serapionem de morte Arii (De morte Arii)* has been dated to different periods of Athanasius' career, from 340 to 358. I am in favour of a later dating (around 357/8),[18] a period in which the other works of the group were being composed or reworked. The dating of this work, however, does not change the core of my argument. The Athanasian account appears very simple on first reading:[19] in the period after the Council of Nicaea, Arius was invited by his supporters to declare his faith in front of Constantine. According to Athanasius, the main points of Arius's heretical discourse were missing from his pronouncement. Constantine was inclined to accept his declaration, but the bishop of Constantinople strongly opposed Arius' entry into the church. When Arius, following his sponsors, tried to enter the church, a sudden gastro-intestinal attack provoked his death, depriving him of communion with the Catholic Church. The passage concerning Constantine deserves to be quoted (2.1 – 3):[20]

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12 The standard reference book on Athanasius is now *Athanasius Handbuch*, ed. P. Gemeinhardt, Tübingen 2011.

13 L.W. Barnard, "Athanasius and the Roman State", *Latomus* 36 (1977) 422 – 437, reprinted in his *Studies in Church History and Patristics* (ΑΝΑΛΕΚΤΑ ΒΛΑΤΑΔΩΝ 28), P. C. Christou, Thessaloniki 1978, 312 – 328; see now K. Piepenbrink, "Athanasius und die Kaiser", in Gemeinhardt (cf. fn. 12) 134 – 139.

14 *Athanasius Werke. Zweiter Band. Erster Teil. Die Apologien*, ed. H.G. Opitz, Berlin 1934, 178 – 180.

15 *Athanasius Werke. Erster Band. Erster Teil. Die Dogmatischen Schriften*, 1. Lieferung, ed. K. Metzler, Berlin – New York 1996.

16 Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 87 – 168.

17 Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 181 – 230.

18 See also H. Muehlberger, "The Legend of Arius's Death: Imagination, Space, and Filth in Late Ancient Historiography", *Past & Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* 277 (2015) 3 – 29 (esp. 6 – 7), an article where the Greek and Latin historiography about Arius' death is studied and put into perspective; see also B. Stefaniw, "Epistula ad Serapionem de morte Arii", in Gemeinhardt (cf. fn. 12) 208 – 210, and, for a different dating, D.M. Gwynn, *Athanasius of Alexandria: Bishop, Theologian, Ascetic, Father*, Oxford 2012, 9.

19 Gwynn (cf. fn. 18) 10: "his vision of Arius dying on a Constantinopolitan latrine is one of the most famous images in Christian heresiology."

20 Ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 178 – 179, English translation by A. Robertson, *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria* (A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, 4), Grand Rapids/MI 1891, 565a.

Arius had been invited by the Emperor Constantine, through the interest of Eusebius and his fellows; and when he entered the presence, the Emperor enquired of him, whether he held the Faith of the Catholic Church? And he declared upon oath that he held the right Faith, and gave in an account of his Faith in writing, suppressing the points for which he had been cast out of the Church by the Bishop Alexander, and speciously alleging expressions out of the Scriptures. When therefore he swore that he did not profess the opinions for which Alexander had excommunicated him, [the Emperor] dismissed him, saying, 'If thy Faith be right, thou hast done well to swear; but if thy Faith be impious, and thou hast sworn, God judge of thee according to thy oath.' When he thus came forth from the presence of the Emperor, Eusebius and his fellows, with their accustomed violence, desired to bring him into the Church. But Alexander, the Bishop of Constantinople of blessed memory, resisted them, saying that the inventor of the heresy ought not to be admitted to communion.

In the *Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti* 19.4 we find another version of the episode: here there is only one note about the emperor, that is, his reaction to the extraordinary manner of Arius' death. "The blessed Constantine hearing of this at once, was struck with wonder to find him thus convicted of perjury."[21] In contrast, Constantine's presence in *De morte Arii* is reported at the beginning of this affair. Athanasius suggests that the emperor could have been inclined to accept Arius' profession of faith, but at the same time a doubt arose in him about the heretic's sincerity which made him pronounce a threat about the judgment that God would have against him in case of perjury. The threat immediately became reality, establishing a strict connection between the emperor and Arius' destiny.

The other two works provide richer evidence about Athanasius' ideal of good (or bad) Christian emperors. The *Apologia secunda contra Arianos (Apologia)* is a personal defense by Athanasius against charges laid against him by his ecclesiastical opponents, built on rich civil and clerical documentary sources probably preserved in Alexandria's large archives. In one passage, after having reported the origins of the Melitian schism and the birth of Arianism, Athanasius deals with the Arian pressure on Constantine (59.4–5):[22]

At first (Eusebius of Nicomedia) sent to me, urging me to admit Arius and his fellows to communion, and threatened me in his verbal communications, while in his letters he [merely] made a request. And when I refused, declaring that it was not right that those who had invented heresy contrary to the truth, and had been anathematized by the Ecumenical Council, should be admitted to communion, he caused the Emperor also, Constantine, of blessed memory, to write to me, threatening me, in case I should not receive Arius and his fellows, with those afflictions, which I have before undergone, and which I am still suffering.

In this passage, in which quite a long period of ecclesiastical history is summarised, Constantine appears as someone who made his decision after having listened to his ecclesiastical advisors. Later, these same advisors, when they told the emperor that

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21 Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 233a; ed. Metzler (cf. fn. 15) 60.
22 Translation in Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 131b–132a; ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 139–140.

Athanasius, according to some witnesses, had said in another circumstance that he was able to block the corn which was usually sent from Alexandria to Constantinople, provoked in Constantine that "anger" which an emperor should always keep under control (Ath., apol. sec. 87.2):[23]

> It was proved also by the anger of the Emperor (θυμός); for although he had written the preceding letter, and had condemned their injustice, as soon as he heard such a charge as this, he was immediately incensed, and instead of granting me a hearing, he sent me away into Gaul (εὐθὺς ἐπυρώθη καὶ ἀντὶ τῆς ἀκροάσεως εἰς τὰς Γαλλίας ἡμᾶς ἀπέστειλεν).

But a little later we learn that, according to Athanasius, this temporary yielding to anger was superseded by more forward-looking decisions, inherited and actualised by his son Constantine II. Athanasius quotes a letter by him addressed to the church of Alexandria, dated 17 June 337, that reveals what his father's real intentions were (87.4 – 7):[24]

> I suppose that it has not escaped the knowledge of your pious minds, that Athanasius, the interpreter of the adorable Law, was sent away into Gaul for a time, with the intent that, as the savageness of his bloodthirsty and inveterate enemies persecuted him to the hazard of his sacred life, he might thus escape suffering some irremediable calamity, through the perverse dealing of those evil men (ἵν᾿, ἐπειδὴ ἡ ἀγριότης τῶν αἱμοβόρων αὐτοῦ καὶ πολεμίων ἐχθρῶν εἰς κίνδυνον τῆς ἱερᾶς αὐτοῦ κεφαλῆς ἐπέμεινε, μὴ ἄρα διὰ τῆς τῶν φαύλων διαστροφῆς ἀνήκεστα ὑποστῇ). In order therefore to escape this, he was snatched out of the jaws of his assailants, and was ordered to pass some time under my government, and so was supplied abundantly with all necessaries in this city, where he lived, although indeed his celebrated virtue, relying entirely on divine assistance, sets at nought the sufferings of adverse fortune. Now seeing that, it was the fixed intention of our master Constantine Augustus, my Father, to restore the said Bishop to his own place, and to your most beloved piety, but he was taken away by that fate which is common to all men, and went to his rest before he could accomplish his wish.

It is really impressive to see how much Athanasius' propaganda has influenced the young emperor. When looking at the general plan of the *Apologia*, the imperial materials which are used in Athanasius' defense should not escape the attention of the reader. In the first section, devoted to the Council of Serdica, there emerge letters written by Constantius to Athanasius before and after Gregory's death (51.6.7.8: invitation to the court), and those notifying Athanasius' restoration to his see in Alexandria (54 – 56). The quotation of these letters serve the function of showing Constantius' contradictory attitude, who receives Athanasius, but at the same time is ready to arrest him. In the second part, the focus is on Constantine as an author of letters: while urging Athanasius to admit Arius, he is also ready to condemn the bishop's enemies (59, 61, 68, 70). His changing attitude is due not so much to the weakness of his personality, like in Constantius' case, but to the pressures he receives from

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23 Translation in Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 146a; ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 166.
24 Translation in Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 146a; ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 166.

the diverse religious groups active around him, whose perspectives he has to consider before choosing a course of action.[25] It is only after the council of Tyre that, according to Athanasius, Constantine begins to suspect that Athanasius may have been the object of unjust treatment on the part of his ecclesiastical colleagues (86). His decision to restore him as bishop of Alexandria is thus inherited by Constantine II.

The *Historia Arianorum* is characterised by a more violent tone and can be classified as opposition literature, political satire, engaged historiography, and a real manifesto against Constantius.[26] But it is here that broader considerations emerge about the relationship between state and church. The quoted documents are few and coincide with those reported in the *Apologia*, while other documents and events lacking in the *Apologia* are simply alluded to, such as the famous decree by Constantine in which the Arians are compared to the disciples of Porphyry (Ath., *hist. Ar.* 51.1: "Porphyrians"), or the story of Arius' death (ibid.). On the other hand, the *Historia Arianorum* contains long pieces of polemics, in which Constantius is denounced as the Antichrist (74, 77) and is compared to such Biblical figures as Saul, Ahab, and Pontius Pilate (68–69). He is also represented as cruel against his relatives (69) and incapable of resisting the pressures of his advisors, lacking one of the prerogatives of a good emperor, the capacity of making an independent decision (69.2):[27]

> But when I compare his letters, I find that he does not possess common understanding, but that his mind is solely regulated by the suggestions of others and that he has no mind of his own at all (ἐγὼ δὲ συμβάλλων αὐτοῦ τὰς ἐπιστολὰς εὑρίσκω τοῦτον μὴ κατὰ φύσιν ἔχοντα τὰς φρένας, ἀλλὰ μόνον πρὸς τοὺς ὑποβάλλοντας κινούμενον, ἴδιον δὲ νοῦν καθόλου μὴ ἔχοντα).

Thus, the good relationship and reciprocal independence between the church and the empire is compromised (52.3):[28]

> For if a judgment had been passed by Bishops, what concern had the Emperor with it? (εἰ γὰρ ἐπισκόπων ἐστὶ κρίσις, τί κοινὸν ἔχει πρὸς ταύτην βασιλεύς;). Or if it was only a threat of the Emperor, what need in that case was there of the so-named Bishops?

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25 Barnard (cf. fn. 13) 319: "He was concerned that Christianity should be the religion of the Empire – but what kind of Christianity was not his main concern as long as unity and peace (*concordia*) were preserved."

26 Barnes (cf. fn. 10) 126: "The underlying assumption of the HA is that Athanasius is a victim of a systematic policy of persecution mounted by the Arians against Christ and his true believers ever since the days of Constantine, and that this policy has been rendered possible only by secular support. (...) But it is Constantius above all who has fostered the persecution of orthodoxy and interfered improperly in the affairs of the Christian church. (...). His constant complaint that the emperor interferes in the affairs of the church is not in fact directed against interference as such, but against imperial actions of which he disapproves (...) Athanasius implicitly asserts that emperors have a right to overrule church councils – provided that they do so in the interest of orthodoxy rather than heresy."

27 Translation in Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 296a; ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 221.

28 Translation in Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 289a; ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 213.

Athanasius ascribes to Ossius of Cordova a famous discourse in which Matthew 22:21 is used to proclaim the right of the independence of the church from the state (44.6 – 8):[29]

> God has given you kingship, but has entrusted us with what belongs to the church. Just as the man who tries to steal your position as emperor contradicts God who has placed you there, so too you should be afraid of becoming guilty of a great offense by putting the affairs of the church under your control. It is written, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). Hence neither do we (bishops) have the right to rule over the world nor do you, emperor, have the right to officiate in church.

Barnard states that "Athanasius claimed the right of the Church to manage its own affairs without imperial interference – indeed the sum total of his charges against Constantius derive from the one premise that the Emperor had infringed ecclesiastical order and mingled Roman sovereignty and the constitution of the Church."[30] He adds that it is "unlikely that Athanasius' goal was a complete dualistic severance of Church and State. Indeed when it suited him he had no qualms in appealing to the imperial court. His ideal was probably cooperation between Church and State with the bishops having freedom to decide Church matters in their own gatherings and the Emperor having the right to maintain the peace of the Church and to defend its faith."[31]

1.2 From the *Historia Episcopatus Alexandriae* to Timothy Aelurus

It is clear that the question of the orthodoxy of the emperor becomes more and more important over time, particularly during the Theodosian age. Barnes' conclusions can only be shared: "By the end of the fourth century Christian orthodoxy had been added to the traditional list of virtues required in a legitimate emperor."[32] The process appears to have been gradual.

The official history of the Alexandrian episcopate (*HEpA*)[33] deserves a brief analysis from this point of view. Here the Athanasian influence is clear, in the sense that

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29 Barnes' translation (cf. fn. 10) 175; ed. Opitz (cf. fn. 14) 208.
30 Barnard (cf. fn. 13) 325.
31 Barnard (cf. fn. 13) 328.
32 Barnes (cf. fn. 10) 174.
33 For an edition of the new Gəʿəz version and Latin parallels, see A. Bausi, A. Camplani, "The History of the Episcopate of Alexandria (HEpA): *Editio minor* of the fragments preserved in the Aksumite Collection and in the *Codex Veronensis* LX (58)", Adamantius 22 (2016) 249 – 302, where a bibliography is offered of the editions of the single pieces composing the *HEpA*; for the section of the *HEpA* concerning Nicaea and Athanasius (*Historia Athanasii* or *Historia acephala*), see A. Martin, M. Albert (cf. fn. 7).

Constantine and Constantius are presented, by way of documents, as the two contrasting incarnations of the Christian emperor, the orthodox and the heretical. This contrast is inserted in a kind of history with canonical interests which promotes the rights and the jurisdiction, as well as the geo-ecclesiological position, of the great episcopal see.

HEpA was composed gradually between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, with possible later editions based on third- and fourth-century documents. This work, which was originally written in Greek, is preserved in two distinct languages, Latin and Gəʿəz, while minor fragments and quotations survive in Greek and Syriac. The Ethiopic version, identified by Alessandro Bausi, is preserved within a codex (siglum *Σ*), dating from the thirteenth century at the latest: it contains a canonical-liturgical collection composed of translations from the Greek which appear to belong to the Aksumite period (fourth to seventh centuries CE). The Latin version has been known since Scipione Maffei (1738) thanks to an old Latin uncial codex of the *Biblioteca Capitolare* in Verona (seventh–eighth century, *Codex Veronensis* LX [58], siglum *V*), the two tomes of which contain documents concerning the church of Africa and a rich and varied canonical and synodical collection. Some items of the two collections, which coincide in more than one case, have been proven to belong to a lost Greek *History of the Episcopate of Alexandria*, to be distinguished from both the later Coptic *History of the Church* and Copto-Arabic *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, to which we will come back later. In regard specifically to the *HEpA*, it should be remarked that the two canonical collections contain both shared and unique materials. *V* and *Σ* have in common the epistle by four martyr-bishops to the schismatic Melitius of Lycopolis to dissuade him from proceeding to illegitimate ordinations, the epistle by Peter of Alexandria to his church through which Melitius is excommunicated (CPG 1641), and a short historical narrative interposed between the two (CPG 1668). The parallels between *V* and *Σ* include other documents as well, such as a letter by Constantine on the council of Nicaea (CPG 8517) and his letter against Arius (CPG 2041 = 8519). Each version also has its own material: the narrative on the early history of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, enriched by three lists of the Egyptian bishops appointed by them, and the account of some episodes of the Melitian schism are preserved only by *Σ*, while the life of Athanasius (the so-called *Historia acephala* or *Historia Athanasii*), as well as the letters sent by him from the Council of Serdica (CPG 2111, 2112),[34] are preserved only by *V*.

Through the documents it quotes, a portrayal emerges of the good / bad Christian emperor. Constantine is credited with the convocation of the Council of Nicaea, the foundation of every future form of orthodoxy:[35]

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34 *Athanasius Werke. Dritter Band. Erster Teil: Dokumente zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites*, ed. H.C. Brennecke, U. Heil, A. von Stockhausen, A. Wintjes, Berlin – New York 2007, 186–250.

35 C.H. Turner. *Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Iuris Antiquissima. Canonum et conciliorum graecorum interpretationes latinae... opus postumum*, Oxford 1939, I 104.

> *Synodus Nicena sub Alexandro episcopo Alexandrie imperatore Constantino. Multa igitur seditione facta beato Alexandro cum suis de mala mente Arrii, uictoriosissimus imperator Constatinus scripsit illi et omnibus episcopis occurrere, colligens concilium omnium episcoporum in Nicena ciuitate, et conuenerunt uniuersi statuto die.*

> ("The Nicene Synod under Alexander bishop of Alexandria, when Constantine was emperor. Therefore, since great was the discord occurred to the blessed Alexander with his (supporters) regarding Arius' evil opinion, the emperor Constantine *victoriosissimus* wrote to him and all the bishops to come, convening a council of all the bishops in the city of Nicaea, and they all gathered on a fixed date").

There are two protagonists in this short passage: the bishop of Alexandria, persecuted by the heretics, and Constantine, who, in order to defend the Alexandrian orthodoxy, summons all the bishops to a council. This sentence highlights a privileged relationship between Constantine and Alexander that never in fact existed. Constantine, in the face of the religious disorder, acts as a good emperor should act: he does not make a decision on his own, does not impose a choice, but invites all bishops (*uniuersi*) to decide. Only in this way does the relationship between church and state find its balance, because the state does not intervene on its own but gives the church the means to give an effective outcome to her decisions.

Two letters by the same Constantine are quoted in the *HEpA* that support the Alexandrian cause: one is addressed to the Alexandrians on the occasion of the Council of Nicaea, and the other is a famous "decree" in which Arius is attacked and condemned as a "Porphyrian," also alluded to in *Historia Arianorum* 51. Thus, Constantine is presented as an anti-Arian and anti-heretical emperor.[36]

The situation is different under Constantius, whose letters that recalled Athanasius from the second exile are mentioned with the clear intention of showing his contradictory attitude against the hero of the *HEpA*. The emperor is responsible, with his brother Constans, for the convocation of the Council of Serdica (343),[37] which, as the *HEpA* portrays it, could have been a good event if the Arian heresy, supported by Constantius, had not caused it to fail.

Equally interesting is *HEpA*'s treatment of Jovian, the "Christian" emperor (*Historia acephala* 4.3–4.7):[38]

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36 Turner (cf. fn. 35) 631–633; A. Bausi, "The accidents of transmission: On a surprising multilingual manuscript leaf", *Adamantius* 22 (2016) 310–317.

37 Turner (cf. fn. 35) 637: *Tunc {t}temporis ingerebantur molestiae imperatoribus synodum conuocare, ut insidiarentur Paulo episcopo Constantinupolitano per sugestionem Eusebii Acacii Theodori Valentis Stephani et sociorum ipsorum, et congregata est synodus consolat. Constantii III et Constantis II aput Sardicam* ("At that time annoyances were brought to the emperors to convene a synod, in order to undermine Paul bishop of Constantinople, on the advice of Eusebius, Acacius, Theodore, Valens, Stephen and their colleagues, and a synod was convened in Serdica under the third consulate of Constantius and the second of Constans").

38 A. Martin, M. Albert (cf. fn. 7) 152, 158; Robertson (cf. fn. 20) 498a, b.

Quo in his locis degente, cognitum est Iulianum imperatorem mortuum et Iouianum christianum imperatorem. Ingressus igitur Alexandriam latenter episcopus, aduentu eius non pluribus cognito, occurrit nauigio ad imperatorem Iouianum. Et post, ecclesiasticis rebus conpositis, accipiens litteras, uenit Alexandriam et intrauit in ecclesiam methir XIX die, consolatu Iouiani et Varroniani, ex quo exiit Alexandria secundum preceptum Iuliani usquedum aduenit predicto die methir XIX post annum unum et menses III et dies XXII. (...). Cum autem episcopus Athanasius ueniret de Antiochia Alexandriam, consilium fecerunt Arriani Eudoxius, Theodorus, Sophronius, Euzoius et Ilarius [pertinentem] et constituerunt Lucium, presbyterum Georgii, interpelare imperatorem Iouianum in palatio et dicere quae in exemplaribus abentur. Hic autem minus necessaria intermissimus.

("And while he was staying in these places, it was learned that the Emperor Julian was dead, and that Jovian a Christian was Emperor. So the Bishop entered Alexandria secretly, his arrival not being known to many, and went by sea to meet the Emperor Jovian, and afterwards, Church affairs being settled, received a letter, and came to Alexandria and entered into the Church on the xix day of Athyr Coss. Jovianus and Varronianus. From his leaving Alexandria according to the order of Julian until he arrived on the aforesaid xix day of Athyr after one year and iii months, and xxii days. (...) Now when the Bishop Athanasius was coming from Antioch to Alexandria, the Arians Eudoxius, Theodore, Sophronius, Euzoius and Hilary took counsel and appointed Lucius, a presbyter of George, to seek audience of the Emperor Jovian at the Palace, and to say what is contained in the copies. *Now here we have omitted some less necessary matter*").

We learn from both this passage and a letter by Athanasius preserved in Coptic[39] that complaints were presented by members of the anti-Athanasian clergy to the emperor on October 30th, 363 at Antioch against his reinstallation as bishop of Alexandria. A very interesting account of this episode, with the transcriptions of the dialogue exchanges, is preserved in one of the Athanasian collections (α-Sammlung) titled *Petitiones arianorum*. Here it is said that the Arians (Lucius was among them) reached the emperor while he was leaving the city on horseback, but that he refused to listen to them and went out. A second attempt was later made, however the accusations against Athanasius did not convince Jovian. A third attempt, with more detailed charges, was equally unsuccessful, as Jovian declared that he believed in the total orthodoxy of Athanasius. The fourth attempt, led by Lucius alone as Jovian was coming back to the city, was rejected too.[40] In the original form of the *HEpA*, this episode was quoted in its integrity (it has been summarised in Sozom. hist. eccl. 5.2–4), and the text probably knew a certain amount of circulation, given its capacity to meet the popular taste.

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39 Ed. A. Camplani, "Atanasio e Eusebio tra Alessandria e Antiochia (362–363): Osservazioni sul *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, l'*Epistula catholica* e due fogli copti (edizione di *Pap. Berol. 11948*)", in *Eusebio di Vercelli e il suo tempo*, ed. E. Dal Covolo, R. Uglione, G.M. Vian (Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose, 133), Rome 1997, 191–246. See also *Athanasius Werke. Dritter Band, Erster Teil. Dokumente zur Geschichte des arianischen Streites*, 5. Lieferung, ed. H.Ch. Brennecke, U. Heil, A. von Stockhausen, Berlin – New York 2020, 668–669.
40 Ed. *Athanasius Werke. Zweiter Band. Die "Apologien"*, 8. Lieferung, ed. H.Ch. Brennecke, U. Heil, A. von Stockhausen, Berlin – New York 2006, 358–361.

At the same time, the passage mentions a letter sent by Jovian to Athanasius. In this letter, preserved in the α-Sammlung, Athanasius is recognised officially as the legitimate bishop of Alexandria and restored to his see. In the Athanasian collections, this letter, together with a letter sent by the same Athanasius to Jovian (containing the Nicene symbol), demonstrates the new alliance between the religious power and the political power, once the latter is represented by an orthodox emperor.[41]

The attitude of the *HEpA* is similar to Theodoret of Cyrrhus's historical work. In *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.2–3 it is precisely the description of Athanasius' relationship with Jovian, corroborated by the long quotation of a letter of the former to the latter, which has the function of giving the reader the image of the good ruler; that is, one who appears as a strict Nicene, friend of the "orthodox" bishops, and ready to sustain economically the life of the clergy.[42] Here Theodoret draws his materials from the Eustathian section of the Antiochene archives, where documents in favour of Athanasius were preserved.[43]

Finally, it should be remarked that Jovian's period follows the one in which both Constantinople and Antioch are preyed upon by divisions and heretics: the *HEpA* devotes a dramatic paragraph to each of them, which implicitly shows by way of contrast the excellence of Alexandria. Simply stated, according to the *HEpA* the Alexandrian bishops (Peter, Athanasius, and, before them, Mark the evangelist) are united by their personal martyrdom, ecclesiastical rigour, the defence of canonical rules, and the orthodox faith. These virtues are fundamental to the ideology of the Alexandrian episcopate because they distinguish Alexandria from the other eastern *mētropoleis*, especially Constantinople (which moreover lacks an apostolic foundation), thereby making Alexandria the candidate most suited to provide religious leadership for the eastern Roman Empire. This identification occurred during the episcopate of Theophilus (385–412), when the ideological elements, subsequently deployed by Cyril, Dioscorus, Timothy Aelurus, and Peter Mongos, came into existence.[44] These ideological elements included the view to propose Alexandria as the religious leader in the East, a close relationship with the imperial power, the emphasis placed upon the Council of Nicaea, and a complex conception of the history of the Alexandrian episcopate.[45]

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41 Ed. in Brennecke, Heil, von Stockhausen (cf. fn. 40) 357.

42 Ed. Théodoret de Cyr., *Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres III–V*, texte grec de L. Parmentier et G.C. Hansen, annotation par J. Bouffartigue, Introduction par A. Martin, traduction par P. Canivet (Sources chrétiennes 530), Paris 2009, 185–197.

43 See A. Camplani (cf. fn. 2) 250–252, 259–262.

44 Ph. Blaudeau, "Pierre et Marc. Remarques sur la revendication d'une relation fondatrice entre sièges romain et alexandrin dans la seconde moitié du Ve siècle", in *Pietro e Paolo. Il loro rapporto con Roma nelle testimonianze antiche. XXIX incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 4–6 maggio 2000* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 74; Rome: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 2001), 577–591.

45 Blaudeau (cf. fn. 7).

Timothy Aelurus' historiographical activity draws the most important features of its style from Athanasius and the *HEpA*, as well as from their ideology. While a reader could argue that the anti-Chalcedonian bishop was concerned above all with contemporary history based on most of the short fragments of his works, there are rare passages in which we perceive that the events were contextualised in a longer period of time, the fourth century.[46]

However, we are here interested more in the conceptions of power, empire, and emperor that emerge from Timothy's writings. A series of fragments published by Nau recalls the major events of the period from the first to the second Council of Ephesus (431–449) and then recounts those following the accession of Marcian to the throne, which led to the catastrophe of the Council of Chalcedon (451), when bishop Dioscorus was condemned and sent into exile.[47] Some of the fragments try to establish a connection between the Council of Chalcedon and the contemporary events taking place in Rome.[48] The writer wants his readers to believe that the impiety of the council had both caused the Vandal invasion of 455 and announced the coming of the Antichrist and the end of times, motifs found also in Athanasius's *Historia Arianorum*. In the *Plerophories* of John Rufus[49] we find the same catastrophic tones and an explicit connection between pope Leo's *Tome* and the Vandal invasion of the city of Rome, the city in which the *Tome* was written. Here again the Council of Chalcedon is interpreted by Timothy as the sign of the coming of the Antichrist, while his church is portrayed as the orthodox minority, persecuted by a political power that has succumbed to a heresy. To the true believers of the persecuted church, Timothy, bishop and historian, offers a theological interpretation of ongoing and recent developments.[50] The events of the Council of Chalcedon have destroyed the balance of powers that was typical of the previous age, when Cyril and Dioscorus were patriarchs in Alexandria and the empire was ruled by Theodosius the Younger (*Plerophoriae* 36):[51]

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46 A. Camplani, "A Syriac fragment from the *Liber historiarum* by Timothy Aelurus (CPG 5486), the Coptic Church History, and the archives of the bishopric of Alexandria," in *Christianity in Egypt: literary production and intellectual trends in late antiquity*, ed. P. Buzi, A. Camplani (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 125), Rome 2011, 205–226.

47 F. Nau, *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'église nestorienne* (PO 13), Paris 1919, 202–217.

48 Nau (cf. fn. 47) 215–216.

49 *Plerophories* 89, ed. F. Nau, *Jean Rufus, évêque de Maïouma. Plérophories* (PO 8), Paris 1912, 152–154.

50 For a presentation of Timothy's historiography and his considerations about the situation of Christianity after the council of Chalcedon, see E.J. Watts, "Interpreting Catastrophe: Disasters in the Works of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Socrates Scholasticus, Philostorgius, and Timothy Aelurus," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009) 79–98 (esp. 92–96); Id., "John Rufus, Timothy Aelurus and the Fall of the Western Roman Empire", in *Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World. Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Mathisen, D. Shanzer, Farnham/UK – Burlington/VT 2011, 97–106 (in particular 134–135).

51 Nau (cf. fn. 49) 83.

At this time, with the permission and the will of God, it happened that, because of our many sins, our venerable Emperor Theodosius died, a year after the Second Council of Ephesus. His successor did not follow his burning zeal for the faith. Therefore, all the affairs of the church were troubled and their outcome was contrary to the law which had been made by the Venerable Theodosius, worthy of remembrance, against the heretics, from then until now. The god-fearing are persecuted and in fact every blasphemous and rebellious tongue can speak against Christ with freedom of speech.

Timothy shows how controversial the evaluation of Marcian's reign and religious policy was:[52]

(the Chalcedonians) proclaim him (Marcian) a believer and God-fearing, as one equipped with the zeal of piety, he that only at the end (of his life) and with difficulty was made worthy of the empire by God. (They say) that he possessed the zeal of piety, meaning obliquely that the blessed Theodosius did not think in an orthodox manner, he and those before him who were orthodox emperors, up to the time when Marcian took the kingdom, at the end (of his life) and with difficulty.

The age of the two Theodosii (I and II), to which the patriarchs Theophilus, Cyril, and Dioscorus belonged, is considered a golden age in which relations between church and state were fruitful, as both parties, according to their different competences, supported the true faith. It is in this context that heresy could be targeted and heretics exiled: the civil and ecclesiastical punishment of Nestorius was approved by God, who inflicted on him a terrible and exemplary death. Timothy draws on the narrative style of Athanasius; his image of Nestorius' tongue rotten and reduced to pieces[53] is mirrored in the guts of Arius scattered on the ground as described by Athanasius. On the other hand, the judgment on Marcian's reign shows an awareness of those traditions concerning Marcian's late accession to the power and his particular relationship with Pulcheria, Theodosius II's sister, that will be developed by hagiographical texts such as the *Life of Dioscorus* and the *Encomium of Macarius of Tkow*.

2 The Later Historiographical and Hagiographical Production (Sixth to Ninth Centuries)

In order to study the image of the emperor over time, we will take in consideration two late histories, which draw on older sources; the *Church History* (*CHC*) produced in the sixth century and preserved in Coptic, and the *History of Patriarchs* (*HP*), produced in the eleventh century. Some late Coptic texts will be used to help interpret the two works.

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52 Nau (cf. fn. 47) 216.
53 Nau (cf. fn. 49) 84–85.

CHC[54] has been recovered gradually[55] from fragmentary Coptic manuscripts and from other witnesses, in particular the parallel passages of the *HP*. The career of Timothy Aelurus (d. 477) is described in the last part of the *CHC*, making his episcopate the accepted *terminus post quem* for the composition of the work. From the fragments of two Coptic manuscripts we can deduce that this work was divided into two parts: a first part, poorly preserved, containing a translation of (at least) some sections of Eusebius' *History of the Church*, and concerning the period until the Diocletianic persecution; a second part, completely original, narrating the events from Peter I to Timothy Aelurus. From both an index to a section of the text and a colophon we learn that the work was further divided into twelve books, each called "history of the church" (ϩιϲτορια ⲛⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ) and accompanied by a numerical identification.[56]

In comparison with the *HEpA*, the scope of the *CHC* is broader, as its focus extends to the whole eastern Mediterranean, even if the starting point is always Alexandria. This is proven both by the use of Eusebius in the first part for periods and events in which Alexandria has no role to play, in addition to the attention paid to the situation of the church in the whole East in its second half.

The *CHC* is one of the sources used by Mawḥūb b. Manṣūr b. Mufarriǧ in the eleventh century to compose the second work to be studied here, the *HP*. This long work, which heavily depends on previous historical writings, is structured as a sequence of lives of patriarchs, as indicated by its Arabic title: *Siyar al-Biʿah al-Muqaddasah* ("biographies of the Holy Church"). Alongside the biography of each patriarch, various political, social, and ethnic events are recorded in a format that varies according to the tastes of the original authors from whom the final editor draws his materials.[57]

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54 An edition of the first and second part of the Coptic history is published on the web site of the *Corpus dei manoscritti copti letterari:* http://www.cmcl.it. See the text in *Storia della Chiesa di Alessandria*, ed. T. Orlandi, 2 vol. (Testi e Documenti per lo Studio dell'Antichità 17; 31), Milano – Varese 1968–1970.

55 For additional fragments, see D.W. Johnson, "Further Fragments of a Coptic History of the Church. Cambridge Or.1699R", Enchoria 6 (1976) 7–18; T. Orlandi, "Nuovi frammenti della Historia Ecclesiastica copta, in *Studi in onore di Edda Bresciani*, ed. S.F. Bondí, Pisa 1985, 363–384.

56 On the sources, cf. T. Orlandi, *Studi Copti. 1. Un encomio di Marco Evangelista, 2. Le fonti copte della Storia dei Patriarchi di Alessandria, 3. La leggenda di S. Mercurio* (Testi e Documenti per lo Studio dell'Antichità 22), Milano 1968; T. Orlandi, "The Coptic Ecclesiastical History: A Survey, in The World of Early Egyptian Christianity. Language, Literature, and Social Context. Essays in Honor of David W. Johnson", ed. J.E. Goehring, J.A. Timbie, Washington, D.C. 2007, 3–24; A. Boud'hors, S. Morlet. "La version copte de l'*Histoire ecclésiastique*" in *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique. Commentaire*. Tome I. *Études d'introduction*, ed. S. Morlet, L. Perrone, Paris 2012, 267–270. On the contents, see http://www.cmcl.it, which offers the critical edition: the work is classified as Clavis Coptic 0200; on the manuscript tradition, see https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/works/200.

57 Still fundamental is the volume by J. den Heijer, *Mawḥūb ibn Manṣūr ibn Mufarriǧ et l'historiographie copto-arabe. Étude sur la composition de l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie* (CSCO 513, Subsidia 53), Leuven 1989. More recent information is found in the following publications: P. Pilette "La recension primitive du texte arabe de l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie: problématique et per-

The *HP* has two recensions; the first one is called "vulgate" and has been edited twice and translated to English by Evetts, and the second one is more archaic, partially edited, but has not been translated.[58] Characterised by a variety of layers of composition, it has undergone a number of editorial additions over time. The early historians wrote in Coptic, while their successors in the eleventh century wrote in Arabic. The list of the preserved and lost sources is as follows:

1. the *CHC*
2. a Coptic history about the period 412–700 attributed to the archdeacon George, collaborator of patriarchs John III (677–686), Simon I (689–701), and Cosmas (730–731)
3. a text written by a monk named John (middle of the eighth century)
4. a history composed by another John (865–866)
5. a text by Michael, bishop of Tinnis (1051 or 1058)

To this Coptic material translated into Arabic, the last compiler added the biographies of Christodulos (1047–1077) and Cyril III (1078–1092), composed directly in Arabic. This composite text in turn underwent minor additions and alterations in the course of time, which have led to the vulgate form of the *HP*.

The *HP* has the same ideology of the Patriarchate, since the authors of its Coptic sources were part of circles close to the Coptic institutional church. However, when we read the work, we have to take into account a plurality of ideologies, which are interwoven but not always blended together: the ideology of the *CHC*, the perspectives of the other later sources, and the opinions of the final compiler, Mawhūb. The possibility that the last compiler used the method of combining the sources is well demonstrated in some situations. For example, when one reads the "Life of Demetrius,"[59] it becomes clear that a later editor compiled the story by inserting a homiletic text into the CHC's version of the story, which is in turn, translated from Eusebius' *History*. Similarly, Orlandi has proposed that the "Lives of Alexander and Athanasius" is the combination of two sources, one of which is the *CHC* while the other is uncertain.[60]

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spectives", *Acta Orientalia Belgica* 23 (2010), 141–155; ead., "L'*Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*: une nouvelle évaluation de la configuration du texte en recensions.", *Mus* 126 (2013) 419–450; ead., *L'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie: une tradition textuelle ouverte. Essai méthodologique, édition critique et traduction des Vies 17 à 26*, PhD Dissertation, Université Catholique de Louvain, August 2014.

58 Editions of the version qualified as "*vulgata*": *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, ed. B.T.A. Evetts, Paris 1904–1915: PO 1,2: 99–214; 1,4: 381–619; 5,1: 1–215; 10,5: 357–551. The ms. of Hamburg, which testifies to a more archaic state of the text, is edited in *Severus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. Alexandrinische Patriarchatgeschichte von S. Marcus bis Michael (61–767), nach der ältesten 1266 geschriebenen Hamburger Handschrift im arabischen Urtext heraugegeben*, ed. C.H. Seybold, L. Gräfe, Hamburg 2012.

59 Evetts (cf. fn. 58) 154–162.

60 Orlandi, *Studi copti* (cf. fn. 56) 63–74.

2.1 Revisiting Fourth Century Church History: Constantine, Constantius, Jovian

While the manuscripts of the *CHC* lack the account of the Council of Nicaea, a very strange story is found in the *HP*. We do not know if it is dependent on the lost text of the *CHC* or an addition of its compiler:

> The four sees were assembled on his account at Nicaea: Eusebius for Rome, Alexander for Alexandria, Ephesus and Antioch. Constantine, the believing prince, sat with them. So when they settled the orthodox faith, and the time of the fast and the Easter, the prince said to them: "I pray you to make the city of Constantinople a patriarchal see, because it is the seat of the prince, and likewise Jerusalem, because it is the city of the Saviour, the heavenly prince." So when they saw his humility, they did this as he prayed them. Then they cut off Arius, by the command of the prince, and Constantine wrote the excommunication of Arius by his own hand.[61]

Despite some inconsistencies, especially the anachronism concerning a not-yet-existing Constantinople and the reference to Ephesus as one of the patriarchates (an innovation fitting polemical purposes against the Council of Chalcedon), the text foreshadows the ideal of pentarchy and advocates the subordination of the political power to the council. This text could have been written only after Alexandria had accepted the patriarchal status of the see of Constantinople – an acceptance that can be dated to the epoch of Acacius, bishop of Constantinople (472– 489), linked with the patriarch Peter Mongus in Coptic memory (480 – 488).

In the *CHC* the story of the relationship between Constantine and Arius is broken into two parts, so as to attribute the excommunication of the heretic to Constantine, and his readmission and unexpected immediate death to his son Constantius, against everything we learn from historical sources.[62] The *CHC* introduces a speech by Bishop Alexander, addressed not to Constantine as the chronology would require, but to Constantius:

> For, the emperor your father signed his (Arius') excommunication and subjected it to the prefect, and, if you investigate, you will find the document (*hypomnēma*). As for me, it would be not a little danger to cancel a decree which was established by the emperor, especially because your own father attended to his (Arius') excommunication at the Council which gathered us at Nicaea.[63]

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61 I prefer Reda Hammad's translation of the Hamburg recension found in his 2014 dissertation: *Un contributo alla nuova edizione critica della Storia dei Patriarchi di Alessandria: Vitae XXVII–XXXVII. Trascrizione, traduzione, collazione, note e commento storico*, PhD Dissertation, Rome 2014. The text corresponds to Evetts (cf. fn. 58) 406 – 407.

62 Ed. Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) I, 22 (text), 58 (translation). The reference to the documentation is noteworthy, but the author's real knowledge of all the Nicaean documentation appears questionable, just like his supposed familiarity with the bureaucratic background of the Council.

63 Ed. Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) I, 22 (text), 58 (translation).

This split, probably favoured by the homonymy of Constantine and Constantine II, his son, served the double function of defending Constantine from the accusation of having supported Arianism and blaming Constantius for his compromise with this heresy.[64] We have seen that this tendency, already at play in Athanasius, was further developed in the *HEpA* through the selection of documents that bolstered the author's view, and was destined to grow during the following centuries. In the *CHC*, as well as in later homiletic production, it resulted into the dissolution of the correct chronology of the fourth century and the splitting of the figure of Constantine.

In Coptic hagiography, specifically hagiographical materials organised in "cycles" according to Orlandi's suggestion,[65] the Roman emperors of the fourth century are deeply transformed from their most ancient representation into symbols of the different ways of managing the political power in religious matters. As Paola Buzi has put it, Constantine "often appears completely devoid of his historic traits and reduced to an abstract 'hero' character, which has been elaborated to represent the ideal model of a sovereign rather than to reconstruct the historical facts faithfully."[66] Buzi's analysis shows that Coptic hagiography characterises Constantine in four ways: as responsible for the release of Christians from the imperial prisons, as an advocate of orthodoxy, as an evangelizer of pagan lands, and as a builder of holy places.[67] The same themes recur until medieval times, as demonstrated by the Synaxarial texts studied by Ph. Luisier.[68]

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64 Thus, Arius' vicissitudes and death are placed under Constantius, obviously using the account written by Athanasius in his *De morte Arii*. It is not clear if the author had access directly to this letter, or to the traditions to which it gave birth. See Gwynn (cf. fn. 18) 189: "by placing the recall of Arius in the reign of Constantius, the *History of the Patriarchs* protected the reputation of Constantine, who is praised repeatedly as the defender of Nicaea but who was in fact responsible for Arius' return from banishment after 325", and Id., "Athanasius of Alexandria in Greek and Coptic Historical Tradition" *Journal of Coptic Studies* 15 (2013) 43–54.

65 See for example T. Orlandi, "Hagiography" in *Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. A.S. Atiya, Macmillan, New York 1991, 1191a–1197b; see also "Literature", *ibid.*, 1450b–1460a.

66 P. Buzi, "Re-interpreting History: Constantine and the Constantinian Age according to Coptic Hagiography", in *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion, from Late Antiquity to Modern Times. Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Rome, September 17–22, 2012, and Plenary Reports of the Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Cairo, September 15–19, 2008*, ed. P. Buzi, A. Camplani, F. Contardi (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 247), Leuven 2016, 1117–1128, esp. 1119. Some of the texts with which I will deal here are translated and introduced by T. Orlandi, *Omelie copte*, SEI, Torino 1981.

67 See *In Mariam Virginem* by Cyril of Jerusalem dedicated to the dormition: E.A.W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London 1915, 49–73, A. Campagnano, *Ps. Cirillo di Gerusalemme. Omelie copte sulla Passione, sulla Croce e sulla Vergine* (Studi e testi per lo studio dell'antichità 65), Milano – Varese 1977, 152–195 and other texts quoted by Buzi.

68 Ph. Luisier, "Elena e Costantino nella tradizione copta," in *Costantino e l'Oriente. L'impero, i suoi confini e le sue estensioni. Atti del convegno di studi promosso dal PIO in occasione della ricorrenza costantiniana (313–2013), Roma 18 aprile 2013*, a cura di M. Pampaloni e B. Ebeid (OCA 300), Rome 2016, 247–265.

The *Encomium on Athanasius* is an interesting Coptic text attributed to Cyril of Alexandria that narrates several episodes of the life of Athanasius, from the time of his nomination as the secretary of Bishop Alexander to the election of Jovian and the letter with which this emperor reinstated him on the Alexandrian see.[69] As in the *Historia Arianorum*, Constantius[70] also appears in this text incapable of exercising his power with authority. He is "naïf" (ογαφελнc πε νογκογϊ)[71] because he was easily influenced by the Arians, sent Athanasius into exile, and put George on the episcopal throne. It is striking that Isauria and Seleucia are completely missing from the list of Athanasius' places of exile. A possible explanation of this oddity has been recently offered by Victor Ghica, according to whom this toponym should be interpreted as an allusion to the council of "imperial" bishops close to Constantius II which took place on 27 September 359 in Seleucia of Isauria. The council's decisions resulted in the rejection of the terms ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος and the adoption of the Homoean trinitarian definition and the generic term ὅμοιος. Ghica supposes rightly that in the narrative describing the very beginning of Athanasius' mission at Seleucia the expression "the heritage (ογcϊа) of his Lord (was) growing," used in reference to the flock gathered around the new preacher in exile, is a word play inserted in the text in order to support the trinitarian and orthodox use of οὐσία against its abolition by a council considered Arian by the bishop.[72] The picture of the bad Christian emperor is completed by the characterisation of Constantius as fearful of his brother Constans. In his fear, he ceases his persecution of Athanasius at least for a period,[73] a motif found in the *CHC*.[74] Another anonymous *Vita Athanasii* preserved in an eighth-century papyrus codex (Turin) and influenced by the above mentioned passage of the *CHC*, introduces a Constantine / Constantius (the two characters overlap) who exiles and recalls the orthodox bishops, among whom was Athanasius, and is ready to put Arius on trial for heresy. This episode is followed by a reworking of the famous miraculous death of Arius. What is interesting here is that, as in the *CHC*, there is a reference to the father Constantine as someone of the past, who has ratified the Nicene faith with the subscription of Alexander, therefore completely unconnected with the rehabilitation of Arius.[75]

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69 T. Orlandi, *Testi copti. 1) Encomio di Atanasio. 2) Vita di Atanasio*, Milano – Varese 1968. A new parallel fragment has been published by V. Ghica, A. St. Damiana "'His Toil was not in Vain'. Two Unpublished Coptic Fragments of the Encomium on Athanasius Attributed to Cyril of Alexandria (IFAO inv. 79–80)", *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion, from Late Antiquity to Modern Times* (cf. fn. 66) 953–968.

70 In Orlandi's manuscripts we read ...]τλητιη[...which should point to Constantine (cf. fn. 69, 26 l. 9), while in the IFAO fragment published by Ghica (IFAO inv. 79v) the reference to Constantius, more appropriate to the chronology of the historical context, is certain.

71 Orlandi (cf. fn. 69) 26 l. 11.

72 Ghica, Damiana (cf. fn. 69) 963–964.

73 Orlandi (cf. fn. 69) 35 ll. 21–28 (text), 67 (translation).

74 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) I, 22 ll. 12–15 (text); 58 (translation).

75 Orlandi (cf. fn. 69) 92 l.1–93 l. 1 (text) 124 (translation).

Other texts could be mentioned in order to outline Constantine as the symbol of the ideal Christian ruler in the history of the Coptic culture, from time to time responding to different needs. For this purpose the reader can refer to the rich and detailed studies by Buzi and Luisier, but a brief mention seems necessary of the strangest text about Constantine; it includes the legend of "Eudoxia and the Holy Sepulchre" narrating the horrible death of Diocletian (an Egyptian!),[76] a fabulous career of the young Constantine, and the cultic activities of a certain Eudoxia, called "his sister." This text, preserved in manuscripts of the seventh/eighth century and redacted during the seventh century, attributes the finding of the True Cross and the discovery of the Holy Sepulchre to this fictitious sister. Drake has studied this complex set of legends and views it as the product of the Coptic intellectual circles of the seventh century, who were trying to understand new power dynamics and defend their own religious traditions while living under the Arab domination.[77]

The change that occurred in the historiographical representation of the emperor can be measured through later texts about Jovian. Two known elements of Jovian's biography emerge in the accounts from the *CHC* and the *HP:* the letter by which Athanasius is reinstalled in Alexandria – which appears reformulated by both texts when compared to the original Greek – and the accusations against him made by an Arian delegation to the emperor guided by the Arian Lucius.[78] The *CHC* does not mention the letter and the Arian petitions but instead quotes the detail of the emperor's horse incitement, which is preserved only in the Greek text of *Petitiones arianorum*, in turn cited in the *HEpA:* "and he incited his horse (ϣⲁϥⲧⲉⲃⲥ ⲡⲉϥϩⲧⲟ) and went hunting."[79] It is difficult to trace how this particular element reached the *CHC* (while it is suppressed in the *HP*).

The *Encomium,* attributed to Cyril, includes the same episode of the Arian petitions. However, in this text it is impressive how the author uses Jovian's reign as the purest example of the ideal relationship between state and church. A fictional letter written by Jovian to Athanasius declares the subordination of the secular power to the ecclesiastical one:

> (...) while you take care of the churches, so that they become like heavenly things, adorned with all purity. It is not me, o holy shepherd, the one who dictates the norms (ϯ ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ) to you, but you will be the one who gives the norms to me. Certainly it is necessary that the kings submit to the priests (ⲛⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲅⲩⲡⲟⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ ⲛⲛⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ). Finally to all this, write to all the inhabited world to pray for my kingdom in all the churches, so that the God, Christ, may preserve me in the orthodox faith of my fathers. I inform your Holiness that Lucius of Cappadocia (whose name is not worth men-

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76 On this theme see A. Papaconstantinou, "Historiography, Hagiography, and the Making of the Coptic 'Church of the Martyrs' in Early Islamic Egypt", *DOP* 60 (2006) 65 – 86.

77 For the texts and the historical commentary, see T. Orlandi, B.A. Pearson, H.A. Drake, *Eudoxia and the Holy Sepulchre. A Constantinian Legend in Coptic* (Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità 67), Cisalpino-Goliardica, Milano 1980.

78 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) I, 50 – 52 (text), 68 – 69 (translation).

79 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) I, 52 ll. 12 – 13 (text), 68 (translation).

tioning) and those who are with him, who have been driven out of your city since that time, as we have witnessed, having come complained against your pity in front of us. But we have not listened to them absolutely (...)

In fact, the senate has no power over any ecclesiastical affair (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲃⲟⲩⲗⲉⲩⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲍⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲛ ⲥⲱⲃ ⲛⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁⲥⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ), but it is right that each order governs its own things (ⲧⲧⲁϫⲓⲥ ⲧⲧⲁϫⲓⲥ ⲇⲓⲟⲓⲕⲉⲓ ⲛⲛⲉⲥϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ).[80]

The last episode of Jovian's reign concerns a seriously ill Athanasius who, in the final days of his life, expresses the desire to see the doors of Serapis' temple closed (the *HP* is strictly dependent on the *CHC* for this episode):

the clergy of Alexandria is witness to the fact that before seven days had passed since his death, Jovian sent to close the door of that temple.[81]

It is clear here that the narration, with its chronological inversion of the death of Jovian (364) and that of Athanasius (373), presents this initiative as an anticipation of what will be the most important event in Egypt in the long agony of paganism, i.e., the destruction of the Serapeum and the statue of the divinity (392). Catherine Louis has studied and published an edition of a parchment sheet preserved in *Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (IFAO) (*inv. no.* 51),[82] whose text (an extract of a *florilegium*) deals with the final phase of the Serapeum in a legendary fashion. It contains the conclusion of an imperial letter in which the sending of a general (*stratēlatēs*) with troops is promised in order to close the pagan temples; at the end of the text we discover that this letter is fictionally quoted in a message of the clerics of Alexandria to the people of the city. Their signature at the end of the quotation is as follows: "the clerics of the city of Rakote (Alexandria)" (ⲛⲉⲕⲗⲏⲣⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲣⲁⲕⲟⲧⲉ). Louis demonstrates that the lost text to which this fragment belongs was the basis of the above-mentioned passage of the *CHC* and the *HP*.

For the following period, the text of the *CHC* introduces Theophilus, and only later informs the readers about the succession to Jovian: Valentin(ia)nus and Valens, who are mistakenly defined as his sons and qualified as "believers," i.e., orthodox – a qualification which could be deemed at least questionable in regard to Valens.[83]

A further sign of the growing importance assumed by Jovian as the image of the good emperor, given his advantage of being completely unrelated to later theological controversies, is the *Encomium of Saint Mena* published by Drescher, and attributed

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80 Orlandi (cf. fn. 69) 36 l. 19–37 l. 9 (text), 69 (translation).

81 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 12 (text), 61 (translation).

82 C. Louis, "Les derniers temps du Sérapéum d'Alexandrie: un nouveau témoin copte", *Journal of Coptic Studies* 17 (2015) 109–126; the last words of the text are edited at 114.

83 On the difficult question of defining Valens' religious policy, see N. Lenski: *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.*, University of California Press, Berkeley 2002.

to John III (patriarch during the period 677–686), certainly written after the Arab conquest (which is mentioned):[84]

> Accordingly, the chief citizens of Alexandria and those of Mariotes and all the archons of Egypt besought the holy Athanasius, the archbishop, to build a wondrous memorial-church to the glory of God and the holy Apa Mena and the joy and gladness of all the peoples who came to it. And the holy Athanasius was unable because of the trials caused by the impious Arians persecuting him. But God confounded the (vile faith) of the heretics. He raised up the just and the pious king (ⲡⲣⲣⲟ ⲛⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲩⲥⲉⲃⲏⲥ) Jovian. The Church took honour again in his days. Then the holy Athanasius undertook the carrying-out of the people's request to the glory of God and His blessed martyr. And when the God-loving king (ⲡⲣⲣⲟ ⲙⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ) Jovian heard, he wrote to the *stratēlatēs* of Alexandria that he should help him with money for the building of the church (in the name of) the blessed martyr. And so he gave orders with great power. He brought it to completion in all beauty, adorning it with precious marbles glistening like gold.

Again Jovian has to deal with a *stratēlatēs*. This time, through another fictional letter, Jovian exhorts him not to close a temple, but to find the money in order to build a church. It is to be noticed that the financial support comes from both the general and the *archontes:* I think that there is here an allusion not only to the rich Christian élite, but also to the engaged movement of the *philoponoi*. A final remark: the writer makes the same mistake as the writer of the *CHC*; immediately after this passage, Valens and Valentini(an)us are defined as sons of Jovian and just emperors. Is it possible to suppose a close dependence of this late text on the *CHC?*[85]

2.2 The New Figures of Power: The Two Theodosii, Arcadius and Eudoxia, Marcian and Pulcheria, Justinian and Theodora

In regards to Theophilus of Alexandria (385–412) as outlined in both the *CHC* and the *HP*,[86] it is worth noting that the destruction of the Serapeum (392) is left in the background and the reader is referred to a lost writing attributed to the bishop about the events surrounding the fact (it should be remembered that a mention of

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84 J. Drescher, *Apa Mena. A Selection of Coptic Texts Relating to St Menas*, IFAO, Cairo 1946. The passage is edited at 66–67 and translated at 144–145. See also Orlandi (cf. fn. 66) 302. It should be remarked that the whole passage contains very good historical information until the time of the Arab invasion. Zeno and Anastasius are mentioned as examples of good Christian rulers in the history of Saint Mena.

85 It is noteworthy the fact that John III, the supposed author of the text, was assisted in his patriarchal activity by the scribe George, who was also his spiritual son: George in turn became secretary of the following two patriarchs and was the author of a Coptic history for the period from Cyril to the end of the seventh century, which is one of the main sources of the *HP*. Given his function and his historiographical attitudes, I ask myself whether this historical sketch of the sanctuary of Saint Mena is due to George rather than to his patron.

86 Evetts (cf. fn. 58) 425–430; Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 12–16 (text), 61–63 (translation).

the Serapeum occurs already in the account of Jovian's reign).[87] Great emphasis is given instead to traditions concerning the most important cultic buildings, especially those in which monks and lay confraternities (the so-called *philoponoi*) were involved. Such memories were tied to the origins of the Christian community itself; a mention in a historical narrative was a way for these groups to enhance their own prestige in the history of Christian Alexandria.[88] A famous episode, mentioned here for its relevance to the topic of the good Christian emperor, is connected with Athanasius' desire, expressed in front of monks and *philoponoi,* to build in his possession a *martyrion* for John the Baptist.[89] Theophilus accomplishes this project as attested here:

> Theophilus remembered the speech that his father had made about the shrine of John the Baptist. He had acquired great wealth. The emperor had ordered to give him the key of the temples and he had found great wealth. And according to the word of God and the will of his servant Athanasius, he built the *martyrion* facing the garden of Athanasius and adorned it with large ornaments, with the help of the emperors and the nobles of Egypt, who sent him gifts, gold, silver and precious stones for the construction of the shrine. And they rejoiced with him in every region, especially the great merchants who were in India and in remote regions, who brought him everything necessary. After it had been finished, he moved there the bones of John the Baptist, and great miracles occurred during the translation of the bones of the precursor of Christ.[90]

This passage highlights a positive custom of the empereror, his court and the provincial administration that was supposed to emanate from him: the construction of cultic buildings. Such a use supports the activities of the church while removing from society both the error of the pagan religions and the danger of heresy. Theodosius I is obviously the best representative of this ideal emperor. The so-called "the legend of the three *thētas*" is one of the most ideologically powerful tales elaborated in late antique Egypt related to this motif.[91] It is missing from the *CHC* but occurs in the *HP*,[92] the *Annals* by Eutychius,[93] the *Encomium of Raphael*,[94] the *Synaxarium* and

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87 On the accounts about the destruction of the Serapeum, see T. Orlandi, "Uno scritto di Teofilo alessandrino sulla distruzione del Serapeum?", *La Parola del passato* 121 (1968) 295–304; A. Martin, "Sarapis et les chrétiens d'Alexandrie: un réexamen", in *Alexandrie médiévale 3*, ed. Chr. Décobert et J.-Y. Empereur (Études alexandrines 16), Cairo 2008, 41–57.

88 See Camplani (cf fn. 5).

89 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) I, 46–47 (text), 66–67 (translation).

90 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 14 ll. 2–29 (text); 62–63 (translation).

91 T. Orlandi, "Teofilo e i templi pagani; Le opere di Teofilo in lingua copta", in Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 95–106 and Id., "Theophilus of Alexandria in Coptic Literature", in *StP* 16 (TU 129) Berlin 1985, 100–104.

92 Evetts (cf. fn. 58) 426.

93 *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales. Pars Prior – Parts posterior*, ed. L. Cheiko (CSCO 50–51, Scriptores arabici 6–7), Beirut – Paris 1906–1909.

94 T. Orlandi, "Raphael in Alexandria", in *Philologie, herméneutique et histoire des textes entre Orient et Occident. Melanges et hommage à Sever J. Voicu*, ed. by F. P. Barone, C. Macé and P. A. Ubierna, Brepols, Turnhout 2017, 225–246. See the edition in T. Orlandi, *Encomium In Raphaelem Archangelum*

other texts.[95] The story describes how a pious woman, while visiting Theophilus during the work for the construction of a sanctuary supported by her finances, found a stone slab engraved with three *thētas*. Theophilus easily recognised a real political and religious program in the stone slab by interpreting the three *thētas* as the initials of *Theos*, *Theodosios*, and *Theophilos*. Under this stone the bishops discovered a treasure that he used for the ecclesiastical constructions. Here we have an idealised representation of that link between the empire, the church of Alexandria and the Christian élite that was well represented by Theophilus' symbolic figure as reworked in later centuries. The legend acquired a considerable pace in Alexandrian circles around the late sixth century since no traces of it are detectable during Theophilus' episcopate or in the *CHC*.[96]

This ideal occurs under different political circumstances, including the period under Arab domination when building a church was becoming a problem. Those accounts could be used to remind people (and the administration?) of a time in which this activity was a charge of the political power, which neither hindered the restoration of old churches nor opposed the construction of new ones but instead supported them. In the *Encomium of Saint Mena*, written under Arab domination, we read:[97]

> And when some time had passed until the days of Theodosius the Great, with Arcadius and Honorius, his sons, in the days of Theophilus, the archbishop, there being great peace and prosperity in their reign, (it befell that) when the feast of the blessed martyr came round, on the fifteenth of Hathôr, many great multitudes assembled. And they suffered distress because the church could not hold the multitudes but they were standing outside in the desert. And the blessed archbishop, Apa Theophilus, was there. At the sight of the people's distress he wrote to Arcadius, the king. And the king ordered the building of a spacious memorial-church.

But the political power also had an irrational side. This was already evident at the time of the "holy" Constantine: he reacted with *thymos* to the new accusations against Athanasius in November 335. In the *CHC*, women especially incarnate this ir-

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(Relatio Theophili) Attributed to Cyril of Alexandria or Theophilus of Alexandria. Text, Latin Translation, and Diplomatic Edition of the Codices, Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari, Rome 2018 (digital edition). For the Arabic text see R.-G. Coquin, "Discours attribué au patriarche Cyrille, sur la dédicace de l'église de S. Raphaël, rapportant les propos de son oncle Théophile", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 33 (1994) 25–56; "II – version arabe", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 36 (1997) 9–58.

95 For the *Synaxarium* see both recensions under the date 27 Bābah: *Synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte)*, ed. R. Basset, in PO I, 3, Paris 1904, 346–347; *Synaxarium alexandrinum. Pars prior*, ed. I. Forget (CSCO 89–90, Scriptores arabici 18), Rome 1921, 67, see translation 72–73.

96 To this legend another one should be added concerning the youth and friendship of Emperor Theodosius and bishop Theophilus reported in the *Annals* by Eutychius. An analysis of the significance of this tale will be published by M. Conterno, "Whose dream comes true? Negotiation of primacy in the 'Legend of Theodosius and Theophilus", in *Narrating Power and Authority in Late Antique and Medieval Hagiographies from East to West*, ed. G. Dabiri, Turnhout 2021, in press.

97 Drescher (cf. fn. 84) 67–68 (text), 145–146 (translation).

rational side by losing self-control in the exercise of power. For example, Eudoxia, the wife of Arcadius, is an evil, greedy woman, feared by all notables and clerics, whose anger cannot be controlled even by her husband Arcadius. The *CHC* pitifully explains Theophilus' attitude towards John Chrysostom with the former's intention to contain the wrath of Eudoxia against the church.[98] The *HP* reformulated the course of events to delete from historical record Theophilus's responsibility in the exile and death of John Chrysostom.[99]

Theodosius II, as described in the *CHC*, is also the symbol of the good emperor worthy of his office. He has a sister, Pulcheria, who helps him reign more than his own wife. His support for the patriarch Cyril is unconditional in the latter's fight against emperor Julian's pagan writings and the heresy of Nestorius. He provides the organisational and financial means to summon a Council at Ephesus in order to defend the orthodox Christology.[100]

However, the emperor's positive function is afflicted by potential dangers: both the lack of sons and Pulcheria's ambition are responsible for the greatest catastrophe of the Egyptian church, the Council of Chalcedon (451):[101]

> (Theodosius the Younger) had no sons in those days and he was afflicted for that reason. His sister Pulcheria / Porcheria was virgin and lived with him in the *palation*. She administered the empire with his wife, but Pulcheria / Porcheria had a rod (=authority) above the one of the wife of the emperor.

The sudden death of Theodosius pushes Pulcheria into the arms of Marcian, a "Nestorian," who becomes the new emperor by marrying her. The greatest fight for orthodoxy for the Coptic Church begins from this moment. In these vicissitudes and traditions surrounding them are contained all the elements of the future anti-Chalcedonian polemics.

The *Life of Dioscorus* and the *Encomium of Macarius Bishop of Tkow*, written a little before or during the composition of the *CHC*, are two texts that help us understand the political significance of this change of direction. The former is a pseudonymous account of the bishop's exile, preserved in Syriac and Arabic but originally written in Greek or Coptic. This text contextualises Dioscorus' vicissitude at the Council of Chalcedon into a broader narrative of Egyptian history. In the exordium the signs of the catastrophe are evoked and a famous tale is presented (2–4):[102]

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98 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 34–36 (text), 72–76 (translation).

99 Evetts (cf. ft. 58) 426–427, 430–431.

100 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 36–50 (text), 76–88 (translation).

101 Orlandi (cf. fn. 54) II, 36 (text) 23–28, 76 (translation).

102 Theopistos, *Vita Dioscori*, ed. F. Nau, "Histoire de Dioscore, patriarche d'Alexandrie, écrite par son disciple Théopiste", *JA* 10 (1903) 5–108, 241–310. See now the Arabic version: *Die arabische Version der Vita Dioscori: Edition und Übersetzung* (PO 56, fasc. 1), Turnhout 2016.

> The emperor Theodosius the younger had no children. He had a sister named Pulcheria who had promised before God to live in virginity (...). In the imperial palace there was a young man of good presence, named Marcian, belonging to the Nestorian sect. Satan inflamed Pulcheria's heart for this wicked man. One day to the victorious emperor Theodosius was brought a great and very beautiful apple, which he contemplated and admired. An excellent perfume exuded from it. And since there was no one to honor and esteem more than his sister, he called her and gave her this apple. This adulteress took it and sent it secretly to her impure friend, the Nestorian Marcian, because there was no man she loved more than him. Marcian in turn thought that no one else could be worthy of having this apple except the emperor. He took it and brought it to him. This one recognised the apple he had donated to his sister, but asked, as if he knew nothing: "Where does this beautiful and so remarkable apple come from?" Marcian answered him: "A general, a friend of mine, sent it to me." The emperor understood that his sister Pulcheria was burning with an adulterous love and exiled Marcian in the Thebaid of Egypt under the pretext that he was Nestorian, but, in reality, with the intention that his sister could no longer see him in Constantinople. Shortly after, the victorious Theodosius died. Satan, the cursed serpent, began his old fight against the woman. He spoke to the impure heart of Pulcheria in this way: "You remain in the inactivity and the empire of your fathers will pass to another people (ܐܚܪܢܐ ܠܥܡܐ), while you, who are the daughter of the Romans (ܒܪܬ ܪܗܘܡܝܐ), are despised."

This tale served the anti-Chalcedonian propaganda with great communicative power: the turning point of the religious policy of the empire should be attributed to an act of adultery on the part of the woman who promised to maintain virginity. Its effectiveness was recognised by the other side, the Chalcedonians, who by contrast transformed it into the story first attested in Malalas. In it, Eudocia, wife of Theodosius the Younger (the ideal emperor for the anti-Chalcedonians), receives an apple from her husband and gives it to her lover Paulinus, who in turn offers it to Theodosius, allowing the latter to discover the adultery, execute him and punish Eudocia with exile in Jerusalem.[103] The fact that Theodosius did not have children along with the vow of chastity by his sister Pulcheria are elements of an unstable equilibrium which, as soon as it was disturbed, gave rise to a dynamic that was destined to have a fatal outcome. Satan intervened, just as he did in the days of Eve, to push Pulcheria to sin, suggesting that she should fear that power might not remain in the hands of the Romans but be destined to move to other families or populations. Burgess has dedicated a long article to the history of Marcian's representation[104] and Scott has masterfully delved into some of his insights.[105] The two have demonstrated well how the story was so successful that the front of Chalcedon was obliged to rework and rewrite it, implicitly recognizing its communicative power.

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103 Johannes Malalas, *Chronographia* 14, ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn 1831, 356–357.
104 R.W. Burgess, "The Accession of Marcian in the Light of Chalcedonian Apologetic and Monophysite Polemic", *BZ* 86 (1993–1994) 747–768.
105 R. Scott, "From Propaganda to History to Literature: The Byzantine Stories of Theodosius' Apple and Marcian's Eagles", in Id., *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century* (Variorum), Farnham, Surrey – Burlington 2012, n. XVI.

In the *Encomium of Macarius of Tkow*, 3–4,[106] Pulcheria's betrayal is described in apocalyptic terms within a vision narrated by the hero of the story:

> It was as if the holy bishop and martyr, Father Psote of Psoi, stood there, and all of the bishops stood there. And you and I also, we stood there. I saw in the vision shining crowns upon all our heads (Rv 4:4). I saw Athanasius, the archbishop, saying to Father Psote, the bishop: 'O holy martyr, the fathers at the throne (Rv 4:4.9) are those who say to you: Appraise the bishops. Will they fight well or not?' And I saw him who opened a gate of darkness. He called inside saying: 'Ancient serpent (Rv 12:9; 20:2), come out!' And at once I saw a large dragon with a papyrus tome (ⲧⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲭⲁⲣⲧⲏⲥ) transfixed in his mouth. And I also heard a voice in the darkness behind the dragon, saying: 'Pulcheria, Pulcheria, take this to yourself and give it to Marcian, for the sixth day is finished. He who reads, let him understand.' At once I saw the woman whose name we pronounced, and she, having straightened out her purple (robe), took it to herself. I also saw her passing it to another who was beside her. And I saw little snakes also coming out of the large dragon's mouth. They went over beside the man who held the papyrus. They kept encouraging him.

In this account, Pulcheria is the great harlot, Marcian is connected to the dragon and the beast, and the orthodox bishops are the apocalyptic elders, destined to salvation. The references to Revelation could be easily multiplied beyond the ones I have pointed out, but the general meaning of the passage is unequivocal: the political power must remain orthodox, otherwise it is destined to be transformed into a Satanic tyranny, an anticipation of the Antichrist.

When we turn our attention to the account of Peter Mongus' life in the *HP* (n. 27), the Coptic source chosen by the compiler is no longer the *CHC*, but probably the history written by George under the Arab domination, which included the period from Cyril to his own time (eighth century, under the patriarch John III). The attitude towards the empire of the post-Chalcedonian era changed dramatically, as can be gleaned from the following passage, where the Roman Empire as such is no longer considered the political structure of reference:

> So when Timothy went to the Lord, Peter the priest was ordained by command of God in the church of Alexandria, and was made patriarch. But the empire of the Romans remained established upon the ever-renewed memory of the impure council of Chalcedon; for it was not built upon the foundation of the firm Rock, which belongs to God the Word who is Jesus Christ.[107]

It is from this same source, and according to the same ideological perspective, that *HP* has drawn some of its materials about Justinian and Theodora, the last figures which we will take into consideration here. The imperial couple is the most important for the Coptic identity for the simple reason that Justinian's persecution pro-

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106 *A Panegyric on Macarius, Bishop of Tkôw, Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, ed. and trans. by D.W. Johnson (CSCO 415–416, Scriptores coptici 41–42), Louvain 1980. The passage is at 8–11 (text), 6–9 (translation). See Orlandi's Italian translation (cf. fn. 66) 164–165.
107 Evetts (cf. fn. 58) 445–446.

voked the birth of an alternative clerical hierarchy in Egypt in the second half of the sixth century, that is, the Coptic Church, with its own religious ideology and perspective on its past.[108] The historical account in this section of *HP* has three main characters (*Life* 33): Justinian, who uses every means to obtain his purpose of obliging the bishops to sign the heretic definition of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo; bishop Theodosius of Alexandria, representative of the martyrial tradition of Mark, Peter, Athanasius, Dioscorus, ready to resist the imperial flattery in the name of the traditional faith; and Theodora, who, as the opposite of Eudoxia, is particularly sensitive to bishop Theodosius' holiness. Justinian is explicitly compared to Satan, the tempter mentioned in Matthew and Luke. However bishop Theodosius refuses the temptation of religious, economic, political power, so that no other option is left to the emperor than to persecute the orthodox believers in Egypt, close the churches, exile Theodosius in Constantinople. Other texts offer similar scenes, characterised by a similar balance of attitudes. For example, in the Coptic *Panegyric on Manasseh*,[109] the anti-Chalcedonian monk Abraham of Farshut is described as prisoner in Constantinople while resisting the emperor (ⲡ̅ⲣ̅ⲣⲟ)[110] and being supported by the empress (ⲧ̅ⲣ̅ⲣⲱ), who at the end has to give up because of the violent attitude of Justinian. In a Coptic chronicle, a possible source used in *HP*, the conversations of bishop Theodosius and emperor Justinian in the imperial court of Constantinople are reported with the aim of showing both Justinian's sophisticated means of persuasion, based on his and his collaborators' theological culture, and the resistance of Theodosius, who knows how to face the imperial pressure with the weapons of tradition.[111]

Stephen of Herakleopolis Magna uses *Revelation* to connect the era of Marcian with that of Justinian in the *Panegyric of Apollo*, in which Justinian is the representative of a satanic line of action in history comparable to a "a hidden fire in chaff which continues to produce smoke" (8–9):[112]

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108 Ph. Booth, "A Circle of Egyptian Bishops at the End of Roman Rule (*c.* 600). Texts and Contexts", *Mus* 131 (2018) 21–72; Id., "Towards the Coptic Church: The Making of the Severan Episcopate", *Millennium* 114 (2018) 151–189.

109 Ed. J.E. Goehring, *Politics, Monasticism, and Miracles in Sixth Century Upper Egypt: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Coptic Texts on Abraham of Farshut* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 69), Tübingen 2012, 116.

110 Abraham prefers martyrdom, as the texts says, rather than to "be cast into punishment like Nestorius and Arius and Juvenal and Marcian and the rest who have repudiated the faith of the Son of God" (*ibid.*, 116–117). The Coptic text has ⲙⲁⲣⲕⲓⲁⲛⲟⲥ; Goehrings translates "Marcion", but here the reference is clearly not to the second century heretic but to emperor Marcianus, symbol of the Nestorian / Chalcedonian heresy, who in the list is close to Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem, the traitor who abandoned the tradition of Cyril of Alexandria and adhered to the Chalcedonian heresy.

111 R.-G. Coquin, "Fragments d'une chronique, relatifs à un patriarche d'Alexandrie, sans doute Théodose (535–566 A.D.)", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 30 (1991) 1–24.

112 Ed. in *A Panegyric on Apollo, Archimandrite of the Monastery of Isaac, by Stephen bishop of Heracleopolis Magna*, ed. trad. by K.H. Kuhn (CSCO 394–395, Scriptores coptici 39–40), Louvain 1978, 14–15 (text), 10–11 (version).

Suddenly the sky became thick with clouds. Great hail rained from on high upon men (Rv 16:21) not according to virtues' desert. Then the lion that had been hidden came forth from his lair to seize someone. I saw, said John in his Apocalypse, a star that had fallen from heaven. The pit of the abyss was opened. Smoke of a great fire went up. The sun and the air became dark through the smoke of the pit (Rv 9:1–2), the pit of the impiety which the rulers had gathered up who had come together to Chalcedon. This very pit of the abyss was opened again in the days of the Emperor Justinian. Again that soul-destroying madness, again the torrents of lawlessness flowed in their ravines to shake the house of the faithful. For after Marcian, the originator of the innovation of the faith, had finished, and after Basiliscus and Zeno and still others after these, the bad weed grew again in the kingdom of Justinian like a hidden fire in chaff which continues to produce smoke. Now the wretched bishops who had come together at Chalcedon became food for perdition and death and error, but their sins continue to be active. And their wickedness was unending and their punishment also is unceasing. For the fire of apostasy which those wretched bishops kindled everywhere drew to itself the laments and tears of the holy prophets unto the end. For let the pine tree weep, said the prophet Zechariah, because the cedar has fallen (Zec 11:2). This means: Let the people weep, for their bishops have fallen in a fall deliberately chosen, that is of their deliberate choice. Jeremiah also laments over them, saying: Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard (Jer 12:10). I shall yet adduce another third prophetic lament, for their impiety is against the Trinity. Woe to the peoples, said Nahum, for their shepherds have slumbered in spirit. The king of the Assyrians who is hidden has laid to rest a ruler, for the rulers of the church are the bishops, as the holy apostles said. There is no healing, he said, for their ruin (Na 3:18–19).

Conclusion

In this contribution we have discussed a limited number of texts, which may be categorised as historiographical and hagiographical – that is, different ways of writing history – composed within environments close to the religious power, particularly the patriarchate. Our purpose was to draw out from these narratives different ideas of the good Christian emperor, to compare them in order to identify elements of transformation and continuity over time, and to understand what changing needs they were meant to address. Through the analysis of some characters and images reported in these works an outline has been offered of the various and evolving conceptions regarding both the role of the Alexandrian see within the political system of the eastern Roman Empire and the function of the emperor responsible for the search of the true public religion of the empire.

The role of Athanasius, as both a historical character (exiled by the first Christian emperor, Constantine) and a writer able to select documents and create stories about himself and other historical actors, has been emphasised because his influence extends over the centuries and in different contexts thanks to the images created by him and his statements about the relationship between church and political power. Athanasius' model of writing history and personal defense exerted its influence on the *HEpA* and Timothy Aelurus' historical work. The latter too appears affected by Athanasius' style of polemics, but also as a creator of new images and ideas, in turn reworked in later literature. One such motif is the contrast between the happy

times of Cyril of Alexandria and Emperor Theodosius the Younger when church and state were cooperating, and the dark times of the Emperor Marcian and Leo's *Tome*, connected to the arrival of the Antichrist, when passions for money, career, and sex corrupted the exercise of the public power.

At the same time, hagiographic texts such as the *Life of Dioscorus* and the *Panegyric of Macarius* placed emphasis on the stories concerning the representatives of the political power, such as the "adulterous" relationship between Marcian and Pulcheria, or the servile attitude on the part of some bishops towards the emperors. These texts connect the first phase of Alexandrian historiography to the next one.

A second phase in the conceptualisation of the past begins with the redaction of the *Coptic History of the Church* (dated to the sixth century), which gives a good indication of the evolving identity of the Egyptian church both in its internal structure and in its relationship with the empire, that, in spite of everything, remained its fundamental political framework, not questioned by any form of nationalism. The text also pays attention to the irrational side of power, which is expressed especially through the political and ecclesiastical action of women like Eudoxia and Pulcheria, and contrasted by Theodora who, according to some historical accounts, was sensitive to the holiness of the "orthodox" bishops. This is the period in which a new church was born, separate from the Chalcedonian one often supported by the empire. Of course the conception of political power is deeply affected by the motif of Christological orthodoxy: the emperor must be "orthodox" if he wants to be a good emperor. But the choice of the Roman Empire was to gradually embrace the Chalcedonian heresy; Marcian and Justinian were the main promoters of this line of religious policy.

The author (authors) of *Coptic History of the Church* collected Coptic homilies and traditions about cultic establishments, while the references to real documents are rare. In this late production, references to fourth century emperors such as Constantine, Constantius, and Jovian allowed Egyptian historians to express additional traits of the ideal good emperor. He is not only the one who destroys pagan cults and supports the church against heresy, punishing deviations, but also the one who, through his political and social mediations, favours the expansion of ecclesiastical structures on the territory and their urban visibility by supporting the cult in all its forms, and strengthening social cohesion among the different civil and ecclesiastical actors. It should be questioned if the image of the emperor as "builder" answers only to late antique needs or is connected also to the new situation of Christians under the Arab rule, when the restoration of old churches, but above all the construction of new ones, could become a difficult question, to which some homilies tried to find different solutions.

Philip Michael Forness

Faithful Rulers and Theological Deviance: Ephrem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh on the Roman Emperor

The involvement of Roman Emperors in theological controversies brought both praise and resentment. The sudden entry of Constantine I (r. 306–337) and his successors into ecclesiastical affairs inspired starkly different responses.[1] The efforts of Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565) and Empress Theodora (c. 497–548) to reconcile pro- and anti-Chalcedonian parties proved similarly divisive.[2] The complex development of Christian political thought in late antiquity has become a major area of scholarly interest,[3] and the perspectives of Syriac authors on this topic have recently

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1 For example, Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39 (Berkeley 2005), 78, argues that support for an imperial role in the church was largely found among the opponents of Nicene theology until the last quarter of the fourth century. Studies on church and state during Constantine's reign are legion. See, for example, the following recent studies: Harold A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance*, Ancient Society and History (Baltimore 2000); Harold A. Drake, "The Impact of Constantine on Christianity," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Emmanuel Lenski, Cambridge Companions to Literature and Classics (Cambridge 2006), 111–136; Mark Edwards, "The Beginnings of Christianization," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Emmanuel Lenski, Cambridge Companions to Literature and Classics (Cambridge 2006), 137–158; Klaus W. Rosen, *Konstantin der Große: Kaiser zwischen Machtpolitik und Religion* (Stuttgart 2013); A. Edward Siecienski, ed., *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy* (London 2017).

2 For church and state under Justinian, see Karl-Heinz Uthemann, "Kaiser Justinian als Kirchenpolitiker und Theologe," *Augustinianum* 39, no. 1 (1999): 5–83; Hartmut Leppin, "Zu den Anfängen der Kirchenpolitik Justinians," in *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, Millennium Studies 10 (Berlin 2006), 187–208; Hartmut Leppin, *Justinian: Das christliche Experiment* (Stuttgart 2011).

3 For a survey of the literature in a recent reference work, see Harold A. Drake, "Church and Empire," in *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford 2008), 446–464. For narrative approaches to this question, see Charles Pietri and Luce Pietri, eds., *Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (230–430)*, Die Geschichte des Christentums 2 (Freiburg im Breisgau 1995), 193–506; Luce Pietri, ed., *Der lateinische Westen und der byzantische Osten (431–642)*, Die Geschichte des Christentums 3 (Freiburg im Breisgau 1998), 120–157, 222–231, 300–342, 421–461, 794–864; Harold A. Drake, "The Church, Society and Political Power," in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2, *Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge 2007), 403–428.

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attracted attention.[4] Yet Syriac sources still remain outside the purview of most studies.[5] This article seeks to explain a surprising perspective on emperors found in the works of two of the most celebrated authors in the Syriac tradition: Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373) and Jacob of Serugh (d. 520/1). Both authors praise emperors – and even the faith of emperors – with whom they disagreed theologically. The exploration of these two authors will demonstrate the value of Syriac sources for the broader investigation of Christian perspectives on rulers in late antiquity.

Ephrem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh wrote at turning points in imperial involvement in the church. Ephrem composed five hymns that comment on the religious conduct of Emperors Constantine I, Constantius II (r. 337–361), and Julian (r. 361–363).[6] Constantius became *augustus* when his father Constantine died in 337,

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4 Four recent monographs, for example, focus on Syriac political thought: Philip Wood, *"We Have No King But Christ": Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400–585)*, Oxford Studies in Byzantium (Oxford 2010); Richard E. Payne, *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 56 (Berkeley 2015); Kyle Smith, *Constantine and the Captive Christians of Persia: Martyrdom and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 57 (Berkeley 2015); Manolis Papoutsakis, *Vicarious Kingship: A Theme in Syriac Political Theology in Late Antiquity*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 100 (Tübingen 2017).

5 The lack of research on both sets of sources treated in this article regarding questions of church and state is illustrative. Major biographies of the Emperor Julian mention Ephrem the Syrian's *Hymn on the Church* and *Hymns against Julian* only in passing: Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (Berkeley 1976), 192, 213–215, 217; Glen Warren Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, MA 1978), 9–10, 103–104, 114, 116, 118, 122; Klaus Bringmann, *Kaiser Julian: Der letzte heidnische Herrscher* (Darmstadt 2004), 182–183; Klaus W. Rosen, *Julian: Kaiser, Gott und Christenhasser* (Stuttgart 2006), 17–18, 289, 362, 374, 457; H. C. Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War Against Christianity* (Oxford 2017), 30, 170n6, 173n6, 179n4. Recent studies focused on politics and religion during Julian's reign only rarely incorporate Ephrem's writings: Federico Fatti, *Giuliano a Cesarea: La politica ecclesiastica del principe apostata*, Studi e testi tardoantichi 10 (Rome 2009), 126n98, 143n16; Susanna Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 49 (Berkeley 2012), 371n119, 424n147, 447, 450. The lack of attention to the *Hymns against Julian* seems surprising, given their incorporation in 1989 into a collection of texts related to Julian's reign in English translation: Samuel N. C. Lieu, ed., *The Emperor Julian: Panegyric and Polemic*, Translated Texts for Historians 2 (Liverpool 1989), 105–127. Jacob of Serugh's *Letters* had been published but not fully translated when the last major treatment of Justin's reign appeared: A. A Vasiliev, *Justin the First: An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great*, DOS 1 (Cambridge, MA 1950).

6 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, CSCO 174–175, Scr. Syri 78–79 [Leuven: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1957], CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:67–70); *Hymns against Julian* 1–4 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:71–90). Various translations of the set have appeared, among which see Gustav Bickell, "Die Gedichte des hl. Ephräm gegen Julian den Apostaten", *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 2, no. 2 (1878): 337–356; Beck, CSCO 175, Scr. Syri 79:61–86; Lieu (cf. fn. 4) 105–127 (only the four *Hymns against Julian*); Kathleen E. McVey, trans., *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York 1989), 221–257. The recent Russian translation could unfortunately not be consulted:

and he was the sole Roman Emperor after defeating Magnentius (r. 350–353) who had overthrown Constantius's brother Constans I (r. 337–350). Constantius supported the anti-Nicene, so-called "Homoeans" in his pursuit of church unity,[7] and he became known especially for sending pro-Nicene bishops such as Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 295–373) and Hilary of Poitiers (c. 295–373) into exile.[8] Constantius appointed Julian as *caesar* in 355, and Julian became sole emperor on Constantius's death in 361. Julian's policies aimed towards restoring traditional Roman piety earned him the scorn of Christians in his time, Ephrem the Syrian among them.

Jacob of Serugh authored two letters in response to the changes in ecclesiastical policy early in the reign of Justin I (r. 518–527).[9] Parties opposed to the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 had enjoyed a certain level of success during the long reign of Anastasius I (r. 491–518).[10] Yet the imperial church's position on the

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Alexey Muraviev, *Мар Афрем Нисибинский (Прп. Ефрем Сирин): Юлиановский Цикл*, Smaragdos Philocalias (Moscow 2006).

7 On Constantius's support for Homoean views, see Richard Klein, *Constantius II. und die Christliche Kirche* (Darmstadt 1977), 16–67; Hanns Christof Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 73 (Tübingen 1988), 5–86. The anti-Nicene church historian Philostorgius portrays Constantius as a saint, as explored in Bruno Bleckmann, "Das Bild des Constantius in der Kirchengeschichte des Philostorgios," in *Le Prince chrétien de Constantin aux royautés barbares (IVᵉ–VIIIᵉ siècle)*, ed. Sylvain Destephen, Bruno Dumézil, and Hervé Inglebert, Travaux et mémoires 22/2 (Paris 2018), 127–136.

8 On his engagement in ecclesiastical affairs, see especially Steffen Diefenbach, "Constantius II. und die „Reichskirche" – ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von kaiserlicher Kirchenpolitik und politischer Integration im 4. Jh.," *Millennium* 9, no. 1 (2012): 59–121. On his relationships with Athanasius and Hilary, see Hanns Christof Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II: Untersuchungen zur dritten Phase des arianischen Streites (337–361)*, Patristische Texte und Studien 26 (Berlin 1984); Timothy David Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge 1993), 144–151.

9 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Gunnar Olinder, ed., *Iacobi Sarugensis epistulae quotquot supersunt*, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57 [Leuven 1937], 238–241); 35 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:257–260). For translations of these letters in German, French, and Italian, see Severin Matthias Grill, trans., *Jakob von Sarug: Ausgewählte Briefe*, Heiligenkreuzer Studien 17 (Heiligenkreuz 1971–1972), 3:32–35, 38–40; Micheline Albert, trans., *Les lettres de Jacques de Saroug*, Patrimoine Syriaque 3 (Kaslik, Lebanon 2004), 316–322, 338–341; Behnam M. Boulos Sony, trans., *Lettere di Giacomo vescovo di Sarug, 451–521 a.d.* (Rome 2008), 396–400, 410–413. An Arabic translation of Jacob of Serugh's letters has also appeared, but I have not consulted it for this article: Behnam M. Boulos Sony, trans., *Rasāʾil Mār Yaʿqūb al-surūji al-malfān*, 2 vols., Mawsūʿat ʿuẓamāʾ al-masīḥīyyah fī al-tārīḵ: dirāsāt mutaḵaṣṣiṣah 3–4 (Dekwaneh, Lebanon 1995).

10 On Anastasius's religious policy, see Peter Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire: The Religious Policy of Anastasius the First, 491–518*, University of Wisconsin Studies in the Social Sciences and History 26 (Madison, WI 1939); Carmelo Capizzi, *L'imperatore Anastasio I (491–518): Studio sulla sua vita, la sua opera e la sua personalità*, OCA 184 (Rome 1969), 100–137; F. K. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World*, ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 46 (Cambridge 2006), 115–183; Mischa Meier, *Anastasios I.: Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart 2009), 38–52, 250–319.

Council of Chalcedon changed very soon after Anastasius's death on the night of July 8th to 9th, 518.[11] After the army proclaimed Justin emperor on July 9th or 10th, a group of laity gathered on July 15th in the Great Church in Constantinople to demand acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon, the denouncement of its detractors, the reinstatement of pro-Chalcedonian bishops to their sees, and the restoration of the names of pro-Chalcedonian leaders to the diptychs. The patriarch of Constantinople succumbed to their request to celebrate a liturgy in honour of the council on the following day. Petitions sent by a group of monks along with the demands of the laity were considered and affirmed at a synod held in Constantinople on July 20th.[12] Shortly thereafter, the patriarch wrote letters to provinces throughout the Roman Near East seeking their acceptance of these decisions.[13] The measures that Justin took to compel adherence to Chalcedonian Christology following this synod affected the Roman Near East in a particularly strong way during Jacob of Serugh's lifetime, as explored below.

Although Ephrem disagreed with the theological views of Constantius and Jacob with those of Justin, these authors portray the emperors in a positive light and even laud the content of their faith. An examination of the circumstances of composition of these works will help to clarify these apparent contradictions. This analysis, as I

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11 On the events summarised in this paragraph, see Sévérien Salaville, "La fête du concile de Nicée et les fêtes de conciles dans le rit byzantin," EO 24, no. 140 (1925): 455–461; Vasiliev (cf. fn. 5) 132–148; Sévérien Salaville, "La fête du concile de Chalcédoine dans le rite byzantine," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, vol. 2 (Würzburg 1953), 681–687; William H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge 1972), 233–234; Milton V. Anastos, "The Emperor Justin I's Role in the Restoration of Chalcedonian Doctrine, 518–519," *Byzantina* 13, no. 1 (1985): 128–134; Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*, part 1, *Reception and Contradiction: The Development of the Discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the Beginning of the Reign of Justinian*, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte (London 1987), 318–322; J. Speigl, "Synoden im Gefolge der Wende der Religionspolitik unter Kaiser Justinos (518)," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 45 (1996): 8–20; Brian Croke, "Justinian under Justin: Reconfiguring a Reign," BZ 100, no. 1 (2007): 26–27.

12 Four texts preserved in the fifth session of the *Acts of the Synod of Constantinople in 536* form the primary witnesses to the events that followed shortly after Justin I's enthronement: the *Request of Clergy and Monks of Antioch* (Eduard Schwartz, ed., ACO [Berlin 1914–1940], 3:60–62); the *Relation of the* endemousa *Synod of Constantinople to the Patriarch John* (Schwartz, ACO 3:62–66); the *Petition of the Monks to the Synod* (Schwartz, ACO 3:67–71); and the *Acclamations of the People and Addresses of the Bishops* (Schwartz, ACO 3:71–76).

13 John II of Constantinople, *Letter to John III of Jerusalem* (Schwartz, ACO 3:76); John II of Constantinople, *Letter to Epiphanios of Tyre* (Schwartz, ACO 3:77). The title assigned to the first of these letters indicates that it was sent to bishops other than John III of Jerusalem as well (Schwartz, ACO, 3:76): "... written to John of holy memory, who was the archbishop of Jerusalem, and to all the metropolitans who do not reside there" (... γραφεῖσα Ἰωάννηι τῶι τῆς ὁσίας μνήμης γενομένωι ἀρχιεπισκόπωι Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς μὴ ἐνδημοῦσι τηνικαῦτα μητροπολίταις).

will argue in the conclusion, should encourage circumspection in identifying texts as evidence of political thinking. In this way, the study of the perspectives of authors writing from the eastern border of the Roman Empire has implications for our understanding of the relationship between church and state in antiquity more broadly.

1 Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns against Julian

Ephrem the Syrian lived on the border of the Roman and Persian Empires for most of the fourth century.[14] His extensive corpus includes poetic hymns and homilies as well as prose writings on exegesis and theology.[15] He spent most of his ecclesiastical career in the city of Nisibis under various bishops. Beginning in March 363, the Emperor Julian led an expedition against the Sasanian Empire in Mesopotamia. Julian died during a conflict in June 363. The army quickly chose Jovian (r. 363–364) as the new emperor. Jovian was forced shortly thereafter to surrender Mesopotamia, including Ephrem's Nisibis, to the Persians. Ephrem along with his community had to relocate westward to the city of Edessa. This event, the deportation of the Nisibene community, confronted Ephrem with the consequences that imperial actions could have for his local community.[16]

Ephrem wrote a series of hymns that comment on the hardships experienced directly before and after his community's expulsion from Nisibis. The first has no title in the manuscript but is commonly known as the *Hymn on the Church*. The other four form a series named the *Hymns against Julian*. The dating of these texts remains a matter of debate. Most recently, Manolis Papoutsakis has dated the third hymn to between 366 and 370 based on Ephrem's use of Gregory of Nazianzus's (329/30–c. 390) fifth *Oration*, itself composed in late 365 or early 366.[17] The five hymns appear

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14 There are few reliable facts about Ephrem the Syrian's life. For recent summaries, see Sebastian P. Brock, "In Search of Saint Ephrem," *Khristianskij Vostok* 6 (XII) (2013): 13–25; Jeffrey Wickes, trans., *St. Ephrem the Syrian: The Hymns on Faith*, Fathers of the Church 130 (Washington, D.C. 2015), 5–14.

15 For a list of Ephrem's works with their editions and translations, see Brock (cf. fn. 14) 25–77.

16 On Nisibis and Edessa around Ephrem's lifetime, see J. M. Fiey, *Nisibe, métropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragants des origines à nos jours*, CSCO 388, Subsidia 54 (Leuven 1977), 21–38; J. B. Segal, *Edessa: "The Blessed City"* (Oxford 1970), 110–191. For studies on Ephrem's various relationships to these cities, see Sidney H. Griffith, "Ephraem, the Deacon of Edessa, and the Church of the Empire," in *Diakonia: Studies in Honor of Robert T. Meyer*, ed. Thomas Halton and Joseph P. Williman (Washington, D.C. 1986), 22–52; Paul S. Russell, "Nisibis as the Background to the Life of Ephrem the Syrian," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005): 179–235.

17 Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 135–137; Manolis Papoutsakis, "*Is He the Rider of the Quadriga?*: Ephrem the Syrian on Julian's Apotheosis," *Adamantius* 24 (2018): 399. For other proposals on dating the

together in the one sixth-century manuscript that preserves them,[18] and a colophon after the last hymn marks the five as a set: "The end of the five hymns on the Emperor Julian, the pagan."[19] Here Ephrem laments the sufferings of his community while also reflecting on the failures of Julian. In addition to selections from Ephrem's other cycles of hymns,[20] several studies have treated these hymns as key places for understanding Ephrem's political thought.[21] I will return to the most recent scholarship on his political thought after an examination of Ephrem's perspectives on Roman Emperors in these hymns.

1.1 Contrasting Images of Constantius II and Julian

Each of Ephrem's five hymns written around the time of the loss of the city of Nisibis has its own narrative structure. The *Hymn on the Church* seems to come from the time of Julian's rule. Ephrem seeks to comfort his audience by pointing to biblical figures who remained faithful under idolatrous rulers. The first *Hymn against Julian* describes Julian's death as just vengeance and suggests that the forces of good have allied against those of evil. The second *Hymn against Julian* focuses on historical events from Julian's tenure, especially regarding his support for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and contrasts him with his predecessor Constantius. The

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hymns, see Browning (cf. fn. 5) 213; Sidney H. Griffith, "Ephraem the Syrian's Hymns against Julian: Meditations on History and Imperial Power," VChr 41, no. 3 (1987): 238.

18 A colophon dates the manuscript – London, British Library, Add. 14571 – to the year 519 (William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838* [London, 1870–1872], 2:410–413).

19 ܫܠܡ ܡܕܪ̈ܫܐ ܚܡܫܐ ܕܥܠ ܝܘܠܝܢܘܣ ܚܢܦܐ ܡܠܟܐ (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:91).

20 Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, "L'évêque et son role d'après saint Éphrem," *Parole de l'Orient* 4.1 (1973): 137–146, is the first study dedicated to Ephrem's political thought. He focuses on Ephrem the Syrian, *Carmina nisibena* 21.21, 23 (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Carmina nisibena*, CSCO 218–219, 240–241, Scr. Syri 92–93, 102–103 [Leuven 1961–1963], CSCO 218, Scr. Syri 92:58–59). Griffith (cf. fn. 16) discusses this same passage as well as Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Faith* 20.23 (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de fide*, CSCO 154–155, Scr. Syri 73–74 [Leuven 1955], CSCO 154, Scr. Syri 73:271). Andrew Palmer, "The Prophet and the King: Mâr Afrem's Message to the Eastern Roman Emperor," in *After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han J. W. Drijvers*, ed. G. J. Reinink and A. C. Klugkist, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 89 (Leuven 1999), 213–236, focuses especially on *Hymns on the Faith* 8.10–11 (Beck, CSCO 154, Scr. Syri 73:39–40). Manolis Papoutsakis, "The Making of a Syriac Fable: From Ephrem to Romanos," *Mus* 120, no. 1–2 (2007): 31–37, treats Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Nativity* 6 (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)*, CSCO 186–187, Scr. Syri 82–83 [Leuven 1959], CSCO 186, Scr. Syri 82:50–55). The works treated in Papoutsakis, *Vicarious Kingship* (cf. fn. 4) are too numerous to list here.

21 See Griffith (cf. fn. 16) 36; Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 87–91, 119–120; Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 17); Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 20) 45.

third and fourth *Hymns against Julian* suggest why God allowed Julian's paganism to come to the fore, that is, on Ephrem's view, so that paganism might be rebuked and thwarted. These five hymns form a set through their topical similarity, their use of the same poetic meter, and their manuscript transmission.[22] Their unity appears strongly in their common use of a defined set of symbols drawn from the biblical text and the natural world.[23] An examination of the employment of such imagery allows a clearer articulation of Ephrem's views on Roman Emperors in these five hymns.

In his *Hymn on the Church*, Ephrem draws on the imagery of a vine. This "vine symbolism"[24] has its origin in the Hebrew Bible and in Jesus's description of the true vine in John 15:1–8.[25] Ephrem focuses especially on the symbols of a branch, the shade it offers, and the cover it provides during time of drought. Although Ephrem does not name Julian in the *Hymn on the Church*, the criticisms he makes of an unidentified emperor suggest that he has Julian in mind. He summons biblical narratives to show his contempt. The 7,000 people who did not bow down to Baal during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel show that God uses wicked rulers to test the true (1 Kgs 19:18; Rom 11:4).[26] The story of Daniel and his three friends during Nebuchadnezzar's reign demonstrates that God destroys the acts of those who worship false gods (Dn 3:8–30).[27] Yet, at the end of the hymn, he surprisingly praises not only Constantine but also Constantius, who supported parties that opposed the Nicene theology to which Ephrem himself adhered:

> The emperors who provided shade quenched us in the droughts,
> We ate their fruits [but] we despised their branches.
> Our soul revelled in the blessings and shadows.
> Our mouth raged and attacked our creator.[28]

The emperors' actions celebrated in this strophe are the same actions for which Ephrem commemorates Christ and the church earlier in the hymn. Christ or the church also provided shade upon the earth,[29] quenched the furnace for Daniel's

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22 Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:i–ii.

23 On this tendency in general, see Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, rev. ed. (London 2006), first published in 1975; Sebastian P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*, Cistercian Studies 124 (Kalamazoo, MI 1992).

24 Murray (cf. fn. 23) 106.

25 Murray (cf. fn. 23) 97–99.

26 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* 4 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:67–68).

27 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* 6–7 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:68).

28 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* 15 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:70): ܚܠܬܟ ܕܐܝܠܬ ܗܘܘ ܗܘܢ ܚܙܝܩܐ ܚܕܥܬܟܐ ܟܠܚܢ ܠܛܠܠܝ ܟܢ ܦܚܐܕܝܗܘܢ ܚܡܩܬܡ ܠܚܡ ܚܠܬܗ ܐܝܟܐܟܐ ܗܘܢ ܦܝܗܘܢ. ܚܕܢܝ ܗܘܗܡܘ ܢܐ. I follow McVey (cf. fn. 6) 225, on the translation of ܗܡܘ.

29 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* 9 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:69), claims that the branch of truth (i.e., Christ or the church) "conquered all kings and provided shade over the whole

friends,[30] and grew fruit to satisfy the ungrateful.[31] Ephrem remarkably applies the vine imagery usually reserved for God and leaders of the church to both Constantine and Constantius. He makes a striking contrast between the Emperor Julian whom he condemns and the Emperors Constantine and Constantius who receive praise for providing protection and peace.

Ephrem also uses pastoral imagery throughout this set of hymns. This imagery derives from Jesus's self-description as the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11, 14), from Jesus's commandments to Peter in which he calls his followers sheep (Jn 21:15–17),[32] and from an epithet of King David.[33] This set of imagery includes words such as "shepherd" (*rāʿyā* ܪܥܝܐ / *rāʿē* ܪܥܐ) "sheep" (*ʿerbā* ܥܪܒܐ), "ewe" (*neqyā* ܢܩܝܐ), "kid" (*gaḏyā* ܓܕܝܐ), and "lamb" (*ʾemrā* ܐܡܪܐ) as well as the opponent of the sheep: the "wolf" (*d[ʾ]ēḇā* ܕܐܒܐ). Ephrem ordinarily uses such language to refer to Christ and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[34] But here he applies pastoral imagery to the duties of emperors. In the first *Hymn against Julian*, for example, he lists the responsibilities of true rulers: "The sceptre of the kingdom which shepherds humanity, / attends to cities, and chases away animals....."[35] Later in this hymn, Ephrem speci-

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world" (ܟܠܡ ܚܠܦܘܗܝ ܐܠܐ ܡܠܦ ܠܗܠ ܐܚܕܐ). This language surfaces later in *Hymn on the Church* 15 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:70), when Ephrem writes that Julian "removed our shade" (ܛܠܠܝܢ ܐܥܒܪ), and the concluding benediction to the *Hymn on the Church* states that God's grace "provides shade over us" (ܡܛܠ ܥܠ ܠܢ ܗܘ ܛܠܠܗ) (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:70).

30 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* 7 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:68), states that the branch (i.e., Christ) "quenched the furnace" (ܕܥܟ ܗܘܐ ܠܐܬܘܢܐ) for Daniel's friends.

31 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn on the Church* 8 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:68), speaks of "that branch [i.e., Christ or the church] that bent down its fruits to the ungrateful" (ܗܘ ܣܘܟܬܐ ܕܐܪܟܢܬ ܦܐܪܝܗ ܠܟܦܘܪܐ).

32 Murray (cf. fn. 23) 187, states that the biblical origins of the shepherd and its counterpart, flock, come from "the Old Testament, where both God and the king are called shepherd of God's people, and in the New, where Christ, the 'Good Shepherd,' entrusted his sheep to Peter, and in turn 1 Peter 5:2–4 exhorts the clergy to 'tend the flock' in such a way as to earn commendation from the 'Chief Shepherd.'"

33 In this regard, Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 88, lists 1 Samuel 16:11; 2 Samuel 5:2; 1 Chronicles 11:2; Ezekiel 32:23; 37:24. Such imagery is also used in reference to Cyrus the Great in Isaiah 44:28.

34 He usually uses this symbol to refer to Christ or to bishops, as Murray (cf. fn. 23) 191, has shown. For examples of Christ as shepherd (ܪܥܐ/ܪܥܝܐ), see Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Nativity* 1.4, 3.15, 4.128, 7.5, 8.6, 11.6 (Beck, CSCO 186, Scr. Syri 82:1, 23, 37, 56, 60, 70). For examples of church leaders as "shepherds" (ܪܥܘܬܐ) and "pastors" (ܢܩܕܐ), see Ephrem the Syrian, *Carmina nisibena* 14.1; 17.1, 3–4 (Beck, CSCO 218, Scr. Syri 92:37, 46). For examples of congregations as "flocks" (ܡܪܥܝܬܐ), see Ephrem the Syrian, *Carmina nisibena* 19.1, 3, 6, 14 (Beck, CSCO 218, Scr. Syri 92:50–51, 53).

35 Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns against *Julian* 1.1 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:71):

ܫܒܛܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܪܥܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܗܘܐ ܣܥܪ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܪܕܦ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܠܒܪ.

fies that Julian has failed to wield this sceptre rightly[36] and as a result the Persians have "surrounded the blessed flock."[37] Ephrem criticises Julian for failing to carry out one of the fundamental responsibilities of emperors: protecting the area under their control from enemies.

In the next hymn, Ephrem explicitly contrasts the actions of Constantius and Julian in fulfilling their roles as shepherds. He writes:

> The wolf was borrowing the clothing of the true lamb.
> The innocent sheep sniffed him, but they did not recognise him.
> He greatly deceived that shepherd who departed [this life].[38]

A defensible interpretation of these lines runs as follows. The first line describes Julian, here called the "wolf," and his deceitful actions in becoming the Roman Emperor. The "innocent sheep" in the second line represent the Christian community or people living under Roman rule more broadly who fail to recognise Julian for what he is. The third line proves most relevant for the present discussion. Here Julian escapes the notice of another shepherd – Constantius – who has just died. Constantius was apparently the shepherd of these innocent sheep and was deceived into believing that Julian was a Christian. The remainder of the passage describes the consequences of the failure of the Christian community and Constantius to notice who Julian really was.[39] Despite Constantius's deception by Julian, Ephrem assigns Constantius the title of shepherd contrasting him with Julian, the wolf in sheep's clothing. Only the true shepherd, that is, the true emperor, could fulfil his responsibility to protect his flock.

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36 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 1.1 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:71): "Its opposite was the sceptre of the emperor who had reverted to paganism" (ܗܘܐ ܫܒܛܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܗܦܟ ܠܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܗܘܐ).

37 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 1.2 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:71):

ܘܕܝܪܬ ܐܝܕܐ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܪܒܝܬܐ.

38 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 2.1 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:75): ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܒܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܚܡܐ ܐܝܟܐ ܐܝܟܪܐ ܘܩܕܡܬܐ ܘܐܪܝܢܐ ܚܘܣ ܐܟܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܪܝܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܪܒܚܬܐ, ܠܚܡ ܒܠܝܟ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ, ܕܪܝܐ ܪܝܢܝ ܗܘܗ. Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 88, argues that the phrase "who departed" (ܪܝܢܝ) alludes to Genesis 49:10: "the sceptre will not depart from Judah" (ܠܐ ܢܥܒܪ ܫܒܛܐ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕܐ) (Taeke Jansma and The Peshiṭta Institute Leiden, eds., "Genesis," in *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version*, vol. 1.1 [Leiden 1982], 112). Thus, within the eschatological interpretation of this passage, Ephrem portrays Julian as the one who breaks off the succession of good emperors beginning with Constantine and Constantius. Papoutsakis suggests that this phrase should be understood fully as "that shepherd upon whose *departing* the new Davidic line was cut off."

39 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 2.1 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:75): "The wolf came out from within the lamb. / He took off [and] threw away his beauty. / The kids caught his scent. / They hated the ewes but loved him as a shepherd [ܪܥܝܐ]" (ܘܕܐܒܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܢܦܩ ܡܢ ܓܘ ܐܡܪܐ ܥܠ ܫܠܚ, ܫܕܐ ܫܘܦܪܗ ܓܕܝܐ ܪܝܚܘܗܝ ܣܩܘ ܣܢܘ ܠܪܝܚܠܬܐ ܘܐܪܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܪܥܝܐ ܪܚܡܘܗܝ,).

The final type of imagery examined here is Ephrem's use of biblical typology to malign and praise emperors. In the second hymn, he compares Julian to "Ahab and Jeroboam, Jotham and Manasseh, Jezebel and Athaliah," whom he calls "founts of godlessness."[40] He also describes Julian's fall in relation to the narrative of Nebuchadnezzar and to the deaths of the maligned Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 175–164 BCE) and Herod Agrippa I (r. 41–44 CE).[41] Most significant for this article, in the second hymn Ephrem contrasts the behaviour of Julian and Constantius through the figure of the king of Nineveh from the book of Jonah. He focuses on the iconic image of the king ordering both people and animals to be covered in sackcloth (Jon 3:8).[42] Under Julian's reign, Ephrem suggests, God allowed Nisibis to be ceded to Persia in

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40 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 2.2 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:76): "They [i.e., the Jews] rejoiced that [Julian] had filled the place of many: / Of the kings and the queens who were like / Ahab and Jeroboam, Jotham and Mannaseh, / Jezebel and Athaliah – the founts of godlessness" (ܘܐܚܒ ܘܗܘܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܘܟܬ ܤܓܝܐܐ܆ ܕܡܠܟ̈ܐ ܘܕܡܠܟ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ) ܘܝܪܒܥܡ ܝܘܬܡ ܘܡܢܫܐ܆ ܐܝܙܒܠ ܘܥܬܠܝܐ ܡܒܘܥ̈ܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ). On Ephrem's anti-Semitism, see Christine C. Shepardson, *Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy: Ephrem's Hymns in Fourth-Century Syria*, Patristic Monograph Series 20 (Washington, D.C. 2008).

41 Ephrem the Syrian, *On the Church* 7 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:68), alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's altercation with Daniel and the three men to reveal the powerlessness of rulers like Julian: "The arms of the conqueror were conquered, for he threatened / That his highness would have to bow down before his images" (ܐܬܚܒ̈ܝ ܕܪ̈ܥܘܗܝ ܕܙܟܝܐ ܕܐܙܕܗܝ ܗܘܐ ܕܠܨܠܡ̈ܘܗܝ ܢܓܗܘܢ ܬܬܪܟܢ ܪܒܘܬܗ,). Nebuchadnezzar's repentance also forms a foil for Julian: Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 1.18 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:74), writes that unlike Julian he "learned to be subdued" (ܝܠܦ ܕܢܫܬܥܒܕ), and in *Hymns against Julian* 1.20 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:75), God "maddened [Nebuchadnezzar] so that he might become reasonable" (ܐܫܢܝܗ ܕܢܬܪܥܐ).

On Antiochus and Herod, I will briefly summarise the findings of Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 20) 45–46; Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 124–125. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 4.3 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:85), describes the death of Julian's namesake uncle: "[Julian] also caught a glimpse of his kinsmen in his kinsman, / Who bred worms, while still alive, and crumbled away" (ܐܦ ܗܘ ܚܙܐ ܗܘܐ ܓܢܤܗ ܒܓܢܤܗ ܕܐܪܡ ܬܘܠܥ̈ܐ ܟܕ ܚܝ ܘܐܬܦܬܟ,). My translation is slightly modified from that found in Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 20) 45. The phrase "who bred worms, while still alive" (ܕܐܪܡ ܬܘܠܥ̈ܐ ܟܕ ܚܝ) recalls the description of Antiochus's death in 2 Maccabees 9:9: "So severe was the suffering of the wicked man that even worms bred from his body. Although he was alive, his flesh was wasting away and falling off him" (ܘܗܟܢܐ ܕܒ ܡܢ ܒܤܪܗ ܕܚܛܝܐ ܗܘ ܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ. ܡܤܠܝܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܕܐ ܗܘܐ ܟܐܒܗ܆ ܗܘ, ܟܕ ܚܝ ܗܘܐ. ܘܡܢ ܟܐܒܗ ܗܘܐ ܢܬܪ ܒܤܪܗ ܘܡܢ ܦܓܪܗ) (Angelo Penna, Konrad Dirk Jenner, and D. Bakker, eds., "1–2 Maccabees," in *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version*, vol. 4.4 [Leiden 2013], 175). It also alludes to the description of Herod's death in Acts 12:23 in which he is said to have "bred worms and died" (ܘܪܦܬ ܬܘܠܥ̈ܐ ܘܡܝܬ) (*The New Testament in Syriac* [London 1905–1920], 21).

42 Jonah 3:8: "But people and animals shall be covered with sackcloth" (ܐܠܐ ܢܬܟܤܘܢ ܤܩ̈ܐ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܘܒܥܝܪܐ) (Anthony Gelston, ed., "Dodekapropheton," in *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version*, vol. 3.4 [Leiden 1980], 43). Sackcloth appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in mourning rituals. But in no other passage is it so clearly associated with the (successful) preservation of a city as in Jonah.

order to reveal the futility of Julian's piety, that is, traditional Roman piety.[43] Yet Constantius, as Ephrem suggests, preserved the city "by his sackcloth," that is, by the penitential garments that the king of Nineveh and his subjects wore in Jonah.[44]

Ephrem draws on the imagery of sackcloth later in the same hymn. He writes: "As for the walled city which was the head of the region of Mesopotamia, / The sackcloth of the blessed one preserved it and it was exalted. / The tyrant by his blasphemy made it bow down, and it was overcome."[45] The terms "tyrant" and "sackcloth" in this quotation deserve special attention. First, the Syriac term translated here as "tyrant" (*ṭronā* ܛܪܘܢܐ) is a loan word from Greek (*túrannos* τύραννος) that carries the meaning of illegitimate rule.[46] The Greek epithet is applied to Julian in two *Orations* of Gregory of Nazianzus[47] and the *Ecclesiastical History* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c. 393–c. 466).[48] Significantly, the Syriac Peshiṭta translation of 2 and 4 Maccabees employs this title in reference to Antiochus IV Epiphanes.[49] Ephrem uses the term "tyrant" (*ṭronā* ܛܪܘܢܐ) in reference to several other rulers: Pharaoh,[50] the

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43 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 2.16 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:79).

44 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 2.19 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:79): ܚܒܪ ܣܩܗ.

45 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 2.25 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:80–81):

ܗܟܢ ܗܘ ܟܪܟܐ ܗܘ ܪܒܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܪܝܫܐ ܕܐܬܪܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܢܗܪܝܢ ܣܩܗ ܗܘ ܕܛܘܒܢܐ ܢܛܪܗ ܘܐܬܬܪܝܡ ܛܪܘܢܐ ܒܓܘܕܦܗ ܐܪܟܢܗ ܘܐܙܕܟܝܬ.

46 On this, see especially the explanation in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (New York, 1889), 824–825: "not applied to old hereditary sovereignties (βασιλεῖαι) such as those of Hom. or of Sparta; for the term rather regards the irregular way in which the power was *gained*, than the way in which it was *exercised*, being applied to the mild Pisistratus, but not to the despotic kings of Persia." See also Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, new rev. ed. (Oxford 1961), 1836; G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961), 1421.

47 Gr. Naz., or. 4.1–2; 5.3 ("tyranny" [τυραννίδος]) (Jean Bernardi, ed. and trans., *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 4–5*, SC 309 [Paris 1983], 86, 88, 298). I am grateful to Hartmut Leppin for the references to Gregory's and Theodoret's use of the language of tyranny in relation to Julian.

48 Theod., hist. eccl. 3.11.1; 3.16.6; 3.28.3; 4.1.3 (Léon Parmentier and Günther Christian Hansen, eds., *Theodoret: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS, n.F. 5 [Berlin 1998], 187, 195, 206, 210).

49 The mother of the seven boys that are killed uses this word in relation to Antiochus in 2 Maccabees 7:27 (Penna, Jenner, and Bakker [cf. fn. 41] 168). The book of 4 Maccabees retells this story in more detail and repeatedly uses "tyrant" (ܛܪܘܢܐ) to refer to Antiochus. The first instances appear in 4 Maccabees 1:11; 5:1, 4–5, 14 (Robert Lubbock Bensly and W. Emery Barnes, *The Fourth Book of Maccabees and Kindred Documents in Syriac* [Cambridge, 1895], ܢܗ-ܢܒ ,ܢܓ). On the portrayal of Antiochus in 4 Maccabees as an illegitimate ruler in relation to the term "tyrant" (τύραννος), see David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden 2006), 125–27. The date at which 2 and 4 Maccabees were translated into Syriac remains unclear. However, it seems likely that they were undertaken in the fourth century at the latest when the cult of the Maccabees was rising to prominence.

50 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Virginity* 10.4 (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de virginitate*, CSCO 223–224, Scr. Syri 94–95 [Leuven 1962], CSCO 223, Scr. Syri

five lords of the Philistines,[51] Nebuchadnezzar,[52] and Herod Antipas (r. c. 4 BCE–39 CE).[53] Manolis Papoutsakis has demonstrated the link between Herod the Great (r. 37–4 BCE), the father of Herod Antipas, and Julian as illegitimate rulers in Ephrem's thought.[54] Ephrem's application of this term to Julian three times in his *Hymns against Julian* seems to link his reign to that of other illegitimate rulers, such as Antiochus IV and the Herodian line.[55]

Second, the precise meaning of the word "sackcloth" (*saqqā* ܣܩܐ) in this quotation remains unclear. Ephrem contrasts Constantius's "sackcloth" with Julian's blasphemy, indicating that sackcloth refers to the opposite of blasphemy. "Reverence" or "piety" seems a likely interpretation.[56] Decades later, Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395) was forced to do penance following a massacre at Thessaloniki for which Ambrose of Milan (c. 339–397) held him responsible. Literary sources claim that he had to take off his imperial garments in performing the penitential act. The model in these sources seems to be King David.[57] By way of contrast, Ephrem compares Constantius to the king of Nineveh. Just as the king of Nineveh led people and animals to repent, so did the blessed Constantius save the centre of Christianity in Mesopotamia through his piety, in stark contrast to his successor, the illegitimate ruler Julian.

94:34); *Sermons on Holy Week* 6.269 (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Ephraem Syrus: Sermones in Hebdomadam Sanctam*, CSCO 412–413, Scr. Syri 181–182 [Leuven 1979], CSCO 412, Scr. Syri 181:46).

51 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Faith* 8.12 (Beck, CSCO 154, Scr. Syri 73:40). Here he follows the Peshiṭta translation of the Hebrew Bible, which regularly use this term to refer to "the rulers of the Philistines" (Hebrew: סַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים): Joshua 13:3 (J. E. Erbes, ed., "Joshua," in *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version*, vol. 1.2 & 2.1b [Leiden 1991], 33); Judges 3:3; 16:5, 8, 18 (2x), 23, 27, 30 (Piet B. Dirksen, ed., "Judges," in *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version*, vol. 2.2 [Leiden 1978], 7, 44–47); 1 Samuel 5:8, 11; 6:4 (2x), 12, 16, 18; 7:7; 29:2, 6–7 (P. A. H. de Boer, ed., "Samuel," in *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version*, vol. 2.2 [Leiden 1978], 12–15; 73–74); Sirach 46:18 (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B. 21 inf., fol. 236r; Paul de Lagarde, *Libri Veteris Testamenti apocryphi syriace* [Leipzig 1861], 46).

52 Ephrem the Syrian, *Carmina nisibena* 34.6 (Beck, CSCO 219, Scr. Syri 92:102); *Hymns on Fasting* 7.14 (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de ieiunio*, CSCO 246–247, Scr. Syri 106–107 [Leuven 1964], CSCO 246, Scr. Syri 106:22).

53 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Nativity* 4.62, 66, 72, 74; 24.1, 6, 9; 25.4 (Beck, CSCO 186, Scr. Syri 82:31–32, 121–123, 128).

54 Manolis Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 20) 41–45.

55 In addition to the passage discussed in this paragraph, see Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 1.13; 2.19 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:73, 79).

56 As suggested by McVey (cf. fn. 6) 240n94.

57 On this important episode and for references to primary sources see F. Kolb, "Der Bussakt von Mailand: Zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der Spätantike," in *Geschichte und Gegenwart: Festschrift für Karl Dietrich Erdmann*, ed. Hartmut Boockmann (Neumünster 1980), 41–74; Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 22 (Berkeley 1994), 315–330; Hartmut Leppin, *Theodosius der Große*, Gestalten der Antike (Darmstadt 2003), 152–160. See also the contribution by Mikhail Boytsov in this volume.

The three different sets of imagery examined in these hymns expose the spectrum of praise that Ephrem offers Constantius. Vine symbolism emphasises the protecting role of emperors without commenting directly on the content of their faith. The pastoral imagery of the sceptre similarly reinforces the duty of emperors to watch over their subjects. But Ephrem's assertion that Constantius was a true shepherd in contrast to Julian the wolf in sheep's clothing points to a more fundamental claim about the legitimacy of Constantius's reign. Biblical typology based on the king of Nineveh moves even further in this direction by calling Julian a "tyrant" (*ṭronā* ܛܪܘܢܐ) rather than an emperor. Ephrem further contrasts Julian's blasphemy with Constantius's "sackcloth" which likely represents his piety. In these hymns, Ephrem sees Constantius as a good ruler whose reign allowed the cities in his empire to flourish. And, at one point, he even seems to commend Constantius's faith.

1.2 The Pious Emperor Constantius II

Ephrem's praise for Constantius in a work written after 363 is surprising.[58] Ephrem himself did not hesitate to write against the views of those he considered deviant. He authored a series of prose works with explicitly polemical content.[59] One set of homilies and a lengthy cycle of hymns take a particularly strong stance against those who view God the Son as in some way subordinate to God the Father, so-called "Arianism."[60] Ephrem saw himself rather as faithful to the Council of Nicaea of 325 whose creed declared that God the Son was "of the same being as the Father" and anathematised those that said the God the Son is "of another substance or be-

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58 One other location in Ephrem's corpus has been cited as evidence for his positive perspective on Constantius: Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Faith* 87.21 (Beck, CSCO 154, Scr. Syri 73:271). On this passage, see Murray (cf. fn. 23) 66n2; Griffith (cf. fn. 16) 34; McVey (cf. fn. 6) 230n44. Following Wickes (cf. fn. 14) 21, 27, I would argue that this passage permits several contexts, and I have accordingly not considered it as evidence for Ephrem's views on Constantius here.

59 Ephrem the Syrian, *Five Discourses addressed to Hypatius* (Julian Joseph Overbeck, ed., *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta* [Oxford, 1865], 21–58; C. W. Mitchell, ed. and trans., *S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan* [London 1912–1921], 1:1–185); *Discourse against Bardaisan's Discourse Entitled "Domnus"* (Mitchell [cf. fn. 59], 2:1–49); *Against False Teaching* (ibid., 2:50–102); *Two Discourses against Marcion* (ibid., 2:103–142); *Discourse against Mani* (ibid., 2:190–229).

60 A refutation of these viewpoints appears most strongly in Ephrem the Syrian, *Homilies on the Faith* (Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de fide*, CSCO 212–213, Scr. Syri 88–89 [Leuven 1961]) and *Hymns on the Faith* (Beck, CSCO 154, Scr. Syri 73). On the content and contexts of these homilies and hymns, see Edmund Beck, *Die Theologie des hl. Ephraem in seinen Hymnen über den Glauben*, Studia Anselmiana 21 (Vatican City 1949); Edmund Beck, *Ephraems Reden über den Glauben: Ihr theologischer Lehrgehalt und ihr geschichtlicher Rahmen*, Studia Anselmiana 33 (Rome 1953); Wickes (cf. fn. 14) 19–43.

ing" as God the Father.[61] Ephrem does not use this language of "being" often in his corpus, but similar expressions of the equality of the Father and Son appear regularly.[62] Constantius, on the other hand, summoned twin synods in Ariminum and Seleucia in Isauria in 359 to resolve ongoing disagreements over such language.[63] Both affirmed a new declaration of faith, and a Synod in Constantinople in 360 promulgated the so-called *Homoean Creed* that directly opposed the language of "being" and "substance" used at Nicaea.[64] Constantius sought to achieve unity through encouraging or enforcing adherence to this new creed, and he was sharply criticised by theologians who considered themselves faithful to Nicaea.[65]

Manolis Papoutsakis has offered one convincing argument for Ephrem's praise for Constantius in these hymns. He develops this argument at greatest length in a monograph on Syriac political thought in late antiquity.[66] Here he contends against the assumption that Ephrem remained unaware that Constantius favoured non-Nicene theology in spite of his own adherence to the council's theology.[67] Instead, Papoutsakis draws attention to the careful interweaving of eschatological patterns from various biblical passages (Gn 49:10; Acts 12:23; 2 Thes 2:3–10) in Ephrem's positive portrayal of Constantius in *Hymns against Julian* 2.1. He concludes:

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61 Symb. Nic. *(325)* (August Hahn and G. Ludwig Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregel*, 3rd ed. [Breslau, 1897], 161): ὁμοούσιν τῷ πατρί... ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας. On Ephrem's Trinitarian theology, see Beck (1949, cf. fn. 60); Beck (1953, cf. fn. 60); Edmund Beck, *Ephräms Trinitätslehre im Bild von Sonne/Feuer, Licht und Wärme*, CSCO 425, Subsidia 62 (Leuven 1981). For a short comparison with other fourth-century Trinitarian teachings, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford 2010), 229–235.

62 See Wickes (cf. fn. 14) 37–39.

63 Diefenbach (cf. fn. 8) 83–94, argues against traditional historiography that an empire-wide confession was an instrument for unity that Constantius first used with these councils. This was not a primary means of his engagement in ecclesiastical affairs.

64 *Homoean Creed* (Hahn and Hahn [cf. fn. 61] 209): "As for the term 'οὐσία,' which was rather simplistically taken up by the fathers and brought in a stumbling-block for the people as something unknown, for the scriptures do not include this [term], it was resolved that it be removed and no mention [of it] be made in the future at all, because the divine scriptures also did not make mention in any way of the 'οὐσία' of the Father and of the Son. It is also not permissible for the term 'ὑπόστασις' to be uttered in regard to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Τὸ δὲ ὄνομα τῆς οὐσίας, ὅπερ ἁπλούστερον ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων ἐτέθη, ἀγνοούμενον δὲ τοῖς λαοῖς σκάνδαλον ἔφερε, διότι μηδὲ αἱ γραφαὶ τοῦτο περιέχουσιν, ἤρεσε περιαιρεθῆναι καὶ παντελῶς μηδεμίαν μνήμην τοῦ λοιποῦ γίνεσθαι, ἐπειδήπερ καὶ αἱ θεῖαι γραφαὶ οὐδαμῶς ἐμνημόνευσαν περὶ οὐσίας πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ ὀφείλει ὑπόστασις περὶ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος ὀνομάζεσθαι.).

65 On Constantius's role in these synods, see Brennecke (cf. fn. 7) 5–56; Barnes (cf. fn. 8) 144–151.

66 In an earlier article, Papoutsakis noted that Ephrem modelled his account of Julian's death on the death of Herod Agrippa I as described in Acts 12:23: Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 20) 45. He refers here to Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns against Julian* 4.3 (Beck, CSCO 174, Scr. Syri 78:85).

67 Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 88. For this view, he points especially to Murray (cf. fn. 23) 111, 244–245.

Ephrem's representation of Julian as an Antichrist figure is based on the presupposition that the Apostate interrupted the *yubbālā* ('succession'), or *šāqā* ('continuous line'), of the Constantinids, who mirrored the Judahite dynasty which had been broken only by Herod. It would have been impossible for such a *line* of kings to be drawn – and, thus, for Ephrem's representation of Julian to be sustained – without an orthodox Constantius.[68]

Papoutsakis's detailed analysis of the eschatological framework of these hymns should call into question any assumption about Ephrem's ignorance of Constantius's support of creeds opposed to the Nicene Creed. It further suggests that analyses of Ephrem's carefully chosen language and analogies will help explain his intentional representation of Constantius as a faithful ruler.

Papoutsakis's attention to the eschatological framework employed by Ephrem in these hymns can also explain Ephrem's praise for Constantius's piety in part. Ephrem's comparison of Constantius with the king of Nineveh provides some evidence that he praised the content of Constantius's faith directly. The interpretive crux rests on the proper understanding of the term "sackcloth." As noted above, this term is contrasted with Julian's "blasphemy" and thus seems to refer to Constantius's reverence. The eschatological framework offers a plausible argument for Ephrem's decision to portray Constantius's faith in a positive light. Constantius had to be a faithful ruler so that Julian's reign would break a line of faithful rulers. On this view, Ephrem glossed over the theological differences in deference to his eschatological argument.

Yet both the vine symbolism and pastoral imagery employed by Ephrem invite a second explanation for Ephrem's praise of Constantius. First, as detailed above, Ephrem uses language related to the vine and to shepherds to draw a contrast between Constantius and Julian in fulfilling their duties to ward off enemies and to provide peace for the Christian community. The particular type of Christianity to which rulers adhered does not affect Ephrem's evaluation of the execution of their duties. The historical circumstances in which Ephrem wrote offer one compelling explanation for Ephrem's positive representation of Constantius. They do not represent the entirety of his political thought throughout his career but rather provide a snapshot of his deep reflections on Christian rulership in the aftermath of the loss of the city of Nisibis.

Second, despite Constantius's theological views, his reign and conduct as an emperor produced conditions that allowed the church in Nisibis to survive. Ephrem's emphasis on the protection that emperors should provide Christian com-

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68 Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 88 (see also 112, 112n123, 120, 192). He also draws attention to the similar comparison between Herod and Julian in Gr. Naz., or. 4.68 (Bernardi [cf. fn. 47] 178): "after [the manner of] Herod, a persecutor" (Μετὰ Ἡρώδην διώκτης). On Papoutsakis's view, the close parallels in the two works on this theme suggest that Ephrem was familiar with this passage in Gregory (Papoutsakis [cf. fn. 4] 120–137, 193).

munities offers a partial explanation of his reticence to comment on Constantius's support for non-Nicene theology. Ephrem appears in this corpus as an author writing to address the threats his community faced during a difficult change of events. In his third *Hymn against Julian*, as Papoutsakis has argued, Ephrem does respond directly to a development in political thought, namely, the deification of Julian by his adherents.[69] But his employment of vine symbolism and pastoral imagery offers insight not into programmatic Christian political thought but rather into the perspective of an individual author writing on individual emperors based on the threats faced by his community. It will be useful, therefore, to turn to texts that offer more clarity to understand the phenomenon of praising emperors with whom one disagrees.

2 Jacob of Serugh: Letter to Paul of Edessa

Jacob of Serugh lived from around 451 to 520/1 in the region of Mesopotamia.[70] He studied at the school of Edessa before its relocation to Nisibis.[71] His ecclesiastical identity remained a source of debate throughout the Middle Ages and even until the late twentieth century. It is now quite clear that he adhered to the miaphysite, that is, anti-Chalcedonian or non-Chalcedonian point of view, even if he appears moderate compared to some of his contemporaries.[72] He became known even in his lifetime for the numerous homilies he preached and that later circulated in manuscripts.[73] His extant homiletical corpus comprises the third largest single-author

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69 Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 17).

70 For an overview of Jacob's life and works, see Sebastian P. Brock, "Yaʿqub of Serugh," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ 2011), 433–434.

71 Jacob himself notes that he studied at the school in Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 14 (Olinder, *Epistulae*, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:58–59). On the school, see especially Adam H. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia 2006); Adam H. Becker, trans., *Sources for the History of the School of Nisibis*, Translated Texts for Historians 50 (Liverpool 2008).

72 On the history of scholarship regarding his Christology, see Philip Michael Forness, "Cultural Exchange and Scholarship on Eastern Christianity: An Early Modern Debate over Jacob of Serugh's Christology," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 70, no. 3–4 (2018): 257–284; Philip Michael Forness, "Manuscript Discoveries and Debates over Orthodoxy in Early Christian Studies: The Case of the Syriac Poet-Theologian Jacob of Serugh," *Harvard Theological Review*, forthcoming.

73 As evidenced in a chronicle written not long after 506: Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle* 54 (Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed., *Chronicon anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, trans. Jean-Baptiste Chabot and Robert Hespel, CSCO 91, 104, 121, 507, Scr. Syri 43, 53, 66, 213 [Leuven 1927–1989], CSCO 91, Scr. Syri 43:280–281; J. W. Watt and Frank R. Trombley, trans., *The Chronicle of*

collection of homilies from late antiquity.[74] His epistolary corpus has been less explored. It consists of forty-two letters that he wrote to various public officials, religious leaders, and private individuals.[75]

Near the end of his life, the fate of the miaphysite or non-Chalcedonian community took a turn for the worse. Emperor Anastasius I had been relatively sympathetic to the miaphysite community and supported the Emperor Zeno's (r. 474–491) *Henotikon* as a compromise between pro- and anti-Chalcedonian parties, despite its limited success. The miaphysites gained strength during Anastasius's reign. But Justin's ascension to the imperial throne in 518 presented a crisis for miaphysite leaders.[76] Jacob, now a bishop in the city of Serugh in the region of Batnae in Mesopotamia, experienced the problems that Justin's rise to power and policies on Christology brought for the miaphysite community in his local setting. Two of his letters offer evidence for the reaction of the miaphysite communities to Justin's policies: *Letter* 32 to bishop Paul of Edessa (r. 510–522) and *Letter* 35 to the military *comes* Bessas (d. after 554). I will first describe the content of the letters to explicate the context further.[77] I will then analyse Jacob's surprising praise for Justin and even the content of his faith found within one of these letters.

Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Translated Texts for Historians 32 [Liverpool 2000], 63–64). On the date of the *Chronicle*, see Watt and Trombley (cf. fn. 73) xxviii–xxix.

74 The corpora of Augustine of Hippo and John Chrysostom contain more homilies than Jacob's. The most recent listing of Jacob's homilies appears in Roger-Youssef Akhrass and Imad Syryany, eds., *160 Unpublished Homilies of Jacob of Serugh* (Damascus 2017), 1:xiv–xxiii. On his wider literary output, see Sebastian P. Brock, "Jacob of Serugh: A Select Bibliographical Guide," in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times: Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 8 (Piscataway, NJ 2008), 219–244.

75 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57). On the various modern translations of these letters, see fn. 7 above.

76 For an overview of the theological developments during Justin's reign, see Vasiliev (cf. fn. 5) 132–253; Grillmeier (cf. fn. 11) 318–337; Speigl (cf. fn. 11); Brian Croke (cf. fn. 11) 26–33, 35–39, 52–53; Volker L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syriac Orthodox Church*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford 2008a), 16–57. Especially pertinent for this study is Volker L. Menze, "Jacob of Sarug, John of Tella and Paul of Edessa: Ecclesiastical Politics in Osrhoene 519–522," in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 3 (Piscataway, NJ 2008b), 421–438.

77 Taeke Jansma, "Encore le credo de Jacques de Saroug: Nouvelle recherches sur l'argument historique concernant son orthodoxie," *L'Orient Syrien* 10 (1965): 500–501, drew attention to the relationship between these two letters.

2.1 The Emperor Justin I and the Siege of Edessa

At least two of Jacob of Serugh's letters address the immediate aftermath of Justin's growing opposition to miaphysite churches in the early years of his reign.[78] Aside from the Emperor Justin, two additional figures prove essential to understanding the rather complicated context in which Jacob wrote these letters. First, Paul of Edessa became bishop in 510 and remained in this position throughout the reign of Anastasius and the episcopacy of Severus of Antioch (r. 512–518).[79] In short, he was a bishop through a relatively peaceful time for the anti-Chalcedonian or miaphysite movement. The second figure is Pope Hormisdas (r. 514–523) who rose to the papacy in 514 and tried throughout his career to bring reconciliation between Rome and Constantinople.[80] He authored a pro-Chalcedonian text entitled the *Formula of Faith* sometime around the year 515.[81]

Justin tried early in his reign to bring an end to the so-called Acacian schism that had divided Rome and Constantinople since the late fifth century.[82] On March 28th, 519, he adopted Hormisdas's pro-Chalcedonian *Formula of Faith* as a basis for reconciliation. He demanded that bishops sign on to this document to prove their orthodoxy.[83] In November 519, he had a military general lay siege to Edessa, as the bishop of this city Paul had refused to sign this text.[84] Paul refused again and was

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78 The analysis of these letters draws on a closer examination of their Christology in Philip Michael Forness, *Preaching Christology in the Roman Near East: A Study of Jacob of Serugh*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford 2018), 99–115.

79 On Paul of Edessa, see Ernst Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VIᵉ siècle*, CSCO 127, Subsidia 2 (Leuven 1951), 49–50; Jansma (cf. fn. 77) 193–236; Menze (2008b, cf. fn. 76) 423–427.

80 On Hormisdas, see Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums: Von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft* (Tübingen 1930–1933), 2:129–183.

81 Hormisdas, *Formula of Faith* (Walter Haacke, *Die Glaubensformel des Papstes Hormisdas im Acacianischen Schisma*, Analecta Gregoriana 20 [Rome 1939], 10–14).

82 On the background and history of this schism, see C. Capizzi, "Sul fallimento di un negozio di pace ecclesiastica fra il papa Ormisda e l'imperatore Anastasio I," *Storia critica* 17 (1980): 23–54; Jan-Markus Kötter, *Zwischen Kaisern und Aposteln: Das Akakianische Schisma (484–519) als kirchlicher Ordnungskonflikt der Spätantike*, Altertumswissenschaften 2 (Stuttgart 2013).

83 On the resolution of this conflict and its consequences for bishops, see Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, 2:149–181; Vasiliev (cf. fn. 5) 161–190; Grillmeier (cf. fn. 11) 322–327; Menze (2008a, cf. fn. 76) 32–34.

84 On the events of November and December 519, see Menze (2008b, cf. fn. 76) 424–427. Nestor Kavvadas, *Ephraem der Syrer und Basilios der Grosse, Justinian und Edessa: Die Begegnung griechischer und syrischer Traditionsautorität in der Ephraemvita und der miaphysitisch-chalkedonische Konflikt* (Leiden 2018), 134–147, highlights the parallels with these events found in the sixth-century *Life of Ephrem* that was written in Edessa. The attack on Edessa appears in five Syriac chronicles: *Chronicle of Edessa* 88–95 (Ignazio Guidi, ed. and trans., *Chronica minora, pars I*, CSCO 1–2, Scr. Syri 1–2 [Paris 1903], CSCO 1, Scr. Syri 1:10–11); *Chronicle to the Year 819* (Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed., *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, CSCO 81, Scr. Syri 36 [Paris 1920], 8);

exiled. Forty days later, in December 519, Justin demanded that Paul be allowed to return to the city.[85] Jacob of Serugh wrote letters to Paul of Edessa and to the military leader Bessas shortly thereafter. Justin had bartered a deal with Rome that led him to promote adherence to Chalcedon once again.

Jacob's letter to Paul of Edessa seems to come directly after Paul has been welcomed back into the city.[86] This letter begins with parallels between the sojourn of the biblical Joseph in Egypt and Paul's exile from Edessa.[87] Jacob then turns to Paul's situation itself: "But to you, O prince of God, God has truly shown favour, so that you might rise to the step of the confessors and be persecuted by those who worship a human."[88] The title of "confessor" that Jacob assigns to Paul here is the technical term in Syriac – the same as known in other languages – for those who were persecuted but not killed for their faith.[89] Paul, on Jacob's view, had done rightly in opposing the *Formula of Faith* and the policies of Justin.

Jacob wrote a second letter in the aftermath of the military general Patricius's invasion of Edessa to a *comes* named Bessas, who was a military leader in the city of Edessa at the time that Patricius tried to pressure Paul of Edessa to sign the *Formula*

Chronicle to the Year 846 (E. W. Brooks, ed., *Chronica minora, pars II*, trans. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, CSCO 3–4, Scr. Syri 3–4 [Paris 1904], CSCO 3, Scr. Syri 3:228–229); *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (Chabot [1927–1989, cf fn. 73] CSCO 104, Scr. Syri 53:24–25); Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 9.14 (Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed. and trans., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien* [Paris 1889–1909], 4:267–268). The account in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* derives from the second part of the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus. On the relationship of these works, see Jan J. van Ginkel, "John of Ephesus: A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium" (Ph.D. diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1995), 54–57; Amir Harrak, trans., *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn, Parts III and IV: A.D. 488–775*, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 36 (Toronto 1999) 18–19. As Ginkel explains, portions of the *Chronicle to the Year 846* and Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle* also draw on John of Ephesus's *Ecclesiastical History*. In this regard, it is important to note that Michael the Syrian cites John of Ephesus as the source for chapter 9.13 that appears parallel to 9.14 in the *Chronicle* (Chabot [1889–1909, cf. fn. 84] 4:266).

85 As discussed below, Paul's return to the city appears in Jacob of Serugh's letter as well as in the *Chronicle of Edessa* 88 (Guidi, *Chronica minora, pars I*, CSCO 1, Scr. Syri 1:10).

86 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:244–245): "Because 'the heart of the king is in the hands of the Lord' [Prv 21:1], God also made him worthy so that the truth might appear and his faith might be known to the whole world. He immediately returned you to your throne with his swift command" (ܡܛܠ ܕܠܒܗ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܒܐܝܕܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܘܗܘܝܘ ܐܫܘܝܗ ܕܢܚܐ ܫܪܪܐ. ܘܢܬܝܕܥ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ ܠܟܠܗ ܥܠܡܐ. ܒܚܦܝܛܘ ܦܘܩܕܢܗ ܩܪܝܒܐ. ܐܗܦܟܟ ܠܟܘܪܣܝܟ.). The word ܡܗܘܐ should read ܡܗܝܢ, as suggested already in Gunnar Olinder, *The Letters of Jacob of Sarug: Comments on an Edition*, Lunds Universitets Årsskrift, n.f., avd. 1, 34.1 (Lund 1939), 115. See the discussion of this quotation below.

87 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:241–243).

88 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:243):

ܠܟ ܕܝܢ ܐܘ ܪܒܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܒܣܡ ܥܠܝܟ ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܬܪܝܡ. ܠܕܪܓܐ ܕܡܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܬܝܬ ܘܬܬܪܕܦ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܣܓܕܝܢ. ܠܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ.

89 On the Syriac word ܡܘܕܝܢܐ, see R. Payne Smith, ed., *Thesaurus syriacus* (Oxford, 1879), 1:1551. On the related Greek word ὁμολογητής, see Lampe (cf. fn. 46) 957.

of Faith. This Bessas is a well-known military leader mentioned by several sixth-century Greek and Latin historians.[90] Throughout the letter, Jacob praises Bessas for his right belief. He calls him a "faithful believer,"[91] states that the city has been exalted through his faith,[92] recognises the sufferings he has endured for the sake of his faith,[93] compares him to the ruler Abgar (who is credited with introducing Christianity to Edessa), and claims that he has been faithful to his bishop Paul of Edessa.[94] This letter also features a very pointed exposition of Christology. Jacob describes a miaphysite Christology against a Chalcedonian perspective.[95] He draws on the language of Zeno's *Henotikon* and its miaphysite interpretation to praise Bessas for holding true to the faith. The faith that Jacob praised in Bessas was not generic but was a specifically miaphysite understanding of Christology.

These two letters form a picture of Jacob's view of Justin's policies against the miaphysite community. Jacob praised a bishop who refused to sign the *Formula of*

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90 On Bessas, see PLRE 2:226 "Bessas", Telemachos Lounghis, "Διαδοχή στη διοίκηση στο μέτωπο του Καυκάσου," *Vyzantinos domos* 12 (2001): 31–37; Telemachos Lounghis, "Bessas," in *Encyclopaedic Prosopographical Lexicon of Byzantine History and Civilization*, ed. Alexios G. Savvides, Benjamin Hendrickx, and Thekla Sansaridou-Hendrickx, vol. 2 (Turnhout 2008), 112–113.
91 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 35 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:257): "To the great, victorious, and faithful believer, Mar Bessas, the *comes*, Jacob the worshipper of your greatness in our Lord: Peace" (ܠܐܝܟܐ ܪܒܐ ܘܙܟܝܐ ܘܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܒܐܣܐ ܗܢ. ܩܘܡܣ. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܣܓܘܕܐ ܕܪܒܘܬܟ ܒܡܪܢ: ܫܠܡ܀).
92 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 35 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:258): "Your city has been exalted through you" (ܡܕܝܢܬܟ ܡܢ ܕܝܠܟ ܐܬܬܪܝܡܬ).
93 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 35 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:258): "Your mind rejoiced in our Lord that he made you worthy to suffer for his sake and to be plundered and disgraced, because you determined in your soul that if the one who is not needy suffers when he does not need to, how much more is it right that we, who are needy, wretched, and weak, suffer for his sake in those things that befall [us]" (ܘܗܕܝ ܪܥܝܢܟ ܒܡܪܢ. ܕܐܫܘܝܟ ܕܬܚܫ ܡܛܠܬܗ ܘܬܬܒܙܙ ܘܬܨܛܥܪ. ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ. ܕܐܢ ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܗܘ ܣܢܝܩ ܚܐܫ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܣܢܝܩ ܟܡܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܘܠܐ ܠܢ. ܕܣܢܝܩܝܢ ܘܕܘܝܢ ܘܡܚܝܠܝܢ. ܕܢܚܫ ܡܛܠܬܗ ܒܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܓܕܫܢ).
94 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 35 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:260): "It is good for you, O faithful Christian that you have guarded this true faith in your soul. You have become a good heir to Abgar the Parthian. Just as you inherited his city, so its faith you have also inherited. You have risen as a powerful one and warrior. You have demonstrated the truth of your faith to Mar Paul, the shepherd and confessor" (ܫܦܝܪ ܠܟ ܐܘ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܕܢܛܪܬ ܠܗܕܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ. ܒܢܦܫܟ. ܝܪܬܐ ܛܒܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܠܐܒܓܪ ܦܪܬܘܝܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܪܬܬ ܡܕܝܢܬܗ. ܗܟܢܐ ܝܪܬܬ ܐܦ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ. ܩܡܬ ܚܝܠܬܢܐܝܬ ܘܙܝܢܐ. ܘܐܚܘܝܬ ܫܪܪܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܟ ܠܘܬ ܡܪܝ ܦܘܠܐ ܪܥܝܐ ܘܡܘܕܝܢܐ).
95 For one example, see Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 35 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:259): "Of this same only-begotten are all the things that he encountered on the way of his economy: of him are the miraculous feats that he performed and of him are the sufferings that he endured; of him is the body, and of him is the death" (ܘܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܦܓܥ ܒܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܗ. ܕܝܠܗ ܐܢܝܢ ܕܗܢ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܟܕ ܗܘ. ܕܝܠܗ ܐܢܝܢ ܬܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܣܥܪ. ܘܕܝܠܗ ܐܢܝܢ ܚܫܐ ܕܣܝܒܪ. ܕܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܦܓܪܐ ܘܕܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܡܘܬܐ). The language of miracles and sufferings as featured in the quotation appears in Zeno's *Henotikon* in response to the *Tome* of Pope Leo, which was itself accepted at the Council of Chalcedon. This language was adopted by miaphysites in the early sixth century. The pairing of miracles and sufferings is explored at greater length in Forness (cf. fn. 78).

Faith and went into exile as a result. He also commended a military leader who suffered for his support of the miaphysite community. With the letter to Bessas, we also receive further clarification on Jacob's partisan viewpoint on this event. He remained an advocate of miaphysite Christology in contrast to Justin and those that enforced his policies. This emphasis on correct doctrinal belief found in both letters – and especially emphasised in *Letter* 35 to the *comes* Bessas – forms a background to Jacob's surprising praise for Justin.

2.2 Praise for Justin I in the Letter to Paul of Edessa

In his letter to Paul of Edessa, Jacob praises Justin as a faithful ruler and extols the content of his faith.[96] The letter, as noted earlier, features an extended description of the biblical Joseph's trials in Egypt and God's use of these trials to effect good. On Jacob of Serugh's view, this narrative serves as a useful point of comparison to the persecution that Paul of Edessa has faced. Jacob notes that people started to question why God allowed Paul to be persecuted when he was indeed a good and faithful bishop. Jacob views the situation after Paul has already been restored to his episcopacy by Justin and offers a theological explanation in two parts.

In the first part, he describes the emperor's actions in returning Paul to his throne. An extended quotation from this section of the letter reveals Jacob's interpretation of the emperor's actions:

> The emperor, faithful and worthy of victory, learned the things that had been done to you, was stirred and disturbed, and feared that they might befall him. Because "the heart of the king is in the hands of the Lord" [Prov 21:1], God also made him worthy so that the truth might appear and his faith might be known to the whole world. He immediately returned you to your throne with his swift command. He reproached and scorned your enemies. He made known to everyone that he [by] his will excommunicates those who through the tyranny of others disgraced the baptistery and persecuted you.[97]

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96 This letter receives some attention in Vasiliev (cf. fn. 5) 234; Friedrich Winkelmann, "Der Laós und die kirchlichen Kontroversen im frühen Byzanz," in *Volk und Herrschaft im frühen Byzanz: Methodische und quellenkritische Probleme*, ed. Friedrich Winkelmann, Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 58 (Berlin 1991), 150–151.

97 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:244–245): ܐܠܗܐ ܓܝܪ ܚܣܡܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܗܘܝܐ. ܐܠܦ ܗܘ ܠܡ ܘܠܐ ܐܬܕܘܕ ܘܐܬܬܙܝܥ.ܐܬܕܚܠ. ܐܝܬ ܟܕ ܗܝ ܠܡ ܐܬܝܗܒ ܐ ܐܠܗܐ. ܘܐܬܝܕܥ ܗܝ, ܐܝܟ ܕܬܬܚܙܐ ܗܝ ܫܪܪܐ ܘܬܬܝܕܥ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ. ܠܟܠܗ ܥܠܡܐ ܘܡܚܕܐ ܐܗܦܟܟ ܠܟܘܪܣܝܟ ܒܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܩܠܝܠ. ܘܠܒܥܠܕܒܒܝܟ ܚܣܕ ܘܒܣܝ. ܘܐܘܕܥ ܠܟܠ ܐܢܫ. ܕܠܗ ܡܚܪܡ ܗܘ ܨܒܝܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܛܪܘܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܚܪܢܐ ܨܥܪܘ ܠܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܘܪܕܦܘܟ. As noted earlier, I read ܚܣܡܐ as ܚܣܝܐ, as Olinder (1939, cf. fn. 86) 115; Sony (2008, cf. fn. 9) 399.

On Jacob's view, Justin was a pawn that God used to communicate the true faith. Justin acted as God's agent in returning Paul to his throne, and through him God rebuked those who had opposed the faithful bishop Paul. This is the tenor of the quotation as a whole. Yet, already we see a sign that something deeper may underlie Justin's actions. Jacob's quotation of Proverbs 21:1 – "the heart of the king is in the hands of the Lord" – serves as an indication of Jacob's perspective on the emperor's faith. This quotation appears in the panegyrical tradition to communicate that the emperor is already in God's hands and to encourage him to act in a way that corresponds to this reality.[98]

In the second section of praise for the emperor, Jacob becomes more specific about the content of Justin's faith. First, he compares Justin's faith to that of emperors famous for their faithfulness: "For I am convinced as follows: God did not accomplish this salvation for your sake alone, but rather for the sake of the faithful emperor so that the beauty of his truth might be seen and his faith – which is full of beauty and peace – might be proclaimed as that of the blessed Constantine and that of the faithful Abgar."[99] Jacob states that Justin has the same faith as Abgar of Edessa who is seen as the inaugurator of the Christian faith in the city of Edessa.[100] He is said to have the same faith as Constantine the Great, whom Jacob praises elsewhere for his role in organizing the Council of Nicaea.[101]

Jacob continues describing Justin's faith by focusing on the image of his crown that features the cross of Christ. He writes:

> For his faith is not less than that of the disciples of the cross. Since if he had not affirmed that the one who hung on the cross is God, then he would not also have carried his cross on the height of his diadem. If the cross were of a [mere] person, as those who seek to lead the emper-

98 This appears in three of Themistius's orations: Them., or. 7.89d (Wilhelm Dindorf, ed., *Themistii Orationes* [Leipzig, 1832], 107); 11.147c (ibid., 175); 19.229a (ibid., 278). On Themistios's use of this passage, see G. Downey, "Allusions to Christianity in Themistius' Orations," *StP* 5 (1962): 482–484; Gilbert Dagron, *L'Empire romain d'Orient au IVe siècle et les traditions politiques de l'hellénisme: Le témoignage de Thémistios*, TM 3 (Paris: De Boccard, 1968), 150–153. I am grateful to Hartmut Leppin and Simone Mehr for drawing my attention to this tradition.

99 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:245):

ܐܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܗܟܢܐ ܡܦܣ ܐܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܛܠܬܟ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܣܥܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܢܐ ܦܘܪܩܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܡܠܟܐ
ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܕܢܬܚܙܐ ܫܘܦܪܐ ܕܫܪܪܗ: ܘܢܬܟܪܙ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ ܕܡܠܝܐ ܫܘܦܪܐ ܘܫܠܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܩܘܣܛܢܛܝܢܘܣ
ܛܘܒܢܐ ܘܐܒܓܪ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ.

100 Jacob frames Abgar as a mark of orthodoxy in two other letters to leaders in Edessa. See Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 20 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:130, 132–134); 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:245).

101 See especially Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Council of Nicaea* (Paul Bedjan, ed., *S. Martyrii qui et Sahdona quae supersunt omnia* [Paris 1902], 842–865). Another homily discusses the long process by which Constantine came to support Christianity, see Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Baptism of Constantine* (Paul Bedjan and Sebastian P. Brock, eds., *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug* [Piscataway, NJ 2006], 6:298–323).

or astray and mock God say, the emperor would not have taken it upon himself to wear the cross of a person above his diadem.[102]

Jacob's reference to an imperial diadem that has a cross remains unclear. While the cross became a known feature on the imperial crown later, there are no remains or other literary descriptions of the imperial crown with a cross on it from late antiquity.[103] But Roman coinage as early as 353 features emperors wearing a diadem with a cross on top,[104] and Jacob could have encountered coins of Justin with such a crown.[105] Jacob emphasises that Justin's wearing of the cross is a sign that he con-

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102 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 32 (Olinder, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:245):

ܕܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܕܡܠܛܥܝܢ܆ ܘܡܒܙܚܝܢ܆ ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܡܪ ܡܠܟܐ ܐܠܗܐ
ܗܘܐ ܡܩܒܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ. ܐܦ ܠܐ ܚܠ ܕܘܡܪܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܡܩܒܠܘ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܩܒܠ
ܕܗܘ ܐܝܟܐ ܗܘ ܐܡܪ ܕܐܡܒܙܚܝܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ: ܕܐܚܕ ܢܘܠܝܗ܆ ܘܢܚܠܟ ܘܚܘܣܝܐ܆ ܐܠܐܝܟܐ. ܠܐ ܚܡܠ ܗܘܐ
ܚܠܗܡ، ܗܠܟܡ. ܘܢܡܒܙܚ ܕܗܘ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܠܠ ܡܝ ܗ ܠ ܥܠ ܢܝܫܐ ܗܘܐ.

103 On the crowns of Roman Emperors, see especially A. Mau, "Diadema," in RE 5:303–305; Andreas Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells am römischen Kaiserhofe," MDAI(R) 49 (1934): 17–18; Andreas Alföldi, "Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaiser," MDAI(R) 50 (1935): 10–12, 38–41, 51–57, 122–124, 139–150; Karl Baus, *Der Kranz in Antike und Christentum: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Tertullians*, Theophaneia: Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums 2 (Bonn 1940); Klaus Wessel, Elisabeth Piltz, and Corina Nicolescu, "Insignien," in RbK 3:373–398; Michael McCormick, "Crown," in ODB 1:554; Erich Dinkler and Erika Dinkler-von Schubert, "Kreuz I," in RbK 5:47; Aimilia Yeroulanou, ed., *Diatrita: Gold Pierced-Work Jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th Century* (Athens 1999), 41–43, 216 (no. 68–69); Paul Corby Finney, "Diadem," in *The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology*, ed. Paul Corby Finney, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI 2017), 419.

104 Philipp Lederer, "Beiträge zur römischen Münzkunde: V. Kaiserbildnisse mit Kreuzdiadem," *Deutsche Münzblätter* 11, no. 54 (1934): 213–220, 242–245, 267–270; Michail A. Bojcov (Boytsov), "Der Heilige Kranz und der Heilige Pferdezaum des Kaisers Konstantin und des Bischofs Ambrosius," FMSt 42, no. 1 (2010): 51–53. Baus (cf. fn. 103) 201, mentions the introduction of the symbol of the cross to the imperial crown. But he only cites Alföldi (1935, cf. fn. 103) 150, 150n1, who in turn points back to Lederer (cf. fn. 104). Baus (cf. fn. 103) discusses several literary sources and artistic depictions of crowns that encircle a cross. Yet there is no direct connection between these crowns and the crown worn by the emperor. Josef Engemann, "Das Kreuz auf spätantiken Kopfbedeckungen (Cuculla – Diadem – Maphorion)," in *Theologia crucis – signum crucis: Festschrift für Erich Dinkler zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Carl Andresen and Gunter Klein (Tubingen 1979), 143–149, discusses the apotropaic function of nails in the diadem that seem related to the emergence of coins with imperial diadems with the cross. Bojcov (Boytsov) (cf. fn. 104) 42–47, explores Engemann's suggestion that two nails could have been arranged in a cross on the crown. Bojcov (Boytsov) (cf. fn. 104) 55–57, also identifies writings by John Chrysostom and Augustine of Hippo that similarly suggest that the emperor's crown featured a depiction of the cross.

105 For coins that feature a cross above Justin's head bordering on the crown, see Dumbarton Oaks Collection 10, 29a.1, 31, 35 (Alfred Raymond Bellinger, Philip Grierson, and Michael F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* [Washington, D.C. 1966–1999], 1:41, 48–50, Plate IX); Hahn 11², 12², 13², 35³, 38³, 39², 42² (Wolfgang Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini: Rekonstruktion des Prägeaufbaues auf synoptisch-tabellarischer Grundlage*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse,

firms that the one who is crucified is God. Here his language of "the one who hung on the cross is God" seems to be a reference to the debate over the addition of the phrase "who was crucified for us" to the liturgical Trishagion.[106] Advocates of miaphysite Christology supported the inclusion of this phrase in the Trishagion. The allusion to the Trishagion here assumes a specific type of Christological belief. Justin is praised by Jacob as though he were an adherent to a miaphysite view of Christology.

Jacob praises Justin both for his action in restoring Paul of Edessa to his episcopal see and for his assumed adherence to miaphysite Christology. It may well be the case that Justin sought a more peaceful way of dealing with detractors from his strong stance on adherence to the *Formula of Faith* of Pope Hormisdas. Paul of Edessa's return forms one strong indication that he at least varied his approach based on popular response. But there is no indication that he ever changed his official perspective on adherence to the formula or that he ever supported a miaphysite cause. Jacob's praise not only for his action but also for his right belief stands out as an anomaly in comparison to his hard stance on miaphysite theology that he takes in both this letter and his letter to Bessas.

2.3 The Pious Emperor Justin I

How can Jacob's support for Justin be explained? Did Jacob really consider him to be a supporter of miaphysite Christology? At one extreme, one could interpret Jacob's letter literally. He held that Justin's actions were good indications of his beliefs. Justin, on his view, would not act contrary to his own beliefs. On the other hand, this letter may have been strategically composed with the hope that its wider audi-

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Denkschriften 109, 119, 148; Veröffentlichungen der numismatischen Kommision 1, 4, 10 [Vienna 1973–1981], 1:40–41 [Textteil]; 1:6, 8–9 [Tafelteil]); and Sear 62, 68, 84, 91, 100, 104 (David R Sear, *Byzantine Coins and Their Values*, 2nd rev. [London 1987], 45–46, 48–50);

106 For overviews of this debate, see Edith Klum-Böhmer, *Das Trishagion als Versöhnungsformel der Christenheit: Kontroverstheologie im V. u. VI. Jh.* (Munich 1979); Sebastian P. Brock, "The Thrice-Holy Hymn in the Liturgy," *Sobornost* 7, no. 2 (1985): 24–34; Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*, part 2, *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, trans. John Cawte and Pauline Allen (London 1995), 254–262; Dana Iuliana Viezure, "*Verbum Crucis, Virtus Dei*: A Study of Theopaschism from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to the Age of Justinian" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2009), 121–141; Luise Abramowski, "From the Controversy on '*Unus ex Trinitate passus est*': The Protest of Ḥabib against Philoxenus' *Epistula dogmatica* to the Monks," in *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*, part 3, *The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600*, ed. Theresia Hainthaler, trans. Marianne Ehrhardt (Oxford 2013), 545–620; David Allen Michelson, *The Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford 2014), 155–159.

ence – certainly wider than Paul of Edessa – would remain faithful to their Christological beliefs. The letter may even have had the Edessene Christian community in mind in encouraging them not to change their views on Christology.

In either case, Jacob of Serugh's letter aims to support the miaphysite community of Edessa that had just seen the potential consequences of living under a ruler whose policies supported a different expression of Christology. Justin's order to allow Paul of Edessa to return to the city prevented further civil unrest in a part of the empire in which many miaphysite communities lived. Regardless of his motivations and his actual Christological beliefs, he preserved the community and for this reason he received praise. Jacob, as Ephrem before him, praises emperors for creating the conditions that allow their communities to exist and prosper. Their words of praise belie an expectation of emperors to maintain peace under which Christian communities can flourish. For this, they receive praise or blame.

3 Conclusion

Despite the great differences in genre, Ephrem's hymns and Jacob's letter attest to a wider phenomenon of praising emperors with whom one disagrees theologically.[107] Gregory of Nazianzus writes of Constantius: "Never did a burning desire grasp someone for a certain act in such a way as [Constantius] for the strengthening of Christians and their advancement to the height of both glory and power."[108] The three major fifth-century church historians take different approaches to Constantius. While Socrates of Constantinople (c. 380–after 439) emphasises Constantius's support for "Arianism" and finds little to praise in his ecclesiastical engagement, Sozomen of Constantinople (fl. early fifth century) claims that Constantius had the same faith as his father – it was merely a matter of language – and highlights his support for the church. Most significantly for this study, Theodoret of Cyrrhus excuses Constantius's faith and highlights his promotion of the church in contrast to Julian.[109] Theodoret, who wrote from the province of Euphratensis, just one province away from that of Edessa and Serugh, shared the same views as Ephrem. The sixth-century Syriac polemical writing, known as the *Julian Romance*, seems familiar with

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107 The two sources noted here are mentioned in Papoutsakis (cf. fn. 4) 72, 88n53.

108 Gr. Naz., or. 4.37 (Bernardi [cf. fn. 47] 136): Οὐδενὶ γὰρ οὐδενὸς οὕτω πώποτε πράγματος ἔρως θερμὸς ἐνέσκηψεν ὡς ἐκείνῳ χριστιανοὺς αὐξηθῆναι καὶ εἰς πλεῖστον καὶ δόξης προελθεῖν καὶ δυνάμεως.

109 On the views of these three church historians on Constantius, see Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II.: Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret*, Hypomnemata: Untersuchungen zur Antike und zu ihrem Nachleben 110 (Göttingen 1996), 60–66.

Ephrem's works.[110] The final title to one of the sections of the work erases all differences between Constantine's faith and that of his sons, speaking of "the faith of Constantine and of his three sons."[111] Investigations of such statements may reveal the motivations of these authors in glossing over theological differences in their representation of rulers.

The historical circumstances in which Ephrem and Jacob wrote offer one explanation for their positive portrayal of Constantius and Julian. In Ephrem's time, the Roman Empire had ceded Nisibis to the Persian Empire, while, in Jacob's, the enactment of new policies against miaphysite communities led to the persecution of the bishop and citizens of Edessa. Both authors regularly criticised their theological opponents. Ephrem wrote treatises against those he deemed heretics and wove anti-Arian rhetoric into his hymns. Jacob similarly supported miaphysite Christology throughout his career, and he expressed this especially clearly in his letters to Paul of Edessa and the military general Bessas. The clarity in both authors' works regarding doctrinal matters makes their praise for emperors who did not share their theological viewpoints especially surprising. Ephrem praised Constantius as a faithful ruler in contrast to Julian, and Jacob praised Justin as a faithful ruler in light of his mercy towards Paul of Edessa.

Jacob's portrayal of Justin may seem more understandable than Ephrem's praise for Constantius. Justin had indeed saved Paul of Edessa from persecution, and Jacob may very well have seen this as a shift in his policy and perhaps Justin's own perspective on Christology. He would have hoped that Justin's actions at least would have changed for the betterment of the miaphysite community. Ephrem had fewer reasons to portray Constantius in a positive light. Constantius was already dead, and Ephrem would even look forward to an emperor who stood in line with Ephrem's own theological understanding. Jovian, on Ephrem's view, was a supporter of Nicaea; Constantius was not.

The responses of Ephrem and Jacob to rulers whose theology conflicted with their own grants insight into images of good Christian rulers in the late antique Syriac tradition. Neither author presents a programmatic understanding of the tasks that emperors should accomplish. They rather praise emperors for their individual actions. The contingency of these writings under situations of duress should encourage caution about the types of sources used to investigate political thought. Manolis Papoutsakis's study of Ephrem's *Hymns against Julian* has shown the complex eschatological and political framework within which Ephrem wrote. Yet the

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110 For a brief overview of the text and scholarship on it, see Aaron M. Butts, "Julian Romance," in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ 2011), 236–238.

111 *Julian Romance* (Johann Georg Ernst Hoffmann, ed., *Iulianos der Abtruennige: Syrische Erzaehlungen* [Leiden, 1880], 5):

ܘܡܫܬܒܚܐ ܗܘܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܣܛܢܛܝܢܘܣ ܘܕܬܠܬܐ ܒܢܘ̈ܗܝ܀,

historical contexts of these authors form another means of approaching their surprising positive portrayal of Constantius and Justin. They suggest that these sources feature responses to the individual actions of emperors within specific political settings.

Ephrem's and Jacob's works may thus lead to a better understanding of the effect of historical circumstances on writings on emperors in late antiquity. Constantius and Justin brought peace to Ephrem's and Jacob's communities. This peace garnered each of them praise with imagery ordinarily reserved for God and ecclesiastical leaders and through comparisons to the most honoured rulers in the Syriac Christian tradition. Both Ephrem and Jacob made comparisons to Constantine, that is, to the paradigmatic Christian ruler involved in doctrinal debates. Yet they praised Constantius and Justin not for their involvement in such debates but rather for the protection that their rule provided. The ability of an emperor to provide protection seems, in these sources, more important than an emperor's theological orthodoxy. That is the message of these texts written from the eastern border of the Roman Empire.

B. **The Good Christian Ruler
    between Persia and Rome**

Josef Wiesehöfer

Images of the Good Ruler in Sasanian Iran: An Emic View

Gustav Adolf Lehmann with gratitude

1 Introduction

> At this juncture it came about that Cabades became seriously ill, and he called to him one of the Persians who were in closest intimacy with him, Mebodes by name, and conversed with him concerning Chosroes and the kingdom, and said he feared the Persians would make a serious attempt to disregard some of the things which had been decided upon by him. But Mebodes asked him to leave the declaration of his purpose in writing, and bade him be confident that the Persians would never dare to disregard it. So Cabades set it down plainly that Chosroes should become king over the Persians. The document was written by Mebodes himself, and Cabades immediately passed from among men. And when everything had been performed as prescribed by law in the burial of the king, then Caoses, confident by reason of the law, tried to lay claim to the office, but Mebodes stood in his way, asserting that no one ought to assume the royal power by his own initiative but by vote of the Persian notables. So Caoses committed the decision in the matter to the magistrates, supposing that there would be no opposition to him from there. But when all the Persian notables had been gathered together for this purpose and were in session, Mebodes read the document and stated the purpose of Cabades regarding Chosroes, and all, calling to mind the virtue of Cabades, straightway declared Chosroes King of the Persians. (transl. H.B. Dewing)

As can be inferred from the quotation from Procopius' *Persian Wars* (1.21.17–22), the Sasanian king's eldest son Kāūs (Caoses) claimed the succession after the death of Kawād I (Cabades). The aristocrat Māhbōd (Mebodes), however, pointed out on this occasion that a legitimate ruler could only be confirmed by a vote of the Persian nobles (ἀλλὰ ψήφῳ Περσῶν τῶν λογίμων). At the meeting of the nobles, Māhbōd read aloud a letter that Kawād had written shortly before his death, in which he expressed the wish that his third son, Khosrō (Chosroes), should ascend the throne. According to Procopius, the assembly, to which even the highest clerics must have belonged, then gave its consent to Kawād's wish. In other words, although primogeniture was the usual criterion of succession in Sasanian Iran, designation by the predecessor could also be used as a guideline. Both regulations were quite risky, and their outcome not at all certain, as is witnessed by the numerous disputed successions in the Sasanian empire, but both were formally bound to noble acclamation.

Procopius's report of the succession of September 531 CE mentions a further criterion of the royal succession, already observed in many monarchical systems including Achaemenid Iran, namely that a hereditary prince must also be free from physical infirmity. Thus, Kawād's second son Zām could not become king, since it was prohibited by tradition (ἐκώλυεν ὁ νόμος): 'For it is not lawful for a one-eyed man or one to have any other deformity to become king over the Persians' (Procop., pers. 1.11.4). This threw the gates wide open for the intentional mutilation of competitors and princely rebels. Thus, Khosrō I, who had just benefited from the regulation of his father and the acclamation by the great men of the empire, had his rebellious eldest son Anōšagzād's (Anasozados') eyelashes scorched with red-hot iron depriving him of his claim to the throne (Procop., goth. 8.10.8–22).

Royal successions, as in all similarly structured monarchical systems, were always potential times of crisis in the Sasanian Empire due to the large number of eligible princes and the impossibility of double reign. It should not surprise us that Zoroastrian writings, such as the famous 'Letter of Tansar' from the sixth century, and early Islamic historiography, such as aṭ-Ṭabarī, particularly emphasise the decisive voting role of the *mowbedān mowbed*, the supreme cleric of the empire, in the process of the appointment of a new ruler. Rather, in light of the original context of the writings and the intentions of their authors, it should make us sceptical about the statements' accuracy.

If foreign and Iranian traditions agree on the ways of the appointment of a new ruler in the Sasanid kingdom,[1] this does not apply to their definitions of a good or even ideal ruler. Philip Huyse, for example, has shown in a fundamental contribution to the debate about Sasanian royal titulature[2] that Eastern Roman tradition used alleged Sasanian titles to express the inferiority and sometimes also the arrogance and hubris of the Eastern adversary and partner. This is why it seems appropriate for me not to present the good or even ideal Iranian ruler from a foreign point of view, not even from the perspective of a neutral observer, but rather 'with the eyes of an insider' of Sasanian courtly culture, i.e., in the form of a description that is best understood from the perspective of a participant of this culture.

But before I try to present my ideas on this kind of emic view of ideal Sasanian kingship, let me first discuss some problems with sources connected to that topic.

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[1] For successions to the throne in Sasanian Iran, cf. particularly H. Börm, Das Königtum der Sasaniden – Strukturen und Probleme. Bemerkungen aus althistorischer Sicht, in: Klio. Beiträge zur alten Geschichte 90, 2008, 423–443 (for 531 CE: 433–435) and P. Huyse, Die königliche Erbfolge bei den Sasaniden, in: P. Gignoux/C. Jullien/F. Jullien (eds.), Trésors d'Orient. Mélanges offerts à Rika Gyselen (Studia Iranica. Cahiers 42), Paris 2009, 145–157.

[2] P. Huyse, Die sasanidische Königstitulatur. Eine Gegenüberstellung der Quellen, in: J. Wiesehöfer/P. Huyse (eds.), Ērān ud Anērān. Studien zu den Beziehungen zwischen dem Sasanidenreich und der Mittelmeerwelt (Oriens et Occidens 13), Stuttgart 2006, 181–201.

2 Source Problems

First, scholars of Islamic studies have, on the one hand, emphasised time and again that the historical Iranian tradition – or rather the historical Iranian traditions – have been, among others, considered important predecessors of Early Islamic historiography. On the other hand, only few of them have aimed at meticulously investigating and characterising the early Arab-Islamic authors' handling of these traditions. This is in contrast to those many works that have focused on the development and the manner of presentation of the pre-Islamic history of Iran in the universal histories of the Abbasid period.

Conversely and for quite some time, Iranists and ancient historians have dealt intensively with the peculiarities of these precursor traditions that underwent long periods of orally handing down information – but, whose afterlife and impact were often only treated superficially. These pre-Islamic Iranian traditions, long subject to the rules of oral transmission and put into writing usually only in late Sasanian or even post-Sasanian times, were probably less uniform than scholars thought when suggesting a multiform, normative and semi-official "Book of Lords" (*Khʷadāy-nāmag*). The ways in which these traditions became part of Early Islamic historiography were probably much more varied and intertwined than was long and commonly assumed, even by me. There were centuries between the creation of the first *Khʷadāy-nāmag* and the edition of Firdausī's *Shāhnāmeh* (c. 1000), works that are normally associated with each other without much hesitation – the *Khʷadāy-nāmag* is sometimes even simply reconstructed from the *Shāhnāmeh*. In reality, there was great latitude for various literary plans and imaginations of authors, for diverse interests, preferences and legitimisation efforts of princely principals or consumers, and for the compliance with or the abandonment of genre-specific requirements, rules and expectations.

Much other 'historical' material, in addition to the *Khʷadāy-nāmag*-tradition, circulated in Iran in late Sasanian and early Islamic times, material that the *Fihrist* noted by its titles. And Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, at-Ṭabarī, Dīnawarī, Ibn Qutayba and other writers probably had, within their framework of a sacred and/or universal history, enormous leeway for their own specific modes of composition, emphasis, rating and processing of that Persian historical material and information.[3] This is

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3 For the *Khʷadāy-nāmag* and its influence on Arabic and Persian historiography, see J. Hämeen-Anttila (*Khwadāynāmag*. The Middle Persian Book of Kings (Studies in Persian Cultural History 14), Leiden 2018. Cf. already his: Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and the Middle Persian Book of Kings. Contacts and interaction, in: J. Hämeen-Anttila/P. Koskikallio/I. Lindstedt (eds.), Proceedings of the 27th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Helsinki 2014 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 254), Leuven 2017, 171–184. For pre-Islamic historical writing and its transmission, see also 'The History of the Kings of the Persians' in Three Arabic Chronicles. The Transmission of the Iranian Past from Late Antiquity to Early Islam. Translated with Introduction and Notes by R.G. Hoyland (Translated Texts for Historians 69), Liverpool 2018. While agreeing on the fact that the *Khʷadāy-nāmag* was

even more true in view of the fact that the link between Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and all sub-sequent historians that Theodor Nöldeke proposed is assumed, but not really proven.[4] In other words, we have to imagine the process of the emergence of Persian and Arabic historical tradition, such as that of the "Book of Kings" or the *Annals* of aṭ-Ṭabarī, to have been a lot more complicated than commonly assumed.[5]

Second, our evidence points to a growing literate reading society in Iran beginning in the sixth–seventh century CE, an elitist society that increasingly sought to put information into writing. As for historical traditions, this development may, inter alia, have been due to the Iranians' reaction to the impressive Byzantine or Syriac-Christian historical tradition. Previously, script had been more or less a matter of professional scribes, and Iran had only been exposed to a very limited process of literacy. However, it would be wrong to measure an oral society by the standards of a literate one. Historical traditions in an oral society are dynamic and often adapt to the needs of influential contemporary groups: the official story of a new dynasty usually moves along the policy patterns and value systems of its predecessors, but the knowledge of concrete names and specific actions of these precursors disappears over time when people are confronted with new historical or literary contexts. A deliberate *damnatio memoriae* of the predecessors is not excluded either, as is proven by the displacement of the Arsacids from the so-called Iranian National History in late Sasanian times. And the introduction of a script system is not identical with the disappearance of oral traditions, nor does the existence of a centre-based written tradition imply the abandonment of local or regional traditions.

3 Royal Authority and Legitimation of Rule

Let us now come back to our specific topic: the image of the ideal ruler. From what do the Sasanian rulers, according to the sources of the Sasanid and early Islamic period, derive their authority? What legitimates their rule? The following ritualised dialogue between Narseh (293–302) – son of Šābuhr and grandson of Ardašīr and opponent of Diocletian and his Caesar Galerius – and the magnates of the empire is found in the inscription of the Sasanian *šāhān šāh* from Pāikūlī in Iraqi Kurdistan (NPi 73, 86, 89 f., transl. P.O. Skjærvø):

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probably just a rather dry chronicle with a list of Persian kings, Hämeen-Anttila and Hoyland have divergent views of the origins of the narrative material about pre-Islamic Persia extant in the medieval sources and of the history of early Arabic and Persian historiography.

4 T. Greenwood, Sasanian Echoes and Apocalyptic Expectations: A Re-Evaluation of the Armenian History attributed to Sebeos, in: Mus 115.3–4, 2002, 323–397, 329.

5 Apart from the literature mentioned in fn. 3, cf. also M.R.J. Bonner, Three Neglected Sources of Sasanian History in the Reign of Khusraw Anushirvan (Studia Iranica. Cahier 46), Leuven 2011.

If the landholders [know that in Ērānšahr there is someone who?] would be more righteous and better and more pious with respect to the gods than Ourself or [who would be more able] than Ourself [to keep] Ērānšahr in peace [and confident and to govern the affairs of the Persians and … and] to answer… and enemies, let him say so now, so that [he may be lord of?] the Realm and (its various) districts [who] is able to keep and govern the realm.

…

[And from the Hargbed] and the landholders [*šahrdārān*] and the princes [*wāspuhragān*] [and the grandees [*wuzurgān*] and the nobles [*āzādān*] and] the Persians and the Parthians then also a message [and] an answer was brought to Us (saying) thus that: … "[It is fitting for?] Your Majesty [that You should ascend?] the throne which the gods gave [and (that) You should be […] and should keep and govern the realm until the time of the Renovation and be happy by Your Own glory and realm."

…

Then We with the support of and in the name of the gods and Our own [ancestors?] ascent [the throne of?] (Our) father and ancestors.

If one adds other royal self-pronouncements in word and image or information provided by the literature written at court, it appears that in order to be considered an ideal *šāhān šāh* or *kay*, a king had to meet five main requirements:[6] (1) He had to be a member of the Sasanid clan. (2) He must have ascended the throne in the right way. (3) He had to be closely affiliated with the gods. (4) He had to follow the ethical pattern of behaviour set by Ohrmazd and the other gods and thus have been in the possession of the supernatural radiance of the kingly Light, the *xwarrah*, which conferred success, authority, and also special physical qualities upon the ruler. (5) He had to look after the promotion of the 'good religion' (*wehdēn*) by supporting the 'priesthood' and the foundation of fires for the salvation of the souls of the dead and the living. Michael Stausberg rightly emphasised that in scenes of investiture in early and late Sasanian relief art the rule of the respective king is 'represented as being willed by God; the exercise of this rule policises and temporalises a "religious" and supra-temporal act; the enemies of the king are parallelised with the enemy of the god.'[7]

Some early and late Sasanian reliefs, as well as the hunting bowls of Middle Sasanian times, which replaced the inscriptions and reliefs as media of royal pronouncements, emphasise the physical and moral qualities of the king: an ideal warrior and hunter, an invincible fighter against internal and external threats, and a collaborator in the recovery of the lifeworld created by the gods in good order and threatened or even disintegrated by Ahreman. Philip Huyse has summarised all

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6 For the basic requirements and characteristics of Sasanian kingship, see J. Wiesehöfer, King and Kingship in the Sasanian Empire, in: G.B. Lanfranchi/R. Rollinger (eds.), Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity (History of the Ancient Near East, Monographs 11), Padua 2010, 135–152; H. Börm, Königtum (cf. fn. 1) and Kontinuität im Wandel. Begründungsmuster und Handlungsspielräume der iranischen Monarchie in arsakidischer und sasanidischer Zeit; in: S. Rebenich (ed.), Monarchische Herrschaft im Altertum (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs 94), Munich 2017, 545–564.

7 M. Stausberg, Die Religion Zarathushtras, vol. 1, Stuttgart 2002, 213.

these qualities vividly in the term 'experienced virtuousness' ('praxiserprobte Tugendhaftigkeit').[8]

The Armenian author Łazar P'arpec'i demonstrated that lists of these royal virtues crossed the borders of Iran when around 500 CE he ascribes the following description of a good Persian ruler to the *sparapet* of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean:

> Whoever is lord of the Aryans must contemplate every man with just eyes, like a king, and justly observe and justly listen, as is right for a king. But that king who does not regard his servants with impartial eyes and does not listen to anyone's words with impartial ears, but always conducts himself in an overbearing manner... then heavy is that service and bitter and damaging, something which no-one can endure. (History, tr. R.W. Thomson, p. 137, ll. 17–34)

The good Persian ruler, as Vahan and the tomb inscription of Darius I in Naqsh-i Rustam remind us, was surely 'one who respected Armenian religious traditions and listened in person to the petitions of his Armenian subjects.'[9] A catalogue of such royal virtues is still known in the tenth century, as Eutychius of Alexandria proves when he describes the Sasanian king Wahrām Gōr giving the following advice to the leaders of Persia:

> You should only accept as your ruler someone who possesses specific virtues, who is the best expert of religion among you, who is prudent, honest towards the people, who possesses the power of beating, the art of rhetoric, leniency in politics, and the knowledge of stratagems. (ann. 233)[10]

Despite all the legendary and early Islamic transformations of the tradition, late antique ideas of a good and successful Iranian king are most prominently displayed in a quotation from the Arab historian and geographer al-Masʿūdī. According to him, Wuzurgmihr, the famous minister of King Khosrō I, ordered twelve principles for a good king to be written down in gold letters (Murūǧ II 206f. de Meynard/de Courteille):

> First, fear God in passion, desire, anger, and love, and account for the consequences before God, not before men! Second, say the truth and keep promises, agreements, and contracts! Third, consult the scholars in all things! Fourth, honour the wise, the nobles, the warriors, the army leaders, the clerks, and the court officials according to their ranks! Fifth, take care of the judges and check the accounts of the financial officials, rewarding those who have done their job well, and punishing the others! Sixth, take care of the prisoners with the help of frequent visits, so that you can be sure of the true deceiver and free the innocent! Seventh, take care of the roads, the markets, the prices and the trade! Eighth, chastise the subjects according to the severity of their crimes and apply the legal penalties! Ninth, make sure you have the necessary weapons and everything else available! Tenth, honour your family, your children, your confidants, and examine what is conducive to them! Eleventh, pay close attention to the national borders, so

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8 P. Huyse, Erbfolge (cf. fn. 1) 151.

9 Personal communication Tim Greenwood (St. Andrews).

10 I owe this hint to my dear colleague Maria Conterno (Ghent).

you can make preparations before you fear an attack! Twelfth, check your viziers and servants, and replace the faithless and incapable among them!

Soon after (II 210), the author quotes the following ruling maxims of Anūširwān himself:

> The government is dependent on the army, the army on money, money on taxes, taxes on a prosperous agriculture, a prosperous agriculture on justice, justice on the righteousness of officials, and the righteousness of officials on the righteousness of the viziers. But above all is the king's vigilance towards himself and his ability to exercise control over himself so that he can control his feelings and not vice versa. … The welfare of the people is more helpful than a great army, and the king's righteousness is more useful than times of abundance.

It has often and rightfully been stated that during the early Abbasid caliphate the genre of advice literature 'crystallized around Arabic translations of prose works in Pahlavi …, ancient Greek …, and Sanskrit … concerning ethics and statecraft' and that 'the literature of advice (*andarz* or *pand*) – particularly that ascribed to the Sasanians – had the most significant bearing on the subsequent development of Perso-Islamic mirrors for princes.'[11] The early-twelfth-century *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, a 'treasure-store of Sasanian and Muslim stories and sayings,'[12] explains that the 'predecessors (i.e., the Sasanians) (had) lived long lives, (had gone) through many experiences, and learned by experience to distinguish good from bad.'[13]

Andarz texts are a type of literature containing advice and injunctions for proper behaviour in matters of state, religion or everyday life and they were very popular in late Sasanian Iran, especially in courtly circles. Their popularity is proven in both pre-Islamic and in Islamic times especially by special manuals for the education of princes, surviving only in Arabic and New Persian translations with the *Testament of Ardashir* and the *Letter of Tansar* being the most prominent. Numerous *andarz* compilations were made during the time of Khosrō I, so it is unsurprising that many of those texts were later attributed to the king himself or to his famous counsellor Wuzurgmihr, like in our quotes from al-Masʿūdī.

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11 C.G. Lingwood, Politics, Poetry, and Sufism in Medieval Iran. New Perspectives on Jāmī's *Salāmān va Absāl* (Studies in Persian Cultural History 5), Leiden 2014, 35.

12 F.R.C. Bagley, Introduction, in: F.R.C. Bagley (tr.), Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings (Naṣīḥat al-mulūk). Translated from the Persian Text Edited by Jalāl Humāʾī and the Bodleian Arabic Text Edited by H.D. Isaacs (University of Durham Publications), London 1964, IX–LXXIV, XVI.

13 F.R.C. Bagley, Introduction (cf. fn. 13) XXXVI. Only the first of the two parts of the work can confidently be attributed to al-Ghazālī (C. Hillenbrand, A Little-Known Mirror for Princes by al-Ghazālī, in: R. Arnzen/J. Thielmann (eds.), Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea: Studies on the Sources, Contents and Influences of Islamic Civilization and Arabic Philosophy and Science; Dedicated to Gerhard Endress on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 139), Leuven 2004, 593–602, 597).

4 Royal Legitimation in Religious and Mythological Contexts

It should be understood by now that our definitions of royal qualities have so far been guided by principles that the 'Kings of Kings' had formulated or illustrated themselves, perhaps with the exception of the Masʿūdī quotation, which was also inspired by post-Sasanid-Islamic ideas. With a quick reminder not to overestimate the influence of clerical elites in the empire, I would like to direct the reader's attention to two particularly striking things: the first is the sacralisation of the Sasanian king's own rule, which is mirrored, for example, in the formula *kē čihr az yazdān* ('who is the image of the gods' or 'whose origin is from the gods') and which can be found in inscriptions and coin legends until the fifth century as well as in the king's self-designation as a 'Mazda worshipper.' Secondly, there is another form of religious legitimation which refers to the intense concern for the cult sites and the foundation of fires for the souls of the living and deceased members of the royal house and the imperial elites.

But the Sasanian kings localised themselves not only in religious but also in mythical-world-historical contexts when they defined the monarchical ideal of their time or presented themselves as the embodiment of this ideal. Despite the title *kay* only appearing on Sasanian coin legends in the late fifth century, Rahim Shayegan has additionally postulated that the early Sasanians claimed to be the successors of the mythical Kayanian kings, or, that the Sasanians – by introducing the concept of *Ērān ud Anērān* ('Iran and Non-Iran') – created an 'ideological riposte' to Rome's view of its empire as an *imperium sine fine*. The titulature of the later kings (*kay, abzōn ['increase'], xwarrah abzūd ['whose xwarrah is increased' or 'by whom the xwarrah is increased']*) is here interpreted as part of an ideological agenda created in reaction to 'Turanian' (*sc.* Hephthalite and/or Turkic) aggression, or connected with the temporary chance of finally solving the problem of a war on two fronts, respectively.[14]

5 Iranian Mytho-Historical Traditions

Finally, let us turn to the mytho-historical Iranian tradition that I mentioned before and that was put into writing for the first time in late Sasanian times. In pre-Sasanian times, the production, upkeep, performance, and transmission of such material was in the hands of singers and minstrels, the so-called *gōsān*. They performed songs in an epic or poetic form and either travelled from one court or one aristocratic place to

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[14] M.R. Shayegan, Sasanian Political Ideology, in: D.T. Potts (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran, Oxford 2013, 805–813.

another or were members of a noble man's entourage. As with the Homeric epics, the artists had to take into account the tastes, self-images, and interests of an aristocratic audience. Above all, in the pre-Sasanian, especially Kayanid parts of this 'Iranian National History,' neither the priesthood nor the monarchs could outshine the nobility in its role as the real hero of the millenary drama of Iranian history. The charisma of the king and his house was not denied, even if he was an unfair or incompetent monarch. However, he was not a god-like figure, free of all criticism and with an unlimited sovereignty, but often a rather sad figure of a more than dubious humanness. It was the prominent representatives of the high nobility in whose hands the destiny of the land lay, and it was this nobility that found the *gōsān* poetry's real sympathy. There is much to be said for the fact that in the course of time the glorification of certain noble houses became an important feature of the singers' poetry and took on a more concrete, historical shape until the time of the Sasanian dynasty. One may also suppose that in certain figures of the Kayanid legendary circle reminiscences can be found of historical figures of Parthian and Sasanian (maybe even of Achaemenid) times and that Arsacids and Sasanians adapted older traditions to their own needs.

As Firdausī's *Shāhnāmeh* seems to indicate, the Kayanid part's lively interplay between king and nobility, with their manifold individualised personalities, seems to have been wanting in the Sasanid part of this tradition. King Wahrām Gōr, for example, bears certain features of the heroic character of the Kayanids, but he lacks the tragedy of a hero who serves an unjust master. Wahrām Chōbīn is an exception that confirms the rule – the dominance of the royal element. Without a doubt, Firdausī found that the Sasanid part's orientation towards the kings instead of the heroes of Iran is already in the Sasanian historical tradition. In contrast to the Kayanid part of the same tradition, the poet here obviously lacked the aristocratic-monarchical conflicts and antimonarchical discourses or the memory of great figures of the aristocracy of Sasanian times necessary to be able to create tragic constellations of acting characters. It may well be that the late Sasanian conflict between Khosrō II and Wahrām Chōbīn, who tried to legitimise his rebellion by referring to his Arsacid origin, was the reason why after Khosrō's victory a still existing, strong, aristocratic share in the Sasanid parts of the 'Book of Lords' or in other historical material had fallen victim to royal censorship as had the whole Arsacid part of the 'Iranian National History.'

6 Conclusions

Let us summarise briefly: the ruling kings of the house of Sāsān defined the criteria for a good lord themselves and made clear that they alone met these criteria – in contrast to their rivals for the throne, who were denied those qualities. This idea is transformed into a visual image in the triumphal relief at Naqsh-i Rustam. In the relief, Ardašīr – whose horse is trampling his rival Ardawān, the last Parthian king – re-

ceives the ring of kingship from Ohrmazd, whose own horse is trampling his opponent, Ahreman. Ardašīr's grandson, Narseh, put this idea into words when he denied his grandnephew, Wahrām III, the ability to rule and introduced him and Wahnām, his nephew's counsellor, as the two evil usurpers very well known to an orally educated public.[15] In the pre- and early Sasanian period, there must have been something like an alternative political public in aristocratic contexts, where criticism not of monarchy itself, but of monarchical autocracy and bad individual monarchs, was possible, and where people could speak of the co-operation of kings and aristocrats as being necessary for the well-being of Ērānšahr. Conversely, according to the Late Sasanian historical tradition, late antique Iran seems to have known royal ideological attempts to minimise the Parthian and the aristocratic share of the Iranian success story. Such a redefinition of the role of the king proved unsuccessful both ideologically and in terms of 'Realpolitik,' as was demonstrated in the Sasanian defeats against the armies of the Caliphs. However, the Sasanian model of kingship lived on, although it was revised, adapted to new needs and sometimes even replaced. It is our task to reconstruct and analyse the many ways of the model's impact on later generations of rulers, counsellors and authors.

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15 M.R. Shayegan, Aspects of History and Epic in Ancient Iran: From Gaumāta to Wahnām, Cambridge, MA 2012; M.R. Shayegan, Persianism: Or Achaemenid Reminiscences in the Iranian and Iranicate World(s) of Antiquity, in: R. Strootman/M.J. Versluys (eds.), Persianism in Antiquity (Oriens et Occidens 25), Stuttgart 2017, 401–455, 451–453.

Tim Greenwood

Representations of Rulership in Late Antique Armenia

It should come as little surprise to discover that late antique Armenian literature preserves multiple constructions of rulership. Armenia experienced a series of major political, social and cultural transformations between the fourth and seventh centuries, as the twin powers of Rome and Persia confronted one another across this highly contested space. Represented as independent at the start of the fourth century, the Arsacid kingdom of Armenia was partitioned between the two powers in c. 387 CE, each installing a member of the Arsacid line as king. In the Roman sector, this practice was quickly discontinued but it persisted in the Persian sector until the deposition of king Artašēs in 428 CE. Thereafter every district of the former kingdom was under the notional control of Rome or Sasanian Persia and incorporated, to a greater or lesser extent, into their networks of government, administration and law. The balance of power remained remarkably stable for the following century and a half, with some four-fifths of historic Armenia under Persian hegemony, until the outbreak of war in 572 CE. From then on, as relations deteriorated, the situation became fluid. Both powers secured temporary control over swathes of Armenian territory – the Romans through negotiation in 591 and again in 630 as the Sasanian state imploded, the Persians in 607 after four years of warfare.[1] The two decades after 640 witnessed a complex series of campaigns, raids and counter-measures undertaken by Roman, Armenian, and Arab forces. These culminated in Roman troops being driven westwards, beyond the river Euphrates, probably in 661.[2] Yet even this event did not mark the end of Roman engagement. Not only did Roman military operations across Armenia revive in 685 and continue for the next three decades; several compositions completed, translated, or reworked at this time contain representations of Roman rulership, conceptualised in historical and ecclesiastical terms, suggesting that this model of authority held meaning and significance in a contemporary Armenian context.[3]

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1 See G. Greatrex and S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars Part II AD 363 – 630* (London and New York, 2002) for an overview; B. Dignas and E. Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity: Neighbours and Rivals* (Cambridge, 2007) pp. 173 – 88.

2 There is no modern study of the Arab raids into Armenia after 640 CE; see W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the early Islamic conquests* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 181– 204. J.F. Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640 – 740* (Cambridge MA, 2016), refers regularly to Armenia but its two extended excurses on regional variation and resistance explore North Africa and Italy, at pp. 197– 214.

3 For a new study of Islamic rule over Armenia, see A. Vacca, *Non-Muslim Provinces under Early Islam: Islamic Rule and Iranian Legitimacy in Armenia and Caucasian Albania* (Cambridge, 2017). We await new studies of the Armenian and Byzantine perspectives on this critical period, but for

On the basis of the above, the substantial canon of late antique Armenian literature seems to offer a perfect vantage point from which to trace the reception of Persian and Roman traditions of rulership over an extended period of time. Perhaps inevitably it is not as straightforward as it appears and three particular characteristics of Armenian literary tradition need to be outlined. In the first place, none of the surviving original compositions in Armenian derive from the Roman sector of Armenia, at least not obviously so. This is not to say that such works did not circulate within the Roman world. Writing in the middle of the sixth century, Procopius refers to a 'History of the Armenians' at the start of his *Wars* and Garsoïan has drawn attention to parallels between episodes in this section of his narrative and the Armenian text known as the *Buzandaran Patmutʿiwnkʿ* or *Epic Histories*.[4] But it remains the case that the traditions and attitudes of those Armenians settled within the frontiers of the Roman Empire have not been preserved in Armenian literature.[5] As a result, all the surviving works come from the Persian sector and tend to be suffused with representations of Persian rulers rather than Roman emperors. As discussed below, emperors are usually distant, silent figures, to whom appeals can be made in times of emergency, but who remain on the margins of the narrative. This only changes in the middle of the seventh century. Secondly, all the surviving texts, whether historical, hagiographical or philosophical in character, were composed or compiled by Christian authors and preserved through ecclesiastical or monastic institutions. They reflect a complex blend of cultural and linguistic traditions but we need to remember that they attest an overwhelmingly clerical mindset and perspective. This is not to suggest they do not contain a wide range of representations. Although Sasanian *šahanšahs* could be represented as impious fire-worshiping persecutors of their Armenian subjects – imagined as a community of faithful believers and ready to die for their faith if need be – they could also be portrayed as legitimate rulers and even closet Christians. As we shall see, the good Persian ruler could be constructed as one who respected Armenian religious traditions and listened in person to the petitions of his Armenian subjects; the bad Persian ruler was one who sought to extirpate those religious practices and ignored those appeals. It should be noted, however, that this religiously charged interpretation of the relationship between Persian rulers and Armenian subjects sprang primarily from the attitudes and concerns of the Christian Armenian authors and that the relationship had political, social and military dimensions as well, even if these are not as prominent in the narratives. And thirdly, since the invention of the Armenian script – the work of the divinely-inspired Maštocʿ – did not occur until the start of the fifth century and the ear-

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the potential, see M. van Esbroeck, "La politique arménienne de Byzance de Justinien II à Léon III", *Studi Sull'Oriente Cristiano* 2 (2) (1998) pp. 111–20.

4 Procop., pers. I.v.9, 40: ἡ τῶν Ἀρμενίων ἱστορία … ἡ τῶν Ἀρμενίων συγγραφὴ. N.G. Garsoïan, *The Epic Histories (Buzandaran Patmutʿiwnkʿ)* (Cambridge MA, 1989) pp. 10, 301–2 (IV.54).

5 For a rare voice from this region, preserved by Gregory of Tours, see T.W. Greenwood, "Armenia", in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. S.F. Johnson (Oxford, 2012) pp. 115–19.

liest original Armenian composition, Koriwn's *Life of Maštocʿ*, is conventionally dated to the middle of that century, it follows that those works which portray the kingdom of Arsacid Armenia were written after it had disappeared.[6] Nothing survives of how the Arsacid kings represented themselves; instead we are left with narratives of uncertain provenance assembled and preserved in later compilations. This is not to argue that it is impossible to recover any reflection of Arsacid kingship. The *Buzandaran Patmutʿiwnkʿ* offers considerable insight into fourth-century affairs. But we need to recognise that it does so from a later fifth-century perspective and that it will have been shaped, to some degree at least, by the interests and concerns of its compiler.

Since it is not feasible to analyse representations of rulership across the gamut of late antique Armenian literature, this study is limited for the most part to four of the principal Armenian historical texts: the *Buzandaran Patmutʿiwnkʿ* (compiled in the third quarter of the fifth century), the *History* of Łazar Pʿarpecʿi (composed c. 500 CE), the *History* of Ełišē (completed during the last third of the sixth century) and the *History* attributed to Sebēos (assembled in 655 CE, with updating scholia inserted in 661 CE). It does not extend to the famous – and famously controversial – *History* of Movsēs Xorenacʿi. Analysing changes in the representation of rulership across several texts requires confidence in the chronological sequence of those works. The date of Movsēs' sophisticated text remains highly contested.[7] Including it risks invalidating the results obtained and it has therefore been left out.

The study is divided into three sections. After a brief introduction to each work, the use and frequency of certain terms will be established, including the context or contexts in which they are found. The results will be presented and assessed on a text by text basis.[8] The second section compares how Persian, Roman and Armenian

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6 G. Winkler, *Koriwn's Biographie des Mesrop Maštocʿ, Überzetzung und Kommentar*, OCA 245 (Rome 1994); J.-P. Mahé, "Koriwn, *La Vie de Maštocʿ*, Traduction annotée", *REArm* 30 (2006–2007) pp. 59–97.

7 For a thorough overview, see N.G. Garsoïan, "L'*Histoire* attribuée à Movsēs Xorenacʿi: Que reste-t-il à en dire?", *REArm* 29 (2005) pp. 29–48.

8 *Buzandaran, Pʿawstosi Buzandacʿwoy Patmutʿiwn Hayocʿ i čʿors dprutʿiwns* (Venice, 1933), repr. in *Matenagirkʿ Hayocʿ 5th Century*, vol. 1 (Antʿilias, 2003) pp. 277–428; Łazar Pʿarpecʿi, *Patmutʿiwn Hayotsʿ ew Tʿułtʿ aṙ Vahan Mamikonean*, ed. G. Tēr-Mkrtčʿean and S. Malxasean (Tiflis, 1904; repr. Delmar, NY, 1985), repr. in *Matenagirkʿ Hayocʿ 5th Century*, vol. 2 (Antʿilias, 2003) pp. 2201–2375; Ełišē, *Ełišēi vasn Vardanay ew Hayocʿ paterazmin*, ed. E. Tēr Minasyan (Erevan, 1957), repr. in *Matenagirkʿ Hayocʿ 5th Century*, vol. 1 (Antʿilias, 2003) pp. 521–764; Sebēos, *Patmutʿiwn Sebēosi*, ed. G.V. Abgaryan (Erevan, 1979), repr. in *Matenagirkʿ Hayocʿ 7th Century*, vol. 4 (Antʿilias, 2005) pp. 453–565. To give an impression of relative length, *Buzandaran* comprises 152 pages of the reprinted edition, Łazar's *History* extends to 175 pages, Ełišē's to 244 pages and Sebēos' to 113 pages. Although Sebēos' *History* is clearly shorter than the others, these figures are not exactly comparable. The critical apparatus supporting Ełišē's text is more substantial since it is preserved in multiple manuscripts, unlike the other three works; this has the effect of reducing the number of words per page. Łazar and Sebēos are both preserved only through the same manuscript, Matenadaran 2639, copied in 1672 CE. There is presently no means of establishing absolute word lengths.

rulers were represented across these compositions and explores why these representations change. Particular attention will be given to the portrayal of Sasanian *šahanšahs* in the *History* of Łazar P'arpec'i, and how and why this differs from that found in Ełišē's *History*. This work was based upon Łazar's account of the rebellion and martyrdom of Vardan Mamikonean in 451 CE but it projects a noticeably different image of Yazdgird II and reconfigures the relationship between Persians and Armenians. Finally the third section analyses how Sebēos and other seventh-century Armenian writers conceptualised rulership following the collapse of Sasanian Persia and the emergence of a new and dynamic polity in the form of the Islamic caliphate.

Terminology

There are two words in Classical Armenian for 'king': արքայ/*ark'ay* (Gk. ἄρχων, ruler) and (թագաւոր/*t'agawor* (Mid. Pers. **tāg-bar*, 'bearing the crown,' but with Arm.-*wor*, Indo-European **-bhoros*, substituted for the second element).[9] If we examine Astuacaturean's concordance to Zōhrapean's edition of the Armenian Bible for their distribution and context, we find that *ark'ay* appears more frequently in the Old Testament than *t'agawor* overall although the difference is not substantial (1303 and 1077 occasions respectively).[10] Since the Armenian Bible is composite, in the sense that each book has its own distinctive textual history, these totals are not statistically meaningful.[11] Nevertheless it may be significant that *ark'ay* is used much more frequently in the six historical books (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles) than *t'agawor* (on 794 occasions as opposed to 215).[12] Conversely, *t'agawor* occurs 60 times in Psalms whilst *ark'ay* appears just once. Moreover *t'agawor* is used exclusively in Proverbs (35 instances), Ecclesiastes (10), Lamentations (5), Jonah (2), Micah (4), Nahum (1), Habbakuk (1) and Malachi (1). King David is titled *ark'ay* and *t'agawor* – indeed 2 Samuel 5:3 applies them both to David – but the same is true of Saul and the king of Moab, suggesting that the attributes of divinely sanctioned kingship are not represented through one rather than the other.[13] If we turn to the New Testament, we find a different frequency and distribu-

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9 H. Ačaṙean, *Hayerēn armatakan baṙaran*, rev. ed. 4 vols. (Erevan, 1971–1979) I, pp. 345–7 and II, pp. 135–7 respectively; R. Schmitt, "Armenia and Iran iv: Iranian influences in Armenian Language, 5. Linguistic Analysis. Morphology", *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2018, available at https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/armenia-iv (accessed 05 June 2018).

10 T'. Astuacaturean, *Hamabarbaṙ Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'* (Jerusalem, 1895); *Astuacašunč matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'*, ed. Y. Zōhrapean (Venice, 1805).

11 For an overview of the present state of research, see C. Cox, "1.4.7 Armenian Translations", in *Textual History of the Bible*, Vol 1 A, ed. A. Lange and E. Tov (Leiden, 2016) pp. 370–5. Consulted online on 05 June 2018 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2452–4107_thb_COM_0001040700.

12 In the Armenian Bible, 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings are identified as 1–4 Kingdoms, *T'agaworut'eanc'*; 1–2 Chronicles are titled 1–2 Supplements, *Mnac'ordac'*.

13 2 Kgdms 5:3 '... *uxt ark'ay Dawit'... ōcin zDawit' t'agawor...*'.

tion. Here *ark'ay* is less commonly used (25), is limited, with one exception (2 Cor 11:32) to the Gospels and Acts and applied predominantly to kings of Israel and Judea, including Herod; *t'agawor* on the other hand is three times more commonly used than *ark'ay* (76) and is distributed throughout the New Testament in a wider range of contexts, including many related to Jesus. Clearly there is much more research of this type that could be undertaken but it does not seem that *ark'ay* and *t'agawor* were applied consistently, nor that they imply different forms or qualities of kingship, either earthly or heavenly.

Let us now turn to the four historical compositions. Scholarly convention used to dictate that a work covering the history of Arsacid Armenia from the death of king Trdat in c. 330 CE to the partition of the kingdom in c. 387 should be attributed to one P'awstos Buzandac'i, sometimes called Faustus of Byzantium. As a result of Perikhanian's etymological research, the same work is now recognised as an anonymous composition properly titled *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'* or *Epic Histories*.[14] This revised title suits the contents which possess undeniably heroic dimensions. In her magisterial study of the text, Garsoïan identified two main collections of stories within the composition which she termed the 'Geste of the Aršakuni' and the 'Geste of the Mamikonean.'[15] These had been fused with a third strand of ecclesiastical history, focused largely on the sequence of patriarchs from the family of Saint Grigor the Illuminator. Garsoïan did not define this explicitly as a 'Geste of the Gregorids' and the question of the form in which this material circulated and how it came to lodge in the *Buzandaran* is left open. This is certainly not the occasion for a wholesale reappraisal of the work but its date of composition is very significant for this study and so merits brief attention. Garsoïan used several separate chronological markers to support her view that the *Buzandaran* was assembled in the 470s.[16] She maintained that the reference to a time when the family of Saint Grigor would no longer lead the Armenian church points to a date after 438 CE when the last in the line, Saint Sahak, died. The consecration of Vač'ē Mamikonean and the Armenian dead by the patriarch Vrt'anēs recalls the commemoration of Vardan Mamikonean and his companions following the battle of Awarayr in 451 CE.[17] Several passages from Koriwn's *Life of Maštoc'*, identified as being composed between 443 and 451 CE, appear to inform passages in the *Buzandaran*. And Łazar P'arpec'i, writing in c. 500 CE, identifies the second written history of Armenia as that of one P'awstos of Buzand, confirming both that this work was in existence by the turn of the century and that the misunderstanding over its authorship went back to this time.[18] To these, one could add that the editorial

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14 A.G. Perikhanian, "Sur arm. *buzand*", in *Armenian Studies in Memoriam Haïg Berbérian*, ed. D. Kouymjian (Lisbon, 1986) pp. 653–8.

15 Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) pp. 32–5.

16 Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) pp. 10–11.

17 *Buzandaran* (cf. fn. 8) III.11; Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) pp. 80–1.

18 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) section 3.2; tr. R.W. Thomson, *The History of Łazar P'arpec'i* (Atlanta GA, 1991) p. 36. See also Łazar 15.5; tr. Thomson *History*, p. 60, describing Saint Nersēs cursing Aršak for the

decision to include so many episodes of conflict between Persians and Armenians, and in particular Vasak Mamikonean's killing of the head-groom of the Persian king's stables for insulting the Armenian king, suits the context of mutual distrust and hostility which persisted after 451 CE but would have jarred uncomfortably with the lived experience of contemporaries after 484, when the parties were reconciled.[19] Although narrowing the parameters for the date of composition to the 470s is not further substantiated by Garsoïan, we can be confident that the *Buzandaran* was compiled at some point between the mid-450s and early 480s.

Studying the terminology of the composition as a whole, we find that *tʿagawor* is employed over twice as often as *arkʿay* (on 584 occasions as opposed to 264).[20] Both terms are applied to both Persian and Armenian kings: *tʿagawor* is used for kings of Armenia on 334 occasions and for kings of Persia on 167 occasions; *arkʿay* is used for kings of Armenia on 174 occasions and for kings of Persia on 78 occasions. There are multiple instances when we find *tʿagawor* and *arkʿay* being applied to the same figure in successive sentences.[21] There is nothing to indicate a hierarchy of kingship on the basis of the terms used, or to put it another way, the choice of term employed for king does not denote a different quality to that kingship. There are two features, however, which stand out in respect of the Roman ruler. Firstly the title կայսր/*kaysr* (Gr. καῖσαρ) occurs 34 times in the text and is only ever used of the Roman emperor.[22] Secondly the Roman ruler is also termed *tʿagawor*, on 74 occasions, but *arkʿay* on just two occasions. This suggests that Persian and Armenian kings were treated in broadly similar ways within the composition but that Roman rulers were differentiated. Three other features also merit attention. In the first place, the Roman ruler is invariably titled *kaysr*, emperor, or *tʿagawor Yunacʿ*, usually translated as 'king of the Greeks' but literally 'of the Ionians' (Mid. Pers. *Yayna*).[23] Only once (III.10) is he called *kaysr Hoṙomocʿ*, 'emperor of the Romans' and never king of the Romans; indeed as Garsoïan noted, 'Roman' occurs only three times in the whole composition.[24] Secondly the Sasanian rulers are uniformly titled *tʿagawor/arkʿay Parsicʿ*, just as Armenian kings are *tʿagawor/arkʿay Hayocʿ*. The term Արիք/*Arikʿ* (Genitive: Արեաց/

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death of his nephew Gnel 'as it is written in the Second history in the fifteenth chapter'; the equivalent passage occurs in *Buzandaran* at book IV chapter 15.

19 *Buzandaran* (cf. fn. 8) IV.16; Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) pp. 146–7. The groom called him *aycicʿ Hayocʿ arkʿay*, king of the Armenian goats, and invited him to "Come, sit down on a bundle of grass"!
20 All the figures are based on my own textual scrutiny, noting down individual instances as I read through the Armenian text. They are not the product of a digital search. Although the absolute totals may prove to be incorrect, the margin of error will be small.
21 See for example *Buzandaran* (cf. fn. 8) III.16: *aṙ arkʿayn... tʿagaworn*; IV.1: *i arkʿayin Parsicʿ... tʿagaworn Parsicʿ Nerseh*; IV.20: *Šaphoy arkʿayin Parsicʿ... Šapuh tʿagaworn Parsicʿ*; IV.53: *Šapuh arkʿay Parsicʿ... tʿagaworin Parsicʿ Šaphoy*; V.44: *aṙaji Aršakay arkʿayi... ztʿagaworn Aršak*.
22 Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) pp. 537–8 includes *kaysr* in her appendix of technical terms but does not identify how many times it is used, nor does she consider either *arkʿay* or *tʿagawor* in her study.
23 Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) p. 375.
24 *Buzandaran* (cf. fn. 8) III.10: *Kostandianosi kayser Hoṙomocʿ*; Garsoïan (cf. fn. 4) pp. 375, 402.

Areacʿ), sometimes translated as Aryan but perhaps more helpfully understood as 'those of Ērānšahr,' the realm of Ērān, is found on just seven occasions, four of which attest a military context. It is never employed in association with either term for king. Finally *tʿagaworutʿiwn*, meaning kingdom, kingship or reign, occurs 46 times, always in a terrestrial, worldly context (Armenian 35, Persian 7, Roman 2 and Ērān 2); *arkʿayutʿiwn* appears on seven occasions and only in relation to the kingdom of heaven.

Unlike the *Buzandaran*, we are much better informed about the circumstances in which Łazar Pʿarpecʿi's *Patmutʿiwn Hayocʿ*/*History of Armenia* came into being. Łazar states that he was commissioned by Vahan Mamikonean to write a historical composition, picking up from where the Second Book – that is, the *Buzandaran* – had ended and taking the narrative down to the point at which Vahan was appointed *marzpan* of Armenia, shortly after peace had been agreed in 484 CE.[25] At the invitation of Vahan, with whom he had been brought up as a child, Łazar was put in charge of the religious community at the cathedral of Vałaršapat.[26] Subsequently, he was accused of heresy and forced to write a letter to Vahan from exile in Amida vigorously defending himself, following which he was reinstated.[27] When these details are taken together, it seems most likely that Łazar's *History* was composed in the last decade of the fifth century.

The work is divided into three books of unequal length.[28] Book I covers the period from the partition of the kingdom to the death of Saint Sahak in 438 CE. Book II addresses the context in which rebellion broke out in 450 CE under Vardan Mamikonean, the battle of Awarayr itself and its aftermath, focusing at length on the fates of the Armenian nobles and clerics who had been taken captive. The final book considers the circumstances of Vahan's own rebellion thirty years later in 482 CE and how he and his supporters managed to negotiate a settlement with the Persian king Vałarš in 484. Łazar is careful to acknowledge several of his sources, written and oral. He reveals, for example, that he learned about the imprisonment of the nobles and the martyrdoms of the holy clerics outside the city of Nišapur from Aršawir Kamsarakan, the lord of Aršarunikʿ, who in turn had heard about them from a blessed Xužik, a merchant from Xužastan who was a Christian and who spoke Armenian.[29] Given the terrible reputation that Xužiks later came to have in Armenian sources as purveyors of 'Nestorian' teaching, this positive image is striking. Book III is devoted specif-

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25 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 4.1–6; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 37–8.

26 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) *Letter*, 7, 21–31; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 248–50.

27 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) *Letter*, 8–14; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 248–9. The letter was delivered to Vahan by Hamazasp Mamikonean. Since Amida was besieged and captured by the Persian king Kavadh in 502 CE and remained under Persian control until the conclusion of the conflict in 505 CE, it is likely that Łazar sought refuge there before 502.

28 Łazar (cf. fn. 8). Using the reprinted edition, book I comprises 36 pages, book II 66 pages, and book III 73 pages.

29 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 57.10; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 151. The Xužik features regularly in the narrative.

ically to the career of his patron, Vahan Mamikonean, and there is every reason to believe that this was composed by Łazar himself, giving it a particular value. This being so, we shall analyse the terminology book by book.

In book I, we find that kings of Armenia are almost always titled *t῾agawor* (39 occasions) rather than *ark῾ay* (3) but that kings of Persia are titled *t῾agawor* (14) and *ark῾ay* (18) in almost equal measure. The Roman ruler is consistently *t῾agawor* (8) and never *ark῾ay* or *kaysr*; on seven occasions he is titled *t῾agawor Yunac῾*. Thereafter the kings of Armenia vanish from the narrative, which is only to be expected given the demise of the kingdom in 428 CE. In book II, it is now the Sasanian kings of Persia who are titled *t῾agawor*, on 82 occasions, compared with just 16 instances of *ark῾ay*. It is significant, however, that six of these 16 employ the title *ark῾ay-ic῾ ark῾ay*, an Armenian calque on the familiar Iranian title 'king of kings' (Mid. Pers. *šāhan šāh*, from Old Pers. *xšāyaθiya-*).[30] This title is not found in book I, nor previously in the *Buzandaran*. Moreover all six are found in direct speech. In contrast, the equivalent *t῾agawor t῾agaworac῾* occurs twice, both times in relation to God. This corresponds with its Biblical usage; at 1 Timothy 6:15 and Revelation 17:14, *t῾agawor t῾a-gaworac῾* is applied to God and the Lamb of God respectively.[31] The Roman ruler is referred to as *t῾agawor* (4) and *kaysr* (10) but not *ark῾ay*. In book III, kings of Persia are again titled *t῾agawor* more frequently than *ark῾ay* (91 and 19 respectively) but here it is striking that 14 of the 19 use the form *ark῾ayic῾ ark῾ay* and all except one of these occurs in direct speech. The Roman ruler features just twice, once as *t῾agawor*, and once as *kaysr*.[32] Finally whilst *t῾agaworut῾iwn* appears 43 times, again only in a worldly context (Armenian (16) Persian (22) and others five), *ark῾ayut῾iwn* appears on eight occasions, again only in connection with the kingdom of heaven and the heavenly realm.

There is however one further important development. In book I, we find three instances of *t῾agawor Areac῾*, 'king of the Aryans' or 'king of Ērān,' together with one further use of this collective. In Book II, again there are three instances of *t῾aga-wor Areac῾*, but a new title appears, տէր Արեաց/*tēr Areac῾*, 'lord of Ērān.'[33] It only occurs four times but it could have been used in book I and was not. In fact, there are 49 occasions on which *Arik῾* appears in book II, including seven references to *awagnwoyn Areac῾*, 'the nobles of Ērān,' and four instances of the phrase *Areac῾ ew Anareac῾*, 'of Ērān and not-Ērān.' These patterns mature in book III. This contains 106 references to *Arik῾*, of which three qualify *t῾agawor*, six *awagnwoyn* and two

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30 Schmitt (cf. fn. 9), "3. Layers of Iranian Borrowings".

31 Ezra 7:12 *Artašēs t῾agawor t῾agaworac῾*, but see Ezekiel 26:7 *zNabugodonosor or ē ark῾ay ark῾ayic῾* and Daniel 2:37 *du [Nabugodonosor] es ark῾ay, ark῾ayic῾ ark῾ay*.

32 *t῾agaworn Yunac῾ Lewon:* Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 63.15; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 165: *ař kaysr:* Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 67.9; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 175.

33 For a discussion of *Arik῾* (Old Pers. *Ariya-* and Avestan *Airiia*) and its borrowing in the Achaemenid era, see Schmitt (cf. fn. 9) "3. Layers of Iranian Borrowings".

Areacʿ ew Anareacʿ. There are no fewer than 31 references to *tēr Areacʿ*, indicating that this title held particular significance for Łazar. We shall return to this below.

The relationship between the *Histories* of Łazar and Ełišē has long been contested but this study accepts Thomson's proposition, following Akinean and Kiwlēsērean, that 'the *History* of Ełišē [is] more easily understood as an expansive adaptation of Łazar than the latter's work as an abbreviation of Ełišē.'[34] It draws predominantly on book II of Łazar's composition, covering Vardan Mamikonean's rebellion, the battle of Awarayr and its aftermath. It concludes with the imminent release of the remaining prisoners, in the fifth year of king Peroz (463/4 CE) and a study of the virtues of the wives and widows back in Armenia.[35] These feature briefly at the opening of Łazar's book III but Ełišē's composition contains no hint of Vahan Mamikonean's subsequent revolt, nor the final reconciliation.[36] This creates a different ending, one that leaves open whether or not the prisoners are returned. In terms of its date of composition, Akinean argued for a complex two-stage process, according to which the first version was composed in Constantinople in the aftermath of the rebellion of the second Vardan Mamikonean in 572 CE and was subsequently reworked in c. 640; according to Akinean, only this second revised version survives. As Thomson noted, this seems unnecessarily complicated; furthermore it does not consider the circumstances under which the second version was produced.[37] On the other hand, postulating a late sixth-century date fits other features of the text, notably its clear debt to the Armenian translation of several works by Philo, especially *De Jona* and *De Vita contemplativa*.[38] It would also account for several parallels with the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus, a work which extends to 589 CE. These include Ełišē's representation of Yazdgird II comparing the merits of different belief systems in his realm, specifically Zoroastrian, Chaldean and Christian teachings, *usmunkʿ*; John's Khusro I is depicted doing something very similar. Moreover Ełišē's Yazdgird II even asserts that his father (Vahram V, 421–439 CE) had examined all the *usmunkʿ* and found the Christian tradition, *ōrēnkʿ* to be more sublime, *veh*, than all the others.[39] This notion of the Persian court as a place of intellectual discourse and religious debate is a feature of the later Sasanian era and supports a later sixth-century context for Ełišē's *History*.[40]

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34 R.W. Thomson, *Ełishē History of Vardan and the Armenian War* (Cambridge MA and London, 1982) p. 27.

35 Ełišē (cf. fn. 8), *Anuankʿ Naxararacʿ/Names of the Naxarars*, pp. 759.73–764.109; Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 243–8.

36 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 61.7–11; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 161.

37 Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 23–4.

38 Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 21–2; S.P. Cowe, "Ełišē's 'Armenian War' as a metaphor for the Spiritual life", in *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé and R.W. Thomson (Atlanta, GA, 1997) pp. 350–2.

39 Ełišē (cf. fn. 8) 3.227–33; Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 134–5.

40 See J.T. Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2006) pp. 172–80; and A. Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge MA, 2014) pp. 23–38.

Ełišē's use of terminology differs from that of Łazar. The kings of Persia are identified as *tʿagawor* more frequently than *arkʿay* (103 as against 24); strikingly every single use of *tʿagawor* is anonymous. Out of the 24 occurrences of *arkʿay*, *arkʿayicʿ arkʿay* occurs seven times, always in association with a named figure. Five of these have a temporal association, either general or specific. Of the remaining 17, all bar one are anonymous. In comparison the Roman ruler is termed *tʿagawor Yunacʿ* once and *kasyr* on six occasions; he is never titled *arkʿay*. Once again, the use of *arkʿayutʿiwn* (7) is limited to the heavenly realm; *tʿagaworutʿiwn* appears just 5 times, twice when establishing a Persian regnal year and once in an Armenian context. Finally *Arikʿ* occurs on 13 occasions but never in conjunction with rulership; *tēr Areacʿ* has seemingly vanished from the lexicon. There is a single reference to *awagnwoyn Areacʿ* and three references to *Areacʿ ew Anareacʿ*.

Unlike Ełišē's composition, the *History* attributed to Sebēos can be situated very precisely in time. Its compiler – almost certainly the anonymous bishop who defied Constans II during a service in Dvin by refusing to take communion and who was then summoned by the emperor for a private meeting to explain his actions – completed his work in the first months of 655 CE.[41] Six years later, he added several short notices into the margins of the manuscript, thereby disrupting the sequence of the final notices. There is nothing to suggest any later interference with the work, leaving it as a precious compilation of materials, assembled in the middle of the seventh century.

Looking at the frequency of the chosen titles across the composition, we find that kings of Persia are identified as *arkʿay* more frequently than *tʿagawor* (99 as opposed to 70) although there are just three occasions when he is titled *arkʿayicʿ arkʿay*, all in direct speech. The Roman ruler is titled *tʿagawor* (106), *kaysr* (36) and, for the first time, *arkʿay* (21). It is striking that *arkʿay* is only used for a Roman ruler following the death of Khusro II in February 628, after which Persia was convulsed by civil war. However although he is often *tʿagawor Yunacʿ* (19 instances), he is never *tʿagawor Hoṙomocʿ*, nor *arkʿay Hoṙomocʿ*, king of the Romans. Once again, the use of *arkʿayutʿiwn* (2) is limited to the heavenly realm; *tʿagaworutʿiwn* appears 92 times in both a Persian (47) and a Roman (32) context, although it is associated specifically with *Hoṙovmkʿ/Hoṙomkʿ* (Genitive: *Hoṙomocʿ*) on just two occasions.[42] *Arikʿ* also appears twice, once in the phrase *tʿagaworutʿiwn Areacʿ*.

There is one further expression of rulership to trace, albeit briefly. How are caliphs titled? In Sebēos, the caliph is titled *arkʿay Ismayeli* (6). It may simply be coincidental but the first use of this title appears in the sentence after that recording the final destruction of the kingdom of the Persians.[43] We should not place too much

41 Sebēos (cf. fn.8) chapter 49.18–43; tr. and comm. R.W. Thomson and J.D. Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos* (Liverpool, 1999) pp. 141–2. For the date, see J.D. Howard-Johnston, W*itnesses to a World Crisis* (Oxford, 2010) p. 74.

42 Sebēos (cf. fn. 8) 47.8 and 49.56.

43 Sebēos (cf. fn. 8) 48.11–12.

stress on the selection of *arkʿay* because *tʿagawor* is also used for the caliph on four occasions, the first of which refers to *tʿagaworn nocʿa Amṙ*, 'their king Amṙ.'[44] The caliph is never called king of the Saracens, nor of the *Tačikkʿ*/Arabs nor of the *Hagaracʿikʿ*/Hagarenes, nor are Muslims yet called *aylazgikʿ*/foreigners, the term used for them by later Armenian writers, echoing the Old Testament term for Philistines. If we turn to book II of *Patmutʿiwn Ałuanicʿ*/*History of Caucasian Albania* which possesses a core of seventh-century materials assembled probably in the 680s, we find, unexpectedly, that on eight occasions, the caliph Muʿāwiya is termed *tʿagawor harawoy* (or *harawaynoy*), 'the king of the south,' thereby equating him with the figure who features so prominently in Daniel chapter 11.[45] Here we can see a contemporary writer asserting an association between Muʿāwiya and the inauguration of the Last Times. Therefore, unlike the anonymous compiler of the *History* attributed to Sebēos, who employed a title stressing descent from Ishmael, the writer of this later work used a title reflecting his own interpretation of who the caliph was. It is only at the start of the eighth century that we find an Armenian source referring to the caliph – specifically ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān – as *amirmomin*, an Armenian transliteration of the Arabic *amīr al-muʾminīm*, commander of the faithful.[46]

Comparative Analysis

Acknowledging that all the works are compilations, and so prone to internal variation, nevertheless a number of patterns may be discerned. The most common terms for rulers are *tʿagawor* and *arkʿay*, both meaning king, with *tʿagawor* being used more frequently in all four texts. The choice of term does not appear to denote a particular quality or imply a particular meaning. Both are applied to kings of Armenia and Persia and there are many instances when the same figure is titled with first one and then the other in close proximity. One weak pattern of distribution is that *arkʿay* seems to be preferred in direct speech. The only consistently strong pattern is that the Roman emperor is usually titled *tʿagawor* and almost never *arkʿay* in the first three texts (twice in the *Buzandaran*, never by Łazar or Ełišē).[47] This changes in the *History* attributed to Sebēos where Roman rulers are for the first time consis-

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44 Sebēos (cf. fn. 8) 42.92. *Amṙ:* ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (23 August 634–3 November 644).

45 Movsēs Dasxurancʿi/Kałankatuacʿi, *Patmutʿiwn Ałuanicʿ Ašxarhi*, ed. V. Aṙakʿelyan (Erevan, 1983), repr. in *Matenagirkʿ Hayocʿ 10th Century*, vol. 15 (Antʿilias, 2012) pp. 25–437. For a recent evaluation of the seventh-century core, see Howard-Johnston (cf. fn. 41) pp. 108–113. I have exploited one of the clusters of material in book II (chapter 18–28) comprising extracts from a eulogising biography of Juanšēr, prince of Ałuankʿ.

46 *Patmutʿiwn Ałuanicʿ* (cf. fn. 45) III.5.1: *Tiezerakal Abdlayi amirmomnoy.*

47 This is corroborated by a handful of seventh-century Armenian inscriptions: T.W. Greenwood, "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions", *DOP* 58 (2004) pp. 27–91. At Bagaran (A.3), completed in 629 CE, Khusro II is titled *arkʿay*; at Ałaman (A.4), Bagavan (A.5) and Mren (A.6), all dating from the 630s, Heraclius is titled *tʿagawor*.

tently titled *arkʿay*. This only occurs after the passages reporting the demise of Khusro II in 628 CE.[48]

In addition to these terms, there are three titles which are applied exclusively to either Persian or Roman rulers. In book II and book III of Łazar's *History*, the Persian ruler is identified as *arkʿayicʿ arkʿay*, 'king of kings,' on 20 occasions, all but one in direct speech. In Ełišē's *History*, this title is used on seven occasions and is associated strongly with dating clauses. Sebēos employed it on just three occasions, again always in direct speech. It is never used in the *Buzandaran*. Secondly, the term *tēr Areacʿ*, 'lord of the Aryans' or 'lord of Ērān,' occurs four times in book II of Łazar's *History* and 31 times in book III, always with reference to the Persian king. It is not found in any of the other texts. This notion of Aryan, those of Ērān, is particularly prominent in Łazar's *History*, being mentioned on four occasions in book I, 49 occasions in book II and 106 occasions in book III. By comparison it appears just 7 times in the *Buzandaran*, 13 times in Ełišē's *History* and twice in Sebēos. Finally the title *kaysr* is only ever applied to the Roman emperor (34 times in the *Buzandaran*, 11 times in Łazar's *History*, six times in Ełišē's *History* and 36 times in Sebēos' *History*). Yet only once in the *Buzandaran* is *kaysr* linked directly to 'Romans' and never in the other three texts. Instead the Roman ruler is identified consistently as *tʿagawor Yunacʿ*, 'king of the Greeks,' across all four texts (46 times in the *Buzandaran*, seven times by Łazar, once by Ełišē and 17 times by Sebēos) and is never called 'king of the Romans.' By way of comparison, it is striking that book II of *Patmutʿiwn Ałuanicʿ* contains three references to the 'king of the Romans' – both *tʿagawor Hṙovmayecʿwocʿ* and *tʿagawor Hoṙomocʿ* occur – as well as four references to *kaysr Hoṙomocʿ*, 'emperor of the Romans.' This marks a significant departure from the other four works and will be addressed more fully in the final section of this study. Finally whereas *tʿagaworutʿiwn* is applied to a range of worldly kingdoms and reigns, *arkʿayutʿiwn* is reserved exclusively for the heavenly realm.

It is much easier to assess how the texts correspond and diverge in their use of specific terms than it is to establish why they do so. Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging the challenge, a number of tentative propositions may be advanced. Taking them in chronological sequence, the *Buzandaran* is the only composition in this study to represent the Arsacid kingdom of Armenia as a present reality and it is unsurprising to find that kings of Armenia feature very prominently in the text, twice as often as kings of Persia. It is however very noticeable that the same terms are applied to both kings of Armenia and Persia; neither *arkʿayicʿ arkʿay*, nor *tēr Areacʿ*, is used. This has the effect of establishing parity between the two kings within the imagined historical landscape. It also serves to diminish the Sasanian royal line by implying that it did not have the right to use the traditional Iranian title 'king of kings.' Arguments from silence are always problematic but the absence of this title is striking, given that it occurs in all the other compositions as well as being attested in the handful of sur-

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48 Sebēos (cf. fn. 8) 39.10 – 19. Heraclius is identified as *arkʿay* for the first time at 39.24.

viving third-century Middle Persian inscriptions commemorating Sasanian rulers.[49] It is unclear whether this omission derives from the underlying epic traditions or whether it was devised by the late fifth-century compiler. One could make a case for either context. The purpose however seems clear, to deny recognition of Sasanian hegemony.

Łazar's *History*, by contrast, employs both *arkʿayicʿ arkʿay* and *tēr Areacʿ*. Indeed it is the only composition which uses the latter title for the Persian ruler. This is consistent with Łazar's stress on the notion of Ērān as a meaningful category of identity. He is at pains to stress that Armenians are not *ēr*, members of the community of Ērānšahr.[50] On five occasions, the phrase 'you Aryans' is employed in direct speech by an Armenian, with the evident purpose of differentiating 'us,' that is, Armenians. The first of these is spoken by Aršawir Kamsarakan before king Yazdgird II; the other four are spoken by Vahan Mamikonean, one to the Persian commander Mihran, two in the course of negotiations with Nixor Všnaspdat and one in the presence of king Vałarš.[51] Łazar also uses the phrase *Areacʿ ew anareacʿ*, 'of Ērān and not-Ērān,' on six occasions. For Łazar, these terms defined those who belonged to different religious communities, those who were *ēr*, Iranian, and those who were not, *anēr*. When Vahan begins to outline his settlement terms to Nixor, the first and most important of his demands is 'you allow us our ancestral and natural religion (*zhayreni ew zbnik ōrēns mer*) and that you do not make any Armenian man a *mog*,' that is, a Zoroastrian priest.[52] Thus for Łazar, Armenian identity designated a religious identity, one that was incompatible with those of Ērānšahr. It is striking that Armenian and Aryan also both express different genealogical roots, for whilst Armenians traced their origins back to the eponymous Hayk – the land of Armenia is *ašxarh Hayocʿ* – Aryans imagined themselves to be descended from the mythical rulers of Ayriana Vaējah, the homeland of Zoroaster. So when Nixor says to Vahan, 'Although you have not lived with me *ašxarhakcʿutʿean bnutʿeamb*,' a difficult phrase to translate, but literally meaning 'in a state of naturally sharing the same *ašxarh/šahr*,' he seems to be saying

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49 For discussion and partial translation of the inscription of Šapur II (r. 309 – 379 CE) at Naqš-i Rustam, see Dignas and Winter (cf. fn. 1) pp. 56 – 7. The Parthian text opens 'I, the Mazdā-worshipping god Šāpūr, King of Kings of the Aryans and non-Aryans....' For the late third-century Paikuli inscription, referring to Šapur's son Nerseh, see P.O. Skjærvø and H. Humbach, *The Sasanian Inscription of Paikuli* (Wiesbaden, 1983) p. 32: 'May the King of kings graciously move from Armenia hither to Ērānšahr'. See also J. Wiesehöfer, '"King of kings' and 'philhellên': kingship in Arsacid Iran", in *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship*, ed. P. Bilde et al. (Aarhus, 1996) pp. 55 – 66.
50 R.E. Payne, *A State of Mixture. Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Oakland CA, 2015) pp. 6 – 10 and 23 – 38.
51 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 45.29; 75.14; 92.9 and 15; and 95.17; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 130, 194, 228 – 9 and 235.
52 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 89.8; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 221.

that he and Vahan belong to different communities, that 'I, Nixor, am an Aryan, of the *šahr* of Ērān, and you, Vahan, are not.'[53]

Yet we do not have to look very far to see that this distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan/Ērān and not-Ērān did not entail political or social exclusion. In the very next phrase, Nixor acknowledges that he had seen Vahan at court on many occasions. The distinction had not prevented members of the Armenian nobility from serving the 'King of kings' faithfully on the field of battle in the past. In book II of Łazar's *History*, Vardan Mamikonean is described by the venomous *hazarapet* Mihrnerseh as 'a man of courage, who assisted the lord of Ērān; the memory of his greatest actions persists in Ērānšahr and many military commanders and other Aryans with whom he fought also remember, and even the lord who is like a god has seen with his own eyes at Marviṙot his love of valour.'[54] This seems to be recalling an unidentified campaign in the vicinity of Marv in Khurasan during which Vardan had performed valiantly in the sight of the Persian king. Furthermore, when addressing Nixor, Vahan states 'You are our natural lords and we are your natural subjects.'[55] At the turn of the century, therefore, Łazar accepted that the normal state of affairs was for Christian Armenians to serve non-Christian rulers. This is confirmed in a long concluding homily, delivered by the Armenian Catholicos, Yovhan Mandakuni. He declares: 'Lovers of the church, children of the Apostles, the price of Christ's blood, do not make your souls servants to worldly fear. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. In the churches, bless God and the Lord from the springs of Israel. Love the church and be loved by the church. The church has softened kings, tamed wild animals, made wolves into lambs, rendered you glorious, shamed the enemies of the truth.'[56] Within this passage therefore Yovhan is urging his flock to recognise the authority of worldly rulers, 'Caesar' in this instance to be understood uniquely as representing the Sasanian *šahanšah*.

Why did Łazar represent the conflict in terms of religious difference, pitting Christian Armenians against Zoroastrian Aryans? One solution is to see it as a deliberate attempt to sharpen what it meant to be Armenian at a time when it was under threat. The source of that threat is harder to determine. It could be that Łazar was conscious that members of the Armenian elite were at risk of compromising or rejecting their Christian heritage. It is striking that both Vardan and Vahan Mamikonean are depicted as abandoning their Christian beliefs, albeit under duress and for a short time only.[57] One of the major themes of the *History* is to demonstrate, categorically, that those Armenians who apostatized, as several princes of Siwnikʿ did, not only deprived themselves of their eternal future in heaven; they also found them-

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53 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 91.14; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 226. Thomson translates this as 'Although you have not lived with me in a geographical sense....'
54 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 44.2; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 124.
55 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 92.18; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 230.
56 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 100.8 – 9; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 242.
57 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 26.1 – 30 and 75.19 – 25; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 86 – 97 and pp. 195 – 6.

selves permanently out of favour at the Persian court, becoming miserable emaciated figures, shamed and dishonoured. Staying faithful to Armenian Christian tradition brought spiritual and temporal rewards, as Vahan Mamikonean could vouch. It was possible to be a Christian and serve the Persian king.

On the other hand, it could be that Łazar was more concerned about members of the Armenian elite drifting away from the Armenian Church and towards the Church of the East with its separate hierarchy extending throughout the territories of Ērān-šahr and its dyophysite confession. The last two decades of the fifth century was a time of bitter confrontation between different Christian communities across the Persian kingdom, with prominent figures such as Barsauma of Nisibis and Simeon of Bēṯ Aršam on opposite sides of the conflict. Although it seems that accusations of violent persecution were only laid against Barsauma in later miaphysite texts, there is strong evidence from an Armenian source to suggest that Barsauma and others were able to use the apparatus of the state to remove their opponents from office or deprive them of property.[58] It could be therefore that Łazar chose to reflect on the heroism of individual martyrs as well as collective action against an impious persecuting other as a means of sharpening the boundaries of what it meant to be an Armenian Christian at a time of sectarian tension.

For Łazar, the good Persian ruler was one who listened to the petitions of his Christian Armenian subjects in person and gave his permission for them to observe their religious traditions openly and without fear. Vałarš is portrayed granting all of Vahan's requests 'in writing and under seal, today and for evermore.'[59] Łazar also records Vahan saying to Vałarš 'your religion seems to us false and the babblings of mindless men.'[60] Statements such as these served Łazar's purposes in marking the boundaries between the religious communities but are most certainly not verbatim records of what Vahan said before Vałarš. On the other hand, given that Łazar was sponsored by Vahan to compose his *History*, it would have been foolish to include speeches that did not align with Vahan's own sentiments. We have no way of proving how much of this happened but we do need to bear in mind that the account of the negotiations and final settlement had to be plausible, given that they had taken place within living memory. And there are within the narrative several features which appear to reflect the actual process of reintegration. When Vahan approaches Nixor for the first time, he sounds battle trumpets and earns an immediate rebuke from Nixor for doing so. 'You are not acting in accordance with the practice of

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58 T.W. Greenwood, "Oversight, Influence and Mesopotamian Connections to Armenia across the Sasanian and Early Islamic Periods", in *Mesopotamia in the Ancient World. Impact, Continuities, Parallels*, Melammu Symposia 7, ed. R. Rollinger and E. van Dongen (Münster, 2015) pp. 511–13. The canons of the Council of Dvin in 505/6 identify Acacius, Barsauma and others causing 'much trouble and distress' for the faithful 'before princes and judges.'

59 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 95.25; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 236.

60 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 95.14; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 234–5. *Sut*, false; *mardocʿ anmtacʿ barbanǰmunkʿ*, babblings of mindless men.

Ērān but performing something new. From now on, you must observe and obey the practice of Ērān completely, for on campaign, only the *sparapet* [Mid. Pers. *spāhbed*] of Ērān presumes to enter the camp of Ērān with a trumpet; no-one else among the Persians would dare to take this liberty.'[61] Vahan concurs but in return demands that Nixor make him a servant of the lord of Ērān, implying that he would not have acted in this way if he had been, perhaps even that he had done so deliberately as a public demonstration of his lack of relationship. Or again, when Vahan arrives at the court of Vałarš and has an audience before the king and all the nobility of Ērān, Vałarš recalls the effort involved in Vahan's journey and so asks after his health in the most cordial fashion and expresses pleasure in some unspecified way but does not ask any further questions that day.[62] This formal welcome echoes the first meetings between a Persian ambassador and Roman officials, including the emperor, described by the sixth-century Roman diplomat Peter the Patrician.[63] So when Łazar reports at the end of the negotiation that Vałarš asked Vahan 'Are you content with us, did we behave rightly, is there need of anything else? Speak,' we should accept this as a formulaic speech to be delivered by the ruler on departure.[64] Intriguingly, Vahan invites Vałarš to grant the title of *tanutēr* of the Kamsarakan, that is, to vest the ancestral property of the Kamsarakan family in one person as *tanutēr*, lord of the house, which he duly does.[65] However Vałarš defers appointing someone to the same position within the Arcruni family 'until the men of that house have shown to us some service of merit and perform some labours of benefit to the lands of Ērān (i. e., Ērānšahr).' Although Łazar's *History* is concerned primarily to define and defend the Armenian church, it also reveals that loyal service to the Persian *šahanšah* had practical consequences for leading members of the Armenian elite as they sought appointment and recognition as legal head of the family through the title of *tanutēr*. As the Arcruni example shows, this could be withheld. We have no way of determining when this practice began, nor how long it persisted, but evidently it was current when Łazar was writing. Thus while Łazar's *History* seeks to establish what it is to be Aryan and what it is to be Armenian in opposition to one another, it also illustrates

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61 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 91.6 – 9; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 225.

62 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 95.3; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 233.

63 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, Byzantina Australiensia 18, 2 vols., tr. A. Moffat and M. Tall with reprint of the 1829 CSHB Greek edition edited by J.J. Reiske (Canberra, 2012) I.89 – 90. According to Peter, on arriving at Chalcedon, the Persian ambassador was to be greeted and questioned about his journey. At the first meeting in Constantinople, the *magistros* was to ask him 'about the health of his emperor, and then about the children of his emperor, and about the *archons* and about his own health and that of his household and about his journey, that he had not been troubled at all on the way.'

64 Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 96.7; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) p. 237.

65 For this practice and the legal significance of *tanutēr*, see T.W. Greenwood, "A Contested Jurisdiction: Armenia in Late Antiquity", in *Sasanian Persia. Between Rome and the Steppes of Eurasia*, ed. E.W. Sauer (Edinburgh, 2017) pp. 206 – 9 and 211 – 12.

other means by which Armenians participated in the political culture and institutions of Sasanian Persia.

As noted above, Ełišē's treatment of the events of 450/1 CE is very different to that of Łazar.[66] Rather than viewing the conflict as originating in tensions within the house of Siwnikʿ, Ełišē presents it as the outcome of longstanding animosity on the part of Yazdgird II towards his Christian subjects; he also situates it in the context of successful recent military action against the Romans.[67] Ełišē gives greater prominence to the role of the clergy – the holy Łewond gives an extended homily on the heroes of ancient Israel before the battle of Awarayr – and to the sufferings of the captives in Persia. Furthermore his narrative ends with a long study of the patient endurance of the wives and widows of the martyrs back in Armenia; there is no trace of Vahan Mamikonean, nor of the events of 482 which culminated in the settlement. As Cowe noted, the effect of these changes is to highlight the spiritual dimension of the revolt, producing 'a sharpening of focus and polarization of the opposing values.'[68] Ełišē's *History* is an exemplary study in heroic but doomed resistance to an oppressive state in which the Armenian faithful stand alone. It lacks many of the complexities recorded in Łazar's *History*, the multiple betrayals and sudden switches in allegiance, the vast number of figures who emerge without warning and vanish again just as quickly, the incidental details which supply so much depth to the narrative – for example, that bishop Sahak was bilingual in Armenian and Persian but that catholicos Giwt was bilingual in Armenian and Greek, or that Vahan Mamikonean controlled gold mines but operated them in conjunction with a Syrian named Vriw who laid accusations against Vahan at court.[69] Ełišē's *History* amplifies but it does so through the inclusion of speeches and at the expense of historical depth. From a terminological perspective, his work lacks the nuance of Łazar's *History*. By stressing Ērān and not-Ērān, and employing *tēr Areacʿ* for the Sasanian ruler, Łazar was able to highlight the different religious identities and communities without implying permanent political or social exclusion. Ełišē's *History* on the other hand presents a simple dichotomy between Persians and Armenians, a more straightforward but also more uncompromising construction of the relationship. One striking feature of Ełišē's *History* in terms of rulership is the anonymity of the Persian king

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66 For a full comparison, see Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 3–9.

67 For the military context, see Ełišē (cf. fn. 8) 1.6–9; Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 61–2. Ełišē reports that Yazdgird II 'attacked the land of the Greeks, struck as far as the city of Mcbin/Nisibis, devastated many districts of the Romans in his raiding, set fire to all the churches, amassed plunder and captives and terrified all the forces of the land.' Aside from the generic character of the account, Nisibis had been under Persian control since 363 CE and while it was subjected to a short-lived siege by Roman forces in 421, this was quickly lifted. Ełišē would not be alone in confusing the campaigns of 421 and 440/1, when the Persian raids seem to have been directed further north, in the vicinity of Theodosiopolis and Satala. Such confusion serves to distance his account from the middle of the fifth century.

68 Cowe (cf. fn. 38) p. 345.

69 For Sahak and Giwt, see Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 55.12 and 62.2; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 146 and 162; For Vahan and Vriw, see Łazar (cf. fn. 8) 65.9–20; Thomson (cf. fn. 18) pp. 170–1.

Yazdgird II; *t'agawor* is always used anonymously (103 times) whilst only eight of the 24 references to *ark'ay* also included the name of the king. This has the effect of imparting a timeless quality to the narrative and it may not be coincidental that Ełišē's *History* proved to be more influential on later generations than Łazar's *History*.[70]

Sebēos and the Seventh Century

Roman emperors and their rule obtain much greater prominence in the *History* attributed to Sebēos than the three earlier compositions. Far from being silent, peripheral figures, Maurice, Heraclius and Constans II participate throughout the narrative in action and in reported and direct speech, with different shades of approbation or criticism. Whereas the Roman ruler features 31 times in Łazar's *History* and just seven times in Ełišē's *History*, he is identified in Sebēos' *History* as *t'agawor*, *kaysr* or, for the first time, *ark'ay*, on no fewer than 163 occasions. This should come as little surprise, given the sustained Roman engagement with Armenia in the decades after 590 CE. We need, however, to be cautious when analysing their representation. By way of illustration, Maurice is portrayed as a ruler who described the Armenians as 'a perverse and disobedient race'; he is further identified as one who 'sought to preach Chalcedon in all the churches of the land of Armenia and unite them through the sacrament with his army.'[71] These comments are usually accepted as an accurate reflection of Maurice's attitude towards Armenia. Yet it is worth recalling that this whole work was assembled at least fifty years after these events and that the representation of Maurice may have been strongly informed by the compiler's own perception of Heraclius and Constans II. It is significant that a later passage records the role of the Greek forces in spreading their own liturgical practices, noting 'the Armenians never accepted the Roman [rite] in the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord.'[72] Both the sentiment and the language used are proximate to the earlier references. The Maurice of Sebēos may therefore be articulating the present antipathy of the compiler towards Roman rule rather than representing how the figure of Maurice was viewed by Armenians at the end of the sixth century. This interpretation obtains additional support if the compiler was indeed the bishop who refused to take the sacrament with Constans II, for these all express confessional difference in terms of outward liturgical performance rather than inner theological conviction.

As noted above, the results of the terminological analysis of Sebēos' *History* are somewhat inconclusive. There is, for example, no greater association of the emperor with 'Roman-ness' and no displacement of the traditional *Yunac'*, 'of the Greeks,' which remains ubiquitous. Constans II is titled *t'agawor Yunac'* in the final entries

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70 Cowe (cf. fn 38) pp. 343–4.

71 Sebēos (cf. fn.8) 15.4 and 19.3; Thomson and Howard-Johnson (cf. fn. 41) pp. 31, 37.

72 Sebēos (cf. fn.8) 45.31–2; Thomson and Howard-Johnson (cf. fn. 41) p. 113.

at the end of the work. The only significant change is the application of *ark'ay* to the Roman ruler. This suggests that the meanings associated with it, previously restricted to Armenian and Persian kings, were transferred to the Roman emperor, or perhaps that the distinction between *ark'ay* and *t'agawor* was in the process of breaking down.[73] We have already seen that the late seventh-century core of book II of the *History of Ałuank'* refers for the first time to the 'king of the Romans' and the 'emperor of the Romans.' The familiar *t'agawor Yunac'* continues to feature but there is also a unique reference to *kaysr Yunac'*, the 'emperor of the Greeks.'[74] It seems that the conventions governing Armenian expressions of Roman rulership began to transform in the 650s and continued to do so into the 680s.

A parallel development may be traced in a cluster of Armenian compositions completed, translated, or reworked at the end of the seventh century. These feature a renewed interest in Roman imperial and ecclesiastical history. A colophon tells us that abbot Grigor Jorap'orec'i prepared a translation of the *Life of Saint Sylvester* in 677/8 CE for Nerseh the prince of Iberia and son-in-law of 'the Kamsarakan.'[75] In 695/6 CE, at the request of *tēr* Nerseh Kamsarakan, *apiwhipat patrik* (Gr. ἀπὸ ὑπάτων, 'former consul,' and πατρίκιος, 'patrician'), P'ilon Tirakac'i revised Grigor's translation and used it as the introduction to his adapted version of an existing Armenian translation of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates.[76] In other words, P'ilon/Philo revised and combined two separate texts which had already been translated into Armenian. The *Life of Saint Sylvester* fuses details from the saint's life with an account of the life of the emperor Constantine, his conversion and baptism by Sylvester – the bishop of Rome – and a long account of a debate between Christians and Jews which takes place in Rome. Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* records church history within an imperial framework from the reign of Constantine to 439 CE and the final years of the reign of Theodosius II. This is not the occasion to consider in any detail how P'ilon revised these two works but it is striking that he was commissioned to create a new account of fourth- and fifth-century imperial history from the time of Constantine and that what he produced coheres in several respects with Armenian tradition about their own conversion. P'ilon's reworking of the *Life of Saint Sylvester* amplifies the account of Constantine's persecution of Christians, the leprosy he con-

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73 See fn. 47 above. The epigraphic evidence suggests that the distinction was maintained in the 630s so it may be a reflection of the circumstances in which the compiler was working.

74 *Patmut'iwn Ałuanic'* (cf. fn. 45) II.25.6.

75 A.S. Mat'evosyan, *Hayeren Jeṙagreri Hišatakaranner 5 – 12dd* (Erevan, 1988) no. 29.

76 See R.W. Thomson, "The Armenian Versions of the 'Life of Sylvester'", *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies* 14 (2005) pp. 55 – 139; and R.W. Thomson, *The Armenian Adaptation of the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus*, Hebrew University Armenian Studies 3 (Leuven, 2001). As Thomson notes in his introduction to the latter, at pp. 11 – 12, the date and circumstances in which the first translation of Socrates' *History* was undertaken remain obscure. It is very unlikely that Socrates was a scholasticus; see H. Leppin, "The Church Historians I. Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus", in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century AD*, ed. G. Marasco (Leiden and Boston MA, 2003) pp. 221 – 3.

tracts as a result, and his baptism along with more than 12,000 others.[77] These adaptations have the effect of making Constantine more like the Armenian king Trdat who also persecuted Christians, was afflicted by an incurable disease at God's command and was cured only once he had accepted Christianity and been baptised, with thousands of others. Here then the good ruler Constantine was reimagined in terms which allowed him to correspond more closely to the figure of Trdat. P'ilon's reworking of Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* introduces much new material, some of which again adds an Armenian patina to the whole. It is however the final passages which are most instructive. P'ilon chose to include a revised version of Socrates' original Preface to Book VI in which he justified his work on the grounds that otherwise 'we' may fall away from a knowledge of the histories of saints, bishops and kings. Furthermore in his own colophon, P'ilon prayed that Nerseh would seek piety, pursuing righteousness, faith and love and seizing eternal life like 'the most pious king Theodosius (*barepaštagoyn t'agaworn T'ēodos*),' and that he would 'follow the path of kings (*čanaparh t'agaworac'*) like those of this History.'[78] In other words, P'ilon was maintaining that Roman emperors offered the best models of Christian rulership for Armenian princes such as Nerseh. This represents a significant shift in attitude from that displayed in the *History* attributed to Sebēos and stands in sharp contrast to the historical compositions which predate the seventh century, all of which are characterised by a disinterest in Roman rulership. So while it would be extremely unwise to extrapolate from these two later seventh-century adaptations and presume that they reflect views held throughout Armenia, they do point to an interest in refashioning fourth- and fifth-century history – the era of the *Buzandaran* and book I of Łazar's *History* – in completely new ways. Christian Roman rulership was now held to be worthy of emulation and could even be made to conform with features of historic Armenian kingship.

One other contemporary composition attests this reorientation. This work, known variously as *Ananun Žamanakagrut'iwn/Anonymous Chronicle* or the *History* or *Chronicle* of Anania Širakac'i or P'ilon Tirakac'i, is a complex, disjointed miscellany.[79] It may be divided into two parts: firstly, a collection of discrete chronographical

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77 Thomson (cf. fn. 76a) pp. 63–64.

78 Mat'evosyan (cf. fn. 75) no. 28; Thomson, (cf. fn. 76b) p. 229. Thomson has argued that P'ilon's scholarly undertaking should be set 'in the context of the aggressive self-definition of Armenians in the Muslim period following the last and unsuccessful attempt at reunion with Constantinople' (cf. fn. 76b, p. 40). It is however possible that the last decade of the seventh century was characterised by a range of Armenian responses to its imperial neighbour, including continuing relationship. P'ilon's adaptations, stressing the similar conversion experiences of Constantine and Trdat and the worthiness of Theodosius II, appear to reflect a pro-Roman attitude.

79 *Anonymous Chronicle*, *Ananun žamanakagrut'iwn*, ed. B. Sargisean (Venice, 1904); A.G. Abrahamyan, *Anania Širakac'u matenagrut'yunē* (Erevan, 1944) pp. 357–99; P'ilon Tirakac'i, *Žamanakagrut'iwn*, ed. A. Hakobyan, *Matenagirk' Hayoc' 7th Century*, vol. 5 (Ant'ilias, 2005) pp. 899–969, which divides the text into three. For a study, see T.W. Greenwood, "'New Light from the East': Chro-

extracts, largely deriving from works originally composed in Greek and including a freestanding sequence of Roman emperors from Julius Caesar to the thirtieth year of Heraclius (639/40 CE), suggesting that this was created during the reign of Constans II; and secondly, a synoptic ecclesiastical history, also composite, displaying close knowledge of the circumstances and decisions of church councils, structured around a second, different Roman imperial sequence and extending from the birth of Christ to the second year of Justinian II (686/7 CE).[80] Its limited engagement with the Armenian past, alongside the lack of a full translation, have together ensured that this work remains on the margins of study. Yet it merits further attention. By way of illustration, part II displays an interest in the affairs of the see of Alexandria down to the end of the fifth century before switching focus to conditions in Jerusalem during the reign of Justinian I.[81] The final notices reveal a surprising but unmistakable adherence to the monothelete formulation, castigating those who repudiated it at the Sixth Ecumenical Church Council in Constantinople in 680/1 CE.[82] Intriguingly one substantial passage from the *Anonymous Chronicle* was incorporated in P'ilon's reworking of Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, at chapter 170.[83] This indicates that the two works came out of the same intellectual context; indeed it has been argued that P'ilon himself was responsible for both. For the purposes of this study, however, the two key features are that both parts of the *Anonymous Chronicle* contain imperial sequences, and that part II traces the history of the wider Roman church from a miaphysite and then a monothelete perspective, with minor Armenian intrusions, when one might have expected the opposite, that is, Armenian narratives and an Armenian-focused ecclesiastical history, with minor Roman intrusions. The *Anonymous Chronicle* attests sustained scholarly engagement with the Roman imperial past, chronology and ecclesiastical history, supporting the contention that the second half of the seventh century witnessed a transformation in Armenian attitudes towards Roman rulership.[84]

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nography and Ecclesiastical History through a Late Seventh-Century Armenian Source", *JECS* 16/2 (2008) pp. 197–254.

80 P'ilon Tirakac'i (cf. fn. 79) pp. 899–935 and pp. 935–969 respectively. In manuscript Matenadaran 2679, written in 981 CE, the freestanding list ends with Heraclius but Matenadaran 5254, copied in 1280 CE, adds 'Kostandianos, 28 years. In 118 of the Armenian Era,' which equates to 669/70 CE (p. 931 and n. 23). It remains unclear how this final notice came to be omitted by the scribe of M2679 but included in M5254; we cannot rule out the possibility that it reflects later revision.

81 Greenwood (cf. fn. 79) pp. 230, 236 for Alexandria; pp. 238–42 for Jerusalem.

82 P'ilon Tirakac'i (cf. fn. 79) pp. 967–9.; Greenwood (cf. fn. 79) pp. 245–7.

83 Greenwood (cf. fn. 79) pp. 249, for this and three other corresponding passages; Thomson (fn. 76b) p. 227.

84 It is striking that this era also witnessed pro-Roman sympathies being articulated in Ałuank', where the head of the church, Nersēs Bakur, and Queen Spram were accused of praying for the emperor: see *Patmut'iwn Ałuanic'* (cf. fn. 45) III.5.3.

Conclusion

In conclusion, late antique Armenian literature contains a wealth of representations of rulership, extending beyond the stereotypical 'impious' Persian monarch. By treating the four chosen historical compositions as separate discourses, as products of specific circumstances, a nuanced picture has emerged. In refusing to use the traditional title 'king of kings,' the *Buzandaran* promoted the notion of parity between Armenia and Sasanian kingship. Since the Armenian Arsacids were closely related to the Parthian dynasty, this subtle rejection of Sasanian hegemony is unsurprising. Łazar's *History*, on the other hand, offers the fullest expression of Armenian attitudes towards Sasanian rulership, highlighting religious difference but also revealing political integration. In Łazar's narrative, it is clear that being an Armenian Christian did not disqualify one from recognition by, or service to, the Sasanian king of kings. Armenian participation in the institutions and affairs of the Sasanian state was expected and typical; it was rebellion which was anomalous. By contrast, Ełišē's *History* constructed the relationship between Persians and Armenians as antagonistic, with service seemingly conditional on repudiation of Christian conviction and religious difference now a marker of political disloyalty. Ełišē presents Zoroastrian priests urging Yazdgird II to convert 'to one religion (*i mi ōrēns*) all the peoples and nations who are in your lordship.'[85] Yet as Thomson observed, this reflected Ełišē's decision to reinterpret the Armenian revolt through the prism of the experience and fate of the Maccabees.[86] The advice of the priests echoes the decision of Antiochus to send edicts throughout his realm instructing that 'all the inhabitants of the land should abandon their own religions and should subsist in one religion (*i mi ōrēns*)' (1 Mc 1:43). Ełišē's Yazdgird II was modelled, at least in part, on Antiochus, and its representation of Sasanian rulership was therefore distanced from both the historical figure of Yazdgird II and the Persian ruler of his own day, probably Khusro I. In this composition, the focus is on the reaction of the faithful to their circumstances – one that would suit a monastic context of production and circulation – and not on the creation of those circumstances, deemed to be out of their control.[87]

Roman emperors on the other hand remain on the margins of these three Armenian historical narratives. Whether or not this reflects genuine disengagement or confessional anxiety on the part of their clerical authors is unclear and likely to remain so. As the *History* attributed to Sebēos demonstrates, the demise of Sasanian Persia in the middle of the seventh century had an impact on how Roman emperors were titled and their presence in the narrative. This transformation can also be discerned in the *Patmut῾iwn Ałuanic῾* through its use of the title king or emperor 'of the Romans'

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85 Ełišē (cf. fn. 8) 1.21; Thomson (cf. fn. 34) p. 63.

86 Thomson (cf. fn. 34) pp. 11–16. The classic study remains R.W. Thomson, "The Maccabees in Early Armenian Historiography", *JThS* 26 (1975) pp. 329–41.

87 Cowe (cf. fn. 38) pp. 352–6.

rather than 'of the Greeks.' Several compositions from the final decades of that century reveal a willingness, on the part of some, to construct Roman emperors in new ways, by recasting the conversion experience of Constantine I to correspond to that of the Armenian King Trdat (*Life of Saint Sylvester*), by presenting the pious Theodosius II as a model Christian ruler for prince Nerseh Kamsarakan (Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*) and by expressing time in terms of the sequence of Roman emperors (*Anonymous Chronicle*). It is impossible to assess the reception or the longevity of this positive projection of Roman rulership but it serves to remind us that a range of possible relationships existed for Armenian princes at the end of the seventh century, not least with the Roman emperor.

Azat Bozoyan

The Depiction of the Arsacid Dynasty in Medieval Armenian Historiography

Introduction

The Arsacid, or Parthian, dynasty was founded in the 250s BCE, detaching large territories from the Seleucid Kingdom which had been formed after the conquests of Alexander the Great. This dynasty ruled Persia for about half a millennium, until 226 CE, when Ardashir the Sasanian removed them from power. Under the Arsacid dynasty, Persia became Rome's main rival in the East. Arsacid kings set up their relatives in positions of power in neighbouring states, thus making them allies. After the fall of the Artaxiad dynasty in Armenia in 66 CE, Vologases I of Parthia, in agreement with the Roman Empire and the Armenian royal court, proclaimed his brother Tiridates king of Armenia. His dynasty ruled Armenia until 428 CE. Armenian historiographical sources, beginning in the fifth century, always reserved a special place for that dynasty.

Movsēs Xorenacʻi (Moses of Xoren), the 'Father of Armenian historiography,' attributed the origin of the Arsacids to the Artaxiad kings who had ruled Armenia beforehand. Early Armenian historiographic sources provide us with a number of testimonies regarding various representatives of the Arsacid dynasty and their role in the spread of Christianity in Armenia. In Armenian, as well as in some Syriac historical works, the origin of the Arsacids is related to King Abgar V of Edessa, known as the first king to officially adopt Christianity. Armenian and Byzantine historiographical sources associate the adoption of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia with the Arsacid King Tiridates III.

Gregory the Illuminator, who played a major role in the adoption of Christianity as Armenia's state religion and who even became widely known as the founder of the Armenian Church, belongs to another branch of the same family. Medieval Armenian sources call that branch of the Arsacids, which played a significant role in the middle of the fifth century, the Pahlavuni branch. It produced a series of catholicoi who presided over the Armenian Church until the line was broken by Sahak I 'The Parthian' (386–428?). A number of medieval catholicoi, particularly from Gregory II Vkayaser to Gregory VI Apirat (eleventh–twelfth centuries), also descended from the Pahlavuni family. A theoretical justification of this inheritance was elaborated in the eleventh century and, especially, in the *Vipasanutʻiwn* (*Narratio*) of Catholicos Nerses IV the Gracious (twelfth century).

From an early period, Roman and Byzantine authors speak of the Parthian Arsacids as the ruling dynasties both in Persia and Armenia. Some scions of the Arsacid dynasty, who were mostly associated with the Byzantine Empire, are mentioned in

Procopius of Caesarea's *History*. Apocalyptic works preserved in Greek and attributed to the Catholicos Sahak I attach great importance to the Arsacid dynasty in the future restoration of Armenian kingship. A number of apocalyptic works preserved in Armenian are also associated with this family. The earliest source attributed to Catholicos Sahak is incorporated into the historical work of Łazar P'arpec'i (fifth century).[1] In the ninth and tenth centuries, Emperor Basil I the Macedonian was said to have Arsacid origin by Patriarch of Constantinople Photios and by Basil's grandson Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos.

These and other sources allow us to seek common roots of the Armenian and Byzantine claims regarding the Arsacids. They found fertile ground both in Armenian and Byzantine historiographical traditions, shaping the image of the Arsacids as good Christian rulers.

On the Subject of the Arsacids

The royal house of the Arsacids or Parthians first appeared in history around 250 BCE when it seceded from the Seleucid Hellenistic state formed in the aftermath of Alexander the Great's campaigns. The Parthian-Arsacid dynasty ruled over Iran for about 500 years until 226 CE when Ardashir the Sasanian, founder of a new dynasty, deprived them of their power.[2]

However, little is known about the rule of members of the Parthian-Arsacid royal family or their attitude towards their kingdom. We know that the Arsacids considered their power as divine gift; they founded a new temple in Iran on the occasion of the coronation of each of their new rulers and thereby sanctified each monarch's rule.[3] Moreover, in conformity with ancient conventions, they traced their dynasty back to the Achaemenids, constructing their direct descent from Artaxerxes II.[4] Thus, follow-

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1 See G. Muradyan, The Vision of St. Sahak in the History of Łazar P'arpec'i. The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition. A Comparative Perspective. In: Kevork B. Bardakjian and Sergio La Porta (eds.), Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Robert W. Thomson on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, Leiden, Boston, 2014, 313–325.

2 V. G. Lukonin, Iran in Ancient Times and the Early Middle Ages [Essay on the History of Culture], Moscow, 1987 (in Russian: В.Г. Луконин, Древнийи ранне-средневековый Иран (Очерки истории культуры), Москва, 1987), 87–88.

3 Lukonin (cf. fn. 2) 109, 115; M.R. Shayegan, Arsacids and Sasanians. Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia, Cambridge, New York, 2011, 137–150, 226–228.

4 Arrianus, Flavii Arriani quae extant omnia, ed. by A.G. Roos, vol. II: Scripta minora et fragmenta / Editio stereotypa correctior addenda et corrigenda adecit G. Wirth, Leipzig, 1968 [Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanoeum Teubneriana], 225; Lukonin (cf. fn. 2) 109, 116; Cf. also A. Pétrovitch, Arsacid Coins, Part I: Collections of the Knight Alexander Pétrovitch. A Brief History of the Partho-Armenians by Jacobos, archbishop of Tashean, Vienna, 1917 [Bibliothèque Nationale, LXXX.] (in Armenian: Արշակունի դրամներ, մասն առաջին: Ժողովածոյ ասպետին Աղեքսանդր Պետրովիչ, Համառոտ Պարթևահայ պատմութեամբ, գրեց հ. Յակոբոս վ. Տաշեան, Վիեննա 1919 [Ազգային Մատենադարան, Ձ]), 19.

ing ancient historiography, King Sohemos who seized power twice in Armenia in the second century CE, was a member of both the Achaemenid and Arsacid royal houses (his origins are cited below).[5]

The aforementioned conception of royal power was adopted by the succeeding Sasanian dynasty,[6] which attempted to create the illusion of a continuity of their power in Iran, starting with the time of Cyrus the Great (about 600 – 530 BCE) and persisting until the end of the seventh century CE when the Arabs deposed the last Sasanian Kings. According to the seventh-century Byzantine historian Theophylact Simocatta, the Arsacids occupied one of the most important courtly positions during this critical time for the Iranian state. According to Simocatta, it was the Arsacids alone who had the right of royal power in Iran and therefore could crown the Sasanians.[7] Simocatta also said that Bahram Chobin,[8] commandant of the Sasanian court and usurper, was a member of this dynasty.[9] The Arsacid kings often placed their parents (representatives of their dynasty) on the thrones of neighbouring vassal or confederate countries (e.g., Armenia, Georgia, Atropatene, Media, Adiabene, Edessa etc.).[10]

The Arsacids in the Caucasian Historiographical Tradition

The Arsacid dynasty was founded after the downfall of the Artaxiad dynasty (according to modern historiography) in Armenia during the second half of the first century CE by the Parthian (Arsacid) Vologases I (r. 51–78) with the consent of the Roman Empire and the Armenian court. Vologases proclaimed his brother Tiridates king and the dynasty founded by the latter reigned over Armenia until 428. Medieval Armenian historiography and Movsēs Xorenacʻi point towards another view on the es-

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5 J. Marquart, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran, in: Philologus. Zeitschrift für das Classische Altertum, Supplementband X, 1, Leipzig, 1905, 222–223; Cf. N. Adontz, Works in Five Volumes, I–V, Yerevan, 2006–2012 (in Armenian: Ն. Ադոնց Երկեր հինգ հատորով, Ա.–Ե, Երևան 2006–2012), 63.

6 Lukonin (cf. fn. 2) 109, 116; Shayegan (cf. fn. 3) 340–368.

7 Thphyl., 3.18.8; 10 (Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae, ed. by C. de Boor, Lipsiae, 1968, 148); Cf. Theophylactus Simocatta History / Russian translation by S.P. Kondratev, Moscou, 1957 (in Russian: Феофилакт Симокатта, История / Пер. С.П. Кондратева, Москва), 94; Cf. E. Sh. Khurshudian, State Institutions of Parthian and Sassanian Iran, III BCE– VII CE, Almaty, 2015 (in Russian: Э.Ш. Хуршудян, Государственные Институты парфянского и сасанидского Ирана. III в. до н.э. – VII в. н.э., Алматы 2015), 161, 200–201.

8 Cf. A. Sh. Shahbazi, Bahram VI Čōbīn, in: Encyclopaedia Iranica, III/5, 1988, 514–522.

9 Ibid.

10 Lukonin (cf. fn. 2) 118, 120, 135–137.

tablishment of the Arsacid dynasty in Armenia.[11] In Xorenacʿi's *History of Armenia*, the Arsacid dynasty begins around the middle of the second century BCE (nearly two hundred years before the date acknowledged in modern historiography) when Arsaces II, the Arsacid king of Iran, established his brother Vologases on the throne (around 150–140 BCE). Similar to Movsēs Xorenacʿi, Sebeos (seventh century) attests to the fact that the kings that held power in Armenia from the beginning of the second century BCE are considered as the representative of the Arsacid dynasty.[12] Likewise, as in Movsēs Xorenacʿi, Tigranes the Great is referred to as an Arsacid king in the works of Faustus of Byzantium and Pseudo-Epiphanius of Cyprus (surviving in Armenian), whereas modern historiography considers him king of the Artaxiad (Artašesyan) dynasty.[13] It should be noted that Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, refers to Artavazd, the son of Tigranes who was captured in 35/34 BCE by the Roman commander Marc Antony and offered to Cleopatra the Great, as "Parthian," that is Arsacid.[14]

That is to say, Movsēs Xorenacʿi, like the whole Armenian medieval historiography, did not recognise the Artaxiad dynasty. Georgian medieval historiography like the Armenian tradition considered the Armenian kings, who were contemporaries of the Seleucids, as Arsacids kings.[15] In the *History of Georgia* (*Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba*), the origins of the sixth Georgian King Arshak are ascribed to the families of the Nebrotʿians, the Arsacids, and the Pharnavazids (დედით არშაკუნიანი, და მამით

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11 N. Garsoïan, L'Histoire attribuée à Movsēs Xorenacʿi que reste-t-il à en dire?, in: Revue des études arméniennes 29, 2003, 29–48; Id., Movsēs Xorenacʿi, in: Encyclopaedia Iranica, online: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/movses-xorenaci.

12 History of Sebeos, ed. G.V. Abgaryan, Yerevan, 1979 (in Armenian: Պատմութիւն Սեբէոսի, աշխատասիրությամբ Գ.Վ. Աբգարյանի), chap. III, 55.

13 Faustus, History of Armenia in Four Parts, Venice, 1933⁴ (in Armenian: Փաւստոսի Բուզանդացւոյ պատմութիւն Հայոց ի չորս դպրութիւնս, Վենետիկ 1933⁴), The Epic Histories attributed to Pʿawstos Buzand (Buzandaran Pamutʿiwnkʿ), trans. and comm. by N.G. Garsoïan, Cambridge, 1989, IV, chap. 55; H. Ł. v. Alishan, History of Armenia. The Historians and their Histories, Venice, 1901 (in Armenian: Հ. Ղ. վ. Ալիշան, Հայապատում. պատմիչք եւ պատմութիւնք Հայոց, Վենետիկ 1901), 31; Cf. Pseudo-Epiphanius, Homilies, ed. by H. Qyoseyan, Etcmiadzin, 2013 (in Armenian: Եպիփան Կիպրացի, Ճառեր / Աշխատասիրությամբ Հ.Քյոսեյանի, էջմիածին 2013), 9–10.

14 Jos., BI 18.5 (Flavius Josephus, Bellum Judaicum, trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray, London, 1956, 170/171); Cf. Pétrovitch (cf. fn. 4) 162.

15 L. Mélikset-Bek, Georgian Sources on Armenia and the Armenians, vol. I–II, Yerevan, 1934–1936 (in Armenian: Լ. Մելիքսեթ-Բեկ, Վրաց աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին, հտ. Ա., երևան 1934, հտ. Բ, 1936), 151, 153, 162; G. A. Melikishvili, Towards the History of Ancient Georgia, Tbilisi, 1959 (in Russian: Г.А. Мелкишвили, К истории древней Грузии, Тбилиси 1959), 49; Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba, ed. by I. Abuladzé (Armenian Translation. The Ancient Armenian Translation of Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba, Georgian Text and the Ancient Armenian Translation), Tbilisi, 1953, 43 (in Armenian and Georgian: ქართლის ცხოვრების ძველი სომხური თარგმანი / ქართული ტექსტი და ძველი სომხური თარგმანი გამოკვლევითა და ლექსიკონით გამოსცა ილია აბულაძემ, თბილისი 1953); trans. by R. W. Thompson, Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles (The Original Georgian Text and the Armenian Adaptation), Oxford, 1996, 43 (the edition was not available to me).

ნებროთიანი და ფარნავაზიანი = through mother Arsacid and through father Ne-brotʿian and Pharnavazid).[16] Moreover, according to the Georgian medieval historio-graphical tradition, certain Georgian kings between the second and first century BCE were also scions of the Arsacid royal house.[17] Information relating to the history of Armenia in the *History of Georgia* is denoted with a particular Armenian name: Pat-motʿi “პატმოთიჶ” (in this history a common dialectal form of the Armenians of Tbilisi is preserved until today).[18] This implies an Armenian origin of the work.[19]

Beginning with the fifth century, Armenian historiography displays a particular attitude towards the royal house of the Arsacids. Movsēs Xorenacʿi’s *History of Arme-nia* occupies a special position amongst the works preserved until today in terms of the richness of its description of the Arsacid epoch. It is composed of three parts, and the exposition follows a chronological structure defined by the author. The work rep-resents the entirety of documents compiled by the historian and the logical presen-tation of events based on these documents. This work leans on historiographical and geopolitical analysis of written sources, oral traditions, and archaeological material accessible to the author. As N. Adontz remarked in his time, the tradition of con-structing the descent of the Armenian dynasty from the Arsacids existed in Armenian historiography before Xorenacʿi, which we know from Procopius of Caesarea’s *De Ae-dificiis*.[20] Procopius names “ἡ τῶνʾΑρμενίων ἱστορία” – *The History of Armenia* as the source of his considerations.

The first book of Xorenacʿi’s history contains a genealogy of the Armenian dynas-ty’s ancestors beginning with the Patriarch Noah until the establishment of the Ar-sacids in Iran and Armenia. It should be noted that Xorenacʿi refers to the *History* of Mar Abas Catina as his principal source in his presentation of the history of An-cient Armenia.[21] According to the historian Movsēs, this work was created on the

16 Cf. Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba, ed. by S. Qauxčʿišvili, t. I et II, Tbilisi, 1955 – 1959 (in Georgian: ქართლის ცხოვრება / ტექსტი დადგენილი ყველა ძირითადი ხელნაწერის მიხედვით ს. ყაუხჩიშვილის მიერ, ტ. I, თბილისი 1955, ტ. II, 1955 – 1959), 33, l. 9 – 10.

17 Cf. G. A. Melikishvili, Towards the History of Ancient Georgia, Tbilisi, 1959 (in Russian: Г.А. Мел-кишвили, К истории древней Грузии, Тбилиси 1959), 49.

18 Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) 72 – 73 et passim.

19 Cf. A. Abdaladze “Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba” and the Georgian-Armenian Relations. From Ancient Times Until the Beginning of the Twelvth Century, Tbilisi, 1982 (in Georgian: ალ. აბდალაძე, “ქართლის ცხოვრება” და საქართველო-სომხეთის ურთიერთობა [უძველესი დროიდან XII საუკუნის დასაწყისამდე], თბილისი, გამომცემლობა “მეცნიერება”, 1982), 83, 134, 150, 151 – 153, 156 – 158, 162, 174 – 176, 216.

20 Procop., aed. 3.1.6, (Procopii Caesarensis opera omnia, ed. by G. Wirth, vol. IV, Leipzig, 1913; re-print 1963); Cf. Adontz (cf. fn. 5) II, 280.

21 G. Khalatiants, The Armenian Epic in the History of Armenian of Moses of Xoren, Moscow, 1896 (in Russian: Г. Халатянц, Армянский эпос в истории Армении Моисея Хоренского, Москва 1896), 9 – 19, 61 – 85; G. Khalatiants, The Armenian Arsacids in the History of Armenian of Moses of Xoren, Moscow, 1903 (in Russian: Г. Халатянц, Армянские Аршакиды в “Истории Армении” Моисея Хоренского, ч. I. Исследование, ч.II. Материалы, Москва 1903), 5 ff.; N. Adontz, Armenia

basis of documents from the royal Persian (Iranian) archives under the patronage of Vologases, the first king of Armenia (second–first century BCE). A majority of researchers (N. Adontz,[22] H. Manandian[23]) agree that the *History* of Maraba Mcurnacʿi conserved in the two first chapters of the *History of Sebeos* is identical with Mar Abas Catina's work as mentioned by Xorenacʿi. The Syriac Garshuni *Chronicle* by Maribas the Chaldean should be taken into consideration in the same way.[24] A complete analysis of the genealogical lists of Movsēs Xorenacʿi, Sebeos and Maribas can open new ways of research upon these works, as well as reveal so far unknown historical-philological connections in the Armenian-Syrian world.

The historical genre as used by Xorenacʿi is closely linked to biblical genealogy. In this aspect, Xorenacʿi takes up the example of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicle*. The line of the first Armenian Patriarchs begins with Hayk, the eponymous ancestor of the Armenians (Haykʿ), and ends with Tigranes, contemporary of King Ajdahak of Marastan (that is Media), who lived before the campaigns of Alexander the Great. Xorenacʿi outlines the line of patriarchs and kings previously in power back to Togarmah/Togarmas, scion of Japheth, who was the son of the Patriarch Noah. The main feature of this way of presentation was transmitted in Armenian historiography, where it served in certain cases as an example for the historical works of Leonti Mroveli (ninth century) and parts of it were included in the *Kartʿlis cʿxovreba* (*The Life of Georgia*), which is one of the most ancient works in Georgian historiography.[25]

Based on sources known to him, Movsēs Xorenacʿi, the founder of Armenian historiography, attributes an Arsacid origin to the kings who ruled Armenia after the campaigns of Alexander the Great and parallel to the epoch of the Seleucids. According to Xorenacʿi, around 150 – 140 BCE King Arsaces the Brave of Parthia, after revolting against the Seleucids, and chasing them away from his territory, established his brother Vologases as heir to the throne of Armenia.[26]

Xorenacʿi connects the reigns of Persian kings to those of Armenian kings by setting up chronologically concordant lists based on self-made tables. As one might expect, the historian often mentions Roman emperors as well as persons and events

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in the period of Justinian. The Political conditions based on the Naxarar System, trans. with partial revisions, a bibliographical note, and appendix by Mina G. Garssoïan, Lisbon, 1970, 196.

22 N. Adontz, The Initial History of Armenia, Tiflis, 1899 (in Russian: Начальная история Армении у Себеоса в ея отношениях к трудам Моисея Хоренского и Фауста Византийского. – Византийский Временник, т. VIII, вып. 1– 2, 1899), 64 – 105; Adontz (cf. fn. 20) 196.

23 Y. Manandean, Works, vol. 1, Yerevan, 1977 (in Armenian: Հ. Մանանդեան, Երկեր, Ա, Երեւան 1977), 38 ff.

24 Cf. Maribas the Chaldean 1903, Extraits de la Chronique de Maribas Kaldoyo (Mar Abas Catina), Essai de critique historico-littéraire / par Fr. Macler, in: JA, dixième série, t. I, 1903, mai–juin, 491– 549. Michael the Syrien also cites Maribas the Chaldean among the sources of his *History* (Ibid., 493).

25 Cf. Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) 74, 143 – 147 et passim. It is Adontz who steers the attention of contemporary researchers to this circumstance (Adontz [cf. fn. 5] t. I, 434).

26 The Georgian historiography of the High Middle Ages has also preserved the tradition that Arsaces ascended the Armenian throne, cf. Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) 74 – 75, 150 – 152.

related to the Arsacid kings. Xorenacʻi attributes deeds to the Arsacids that modern historiography ascribes to the Artaxiads (second–first century BCE). Apart from the aforementioned account of Flavius Josephus, Graeco-Roman historiography instead provides us with indirect evidence that supports Xorenacʻi's view.[27]

Movsēs Xorenacʻi and the Arsacids

It is not new to say that Xorenacʻi's work revolves around the history of the royal house of the Arsacids.[28] In the second and third book of his work he introduces the history of the Arsacids until the year 428, which is the date of their fall in Armenia. Thus, the Arsacids reigned in Armenia for over 500 years according to Xorenacʻi's chronological system. This date passed from the Armenian tradition to the Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea.[29] The chronological line between Xorenacʻi's second and third book is the adoption of Christianity in Armenia under the reign of Tiridates III, the Arsacid. According to Xorenacʻi, the Arsacids are descendants of Keturah, the third wife of Abraham, himself a descendant of Sem, the son of Noah. In this general aspect, this genealogy is maintained in Armenian historiography during the following epochs. However, in certain historiographical works of the tenth century,[30] the Arsacids and likewise the Haykians (the descendants of Haykʻ, ancestor of the Armenians) are considered descendants of

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27 B. Harutʻunian is right to consider the transmission of the Parthian title "king of kings" to Tigranes the Great and its return to the Arsacid kings of Persia as an argument for this point of view. (Cf. B. Harutʻunian, La maison princière des Artzrounides dans l'histoire d'Arménie, Yerevan, 2016 [in Armenian: Բ. Հարությունյան, Արծրունյաց իշխանական ընտանիքը Հայոց պատմության մեջ, Երևան 2016], 42). Cf. Shahinyan, L'Arménie et les premiers Arsacides, Yerevan, 1993 [in Armenian: Լ. Շահինյան, Հայաստանը և առաջին Արշակունիները, Երևան 1993], 268. The information referring to the identity of King Artavasdes mentioned above by Flavius Josephus points in the same direction.

28 This is what G. Khalatiants, one of the most vehement critics of Movsēs Xorenacʻi, did by calling his book *Movsēs of Xoren and the Armenian Arsacids*, cf.: G. Khalatiants, The Armenian Arsacids in the History of Armenia of Moses of Xoren, Moscow, 1903 (in Russian: Г. Халатянц, Армянские Аршакиды в "Истории Армении" Моисея Хоренскго, ч. I. Исследование, ч.II. Материалы, Москва 1903).

29 Procop. aed. 3.1.6 (cf. fn. 20); cf. Procopius of Caesarea. Translation, Introduction, and Notes by H. Bartikian (Foreign Sources on Armenia and the Armenians 5, Byzantine Sources, 1), Yerevan, 1967 (in Armenian: Պրոկոպիոս Կեսարացի / թարգմանություն ընծայից, առաջաբան և ծանոթագրություններն Հ. Բարթիկյանի, Երևան 1967 [Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին, 5, Բյուզանդական աղբյուրներ, Ա], 189); Cf. Adontz (cf. fn. 5) t. II, 280.

30 Mainly, this is the case with the *History of Movsēs Kałankatuacʻi*, cf.: Movsēs Kałankatuacʻi. History of Albania, Critical Text and Introduction by V. Araqelyan, Yerevan, 1983 (in Armenian: Մովսէս Կաղանկատուացի, Պատմութիւն Աղուանից աշխարհի / Քննական բնագիրը և ներածությունը` Վ. Առաքելյանի, Երևան 1983).

Togarmah/Togarmas.[31] One of the most important arguments in medieval Armenian and Georgian historiography is the idea that the Haykians as well as the Kartʻlossians (according to Leonti Mroveli, Kartʻlos is the ancestor of the Georgians) are descended from the Patriarch Togarmah/Togarmas.[32] This argument retraces the initial point for the history of the region to the new beginnings of mankind after the deluge. The *Stromates* (Յաճախապատում) attributed to Gregory the Illuminator and one of the oldest works written in Armenian relates that: "In Armenia and in Persia there is no greater power than the one of the house of the Arsacids, who are the descendants of Abraham and at the same time kings of all nations in conformity with the word of the Lord."[33] Deviating from Xorenacʻi, the *Stromates* does not say that the Arsacids were the progeny of the concubine Keturah. It should be noted that Smbat Davitisdze, the Georgian twelfth-century historian, calls Mariam, the mother of King Bagrat (tenth century), "… the descendant of the magnificent, great and powerful Arsacid kings," even though we know that she was part of the house of Artsruni.[34] Moreover it should be noted that Dvin and Ani are referred to as Arsacid[35] estates in fourteenth-century Georgian chronicles. However, Parsadan Gorgijanidze, the seventeenth-century historian, writes that before the Bagratids, "the descendants of the Arsacids ruled over Armenians and Georgians."[36] This demonstrates that people from the Caucasian region have preserved the memory of the Arsacids for quite some time.

Be that as it may, one can assert that the principal subject of Xorenacʻi's two final books is the evaluation of the reigns of Arsacid kings on the basis of Christian values. This becomes apparent in his individual evaluation of every house and king of the dynasty. From this point of view, one should look at the very last chapter of Xorenacʻi's book and his title "Lamentation of the loss of the Armenian throne by the Arsa-

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31 One assumption of this genre is preserved in the text mentioned above, which is attributed to Pseudo-Epiphanius or Epiphanius of Cyprus. Cf. Alishan (cf. fn. 13) 31. Cf. as well: Pseudo-Epiphanius, Sermo de Antichristo (Armeniaca de fine temporum), Introducione testo critico, versione latina e note di Giusepe Frasson, Venice, 1976 (Bibliotheca Armeniaca. Textus et Studia, cura academiae armeniacae S. Lazari venetiarum, 2), 18, 1. 145–150.

32 Cf. Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) t. I, 143 et passim.

33 Gregory the Illuminator, Discourse on the Faith (the Stromates) of Our Father, the Saint and Blessed Gregory the Illuminator, with a Preface, Comparison, and Annotations by A. Ter-Mikélian, St. Etchmiadzin 1894 (in Armenian: Սրբոյ Հօրն մերոյ երանելւոյն Գրիգորի Լուսաւորչի Յաճախապատում ճառք լուսաւորք / Յառաջաբանով, համեմատութեամբ եւ ծանօթագրութիւններով Ա. Տեր-Միքելեանի, Ս. էջմիածին 1894), 238.

34 Cf. Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 14) t. I, 138–139; Kʻartʻlis cʻxovreba (cf. fn. 16) t. I, 386, 25–27. Cf. Abdaladze (cf. fn. 19) 216.

35 Cf. Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) t. II, 54. Cf. Kʻartʻlis cʻxovreba (cf. fn. 16) t. II, p. 186, l. 9.

36 Cf. Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) t. II, 96; Cf. Abdaladze (cf. fn. 19) 83, 134, 150, 151–153, 156–158, 162, 174–176, 216.

cid Dynasty and of the archiepiscopate by the family of Gregory the Illuminator."[37] The general characteristics of this idea developed within Armenian literature were passed on to the work *De Aedificiis* of Procopius of Caesarea (3.1) in the sixth century. In all likelihood, the work of Procopius is one of the bridges linking Armenian historiography to literary works from the Macedonian epoch, especially with the works about the life and deeds of Basil I. Nevertheless, Procopius's work is no exception in Byzantine literature in respect to the transmission of information on the Arsacids. As we have already seen, Theophylact Simocatta underlines the exceptional role of the Arsacids in Persian political life while talking about the last stage of the Sasanian period.[38] The French Byzantinist Christian Settipani has recently tried to summarise information on the political activities of different politicians originating from the Armenian Arsacids passed on between the sixth and tenth centuries in Byzantium and to recreate family trees,[39] taking up the work of Cyrille Toumanoff.[40]

The Christian Virtues of the Arsacids

The next step in Xorenac'i's characterisation of the Arsacids within the system of Christian values is to correlate them with the King Agbar of Edessa, who had written a letter to Christ and adopted Christianity. Armenian historiography from the High Middle Ages contains numerous accounts referring to the relation between representatives of the Arsacid dynasty and certain episodes in the propagation of the Christian faith in Armenia. This problem found its solution in the *History of Armenia* of Movsēs Xorenac'i in which the role of intermediary between Abgar and Christ is reserved for the Apostle Thaddeus (or Addai in the Syriac text). This follows the presentation of Eusebius of Caesarea and not the account of Labubna, who was the scribe of King Abgar. Despite knowing Labubna, Xorenac'i followed the general direction of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea in his depiction. However, two additions by Xorenac'i do not exist in Eusebius of Caesarea: The first claims that Abgar was king of Armenia and the second alleges that he, king of Edessa and contemporary of Christ, was part of the Arsacid dynasty. The second addition is also transmitted to other pieces of Armenian literature whereas the first addition can also be

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37 Cf. Movsēs Xorenac'i, History of Armenia, ed. by M. Abełyan and S. Harut'iwnyan, Tbilisi 1913 (in Armenian: Մովսիսի Խորենացւոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց / աշխատությամբ Մ. Աբեղյանի եւ Ս. Յարութիւնեանի, Տփղիս, 1913), III, 68.

38 Theophylact Simocatta (cf. fn. 7) 147–148, III 18, 6–8.

39 C. Settipani, Continuité des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'empire des VIe et IXe siècles, Paris, 2006, 106–130.

40 C. Toumanoff, Les dynasties de la Caucase chrétienne de l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle. Tables généalogiques et chronologiques, Rome, 1990², 84–91.

found in a certain number of historiographical works in Syriac.[41] In addition, the Byzantine world of the Macedonian period did not remain indifferent regarding the relics of King Abgar of Edessa. The portrait created by divine power and sent by Christ himself to Abgar and their correspondence has been considered as guarantee for the inviolability of Edessa. Both were transferred to the Church of the Virgin of Blachernae located in a district of Constantinople in 944 – there they became one of the most important guarantees for the continuity of the power of the Byzantine Emperor. It seems likely to us that the description of this historical event did not occur by chance and had been penned by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (although for the emperor of Byzantium King Abgar was neither Armenian nor Arsacid).[42]

In the second and third chapter of his *History,* Movsēs Xorenacʻi ascribes different Christian virtues to a certain number of Arsacid kings (both pagan and Christian). For Movsēs Xorenacʻi, the virtues of Arsacid kings are: courage, majesty, fidelity, wisdom, and dedication to Armenia. Among the pagans, it is Vologases (the Valiant, the Sage etc.),[43] the founder of the Arsacid dynasty who is valued the most; among the Christian kings, it is Tiridates III (the victor, "being resplendent with all virtues")[44] under whose reign Gregory the Illuminator propagated the new religion in Armenia. According to accounts from Armenian and Byzantine literature, the official adoption of Christianity in Armenia is ascribed to the activities of King Tiridates III the Arsacid. Tiridates, the first Christian king, is also present in the genealogy of the Macedonian King Basil I. Nicolas Adontz supposes that this genealogy was created by Photius (r. 858 – 867, 877 – 886), patriarch of Byzantium.[45] Among the works that have been handed down to us, the biography of Basil I, written by his grandson Constantine

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41 Cf. Chronicon Anonimum, Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens. I, ed. by J.-B. Chabot, Praemissum est Chronicon Anonymum ad A.D. 819 pertinens. Curante Aphram Barsaum (CSCO 81, Syr. 36), Louvain, 1920, 120 (= Anonymus d'Édesse, Chronicle: Translation, Introduction, and Notes by L. Ter-Petrosyan, Yerevan 1982 [Foreign Sources on Armenia and the Armenians 12, Syriac Sources 2], 196 [in Armenian: Անանուն Եդեսացի, Ժամանակագրություն / Թարգմանություն բնագրից, առաջաբան և ծանոթագրություններ Լ.Հ. Տեր-Պետրոսյանի, Երևան 1982 (Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին, 12, Ասորական աղբյուրներ Բ), 196]). Cf. also: Maribas the Chaldean (cf. fn. 24) 534 – 540.

42 Cf. Constantinus Porphyrogennetos, Narratio diversis ex historiis collecta de divina Christi Dei nostra imagine non manufacta ad Augaium missa (PG, t. 113, col. 423 – 454); Translation, Introduction, and Notes by H. Bartikian, Constantine Porphyrogennetos, Yerevan, 1970 (Foreign Sources on Armenia and the Armenians 6, Byzantine Sources 2), 177 – 220 (in Armenian: Կոստանդին Ծիրանածին / Թարգմանություն բնագրից, առաջաբան և ծանոթագրություններ Հ. Բարթիկյանի, Երևան 1970 [Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին, 6, Բյուզանդական աղբյուրներ Բ]).

43 Movsēs Xorenacʻi, Moïs de Khorène. Histoire de l'Arménie, Nouvelle traduction de l'arménien classique par Annie et Jean-Pierre Mahé (d'après Victor Langlois) avec une introduction et des notes, Paris, 1993, 117, 119 ff.

44 Movsēs Xorenacʻi (cf. fn. 37) 229 – 230, 247 – 249.

45 Cf. N. Adontz, L'âge et l'origine de l'empereur Basile I., in: BZ 1933/1934, 81 – 85, reédition in: N. Adontz, Études arméno-byzantines, Lisbon 1965, 47 – 109.

VII Porphyrogennetos and preserved in the works of the successor of Theophanes the Confessor, acquires conceptual importance:

> Now Emperor Basil – for he is the one whom our work intends to present – hailed from Macedonia, but traced his origins to the nation of the Armenians and his lineage back to the Arsacids: For since the ancient Arsakes, the ruler of the Parthians, had attained great glory and virtue, a law had existed in successive generations, [by virtue of which] the king of the Parthians, Armenians, and even Medes had to be drawn from no other race than that of Arsakes and his descendants. While the aforementioned nations were being governed by this dynasty, it happened that one time when the ruler of the Armenians had left his life, a struggle ensued over the crown and the succession to that realm. (Trans. Ševcenko)[46]

This means Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos traced the first establishment of the Arsacid dynasty within the borders of the Byzantine Empire back to the years of the reign of Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474). Intending to resist the tempting solicitations of the Persians, he gave some land to the Arsacids and set them up in the city of Nicaea in Macedonia.[47] After the disappearance of the Sasanians from the political scene, their place was occupied by the Arab Caliphate (probably towards the end of the eighth century) – however, the influence of the Arsacids was so strong in Armenia they were also invited to the court of the Arab Caliphs.[48] According to the continuators of Theophanes "… the Saracens hoped that if they had had the descendants of Arsaces under their dominion, they would have been easily able to gain the Armenian people for their cause because this people loved the ancient Arsaces."[49] According to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos the Emperor resettled the Arsacids to avoid this temptation and installed them in the city of Philippi of Macedonia and then af-

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46 Theophanus Continuatus, Chronographia 1.2 (Chronographiae quae Theophanis continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris amplectur, recensuit Anglice vertit indicibus instruxit I. Ševcenko [CFHB 42], Berlin, Boston, 2011, 11–12): Πλὴν οὖν οὗτος ὃν ὁ λόγος νῦν ὑποδεῖξαι κατεπαγγέλλεται, αὐτοκράτωρ Βασίλειος ὡρμᾶτο μὲν ἐκ τῆς Μακεδόνων γῆς, τὸ δὲ γένος εἷλκεν ἐξ Ἀρμενίων ἔθνους, [σειρᾶς δὲ τῶν] Ἀρσακίδων· τοῦ γὰρ παλαιοῦ Ἀρσάκου, ὃς Πάρθων ἡγήσατο, ἐπὶ μέγα δόξης προελθόντος καὶ ἀρετῆς, νόμος τοῖς ὕστερον ἐχρημάτισεν μὴ ἄλλοθεν βασιλεύεσθαι μήτ' Ἀρμενίους, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ Μήδους, ἢ παρὰ τοῦ γένους Ἀρσάκου καὶ τῶν ἀπογόνων αὐτοῦ. οὕτως οὖν τῶν εἰρημένων ἐθνῶν ὑπὸ τῆς τοιαύτης βασιλευομένων σειρᾶς, κατά τινας χρόνους, τοῦ Ἀρμενίων κατάρχοντος ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀποιχομένου συνέβη στάσιν γενέσθαι περὶ τὰ βασίλεια καὶ τοὺς διαδόχους τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχῆς. Cf. Theophanus Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus, Ex recognitione Immanuelis Bekkeri, Bonnae, 1838, 212–213, I.2; Cf. Continuator of Theophanus, Translation, Introduction, and Notes by H. Bartikian, Yerevan, 1990 [Foreign Sources on Armenia and the Armenians 15, Byzantine Sources 5] (in Armenian: Թէոփանեսի Շարունակողի / Թարգմանություն ընագրից, առաջաբանը և ծանոթագրությունները Հրաչ Բարթիկյանի, Երևան 1990 [Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին, 15, Բյուզանդական աղբյուրներ են]).

47 Perhaps this settlement is connected to the revolt led by Vahan Mamikonian, who restored in 484 Armenia's autonomy.

48 Theophanus Continuatus (cf. fn. 46) 14–15, 2.43–45. Cf. Bartikian (cf. fn. 46) 128.

49 Theophanus Continuatus (cf. fn. 46) 14–15, 2.35–38. Cf. Bartikian (cf. fn. 46) 127–128.

terwards to Adrianople where they managed "to keep their aristocratic origin and national vision pure and unmixed."[50]

In his *History*, Xorenacʻi distinguishes between three branches of the Arsacids (the ones of Suren, of Karen, and Ispahbudhan of Parthian-Pahlavi origin).[51] He speaks of the confrontation that developed between two branches and which was resolved thanks to Christianity. Gregory the Illuminator, a surviving descendant from the branch of Suren who propagated the faith fighting against the pagans, even baptised Tiridates of Armenia, descendant of the hostile Pahlavi branch. In his medieval history of Armenia, the history of Christianity's propagation by King Tiridates is displayed in multilingual hagiographical works (in Armenian, Greek, Arabic, Syriac and Georgian etc.), as well as in the *History* of Agatʻangełos. It should be noted that the activities of Tiridates III are in many respects aligned to prominent aspects of Constantine the Great's personality.[52] One of the most important occasions for such a comparison is the treaty concluded between Constantine the Great and Tiridates assisted by bishop Sylvester of Rome and bishop Gregory the Illuminator of Armenia. According to medieval Armenian historiography, the royal power has since been in the hands of the Christian Arsacids, the descendants of Tiridates, and the spiritual power has since been in the hands of Gregory the Illuminator, himself descendant of an Arsacid branch. These two branches of the Arsacid dynasty play an important role in the third book of Movsēs Xorenacʻi's *History*. Gregory the Illuminator was a member of the Surenian branch of the Pahlavi-Arsacid house (this double title of his family branch is used in almost all Armenian medieval sources). Thanks to his efforts the Christian religion was officially adopted in Armenia and he therefore became the famous founder of the Armenian Church. As for the ancestors of the Arsacids, the biographers of Basil I claim descent from both branches (Surenian and Karenian).

Since the time of Gregory, the holders of the title of catholicos have been the pillar of Christianity in Armenia. The fall of the Arsacid dynasty and the abdication of the patriarchal throne by Sahak Partʻev, who was a descendant and heir to Gregory the Illuminator, were the main reasons Xorenacʻi wrote the *Lamentation* at the end of his *History*.[53] For a long time after the fifth century, the echoes of attempts aiming at re-establishing the independence of the Armenian Kingdom were present in medieval visions and within the framework of Christian eschatological literature.[54] The

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50 Theophanus Continuatus (cf. fn. 46) 14, 2.51–53; 16–17, I.3.9–10. Cf. Bartikian (cf. fn. 46) 128.
51 On this subject, see Khurshudian (cf. fn. 7) 195–196.
52 In this context, the biographer of Basil I of Macedonia constructs kinship between Basil and Constantine the Great from the maternal side. Cf. Theophanus Continuatus (cf. fn. 45) 16, 3.20. Cf. Bartikian (cf. fn. 46) 129.
53 Cf. Movsēs Xorenacʻi (cf. fn. 37) 358–366.
54 The first scientific essay in this field was delivered by Achot Hovhannissian in his two-volume monograph Episodes in the History of Armenian Liberation Thought, vol. I, Yerevan, 1957 (in Arme-

prophecies announcing the return of the Pahlavi-Arsacids played an important role and were also passed on in the biography of Basil I. As Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos says: "It is now that the prediction and prophecy, made 350 years ago by the priest and monk Isaac, himself of Arsacid origin, are fulfilled. He had a vision and thus learned that after this time, one of the descendants of the Arsacids will hold the sceptre of the Roman Empire."[55]

The Apocalyptical Role of the Arsacid Dynasty

In the *History* of Xorenacʻi, the fall of the Arsacid dynasty was caused by the interruption of the hereditary line of the royal and patriarchal houses of the Arsacids. From this point of view, the *Lamentation* of Xorenacʻi is a literary generalisation characterizing the end of the Arsacid epoch. Among the works belonging to this genre, it can be compared to the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah in the Old Testament. Armenian historiography has attempted to colour the fall of the Arsacid dynasty in an apocalyptical fashion. Movsēs Xorenacʻi succeeded in doing exactly that, connecting Armenian historiography with Christian eschatology. After the fifth century, visions attributed to the bearers of the patriarchal title, to the Catholicos Nerses the Great and to Sahak the Parthian (both are members of the Arsacid dynasty and Nerses is Sahak's father) began to circulate equally in Armenian, Byzantine and Georgian literary works.[56] Already in the *History of Faustus of Byzantium* the life of Nerses the Great is conceptualised with an eschatological purpose (Faustus of Byzantium, V 24 – 28).[57] In the account of the vision of Sahak Partʻev – found in the history of Łazar Pʻarpecʻi, dated to the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century as well as in the biography of Basil the Macedonian written by Constantine Porphyr-

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nian: Ս. Հովհաննիսյան, Դրվագներ հայ ազատագրական մտքի պատմության, գիրք առաջին, Երևան 1957).

55 Cf. Theophanus Continuatus (cf. fn. 46) 147 – 148, 19.35 – 40. Cf. Bartikian (cf. fn. 46) 143.

56 Cf. Mélikset-Bek, On the Question of the Dating of the Pamphlets of Pseudo-Isaac in Greco-Byzantine Literature, in: VV, vol. VIII, 1956 (in Russian: Л.Мелииксет-Бек, К вопросу о датировке псевдоисааковских памфлетов в греко-византийской литературе. – Византийский Временник, т. VIII, 1956, с. 208 – 222), 208 – 222.

57 In the work of Mesrop Vayocʻjorecʻi, the tenth-century biographer of Nerses the Great, the catholicos foresees the slipping away of the patriarchal see from the descendants of Gregory the Illuminator, the downfall of the Arsacid dynasty and the appropriation of the True Cross by the Persians before his own death (cf.: Mesrop Vayocʻjorecʻi, History of the Catholicos St. Nerses Partev, in: Armenian Writers 11: Tenth Century. Historiography, Antelias, Lebanon, 631 – 743 [in Armenian: Մեսրոպ Վայոցձորեցու Ներսէս Ա. Պարթև կաթողիկոսի պատմությունը. – Մատենագիրք Հայոց, հ. ԺԱ. Ժ. դար, Պատմագրություն, Անթիլիաս-Լիբանան, 2010, էջ 631 – 743], 718 – 727). We believe that the following additions are the result of a later redaction of the hagiographical text: "1. Then, the Romans which are called Franks, occupied Jerusalem and took the power away from the Greeks," cf. ibid. 719, 2. "And they deported the Muslims that fell under the unlimited domination of the Romans," cf. ibid. 720.

ogennetos – the same 350 years are mentioned, which pass after the prediction of the fall of the royal house of the Arsacids and the patriarchal house of Gregory the Illuminator – at the end of this period the return of this house is foretold (Łazar P'arpec'i, XV). N. Adontz, N. Akinian and A. Hovhannissian and H. Bartikian have pointed to the astonishing resemblance of the accounts given in both works, written in Armenian and Greek. According to one of the most probable hypotheses, the supplement to P'arpec'i's work was added at the end of the eighth century on the basis of a source also known to Patriarch Photius.[58] This prediction is equally known to Arseni Sapareli, the Georgian author of the ninth century.[59] Nerses Akinian dates the creation of the first text containing the prediction to the eighth century. The Armenian apocalyptical literature is rich and varied and the study of this medieval literary genre remains one of the main problems in Armenology. The manuscripts testifying to the works of this genre are not yet entirely recorded. The eschatological discourse of pseudo-Epiphanius of Salamis testifies to it, treating the question of the loss of Ner (the devil's twin) when the new Tiridates appears in Ani, no longer the capital of the Armenian kingdom but the capital of the Georgian.[60] Pseudo-Epiphanius refers to Agat'angełos, Xorenac'i and Faustus of Byzantium as his sources.[61]

In the apocalyptical works attributed to Sahak and preserved in Greek, he equally ascribes an important role to the Arsacid in restoring the royal power. A certain number of apocalyptical works is bound to the name of this dynasty, of which the most ancient can be found in the historiographical work of P'arpec'i, which has been attributed to Catholicos Sahak Pahlavuni. The above-mentioned facts allow for a search for the common roots of the Armenian and Byzantine tradition which are closely connected to each other and have found fertile soil in the two medieval

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58 Cf. Adontz (cf. fn. 45) 96; N. Akinian, Die Vision des Hl. Sahak I. Eine literar-historische Untersuchung, Vienna, 1948 (in Armenian: Հ. Ներսէս վ. Ակինեան, Տեսիլ Ս. Սահակայ. Մատենագրական-պատմական քննութիւն, Վիեննա 1948 [Ազգային Մատենադարան, հատոր ՃՃԵ]), col. 470; Hovhannissian (cf. fn. 54) I.36 – 37. Cf. as well M. Shirinyan, Les liens entre l'Histoire de Movsēs Khorénatsi et la Généalogie du patriarche Potus-Achtanak I, Yerevan, 1995 (in Armenian: Մ. Շիրինյան, Մովսես Խորենացու "Պատմության" եւ Փոտ պատրիարքի "Ծննդաբանության" աղերսները. – Աշտանակ, Ա, Երեւան 1995), 85 – 96.

59 Mélikset-Bek (cf. fn. 15) t. I, 38 – 39, 57; Cf. Mélikset-Bek, The Georgian "Version" of the "Prophecy" of Sahak Parthev, in: Bulletin of the University of Tibilisi, 2, 1921–1925 (in Georgian: ლეონ მელიქსეთ-ბეგი, ქართული ვერსია საჰაკ პართელის წინასწარმეტყველებისა. – ტფილისის უნივერსიტეტის მოამბე, ტ. II, გვ. 1921, 200 – 221), 200 – 221; L. Mélikset-Bekov, On the Georgian Version of the Apocryphal Vision of Sahak Parthev on the Fate of Armenia. News from the Institute for the Historical Archaeology of Caucasia, vol. II, Leningrad, 1917–1925 (in Russian: Л.Меликсет-Бек, О грузинской версии апокрифического Видения Саака Парфянина о судьбе Армении. – Известия Кавказского Историко-Археологического Института, Ленинград 1917–1925, с. 164 – 176), 164 – 176.

60 Pseudo-Epiphanius (cf. 31) 1976, § 18, l.145 – 152, § 20, l.171, § 22, l.210, § 40, l.365 – 367, 100 – 103; Cf. Pseudo-Epiphanius (cf. fn. 13) 752, n. 1.

61 Pseudo-Epiphanius (cf. 31) 20, l. 170 – 174.

Christian literatures in creating the generous and pro-Christian image of the Arsacids.

According to the Armenian medieval historiographic tradition many of the catholicoi who occupied the patriarchal see of Armenia between the eleventh and twelfth centuries (since Gregory II Martyrophilos until Gregory VI Apirat) emerged from the Pahlavunis. With the objective of restoring national sovereignty (e.g., kingdom), the Armenian princely houses of Cilicia as well as Armenian communities around the world nurtured ideas of enthroning the Arsacids both on the see of the catholicos and the royal throne for a long time. In the nineteenth century, there were attempts to use the example of the Arsacid house to gain political primacy in the years of the Crimean war,[62] when international politics began to show interest in the Armenian question.

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62 From this viewpoint, it is interesting to note that a book published in the nineteenth century carrying the characteristics of Dédéyan of Smyrna starts the genealogy of the royal house of England with the Arsacids (cf. S. M. Vanandetzie, Descent of Her Majesty Victoria Queen of England from the Arsacid Kings of Armenia, Treated by M. Dedeyan, Smyrna, 1866).

Udo Reinhold Jeck

Vakhtang I Gorgasali (r. 447–522) as a Christian Monarch in Georgia: His Depiction in the *Life of Kartli*

In antiquity, the Caucasus was located between two empires with long-lasting conflicts of interest: Rome and Persia.[1] In the view of some late Roman emperors, the Persians barred the path to the East and threatened the eastern part of the empire by their westward expansion.[2] From a Persian perspective, the Romans blocked the path to expansion and resurgence of their old empire.[3] This complicated and enduring conflict dragged on over the course of several centuries into late antiquity.[4] It included military confrontation with alternating victories and defeats.[5]

As the Persians and Romans fiercely battled over hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus attained strategic importance as one of the frontiers between these two empires. The major powers of late antiquity both wanted to secure their own spheres of influence in the region, relying in part on expansive political power and partly on the persuasive force of their respective religious traditions.[6]

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1 Klaus Schippmann, Grundzüge der Geschichte des sasanidischen Reiches, Darmstadt 1990; Josef Wiesehöfer, Das antike Persien. Von 550 v.Chr. bis 650 n.Chr., Düsseldorf/Zürich 1998.

2 James Howard-Johnston, The Sasanian's Strategic Dilemma, in: Henning Börm, Josef Wiesehöfer (ed.), Commutatio et contentio. Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian and Early Islamic Near East in Memory of Zeev Rubin, Düsseldorf 2010, 37–70; id., The Grand Strategy of the Sasanian Empire, in Carsten Binder, Henning Börm, Andreas Luther (ed.), Diwan, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean / Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Kultur des Nahen Ostens und des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes im Altertum. Festschrift für Josef Wiesehöfer zum 65. Geburtstag, Duisburg 2016, 591–613.

3 Roger C. Blockley, East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius (ACRA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 30), Leeds 1992.

4 James Howard-Johnston, East Rome, Sasanian Persia and the End of Antiquity. Historiographical and Historical Studies (Variorum Collected Studies 848), Aldershot 2006; Henning Börm, Prokop und die Perser. Untersuchungen zu den römisch-sasanidischen Kontakten in der ausgehenden Spätantike (Oriens et Occidens 16), Stuttgart 2007.

5 Edward Dabrowa (ed.), The Roman and Byzantine Army in the east. Proceedings of a Colloquium held at the Jagellonian University, Kraków in September 1992, Kraków 1994; Geoffrey B. Greatrex, Rome and Persia at War, 502–532, Leeds 1998.

6 Udo Reinhold Jeck, Die lautlose Invasion. Zur Auseinandersetzung griechischer Philosophen mit dem persischen Mythos, in: Rolf Elberfeld (ed.), Philosophiegeschichtsschreibung in globaler Perspektive (Deutsches Jahrbuch Philosophie 9), Hamburg 2017, 253–277.

While the Persians tried to establish a form of Zoroastrianism in the Caucasus,[7] Christianity, supported by Constantine I, also penetrated the region.[8]

During these political and religious conflicts, the monarchs of Georgia managed to, more or less successfully, preserve a certain amount of independence through careful manoeuvring. The Georgian ruling classes staunchly opposed both the expansive Persian imperialism and their religious encroachments through military means. They banked on Byzantium and the late Roman/Byzantine Christianity which ultimately prevailed in Georgia.

The events of this formative period in Georgian history are very difficult to reconstruct. Later sources offer at least insight into the reception of this time in the Georgian tradition. This study will focus on the representation of Georgian King Vakhtang I Gorgasali in the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* embedded within the Georgian royal chronicles known as the *Life of Kartli*, a collection and redaction of earlier texts formed in the mid-eleventh century. The dates of Vakhtang's rule are disputed, but the most recent scholarship proposes the dates of 447 to 522.[9] The *Life of Kartli*'s description of Vakhtang's style of governing suggests that local elites in the Caucasus at this time received a Graeco-Roman education. This resulted in a specific understanding of good Christian rulership that will be at the heart of this examination.[10]

The surviving records, which certainly only deserve limited trust as sources, depict Vakhtang as a prudent politician, an energetic commander, a highly educated monarch with a great sense of responsibility, and a caring sovereign with a devout Christian disposition. Although the memory of Vakhtang remains quite vibrant within Georgia, knowledge of him, his time, and the long and dramatic historical developments in Georgia remain largely unknown in the West to this day. European scholars became aware of Georgia's history only at a relatively late date through the work of distinguished western scholars of the Caucasus and oriental studies. This study seeks to rectify this in part by bringing attention to the reception of one of the preeminent rulers of late antique Georgia within one of the most important medieval accounts of Georgian history.

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7 On Persian religion and its manifold forms, see Michael Stausberg, Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale, Stuttgart 2002–2004.

8 Heinz Fähnrich, Geschichte Georgiens (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Handbuch der Orientalistik, section eight, Central Asia 21), Leiden/Boston 2010, 122: "Der römische Kaiser Konstantin I. war der erste, der das Christentum in seinem Reich zur Staatsreligion erklärte. Dadurch wurde es in den politischen Kampf zwischen Rom und Persien einbezogen, und so erklärt es sich, daß die Perser nach der Annahme des Christentums durch Rom ihre Beziehung zu den Christen radikal änderten: Von der anfänglich wohlwollenden Duldung gingen sie zur gnadenlosen Verfolgung über."

9 Stephen H. Rapp Jr., The Sasanian World through Georgian Eyes. Caucasia and the Iranian Commonwealth in Late Antique Georgian Literature, Farnham (Surrey) 2014, 271.

10 Vaxtang Goilaje, Vaxtang Gorgasali da misi istorikosi, Mecniereba, Tbilisi 1991; Sargis Kakabadze, Vaxtang Gorgasalis xana, Tbilisis Damoukidebeli Univ. [et. al.], Tbilisi 1994.

A Brief History of Scholarship on the *Life of Kartli*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, important tools for researching Vakhtang I were unavailable in the western hemisphere. The standard reference works of the time only provided incomplete information on the history of Georgia. Even the famous *Conversations-Lexicon oder encyclopädisches Handwörterbuch für gebildete Stände* published in 1815 was of no use. It merely devoted a couple of sentences to modern-age political development in Georgia;[11] it contains no mention of Vakhtang I Gorgasali.

This state of affairs was first changed by Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1783 – 1835). In his *Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien unternommen in den Jahren 1807 und 1808*, the second volume of which was published in 1814,[12] he drew on abundant sources, compiled material on the kings of Georgia, and also included a profile of Vakhtang:[13]

> After Mirdat (346), his son ⟨…⟩ Vachtang Gurg-aßlan, meaning Vachtang the Wolf-Lion ruled; as in Persian gurg means 'wolf' and aßlan means 'lion.' He possessed all royal virtues and is held by Georgians as one of their greatest princes.[14]

Unfortunately, Klaproth's remarks are largely confined to the political activities of the Georgian monarch and his many campaigns against hostile neighbours. In addition, he merely identified him as the founder of Tbilisi. According to his information, Vakhtang also built Christian churches and appointed the first "Catholicos of Georgia."[15] Klaproth did not indicate that the basis of the monarch's politics was his intellectual disposition. Travel literature of the first half of the nineteenth century

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11 Conversations-Lexicon oder encyclopädisches Handwörterbuch für gebildete Stände. Vierter Band. G und H. Leipzig/Altenburg ³1815, 167.

12 Heinrich J. Klaproth, Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien unternommen in den Jahren 1807 und 1808, auf Veranstaltung der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg, enthaltend eine vollständige Beschreibung der Kaukasischen Länder und ihrer Bewohner, von Julius von Klaproth, Kaiserl. Russischem Hofrathe und Mitgliede der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg. vol. 1, Halle/Berlin 1812; id., Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien unternommen in den Jahren 1807 und 1808, auf Veranstaltung der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg, enthaltend eine vollständige Beschreibung der Kaukasischen Länder und ihrer Bewohner, von Julius von Klaproth, Hofrathe und correspondirendem Mitgliede der königlichen Societät zu Göttingen. vol. 2, Halle/Berlin 1814.

13 Klaproth compiled this biography from various different materials: idem, Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien II, 62.

14 Klaproth, Reise in den Kaukasus und nach Georgien II, 163: "XXXIII. Nach Mirdat (346) regierte dessen Sohn ⟨…⟩ Wachtang Gurg-aßlan, das ist Wachtang der Wolf-Löwe; denn im Persischen bedeutet g u r g Wolf und a ß l a n Löwe. Er besaß alle königlichen Tugenden und wird von den Georgiern für einen ihrer größten Fürsten gehalten."

15 Ibid., 163 – 165.

added little new information,[16] and knowledge of Vakhtang's biography was not substantially expanded.[17]

This unsatisfactory situation remained until the French orientalist Marie Felicité Brosset (1802–1880) published his work on the history of Georgia from antiquity until 1469 in Saint Petersburg in 1849[18] and dedicated it to Sergey Semionovich Uvarov (1786–1855), the president of The Saint Petersburg Imperial Academy of Sciences.[19] Brosset took a Georgian source as his starting point and translated it into French.[20] In an extensive preface he provided further details on the document, originally titled *Kʻartʻlis cʻxovreba* (*Life of Kartli*).

However, Brosset did not start from scratch in researching and translating the text. As he himself stated, he followed information contained in scholarly literature of the time. The Armenian Stefanos Orbelian (d. 1304) had already referenced this important text for the history of Georgia in a paper edited by the French orientalist Antoine-Jean Saint-Martin (1791–1832).[21] At any rate, Brosset's translation was an achievement of great importance. For the first time, European scholars gained deeper insight into the history of Georgia. Translations into other languages were not available until much later. A German translation did not appear until 1985.[22] An English translation and commentary have only been available to scholars since 2014, titled *Kartlis tskhovreba: A History of Georgia*.[23] In its preface, the authors explicitly reference Brosset's accomplishment.[24] Thus, with Brosset's translation, western scholars

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16 Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux, Reise um den Kaukasus, zu den Tscherkessen und Abchasen, nach Kolchis, Georgien, Armenien und in die Krim von Fr. Dubois de Montpéreux. Eine von der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Paris gekrönte Preisschrift. Nach dem Französischen. Erster Band. Mit zwölf Abbildungen, Darmstadt 1842 (original: ibid., Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tscherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie et en Crimée, Paris 1839–1849).

17 Ibid., 263–264.

18 Marie Felicité Brosset, Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusque'au XIXᵉ siècle, traduite du géorgien par M. Brosset. Membre de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences. vol. 1, Histoire ancienne, jusqu'en 1469 de J.-C., St. Petersburg 1849.

19 Ibid.: "A Son Excellence Monsieur le Comte Ouvarof, Président de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, Fondateur et Promoteur bienveillant des Études géorgiennes, en Russie; respectueux hommage de l'Editeur."

20 Ibid., 1–13 ("Préface. Aux Lecteurs, sur l'objet de ce livre").

21 Ibid. (Préface), 1, fn. 1: "L'ouvrage que je traduis est connu en Géorgie sous le simple titre de kartlis zxovreba 'Vie du Karthli', titre qui était déjà donné au XIII siècle à une histoire de ce genre, puisque l'auteur arménien Stéfanos Orbélian le cite dans l'histoire de sa famille (S.-Martin, Mém. hist. et géogr. t. II., p. 64)."

22 Gertrud Pätsch, Das Leben Kartlis. Eine Chronik aus Georgien 300–1200 ("Dshuanscher. Das Leben Wachtang Gorgassals, des großen und gottliebenden Königs, der unter allen Königen Kartlis der berühmteste war"), Leipzig 1985, 201–322.

23 Roin Metʻreveli, Stephen F. Jones, Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia ("Juansher Juansheriani, The Life of Vakhtʻang Gorgasali"), 77–114, Notes p. 114–133), Tbilisi 2014.

24 Ibid., 6: "In 1849 the Russian Academy of Sciences published *kartlis tskhovreba*, based on the MS of the post-Vakhtʻang period, edited by the French orientalist and Georgian Academician Marie-Féli-

have been able to access an important document on the political and intellectual history of Georgia that does not merely devote a few words but rather a considerably large section to Vakhtang.[25]

The *Life of Kartli* contains some of the earliest records of Georgian history, including importantly some texts like the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* that were composed before the founding of the Bagratid dynasty in 813. The author of these biographical writings is generally considered to have been Juanšer,[26] who formed the ideal of a heroic, pious, and educated ruler found within.[27] Due to the redaction of these works in the eleventh century, these pre-Bagratid works must be treated with much caution. The current state of research on the origin of the text has been concisely summarised by Stephen Rapp:

> Building upon the meticulous analysis of Toumanoff, I have confirmed elsewhere that *The Life of the Kings*, *The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* and the latter's untitled continuation by Pseudo-Juanšer Juanšeriani attained their received forms just before Bagratid rule. All three texts proceed from the short interval between the establishment of the kingdom of Apʿxazetʿi sometime in the last decade of the eighth century and the accession in 813 of the Bagratid Ašot I to the presiding principate, the foremost political institution of the Kʿartʿvelian *interregnum* (which began ca. 580).

Like almost all other medieval Georgian historiographies, these "pre-Bagratid" texts are preserved exclusively in *Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba*, "The Life of Georgia," the so-called Georgian Royal Annals or Georgian Chronicles. As we know today, the original iteration of the corpus was probably compiled under the direction of Archbishop Leonti Mroveli (Leontius of Ruisi) in the mid-eleventh century. This occurred during the zenith of medieval Bagratid power. Surviving manuscripts of *Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba* are relatively late: the oldest Georgian-language variant was copied towards the end of the fifteenth century. However, the oldest manuscript of its medieval Armenian adaption, *Patmutʿiwn Vracʿ* ("The History of the Georgians"), belongs to the end of the thirteenth or start of the fourteenth century, a cosmopolitan period under Īlkhānid hegemony.[28]

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cité Brosset. Brosset translated the text into French and published it. He made this source on the history of Georgia accessible to the world community."

25 Pätsch (cf. fn. 22) 201–322; Kartlis tskhovreba (cf. fn. 23) 77–114, Notes 114–133)

26 Pätsch (cf. fn. 22) 322: "Dieses Buch aber vom Leben der Kartweler bis Wachtang wurde fortlaufend niedergeschrieben. Aber von König Wachtang bis jetzt hat es Dshuanscher aufgezeichnet, aus dem Geschlecht Dshuanschers, der Ehemann der Brudertochter des heiligen Artschil, der Nachkomme Rews, des Sohnes Mirians."

27 Ibid., 13: "Über das 5. bis 8. Jahrhundert berichtet Dschuanscher. Von ihm ist außer dem Namen nichts Sicheres bekannt. Im Mittelpunkt seiner Darstellung steht Wachtang Gorgassal, den er als das verkörperte Ideal des Heldenkönigs rühmt."

28 Rapp (cf. fn. 9) 7–8; Stephen H. Rapp Jr., Kʿartʿlis cʿxovreba: The Georgian Royal Annals and Their Medieval Armenian Adaption (Anatolian and Caucasian Studies), Delmar (N.Y.) 1998; ibid., Studies in

With due caution, this essay proceeds to investigate the representation of Vakhtang within the *Life of Kartli* to gain insight into the reception of this late antique king within the Georgian tradition.

The Christianisation of Georgia according to the *Life of Kartli*

The introduction of Christianity into Georgia was still quite recent when Vakhtang I became king. This section traces some of the major contours of the narrative of the Christianisation in Georgia in the *Life of Kartli*, including the traditional Georgian religion, the interventions of the Sasanians, and the measures of Georgian rulers to support Christianity. This will help contextualise the depiction of Vakhtang as a ruler within this work, as explored in the next section.

The traditional piety of the Georgians plays a role in the narrative of the Christianisation of Georgia in the *Life of Kartli*. The religious practices of Georgians remain admittedly opaque at the time of Christianisation, although it seems almost certain that they had a number of different gods.[29] Several passing remarks in Graeco-Roman literature suggest that several gods were worshipped in the Caucasus. Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858), a leading romanticist mythologist of the first half of the nineteenth century, drew on these sources, writing about the gods of the Colchians focusing on Hecate,[30] goddess of the underworld,[31] and a moon goddess who allegedly demanded human sacrifice.[32] The practices he described may have been those of the Greeks who had settled Phasis on the coast of Georgia early on.[33] This was all the information Creuzer possessed as he did not have access to any original sources

Medieval Georgian Historiography. Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 601, Subsidia 113), Leuven, 2003.

29 Fähnrich (cf. fn. 8) 109–110; esp. 109: "Bis zum heutigen Tag besteht leider keine Klarheit über den Aufbau des altgeorgischen heidnischen Pantheons. Die Ansichten hierzu gehen weit auseinander. Aber unbestritten ist, daß die Georgier in vorchristlicher Zeit mehrere Götter verehrten."
30 Thomas Lautwein, Hekate, die dunkle Göttin. Geschichte und Gegenwart, Rudolstadt 2009. For older mythologist literature on this goddess, see Eduard Gerhard, Griechische Mythologie. Erster Theil: Die griechischen Gottheiten, Berlin 1854, 573–576; Ludwig Preller, Griechische Mythologie. Erster Band. Theogonie und Goetter, Leipzig 1854, 199–201; Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, Griechische Götterlehre. vol. 1, Göttingen 1857, (n. 91: 'Hekate') 562–567, (n. 92: 'Hekate Brimo') 568–570.
31 On the cult of Hecate in Phasis, see Otar Lordkipanidze, Phasis. The river and city in Colchis (Geographica Historica 15), Stuttgart 2000, 97–98.
32 Friedrich Creuzer, Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen. Vierter Theil. Dritte verb. Ausg. Leipzig/Darmstadt 1843 (ND Hildesheim/New York 1973), 235: "Jener (i.e., Aeetes U. R. J.) hat die schreckliche und zauberische Nachtgöttin, die weithintreffende Hecate, zur Tochter, die der Mondgöttin Artemis einen Altar stiftet, an welchem die anlandenden Fremdlinge als Opfer fallen müssen (Diod. IV. 45.)."
33 Cf. fn. 31.

and had to rely on these reports. Such was the state of research on traditional Georgian piety before the translation of the *Life of Kartli*, which offers important insights into the local religious practices in Georgia.[34] Before the translation of this work, Europeans knew very little about this topic.

In the *Life of Kartli*, the gods of Georgia are depicted much more clearly and prove to be numinous powers of a comprehensive nature-religion. Gods like Armas,[35] Saden,[36] Gazi, and Gaim[37] are considered "Lords of the world," who "radiate the sun" and "send rains." As they "know all the secrets," they also have a spiritual dimension. According to the *Life of Kartli*, the gods cared for humans and were believed in by the people.[38] Their followers erected anthropomorphic idols[39] and offered sacrifices.[40] Mtskheta, at the time capital of Kartli, stands out in literary texts as an important cult site at which the Georgians served their god Armaz.[41]

Within the *Life of Kartli*, the Sasanian Persians encounter these traditions during their attempts to integrate Kartli into their empire and establish Zoroastrianism there, resulting in inevitable religious differences with the indigenous Caucasians. The Georgians stand on one side with their local practices, the Persian Zoroastrians on the other.[42] There are, according to the *Life of Kartli*, some similarities despite

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34 More recent scholarship takes this source into account, see Georges Dumézil, Mythologie der kaukasischen Völker (Wörterbuch der Mythologie. I. Abt. Die alten Kulturvölker. 11. Lief.), Stuttgart 1973, 1–58.

35 Dumézil (cf. fn. 34) 26: "Armaz. Höchste Gottheit, 'Gott der Götter' im vorchristl. Georgien, sicher abgeleitet vom iran. *Ahura-Mazda* (armen. Aramazd). In der Vita der Hl. Nino wird gesagt, daß sein Bildnis, in Mtskhetha, Menschengestalt hatte, und zwar aus Kupfer, bekleidet mit einem goldenen Panzerhemd und einem Goldhelm und geschmückt mit kostbaren Onyx- und Beryll-Steinen. In der Hand trug er ein funkelndes Schwert. Diese Gottheit wird in allen alten georgischen Chroniken erwähnt. Der armen. Historiker Moses von Choren sagt, daß man A. bei Tagesanbruch verehrt habe."

36 Ibid., 56: "Zaden. Eine Gottheit im vorchristl. Georgien, in mehreren Chroniken erwähnt, doch kennen wir fast nur seinen Namen. Im 'Leben der Hl. Nino' sagt König Mirian zur Heiligen: 'Es gibt die beiden Götter, die überreiche Ernten schenken und die Welt regieren; sie lassen die Sonne scheinen und lassen regnen, und so lassen sie, was die georgische Erde hervorbringt, wachsen: Armaz und Z., sie sehen alles Verborgene.' Der gleiche Text spricht von Opferungen erstgeborener Kinder an Armaz und Z. – Marr und Wesendonck haben den Namen mit dem pehlewischen Plural *yaztān*, persisch *yazdān* (vgl. avestisch *yazata*) 'Götter' erklären wollen. Tsereteli hat den asianischen Gott *Sandon-Sandas* mit ihm in Verbindung gebracht."

37 Ibid., 32: "Ga (Gaim) und Gaci. Zwei Götter im vorchristl. Georgien, von denen wir wissen, dass sie in Mtsekhetha zwei Standbilder hatten, das eine aus Silber, das andere aus Gold, die links und rechts von einer Amazstatue aufgestellt waren. Die Vita der Hl. Nino bezeichnet sie als 'Königliche Götter' und erzählt, ein Fürstensohn sei ihnen zum Opfer gebracht worden. Für diese Namen wurden keinerlei annehmbare Erklärungen beigebracht."

38 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 57, 12–14.

39 Ibid., 51.8–9.

40 Ibid., 49.28–29.

41 Ibid., 50.25–26.

42 According to Hdt. 1.131.1, the Persians of his time did not tolerate temples, idols or altars, vehemently criticised their use, and condemned anthropomorphism. They called the circle of heaven Zeus

these irreconcilable differences. As many Caucasians practice a purely nature-based cult, they do not find it difficult to worship fire.[43] For example, Saint Nino (fourth century), upon reaching the town of Urbnisi, sees that fire, stones, and trees are held in high esteem as gods.[44] Because the Persians want to establish a certain form of Zoroastrianism in Georgia, they find themselves forced to compromise. They draw on these similarities and occasionally permit the elites of Georgia to serve both the fire and their own gods.[45]

The local customs of Georgia trouble the Persians in the *Life of Kartli* but do not constitute a serious threat to their political aims. They seem more disturbed by the advance of Christianity into the Caucasus. This was not without reason. The local elites, who feared that the Persians intended to subjugate and integrate the Caucasus into their empire, searched for an alternative and turned towards Constantinople. Persia, which was closer geographically, seemed more dangerous. The Georgians preferred to adopt Christianity than the Persian religion, setting themselves firmly against Zoroastrianism.[46]

From this perspective, Mirian III's (r. 284–361) decision to recognise Christianity as the religion of Iberia in the 320s or 330s seems logical.[47] Other Georgian kingdoms followed this decision.[48] In the *Life of Kartli*, this monarch appears at first as an adherent of the traditional gods of Georgia and of the Zoroastrianism.[49] He later turns his back on them, earning Constantine's favour. Georgians, however, ascribe his change of heart to Saint Nino,[50] who won over the king to Christianity.[51] Ultimately, only the political elite of Georgia could enforce the religious turn towards Christian-

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and worshiped him on high mountains and also sacrificed to cosmic bodies such as the sun and the moon and the elements earth, fire water and air: Albert de Jong, Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 133), Leiden/New York/Cologne 1997, 76–120.

43 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 58.9–10.

44 Ibid., 50.21–23.

45 Ibid., 42.4–7.

46 Werner Seibt (ed.), Die Christianisierung des Kaukasus. The Christianization of Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Albania), Referate des Internationalen Symposions (Wien, 9.–12. Dezember 1999) (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Denkschriften 296 = Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Byzantinistik 9), Vienna 2002.

47 On the proposals for dating the baptism of King Miriam III, see the summary in Rapp (cf. fn. 9) 3 n. 12.

48 Fähnrich (cf. fn. 8) 125: "Im westlichen Teil Georgiens verbreitete sich das Christentum etwa zur gleichen Zeit wie in Iberien und wurde zu Beginn des 4. Jahrhunderts zur offiziellen Religion des Königreichs Lasika."

49 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 58.9–14.

50 Ibid., 61.31.

51 Guliko Sophia Vashalomidze, Die Heilige Nino, in: id., Die Stellung der Frau im alten Georgien. Georgische Geschlechterverhältnisse insbesondere während der Sasanidenzeit (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 16), Wiesbaden 2007, 48–78.

ity; royal decisions were necessary. This can also be indirectly discerned from the *Life of Kartli*.

In the *Life of Kartli*, Christianity seems to irritate the Persians but does not cause them to doubt the superiority of their own tradition.[52] For this reason, many Sasanian kings intervene in the religious lives of Caucasians not only on account of their power-political interests, but also because they are convinced of the primacy and truth of their own religion. The strategies they pursue and means to which they resort are depicted in several poignant episodes in the *Life of Kartli*. In most cases the Persians favour force,[53] but they occasionally rely on more subtle methods, trying to win over Georgians by means of political marriages, tolerance, and missionary conversion.

Initially, brute force, invasion, and suppression of the free exercise of religion seem the most promising paths to achieving their goal. For example, when the Georgian King Mirdat IV (r. 409 – 411)[54] loses a battle to the Persians, they carry him off into exile where he later dies. Subsequently, they lay waste to Kartli, destroying Churches and repurposing some for Zoroastrianism. The inhabitants of Kartli are unfazed by this and continue to practice their faith in secret.[55] Sometimes they even find enough strength for a counteroffensive. King Arč̣il I (r. 411 – 435), Mirdat IV's successor on the Georgian throne, revolts against the Persians, restores the Christian churches, and resists Zoroastrianism.[56]

Once brute force increasingly proves ineffective, the Persians try to break up the enemy front by means of blood ties between the Georgian and Persian elites. They find a sympathetic partner in Mirdat V (r. 435 – 447), the son of Arč̣il I, who does not continue the confrontational politics of his predecessors. Valiant and fearless,[57] he takes measures to achieve peace and marries Sagduxt,[58] the daughter of a high-ranking Persian official named Barzabod. The Georgian king expects this tactic to strengthen Christianity in Kartli,[59] while the Persians probably hoped for greater influence on Georgian leadership.

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52 On religion in the Sasanian Empire: Wiesehöfer (cf. fn. 1) 268 – 273; Richard E. Payne, A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 56), Oakland (California) 2015.

53 The obvious motive of this portrayal is to underline the Christians' courage in the face of Persian cruelty.

54 These and all subsequent dates concerning Georgian kings are according to Rapp (cf. fn. 9) 386 – 387.

55 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 77.6 – 8.

56 Ibid., 77.13 – 16.

57 Ibid., 78.3 – 4.

58 On the origin of this name, see Ibid., 116, fn. 14.

59 The *Life of Kartli* features a fictional speech by Mirdat V to his father Arč̣il I in which he argues for peaceful coexistence between the inhabitants of Kartli and the Persians on account of his marriage to the daughter of a Persian aristocrat (Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia [cf. fn. 23], 78.14 – 20).

In favourable circumstances, the Persians seek to appear tolerant. The afore-mentioned Georgian queen of Persian descent converts to Christianity and gives up Zoroastrianism influenced by her Christian husband and scholars.[60] She fears acts of vengeance that could lead to the destruction of Kartli and the eradication of Christianity in Georgia.[61] Therefore, she appeals to her father for forgiveness, which he generously grants.[62] At the same time, her father acts shrewdly, as the *Life of Kartli* continues, and issues a surprising edict of toleration. No Georgian Christian would be compelled to abandon the Christian faith, but anyone who voluntarily decided in favour of the Persian religion should also be able to practice without restrictions.[63]

The Persians in the *Life of Kartli* also make use of an additional measure supporting their politics: religious mission. In this regard, they send prominent representatives of Zoroastrianism to Georgia with the purpose of establishing the Persian religion in Mtskheta.[64] They are partly successful at the beginning as the people, it is claimed, allow themselves to be convinced. However, the elites subsequently counteract this development successfully: Queen Sagduxt sends for a Christian priest from Byzantium and makes him bishop. The bishop with Byzantine roots combats the Persian religion so successfully that only a minority of Georgians remain loyal to Zoroastrianism.[65] The missionary efforts of Persia in this way end in failure.

The *Life of Kartli*'s narrative of the Christianisation of Georgia encompasses several elements that play a role in its subsequent depiction of Vakhtang I. These include the new possibility of education among the nobility, the attempts of Georgian rulers to situate themselves between the major political powers of Rome and Persia, and the attempts to navigate between traditional forms of piety, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism.

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60 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 78.28–31.

61 Ibid., 79.18–21.

62 Ibid., 79.25–28, 30–31.

63 Ibid., 79.31–34.

64 Ibid., 79.35–36.

65 Ibid., 79.40–80.8.

The Image of Vakhtang I in the *Life of Kartli*

In the *Life of Kartli*, Vakhtang I Gorgasali,[66] the son of Mirdat V and Sagduxt,[67] comes of age in the context of this tense situation and has a Christian upbringing. Since the *Life of Kartli* depicts him as an ideal ruler, its statements regarding his life cannot be taken at face value. Yet his depiction is significant for understanding the concept of good rulership at the time at which this work was authored and redacted.[68] This section focuses on the religious and especially the philosophical elements of the depiction of Vakhtang's rule in the *Life of Kartli* in order to gain insight into the perspective on good rulership within this work.

According to the *Life of Kartli*, Vakhtang receives instruction from a Christian bishop. Through an education that was characterised by Christian spirituality, he then quickly develops into a staunch proponent of Christianity and a fierce opponent of Zoroastrianism.[69] Already at a young age, he drafts policy guidelines and compiles them into a political platform, which he presents to the high nobility of Kartli and emphatically promotes. He promises the Georgian dignitaries unprecedented royal support, far exceeding that of his fathers.[70] As the *Life of Kartli* suggests, Vakhtang keeps to his word, implementing his plans and cleverly gearing his politics towards the improvement of his subjects' situation.

The *Life of Kartli* does not only esteem Vakhtang's individual efforts towards ensuring safety for, strengthening, and consolidating Georgia. But it also attends to the remarkable king's inner disposition and mindset. Throughout, the image of a good ruler with Christian virtues is clearly visible. Vakhtang searches for inspiration within the Holy Scriptures, reveres the biblical Kings David and Solomon, and is guided by their pious actions.[71] Vakhtang also regards Constantine the Great as his role model. The miracles, which the Roman emperor had witnessed through the power of the cross, become a source of inspiration for him.[72] King Solomon and Constantine are also considered exemplary monarchs by his advisors, especially because they had

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66 Vakhtang I witnessed many Persian and Roman/Byzantine monarchs. Late Roman/Byzantine emperors: Theodosius II (r. 408 – 450); Marcian (r. 450 – 457); Leo I (r. 457 – 474); Leo II (r. 474); Zeno (r. 474 – 475 and 476 – 491); Basiliscus (r. 475 – 476); Anastasios I (r. 491 – 518); Justin I (r. 518 – 527). Persian monarchs: Yazdegerd II (r. 439 – 457); Hormizd III (r. 457 – 459); Peroz I (r. 459 – 484); Balash (r. 484 – 488); Kavadh I (r. 488 – 496, 499 – 531). Dates of the Roman/Byzantine rulers according to Georg Ostrogorsky, Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates (Byzantinisches Handbuch I 2), Munich ³1963, 479. For the Persian monarchs, see Wiesehöfer (cf. fn. 1) 409.
67 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 79.5 – 7.
68 On Vakhtang I, see Fähnrich (cf. fn. 8) 130 – 137.
69 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 80.27 – 30.
70 Ibid., 81.4 – 7.
71 Cf. fn. 73.
72 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 86.14 – 15.

modelled their rule on the kingdom of heaven.[73] According to the *Life of Kartli*, Christianity has a profound impact on the Georgian monarch's style of rule.

But the image of a good Christian ruler in the *Life of Kartli* importantly extends beyond his Christian faith and suggests that he received a philosophical education. For example, it reports that the Georgian king distinguishes himself by his wisdom early on.[74] The biographer implies here that Vakhtang did not merely have worldly wisdom but also a knowledge of philosophy that complements his Christian disposition. If what his biographer later wrote in this section is true, then Vakhtang's tutors did not merely emphasise his religious education but also taught him philosophy.

This raises several difficult – perhaps unanswerable – questions. First, where might Vakhtang's knowledge of philosophy have come from? Byzantium seems the only likely possibility.[75] Since late Roman emperors wanted to both win over Georgia to their side in their conflict with Persia and to cement their influence and safeguard their interests there, they intensified contacts with the Georgian elites, impressing the leading representatives of Georgia with the many advantages of Byzantine culture. This included not only late Roman/Byzantine Christianity, but also Christian philosophy, rooted in the philosophy of late antiquity.

Second, did Vakhtang himself participate in a school of thought that wanted to reconcile Plato and Aristotle from a Neoplatonic perspective?[76] The answer to this question must remain a matter of speculation.

But, third, if it is true that Vakhtang learned philosophical ideas early on, is it possible to determine the specifics of what his educated advisors could have taught him about philosophy? This question seems possible to answer at least in regard to the depiction of the Georgian monarch in the *Life of Kartli*. His biographer explains the Georgian monarch's actions not only as coming from a purely Christian disposition, but also mentions philosophical motives for some of his political activities. According to the *Life of Kartli*, Vakhtang studied a philosophy that is not restricted to bookish speculation but embraces tangible philosophical praxis, ethics, and political philosophy.

Vakhtang's apparent philosophical education, though, can only be recognised by investigating a significant passage in the *Life of Kartli*.[77] As will become apparent, no philosopher is actually named and an explicit reference to a specific philosophical background is also missing. But the text exhibits surprising similarities to some of Plato's propositions. This coincidence encourages comparison between Plato's thought and the reasoning attributed to Vakhtang in the *Life of Kartli*.

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73 Ibid., 88.9 – 14.

74 Ibid. 80, 36: "The King began in a loud voice like a wise old man brought up among philosophers...."

75 Vakhtang was tutored by a cleric from Byzantium (cf. fn. 65 and 69).

76 Georgi Kapriev, Philosophie in Byzanz, Würzburg 2005.

77 Cf. fn. 88 and 91.

According to the *Politeia*, Plato believed that leadership of a state was in the best possible hands if it was left to philosophers.[78] Only if a thinker, chosen according to strict criteria, exercised power would there be justice in a *polis*.[79] The arduous path from unsophisticated everyday knowledge to philosophical insight – from imprisonment in the cave to reality outside of the cave – and thus the constraints of the senses was described by Plato in the allegory of the cave.[80] The way a comparable concept is depicted in the aforementioned passage – that is, the surprising speech attributed to Vakhtang in the *Life of Kartli* – will be investigated below.

First, however, it is necessary to examine the literary context of the speech. The *Life of Kartli* indicates that Vakhtang participates in wars as a vassal of the Persian King Peroz (r. 459 – 484).[81] This includes a campaign in India on the eastern border of the Persian Empire.[82] The expedition is successful. At the order of the Persians, Vakhtang turns against the Sindhs and lays siege to their capital.[83] An interesting encounter allegedly takes place there, when the king of the Sindhs tries to persuade the Georgian king to leave the Persians and join him.[84] As weapons are of no use he resorts to rhetoric, presenting a fable (according to Pätsch) or parable (according to Brosset) to Vakhtang. He employs the image of a crow encountering a wounded hawk. Contrary to expectation, the crow does not call on other crows in order to destroy it with their help but rather takes pity on the hawk and nurtures it. Later, the hawk eats the crow by way of thanks. This fable of the beast is meant to make Vakhtang, the vassal of the Persians, reconsider and to provoke a political about face.

The king of the Sindhs argues from a purely strategic standpoint. The Persians are currently in a state of weakness – why else would they need Vakhtang's support? The time is right for revolt, as the minor adversaries of Persia can destroy their empire together. Vakhtang is merely strengthening the Persians as their dutiful vassal. But as soon as the Persians overcome their weakness with his help, they will destroy

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78 Pl. resp., 7.514a–518b (allegory of the cave); Platons Höhlengleichnis. Das Siebte Buch der Politeia. Griechisch/Deutsch. Ed. and trans. by Rudolf Rehn, Mainz 2005.

79 Rosamond Kent Sprague, Plato's Philosopher-King. A Study of the Theoretical Background, Columbia 1976; Michael Erler, Platon (Die Philosophie der Antike, vol. 2/2 = Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie), Basel 2007, 441–449 ('Politische Philosophie'), esp. 445–446 (Lit. 710–712).

80 Hans Lier, Zur Struktur des platonischen Höhlengleichnisses, in: Hermes 99 (1971), 209–216; Konrad Gaiser, Il paragone della caverna. Variazioni da Platone a oggi, Napoli 1985; Hans Blumenberg, Höhlenausgänge, Frankfurt a.M. 1989; Wilhelm Blum, Höhlengleichnisse. Thema mit Variationen, Bielefeld 2004.

81 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 98.16–101.28.

82 Ibid., 98.18–24.

83 Ibid., 98.25–99.9.

84 "Sindh" must be a region of the Indian subcontinent close to Persia, see Leopold von Orlich, Indien und seine Regierung. Geschichte und Colonisation der Länder Sind und Peng'âb, Geschichte des Königreichs Oude und Schilderung der britisch-indischen Armee. Nach den vorzüglichsten Quellen und nach Handschriften, vol. 2, Berlin 1859, ('Geschichte des Sind vom Jahr 600 bis zum Jahre 1857'), 2.

the Georgians.[85] The strategy of the king of the Sindhs is a calculus of power politics. Vakhtang's biographer likely tried to communicate this by including this fictional appeal. The fable of the king of the Sindhs with his unprincipled actions serves as a foil to Vakhtang, the Christian king with a philosophical mindset.[86]

According to the *Life of Kartli*, Vakhtang does not engage in risky endeavours. Thus, he categorically declines the offer of the king of the Sindhs to conspire against the Persians.[87] His response is also indicative of other principles of royal action, such as when Vakhtang accuses the Sindh of profound untruthfulness. Although his assertions seem to be true, they are ultimately based on lies. The real truth looks different.

Vakhtang also turns to a fable to rebuke the king of the Sindhs. From his perspective, the king of the Sindhs resembles a blind mole living underground. As mentioned above, Vakhtang here is alluding to the cave dwellers of Plato's allegory in the *politeia*, who live as chained prisoners. All they can see are shadows that they believe to be reality. They know nothing of the real world outside and therefore are not aware of the sun, the "form of the good." For this reason, they think that everything that exists is exactly as they perceive it. They do not even wish to leave their cave and resist leaving. If they must step outside, they immediately endeavour to return to their seclusion. The path to wisdom, truth, and unconcealment remains barred to them.

To Vakhtang, the king of the Sindhs is in a similar situation to the mole, who as a cave dweller is only aware of his underground corridors, cannot see the sun, and knows nothing of the beauty of the fields on the surface above his burrow. He remains in a limited underground existence that befits him, and he therefore believes everything exists just as he does. He neither strives towards the light nor wishes to perceive the heavens or the earth, meaning he does not desire to find the cave's exit:

> Then Vakhtʼang said: "You think that your speech was inspired by the eye of wisdom. But your words are false. I will tell you the truth. You are mad! You resemble a mole, devoid of eyes which lives underground and knows nothing of the brightness of the sun and the fascinations of space, who is content with his life, because he thinks that all living things live like that. And he does not want to see the light and all the charms of heaven and the earth."[88]

In this passage from the *Life of Kartli*, Vakhtang seems inspired by Plato, who as noted above thinks of the average human who has no philosophical inclinations

85 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 99.10 – 100.2.

86 Pätsch (cf. fn. 22) 47: "Bei Dshuanscher stammt die Parabel von der Krähe aus der alten indischen Sammlung 'Kalilah und Dimnah.' Bei den im Titel genannten Erzählern handelt es sich um zwei Schakale, die ihre Weisheit in der Form von Geschichten austauschen. Und es fällt dem Chronisten nicht schwer, in der Antwort Wachtang Gorgassals Stil und Stimmung beizubehalten" (Husain al-Kerbalaʼ-I, Kalilah und Dimnah. Orientalische Fabeln. Mit zehn alten orientalischen Miniaturen, Leipzig 1974, 47).

87 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 100.3 – 101.28.

88 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 100.3 – 7.

as a deluded cave dweller, lacking knowledge of the truth of the forms and chained to shadowy illusions instead of authentic truths. Vakhtang perceives the king of the Sindhs as likewise trapped in ignorance. He does not truly see what he sees or truly hear what he hears. Instead of living in unconcealment, he exists in concealment in a superficial semblance of the sensory world.

The intellectual world – the forms in Plato – remains hidden to the king of the Sindhs, because he does not pursue this extrasensory, transcendental world, grounded in the eternal form of the good.[89] Instead, he clings to the sensory, holds on to the transient, and invests in finite interests. Therefore, he knows nothing of "infinite life" and the "light" which Vakhtang describes as not merely "eternal" but being of a "greatness that is unspeakable and inconceivable."[90] In this passage, Vakhtang states:

> So are you blind in the eyes of your mind and deaf to the reason of your ears. You do not see or hear, or even know anything of the spiritual life; and you do not want to enter the everlasting, bright and infinite life, the greatness that is unspeakable and inconceivable. And you know nothing of the Lord, the maker of all beings, creator of everything.[91]

Here Plato's "form of the good" and Vakhtang's Christian God, the "creator of all things," converge.

This is the perspective from which Vakhtang confronts the political ambitions of the king of the Sindhs, ever conscious of the eternal. In doing so, he comports himself in a manner worthy of a philosopher king who is mindful of the good, as is demanded by both Plato and Christianity. Vakhtang's campaign on his view is not about finite interests or power politics. He thinks of himself not as the vassal of the Persian king but rather as a servant of the everlasting God, the God of Christianity, whom he describes as the "consubstantial Trinity," the "maker of the world," and "glory, for ever and ever."[92] According to this account, Vakhtang's politics draw their strength from the maxims of a Christian philosophy that oblige him to act ethically. He fulfils these principles in an exemplary manner. According to the *Life of Kartli*, he is protecting the Holy Jerusalem and saving all of Christendom from being destroyed by the Persian king.[93]

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89 Rafael Ferber, Platos Idee des Guten, Sankt Augustin ³2015.

90 Neoplatonic Theology argues in a similar vein, see Jens Halfwassen, Der Aufstieg zum Einen. Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin, Munich/Leipzig ²2006.

91 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 100.8 – 11.

92 On the dogmatics of early Georgian Christianity, see K. Kekelidze, Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur. Auf Grund des ersten Bandes der georgischen Literaturgeschichte v. K. Kekelidze ed. by P. Michael Tarchnišvili and Julius Assfalg (Studi e testi 185), Vatican City 1955; Wolfgang Hage, Das orientalische Christentum (Die Religionen der Menschheit 29,2), Stuttgart 2007, 112 – 126 ('Die Georgisch-Orthodoxe Kirche').

93 Kartlis tskhovreba. A History of Georgia (cf. fn. 23) 100.12 – 16.

In this account, Vakhtang accomplishes what the Byzantines were not able to on account of political weakness. He protects his own kingdom aided by the "power of Christ" and military means. He thereby conforms to his fundamental disposition as a Christian king, who is mindful of the good, puts his hope in Christ, and proves himself by his efforts on behalf of his (Christian) neighbours. In this vein, Vakhtang interprets his campaign in India in the retinue of the Persian king as salvation and as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of his sins. In addition, he sees himself as the protector of Christianity against the Persians.[94]

But why support the Persians in the first place? Vakhtang also has a reasonable explanation for this conduct, seemingly opposed to the interests of Georgia. He first references his kinship with the Persians and then proceeds to a religious rationale. While the Persians may not acknowledge the Christian faith, they do believe in both a "creator" and a "spiritual being." The Sindhs are, by their ignorance, much further removed from true understanding.[95]

In the *Life of Kartli*, Vakhtang labels the world view of the Sindhs as "disgusting" and lacking any moral value from a Christian point of view. Contrary to human nature, they praise those who betray and destroy their benefactors without loyalty. According to Vakhtang's understanding of Christianity, one should treat benefactors in a charitable way. For this, one will receive the praise and recognition from humanity in this life and the forgiveness and eternal life from God in the next. Whoever dies a martyr's death shall even become immortal.[96]

This episode in the *Life of Kartli* reveals the work's depiction of Vakhtang as a good ruler based both on his Christian commitments and his philosophical outlook. The subtle allusions to Plato's allegory of the cave show how a philosophical background became woven into the concept of good Christian rulership in this work. While it is difficult to say how far back these ideas may go in Georgian history, they at least offer insight into the reception of Vakhtang in the Georgian tradition and the importance placed on philosophy in the concept of good rulership within the *Life of Kartli*.

Conclusion

This study has focused on episodes in the *Life of Kartli* that reveal views on good Christian rulership centred on the figure of Vakhtang I Gorgasali. This work reflects the perspectives of a time well after Vakhtang himself ruled, and its history of redaction separates us even further from the world of late antiquity. It nevertheless offers

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94 Ibid., 100.17–23.
95 Ibid., 100.24–28.
96 Ibid., 100.29–33.

insight into the representation of good rulership in Georgia within the Georgian chronicles.

Vakhtang's depiction within this work can be summarised as follows. According to the *Life of Kartli*, the Georgian King Vakhtang I grew up in a world of Roman-Persian tensions and distinguished himself as a Christian ruler, who had to come to terms with the non-Christian ruler of Persia. He received a Christian education that recommended David, Solomon and Constantine as political role models. He is seen as a promoter and saviour of Christianity, who feels deeply obliged to Christian ethics. And, most interesting for the depiction of good Christian rulership in this work, Vakhtang's thoughts and deeds seem influenced by philosophical thinking. In a fictional speech put into his mouth by his biographer, Vakhtang commits to the "form of the good" and aspires to an ideal approaching a platonic philosopher king.

How far the portrayal of Vakhtang in this work corresponds to historical fact is another matter.[97] This paper has sought to shed light on how the *Life of Kartli* – composed and redacted well after his reign – highlights the philosophical reasoning of Vakhtang, one of the preeminent rulers of the Georgian past. In this way, an emphasis on philosophical expertise was woven into one concept of good rulership that developed in medieval Georgia.

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[97] Stephen H. Rapp, New Perspectives on 'The Land of Heroes and Giants'. The Georgian Sources for Sasanian History, in: E-Sasanika 13 (2014), 1–32.

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The Creation of a "Pious" Image of King Vač'agan II (r. c. 485 – 523) of Caucasian Albania in the *Tale of Vač'agan* (Early Sixth Century)

The *History of Albania* is by the late tenth-century Armenian historian Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, (also known from historiography and manuscripts as "Kałankatuac'i") who was from Artsakh.[1] This work is a compilation of numerous writings, both longer and shorter, which come from Artsakh. Since these works were copied in a very literal manner, they have served as the basis for a number of scientific contributions published over the last fifteen years on such texts as the *Tale of Vač'agan*, the *History of Catholicos Viro* by Anonymous Kałankatuac'i, the anonymous *History of the Year 684*, the *Canons of Ałuēn*, among others.

The first of these works was composed at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century by an eyewitness and has historically been given the title of the *Tale of Vač'agan* (in Armenian "Վաչագանի վէպ" – "*Vač'agani Vēp*"; in German *Watschagans Erzählung*; in French *Conte de Vatchagan*; and in Russian "Повесть о Вачагане"). Movsēs Dasxuranc'i copied the *Tale* into chapters XIV and XVI–XXIII of the first book of his *History of Albania*.[2] The title of one of the chapters – "The life, conduct, and regulations of Ałuank' defined by King Vač'agan and the discovery of the holy relics" (*Dasx.* 1.16, p. 42) – must have been the original title of the entire book which the tenth-century historian divided up into chapters by inventing new titles for them.

As I have shown in previous publications,[3] the *Tale of Vač'agan* is a medieval panegyric text written in a classical style. That is, it is an apologetic hagiography that does not present a chronological arrangement of facts by year but instead describes the laudable deeds of its hero in a logical order. The author's goal was not to depict a coherent history of Vač'agan and his house but to present key challenges

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1 *Movsēs Kałankatuac'i,* History of the country of Ałouank'. Critical text and preface by *V. Arakélian*, Yerewan, 1983 (in Armenian) (henceforth cited as *Dasx*.); The History of the Caucasian Albanians by *Movsēs Dasxurançi*, translated by *C.J.F. Dowsett*, Oxford, London, 1961. For more details on the author of the *History of Albania*, cf. *A.A. Akopyan*, Albania-Ałuank' in Graeco-Roman and Ancient Armenian Sources, Yerevan, 1987, p. 150 – 272 (in Russian).

2 I published a detailed historico-philological analysis of the *Tale of Vač'agan* in my extensive article in the annual *Handēs Amsorea* of 2003 (*A. Hakobyan*, The Tale of Vač'agan and the kingdom of Arschakunis in Caucasian Albania, – "Handes Amsorya", CXVII, Vienna 2003, col. 45 – 142; [in Armenian]) and its critical text is published in volume III of the collection *The Armenian Authors* in 2004, p. 51– 112 (in Armenian).

3 Cf. fn. 2.

that had to be and were mastered by the pious king for the sake of the Christian community and the diocese of the marzpanate kingdom of Caucasian Albania, which was subdued by Sasanian Iran ("… and the regulations of Ałuankʿ defined by King Vačʿagan"). Thus, the *Tale of Vačʿagan* marks the beginning of the depiction of King Vačʿagan II of Caucasian Albania as pious, of his veneration, and of his transformation into a legend. In 1970, Nerses Akinian, archimandrite of the Mekhitarist congregation, remarked that this veneration was deepened systematically during the Middle Ages.[4]

It is notable that even now no other representative of this type of an eastern lord described in medieval Armenian literature can compete with Vačʿagan's credentials as a pious Christian ruler as defined in the *Tale of Vačʿagan* and other works created at a later date by medieval Armenian authors. The character of Vačʿagan the Pious is strikingly superior to all other pious kings and princes who earned the respect and love of the Armenian people and Armenian authors. Due to his veneration and legendary reputation, King Vačʿagan almost reached the same level of the ecclesiastical figures who achieved canonisation. The *Tale of Vačʿagan* preserves the most detailed account of the state of Caucasian Albania in the early Middle Ages. Even though ten kings from the dynasty of Vačʿagan II held power in Caucasian Albania, King Vačʿagan is the undisputed hero of the *Tale*. The stylistic peculiarity of the *Tale of Vačʿagan* (as either an epic life or an apologetic hagiography) played an important role in the veneration of King Vačʿagan, as will be seen in the following analysis of the *Tale*.

The *Tale* describes the beginning of the Arsacid dynasty in Caucasian Albania at the turn of the fourth century with the installation of Vačʿagan I the Brave, namesake of the principal hero. Chronologically, this coincides with the reinstallation of the Arsacids at the end of the third century in greater Armenia and the coronation of Tiridates III (r. 298–330) by Emperor Diocletian, which was regulated within the framework of the peace of Nisibis whose negotiations lasted forty years. Information regarding the kings that preceded Vačʿagan the Pious is not coherent; often the author is content to mention their names arbitrarily as they occur in different episodes and to add brief comments about them (*Dasx.*, 1.15, p. 41–42). One of the characteristics peculiar to the genre of the panegyric was to present the hero as superior to everyone, even to his own ancestors. This panegyric feature is also present in the *Tale of Vačʿagan* (p. 42). The anonymous author does not even make an exception for Vačʿē II (Vačʿagan's uncle), the hero of the anti-Sasanian insurrection of 459–461, on which the Armenian Catholicos Giwt lavishly bestows laudatory epithets (*Dasx.*, 1.11).

Moreover, the historian Ełišē conveys a certain number of important details on the "rebel king of Albania" (namely Vačʿē II). These have been copied literarily by Movsēs Dasxurancʿi, who also knew the name of the king (*Dasx.*, 1.10). Vačʿē was in-

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4 *P.N. Akinian*, Movsēs Dasxurancʿi (called Kałankatuacʿi) and his History of the Ałuankʿ (Albanians), Vienna, 1970 (in Armenian), p. 124–127, 140–149.

itially Christian and only became a Zoroastrian under compulsion by Yazdegerd II (r. 449–450). He revolted against the Persians in 459 by converting back to Christianity and forcing his mother (probably his stepmother), who was "Zoroastrian in origin," and his wife, perhaps his half-sister, to convert to Christianity. The Persian King Peroz (son of Yazdegerd) writes to him: "Liberate my sister... and my niece because they are Zoroastrian in origin and you have converted them to Christianity." The text continues: "and the marvellous man made... his mother and wife return [to Peroz]" (*Ełišē*, 1957, p.198). Vač῾ē relinquished power by asking Peroz for permission to keep only the thousand families he received from his father during his infancy ("He asked for what he possessed in his infancy and what his father had given him: the thousand families," p. 199). These "thousand families" show that Vač῾ē was not the oldest son of Esvałēn (*Arsvałēn, Ahsvahēn*), the preceding king (a contemporary of Saint Mesrop Maštoc῾). If he had been the oldest son, he would have inherited the entire kingdom from his father as opposed to the other sons who would have only inherited land from their father. The oldest son of Esvałēn was probably this Yazdegerd/Yazkert (*Dasx.*, 1.17, p. 48) whose son, Vač῾agan, was recognised as the legitimate king twenty-five years later (while it is true that Vač῾agan, in the *Tale*, also inherited land in Artsakh, we must remember that his father did not become king). According to the testimony of Ełišē, the most probable sequence of events is that the death of Esvałēn must have coincided with the persecutions under Yazdegerd II. It was around this time or around the insurrection of the Vardanides (451) that the Persians refused to recognise the oldest son of Esvałēn as king of Caucasian Albania. Vač῾ē had converted to Zoroastrianism (in contrast to his older brother) and married his half-sister. However Vač῾ē also revolted some years later due to his fidelity to Christianity (459–461), but according to the *Tale of Vač῾agan,* King Peroz decided to abolish royal power in Caucasian Albania after he had repressed this revolt.

Even though Vač῾agan's capital city is not mentioned in the *Tale of Vač῾agan*, his court is recounted in a dream of Prince Xočkorik, who was the governor of the city of Tsri (about seventy-five kilometres east of the ancient city of Kapałak), not far from the city Shamakhi on the left riverbank of Kur: "And this man came to the court and he resembled him as if the king had fallen asleep" (*Dasx.*, 1.23, p. 79).[5] Furthermore, in chapter 1.19 (p. 60) after the same Xočkorik in Tsri discovers relics of some saints, he rides as fast as possible on horseback to the king ("and on horseback, he hurried to come to King Vač῾agan the Pious"). Consequently, Vač῾agan's capital cannot be far from Tsri. According to Bagrat Ulubabyan, Vač῾agan could have been under siege in the village of Diutakan (Diwtakan, *var.* Giutakan) of Artsakh, which the *History of*

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5 Babken Haroutunian argued for the localisation of country of the Čiłbk῾ (Silvi) in the Shamakhi region in 1971 (*B.A. Haroutunyan*, About the Question of Localizing Lpink῾, *Journal of the University of Yerevan*, 1971, N 1 [in Armenian], p. 122–123). I have discussed in more detail the location of the city of Tsri of the Čiłbk in (*A. Hakobyan*, On the Timing of Arsacid Kingdom's Downfall in Albania, *Journal of the Institute of Oriental Studies of NAS*, Vol. XXVI, Yerevan, 2008 [in Armenian], not. 27), making it coincide with the modern Armenian village of Sałian, 10 kilometres east of the city Shamakhi.

Catholicos Viro, copied by Movsēs Dasxuranc῾i,[6] mentions is in the valley of the river Trtu (Tartar), close to Kałankatoyk῾ (*Dasx.*, 2.10, p. 132–133). However, this conclusion is based on the erroneous assumption that Vač῾agan is a member of the family of the Aṛanshahiks (and not of the royal house of the Arsacids of Caucasian Albania) and that the familial territory had to be received by the governor Arran, great grandson of Hayk, the eponymous ancestor of the Armenians in Artsakh-Outik῾ on the right riverbank of the Kur. In reality, Vač῾agan was the direct descendent of the royal house of the Arsacids of Caucasian Albania, and the territory should be located on the left riverbank of the Kur. In fact, the village Diutakan in the *Tale of Vač῾agan* did not even have a church prior to the construction of the chapel of Saint Pantaleon, and they were obliged to keep the relics of the saints "in a sacred and noble place" (*Dasx.*, 1.23, p. 86).[7]

Chapter 1.15 of the *History of Albania* was erroneously considered a reliable source in the past. According to the *History*, "the city of Perozapat... named today Partav" was built by King Vač῾ē II of Caucasian Albania "on the order of King Peroz of Persia."[8] But Vač῾ē revolted immediately after the death of Yazdegerd the Sasanian, and the bloody war of succession began between his sons Hormizd and Peroz. Defeated by Peroz and having surrendered the throne, Vač῾ē, therefore, was not able to build a city on the order of the same Peroz. This information from the *History* cannot be corroborated by any source, Armenian or otherwise. In the work entitled the *History of the Year 684,*[9] which was copied in the *History of Albania*, the capital is named "Peroz-Kavad," which in Middle Persian means "the victorious of Kavad," in eight out of eleven cases (but not Perozapat or Partav, which is the case in only three instances). This further supports the assumption that the city was built by Kavad I (or Qavad, Qobad) the Sasanian (r. 488–496, 498–531). This is also affirmed by Arab historians following the later Sasanian historical tradition (Ibn Khordadbeh, Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn al-Athir, etc.).[10] According to them, Kavad broke down the resistance of the Persian doyens and of his brother Jamasp (496–498) in the beginning of his reign and then defeated the tribes of the Savir Huns of northern Caucasia, who had invaded the regions in the north-east of Iran (503–504). After he had chased them down, he strengthened the defence of the Caucasian

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6 I published a critical text of the *History of the Catholicos Viro* in *The Armenian Authors*, t. IV, 7th century, Antelias, 2005, p. 371–414 (in Armenian).

7 We may add the Iranian term *dutak* = "house," "family," or "extended family". It can be considered as the basis of the toponym Diutakan.

8 Cf. *K.V. Trever*, Essays on the history and the culture of Caucasian Albania, Moscow-Leningrad, 1959 (in Russian), p. 217.

9 For more details on this trustworthy seventh-century source, see *Akopyan* (cf. fn. 1) 196–201. I published a critical text of the *History of the Year 684* in *The Armenian Authors*, t. V, 7th century, Antelias, 2005, p. 795–895 (in Armenian).

10 Cf. *N.A. Karaulov*, Information of Arab authors on Caucasia, Armenia and Azerbaïdjan, – Collection of material for the description of towns and tribes in Caucasia (in Russian), t. XXXI, Tbilisi, 1902, p. 15; t. XXXII, Tbilisi, 1903, p. 15; XXXVIII, Tbilisi, 1908, p. 41–43.

region by building the cities of Bailakan and Partav (Berdaʿa).[11] Given this history, the construction of Peroz-Kavad/Partav needs to be dated to the seven-year period of reconciliation between Persia and the Byzantine Empire which began during the first decade of the sixth century (506–512). At this time, Kavad had also received a considerable amount of gold from Emperor Anastasius in an attempt to fortify the Caucasian frontier against the Savir Huns (according to Procopius of Caesarea).[12] As for the variation "Perozapat" on the name "Partav," it is perhaps the result of a linguistic phenomenon known as the alternation of sounds in the place name "Peroz-Kavad" by a predecessor of Movsēs Dasxurancʿi. This could occur both through a popular and simplistic understanding of the proper noun and by association with the ending "pat" (= wall) of the names of cities familiar to Armenians such as Vałaršapat. The understanding of Perozapat as "city of Peroz" fostered the false assumption that the city was built on the order of Peroz.

A matter of dating related to a seeming confusion in the *Chronological List of the Catholicoi of Albania* (*Dasx.*, 3.23) should now be cleared up. The inscription of the ecclesiastical Council of Ałuēn (*Dasx.*, 1.26),[13] assembled by Vačʿagan the Pious, cannot be taken as evidence for the fact that the catholicosate of Caucasian Albania was transferred from Čʿoł/Derbend to Partav in 552. This had probably already taken place under the reign of Vačʿagan and the reign of the Catholicos Šupʿhałišoy of Caucasian Albania. In all likelihood, the seat of the marzpanat and the catholicosate of Caucasian Albania was transferred from Čʿoł to Partav at the beginning of the second decade of the sixth century. Thus, the Council of Ałuēn can be dated around the year 510. The creation of the *Tale of Vačʿagan,* which conveys much older information, can be dated to the beginning of the sixth century, probably 500–502. At that time, Partav had not yet been built, the country was experiencing a period of peace (before the invasion of the Savirs), "the evil and cursed Persian marzpans" (cf. *Dasx.*, 1.18, p. 52) were not in the country (their function being delegated to the king of Albania), and the happy period of the marzpanate of Vahan Mamikonean in Armenia continued, while King Vakhtang Gorgasali ruled in Georgia.

Thus, the *Tale* could not have been written immediately after Vačʿagan ascended the throne (in all likelihood in autumn 485 in the context of the treaty of Nuarsak between Armenia and Iran). As a medieval work written in classical style, the *Tale* is not organised chronologically but rather by a logical succession of good deeds performed by the hero. The *Tale* seems to have been composed after a long period of time as suggested by several facts recounted about Vačʿagan: his ascension to the

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11 Khosrow I Anoshirvan, son of Kavad I, fortified this frontier even more by constructing a wall of stones in Čʿoł/Derbend. According to *J. Marquart*, Partav had already been built by Kavad (*J. Marquart*, Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Mosēs Xorenaçi, Berlin, 1901, p. 177). Cf. *Akopyan* (cf. fn. 1) 217.

12 Procop., pers. 1.7.5.

13 I published a critical text of the *Canons of the Council of Ałouēn* in *The Armenian Authors*, t. III, 6th Century, Antelias, 2004, p. 127–140 (in Armenian).

throne under the King of Kings Vałarš (Balash; r. 484–488); the restoration of Christianity throughout the entire country; the dissolution of several sects in Artsakh and in Caucasian Albania; the discovery of the relics of Saint Pantaleon and Saint Zachary in the city of Tsri of the Čiłbkʿ/Silvi (on the left riverbank of the Kur); and the discovery of the relics of Saint Grigoris in Amaras (in Artsakh on the right riverbank). Finally, the fact that the biannual celebration of the saints' memory is mentioned (*Dasx.*, 1.23, p. 86) shows that the text was not composed immediately after the discovery of the relics of Grigoris and their arrival in Diutakan. It is clear that the king supported their veneration for several years, as mentioned by the author. The last paragraph of chapter 1.19 – regarding the divine gift of the eldest son, named Pantaleon, to a king who had no offspring – demonstrates that at least nine months must have passed between the discovery of the relics and their display. At the time of the discovery of the relics of Grigoris at Amaras, Vačʿagan also had a daughter named Xǝncʿik "in the age of adolescence" (*Dasx.*, 1.23, p. 93), that is, eleven or twelve years old, which reveals yet another chronological interval.

In summary, the *Tale of Vačʿagan* gives the impression that the term "Albania" ("Ałuankʿ") acquired a new meaning in Armenia after the fall of the Arsacid dynasty and the creation of the three marzpanates in 428 and after the great administrative reform of the Sasanians. The geographical area encompassed by "Albania" was now semi-circular in shape and included the provinces of Artsakh and Outikʿ (separated from Armenia by the reform in 428 and reunited in the marzpanate "Albania/Aṛan"). From that time on, the term "Albania" referred to the entire marzpanate, beginning from the Aras River to the mountains of Caucasia and Derbend. According to conception of the world that was characteristic of the Middle Ages, the Armenians of Artsakh and Outikʿ accepted this denomination of "their" country even though it was under the royal power of Albania with its centre in Kapałak and the spiritual power of the catholicosate of Caucasian Albania with its centre in Čʿoł/Derbend. With the passing of time and above all the transfer of the centres of the catholicosate and the marzpanate to Partav on the right riverbank of the Kur, the convergence reached a point where the Armenians of Artsakh and Outikʿ started to think of themselves as the true masters of Caucasian Albania. They did this by assuming pejorative positions towards smaller ethnicities of Caucasian Albania, who were also Christian and from the left riverbank of the Kur, and by treating them as mountain dwelling barbarians. This stimulated the partial Armenisation of one group amongst them (and even the transformation into Georgians at Hereti), while another group converted to Islam and was thus Iranianised (in Shirvan). Only the Christian Udis (in the surroundings of Kapałak and of Šakʿi) preserved their ethnic Caucasian Albanian identity until modern times, in the same way as the peoples speaking the Lezgin language of southern Dagestan and of the northern part of contemporary Azerbaijan (the Lezgins, the Tabasarans, the Tzakhours, the Rutuls, the Aghuls, the Budukh, the Kryz, the Khinalugh, etc.). The multi-ethnic community of "Albania" (Ałuankʿ) remained multi-tribal and no unified ethnos emerged bearing this name. One of the reasons for this was that the Armenians on the right riverbank of the Kur rapidly

adopted the term "Albania/Ałuank" in contrast to the Armenians of the province of Gugarkʻ who belonged to the marzpanate of Virkʻ/Iberia. The latter had accepted the propagation of the term Virkʻ towards the south with one major exception, for they had known the eastern Kartvelian ethnos (that is, the Georgian people) under this name for centuries.

These are the social perceptions of this epoch as preserved in the *Tale of Vačʻagan* (as well as in the *Canons of Ałuēn*). The numerous ecclesiastical councils convened by Vačʻagan II are mentioned; however, it should be noted that the well-known *Canons of Ałuēn*, which introduced the doctrines of the *Book of Armenian Canons* to the country, are the result of a council convened on the right riverbank. The *Tale* does not contain information on direct contact between the centres of Kapałak/Kabala and Čʻoł of the church of Caucasian Albania. Instead, it strengthens the veneration of Gregory the Illuminator, the Apostle Thaddaeus, Saint Hripsimē and Gayianē and above all Saint Grigoris, the grandson of Gregory the Illuminator, throughout the entire country and suppresses the cult of Saint Zachary and Saint Pantaleon of Caucasian Albania or, more precisely, of the Kapałak-Čʻoł region. The *Tale* does not put much effort into extolling the pontiffs of the preceding era of the Caucasian Albanian church, as it only mentions in one episode the archbishop Yunan who sat in Čʻoł (*Dasx.*, 1.23, p. 85) and Šupʻhałišoy, a supreme archbishop who also held office in Čʻoł. Rather the Catholicos Yovhan Mandakuni, whose ring was used to seal the relics of Gregory the Illuminator, Hripsimē, and Gayianē that had been brought into Caucasian Albania, is named "patriarch" (*Dasx.*, 1.21, p. 67). The author does not mention the name of the capital Kapałak of the realm of Caucasian Albania (he only names the city of Tsri on the left riverbank of the Kur and the village of Haku); instead, he sanctifies the ethnically Armenian cult centres on the right riverbank of the Kur for the entire diocese of the realm of Caucasian Albania (Amaras, Darahoǰ, Suhaṛ, Kʻaruēč, Ve[h]kert, Diutakan, etc.). Of all the matters proper to Caucasian Albania, the *Tale of Vačʻagan* only sanctifies the Arsacid Vačʻagan the Pious himself (with his queen Šušanik, a typical name for women of the Armenian princely house of Mamikoneans), who likely saw the absolute guarantee of his power by politically relying on the Armenian population of the right riverbank as Christians and more worthy of trust. The final part of the *Tale* compares Vačʻagan "the Illuminator" to Constantine the Great and the Armenian King Tiridates III, both of whom helped to spread Christianity in their countries (*Dasx.*, 1.23, p. 83) even though they predated him by about two centuries.[14] The Armenians of the right riverbank so successfully established the sanctification of Vačʻagan that he continued to be treated as a hero in numerous religious and ethical writings in the following centuries. This king entered the genealogy of the royal houses of Armenia (the Aṛanshahiks and

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14 It needs to be remarked that this section of the text focuses on the image of the king. For our topic, it is useful to compare Vačʻagan to these two kings. In other sources, no such comparison between Armenian or Albanian kings with Constantine I or Tiridates III can be found, even though these kings occupy an important place in accounts of Armenian history.

the Khatchenians) in popular tales and romantic prose of modern times (see *Anahit and Vačʿagan* by Ghazaros Aghayan) and even became a symbol of renewal (as demonstrated by the "Order of Vačʿagan the Pious" in Nagorno-Karabagh/Artsakh).

It should be noted that the downfall of Vačʿagan II and his reign is not mentioned in any trustworthy source although the year traditionally adopted in the literature is around 510. This date should, however, be moved at least to the middle of the 510s to conform with the information about the Council of Ałuēn. In this case, it would be possible to move the date towards the end of Vačʿagan's reign and during the administrative reforms in Sasanian Iran through which King Kavad I abolished royal power in Virkʿ/Kartli (the date of the dethroning of the Georgian King Gurgen is based on the account of Procopius). Recently discovered numismatic evidence increases the probability of this date. In 1993, F. Gurnet and, in 2003, the Iranologist Ed. Khourchoudian deciphered monograms engraved in two similar coins minted in the year thirty-five of the reign of Kavad (522/3) with the letters ʾlʾn, that is, "ALAN" or "ARAN."[15] For the first time, they have demonstrated the link between a monogram of this kind from the year 523 and the downfall of the Caucasian Albanian kingdom, parallel to the downfall of the Georgian kingdom, when both countries were given the modest status of a marzpanate. The Sasanian numismatic material manifests an astonishing logic in this regard; Sasanian coins that bear the inscription *ARM* (= *ARMINA*/Armenia) only occur during the reign of Bahram V Gor (420–438), who abolished Arsacid royalty in Armenia and introduced marzpanate rule. Thus, a period of about thirty-eight years (485–523) can be said to constitute the reign of Vačʿagan II the Pious, the last king of the ancient and medieval kingdom of Caucasian Albania. It should also be noted that one cannot, based upon the happy decades of his reign, assume that the last years of his reign were also so (not to mention the examples of Armenia and Georgia). However, this did not prevent the following generations from seeking an increasingly comprehensive picture of the "pious king" Vačʿagan and from sanctifying him within the tradition initiated by the *Tale of Vačʿagan*.

Vačʿagan II is a king who was elevated to the rank of the perfect eastern Christian both by the *Tale of Vačʿagan* and by the later oral and written Armenian tradition. Here a few aspects of his depiction as a pious Christian ruler will be identified. First, a pious Christian king has to be capable of finding just solutions to the most complicated geopolitical problems before anything else. According to the *Tale of Vačʿagan*, Vačʿagan takes a just and "reasonable" position at the end of the great revolt 482–485 of the peoples of the ante-Caucasus against Sasanian Persia. He thereby earns the throne offered to him by the King of Kings Vałarš (Balash), even though he was only half independent.

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15 *F. Gurnet*, A New Sasanian Mintmark?, *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, N. 138, London, 1993, p. 5; *E. Khourchoudyan*, Armenia and Sasanian Iran, Almati, 2003, p. 190–193 (in Russian).

A pious Christian king also must be loved by all kinds of people under his rule. In the *Tale of Vačʻagan*, the king is always at his people's side and he and his wife Šušanik are adored and praised by the great lords and peasants of Caucasian Albania alike (*Dasx.*, 1.22–23). A king of this kind also needs to wage war against all deviations from Christian doctrine. The *Tale of Vačʻagan* particularly praises his fight with iron and fire against the members of a sect called the "finger-cutters" (the cutters of little fingers) living on the right riverbank of the Kur as well as against those who believed in different priests, wizards, and witches, in order to make them return to the true faith (*Dasx.*, 1.17).

A pious Christian king needs to love the church and build churches and sanctuaries. Vačʻagan took care to build and bless sanctuaries at his newly built residence Artsakh, in Diutakan, in Amaras, and elsewhere (*Dasx.*, 1.20–23). According to one note of Movsēs Dasxourantsi, Vačʻagan the Pious built churches in Caucasian Albania corresponding to the number of days in a year, that is, 365 churches (*Dasx.*, 3.22). Such a king needed to have vast respect for the canons of the Church and to be open to ecclesiastical concerns. This is demonstrated through the fact that various communications survive from three-quarters of the councils convened during the reign of Vačʻagan (*Dasx.*, 1.19, 21, 23, 26).

The king also needs to possess a true devotion to the relics of saints and of Christian martyrs, and Vačʻagan made great efforts in this regard. At his request, Yovhan Mandakuni, Catholicos of Armenia, transfers to Caucasian Albania some of the relics of the principal saints of the Armenian Church, including Gregory the Illuminator and the virgins Hripsimē and Gayianē. Vačʻagan confirms the discovery of relics of Zachary and Pantaleon the Physician, the principal saints of Albania, on the left riverbank of the Kur in the Čiłbkʻ province (*Dasx.*, 1. 19) and is responsible for the discovery of the relics of Grigoris the Adolescent, one of the most important saints of Albania, in the village of Amaras in Artsakh on the right riverbank of the Kur (*Dasx.*, 1.20–23). Later sources attribute the honour of discovering numerous other saints to Vačʻagan.

Finally, a pious Christian king needs to have a passionate love of the school, science, and the sermons of the Christian archimandrites. According to the *Tale of Vačʻagan,* the king spares no efforts in this domain either. He opens schools and with the teachers takes part in the education of children personally (*Dasx.*, 1.18). He sends queries to the most renowned scholars of his time, including the deacon Matthew of Artsakh (*Dasx.*, 1.24), the bishop Abraham Mamikonean (*Dasx.*, 1.25), and the bishop Peter of Siunia (Stepanos Orbelean, *History of Syunik/Siunia*, chap. 22).

It would not be an exaggeration to compare the character and image of a pious Christian king created by Armenian authors to that of King Tiridates III, the evangelizer of Armenia, as created by a medieval Armenian author, and that of Constantine the Great, the evangelizer of the Roman Empire. Therefore, after the downfall of Arsacid reign, the creation of three marzpanates of the ante-Caucasus in 428, and the large Sasanian administrative reforms, the term "Albania/Ałuankʻ" acquired a new

meaning that corresponded to a geographical region in the shape of a semi-circle: "Albania/Aṛan." The term signified from this time on the provinces of Artsakh and Outikʿ, which had been separated from Armenia by the reform and reunited with it in the marzpanate "Albania/Aṛan." From that point forward, the term referred to the marzpanate as a whole, spanning from the Aras River to the mountains of Caucasia. These are the societal perceptions of the time that are recorded in the *Tale of Vačʿagan* and the *Canons of Ałuēn*. The *Tale of Vačʿagan* was the first work to develop the image of a "pious" King Vačʿagan II of Caucasian Albania and contributed to his veneration and his transformation into legend. His veneration was systematically increased during the Middle Ages. King Vačʿagan the Pious thus entered into the genealogy of the royal houses of Armenia, into popular tales and into romantic prose of modern times, even becoming a symbol of renewal.

Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev

Concerning Four Kings From the Land of 'Deep Ravines, Dense Forests and Dark Thickets'

Introduction

Between the end of the eighth and the end of the tenth century four princely houses, of both Armenian and Georgian origin, rose on the territory of the ancient kingdom of Caucasian (or Caspian) Albania, or adjacent thereto, all pretending to the title of the lords of Albania. The four kings of whom we shall speak here all belong to a single Armenian house. In Armenian, the rulers of the renewed Albanian polities were designated with the terms that in the Arsacid kingdom of Armenia (66 BCE – 428 CE) had denoted dynastic rulers and the heads of noble patriarchal families. The claim to the Albanian throne indicates the enduring prestige enjoyed by that Christian kingdom, which had disappeared since c. 510 CE, across the linguistic and the confessional frontiers of the South Caucasus.

The name *Albania* (and its corresponding Armenian and Georgian toponyms) acquired a new meaning in the course of the tenth century to which our story mainly pertains: indeed, since the middle of the ninth century, the Islamic colonisation of the valley of the river Kur had hampered every prospect of joining both its banks under the sceptre of a Christian prince and of thereby restoring the Albanian kingdom within its former boundaries. The new lords of Albania could only pretend to control small portions of its territory split up by the Kur's broad course; consequently, each faced the necessity of creating new military and economical axes for his domain. The tenth-century Armenian author of the *History of the Albanians* assumes this fragmentation of the region by narrating twice of the 'renovation' of a kingdom in Albania, first on the left bank of the Kur (in 893/4), then on its right bank (c. 968). This renovation, however, had also, according to this author, an antecedent in the person of Sahl Səmbatean who in 837/8 had received princely authority from the Caliph's hands, in recognition of his military feats, to rule over both banks of the Kur 'in a kingly manner.' The heroic figure of this prince who – as the *History of the Albanians* maintains – had once succeeded in reuniting both banks of the main river

of the South Caucasus under his kinglike rule thus overshadowed the subsequent Albanian kings.

In order to explore a single instance from the ancient Albania's *Nachleben*, the present paper will focus on the Armenian-Albanian marchlands stretching along the right bank of the middle Kur. Right tributaries of that river became the main axes of the new statelets. The distinct cultural and political identity that was in the process of crystallisation in these valleys during the tenth–beginning of the eleventh century would largely determine, in the period of the Turkic and Mongol invasions, the history of a much vaster area encompassing the eastern spurs of the Lesser Caucasus. The Armenian author of the *History of the Albanians* names these marchlands 'The Eastern Regions,' thus conferring on them a distinct identity in relation to the rest of Armenia. The idea of the 'East' in Armenian historiography, from its inception, had been associated with Iran, whereas in the tenth century 'The Eastern Regions' were those most closely exposed to the Islamic rulers implanted in Ādharbāydjān on the right bank of the Araxes, in the pre-Caspian plains lying to the north of it and, progressively, also along the Kur. The peculiar geographical conditions of this river's right bank, which will be described below, determined those intricate relations that the rulers of the Eastern Regions developed with their Muslim neighbours. The rulers' onomastics reveals the prevalence of local references and of local forms of names, distinct from common Armenian names. We may furthermore notice a particular abundance of Arabic names, and even names of explicit Islamic connotation (e.g., ʿĀlī). These features betray a peculiar *modus vivendi* established between Christianity and Islam on the eastern slopes of the Lesser Caucasus.

We shall take into examination a case of kingship shared between brothers, which has not yet been elucidated in scholarship. In that form of kingship we can discern some characteristic features of the dynastic principle which had been codified in the ancient Armenian society by the customary law. The fragmentary data about the four sons of Prince Išxananun Sewaday (born c. 910), who ruled over a tiny territory north-east of Lake Sewan and who would be recognised there as kings, can be complemented by the sources witnessing the theological exchanges that took place between three of them and the ecclesiastical writer named Tiranun. A number of these sources were edited for the first time during the last decade. The information that can be gleaned from Tiranun's correspondence, documented in edited texts and in an unedited thirteenth-century manuscript from Yerevan, enables us to make some conclusions regarding the form of rulership exercised in the Eastern regions and regarding the idea of kingship that developed there at the end of the tenth century.

The most important of these documents is Tiranun's *Response* to the kings Atərnerseh and Pʾipē, which reveals a particular interest expressed by his correspondents in the origins of the world, in the first-created man and, notably, in Adam's naming of the living creatures from chapter two of *Genesis*. In the tenth century, the Armenian sources, both textual and figurative, witness a renewed interest in this Biblical scene which is seldom discussed in Patristic literature. Significantly, it was often in-

terpreted at that time as a reflection of Adam's royal prerogative. This would echo the new political realities of Armenia, i.e., the restitution of Armenian kingship first in the north (884/5), then in the south of the country (908): the figure of the first human being was present in Armenia as a *typos* of a new Christian king. Our analysis of the circumstances under which the epistolary exchange between Tiranun and his two correspondents took place leads us to hypothesise that in the case of the first kings of the Eastern Regions the interest in Adam was likewise prompted by pondering on the meaning of kingship.

1 Kings Writing to a Theologian

A number of miscellaneous Armenian manuscripts (ժողովածու) containing exegetical and theological works preserve the document entitled 'The Response of Tiranun (var.: Tiran), an Armenian Vardapet, [Given] to the Questions of the Albanian Kings Atᵊrnerseh and Pʻipē' (Տիրանինյ [Տիրանայ] հայոց վարդապետի պատասխանի հարցմանց բաղատրացն Աղուանից Ատրներսեհի եւ Փիպէի), (hereafter: *Response*), which was recently edited by Azat Bozoyan.[1] This letter, which examines two hundred exegetical questions raised by the two kings (*tʻagaworkʻ*), is a precious echo of the intellectual life on the easternmost fringes of historical Armenia on the eve of the first raids of the Oğuz Turks into the South Caucasus.

Tiran(un) praises 'the inexhaustible wisdom and the exquisite discernment' (անոս իմաստութիւն եւ զանազան ընտրողութիւն) of the questions posed by the kings.[2] His *Response* embraces the entire Bible, from the creation of the world to the mission of the apostles, but the focus is there laid on the Six Days of creation. Surprisingly, out of the seventy-nine columns of the edited text the discussion devoted to the New Testament (to John the Baptist, to Jesus and to the apostles) occupies only seven columns. It is even less than the part devoted to Adam and Adam's naming of the animals, which occupies nine columns. Tiran(un) asserts, notably, that

> God allowed Adam to give the names to the beasts (*Gen* 2:19–20) in order that he may become his Creator's companion; that is [the meaning] of the words 'he created man in his own image' (*Gen* 1:27)

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1 Bozoyan's edition of the *Response* relies on five manuscripts of the *Matenadaran*, of which one was copied in the thirteenth and the rest in the seventeenth century: see A. Bōzoyean, 'Տիրանունի վարդապետի մատենագրական գործունէութիւնը' [Tiranun Vardapet's Literary Activity], in Մատենագիրք հայոց [*Library of Armenian Literature*], vol. 10 (Tenth Century), Antelias, 2009, p. 957, n. *; the name of the author of the *Response* will be discussed in section 6 below.

2 'Տիրանինյ հայոց վարդապետի պատասխանի հարցմանց բաղատրացն Աղուանից Ատրներսեհի եւ Փիպէ' (The Response of Tiranun, an Armenian Vardapet, [Given] to the Questions of the Albanian Kings Atᵊrnerseh and Pʻipē'), ed. A. Bōzoyean, in *Library of Armenian Literature*, vol. 10 (cf. fn. 1) pp. 957–996, here on p. 957, § 1.

վասն այնորիկ ետ կոչել Ադամայ զազանացն, զի եղիցի հագորդ Արարչի իւրոյ. այս է գրեալն, թէ արար զմարդն ի պատկեր իւր:[3]

By naming the living beings, Adam thus participates in the creation of the world. This idea, deriving from ancient speculations concerning the first human being, attested by both Jewish and Christian sources and conveyed in Armenian via numerous para-Biblical writings, was also familiar to Tiran(un)'s contemporary Timothy Vardapet.[4]

Michael E. Stone has recently observed that in Armenian literature 'Adam's naming of the creatures was a major topic in the fifth century but disappears from the discussion in the sixth to the ninth centuries.'[5] Significantly, when it reappears in the tenth century, this scene from *Genesis* is often interpreted as a reflection of Adam's royal prerogative. This must be an echo of the new political realities of Armenia, i.e., the restitution of Armenian kingship first in the north (by the Bagratids, in 884/5 CE) and then in the south (by the Arcrunids, in 908 CE) of the country:[6] the figure of the first human being exercising his sovereignty over the animal world was present in Armenia as a *typos* of a new Christian king. Adam, invested by his Creator with the prerogative of giving names to all living beings and reigning in their midst, is represented as the main prototype of kingship at the centre of the east façade of the palatine church built in 915–921 at Ałtʿamar by the first king of Vaspurakan, Gagik Arcruni. A web of formal associations establishes a tight link between Adam and the royal image set above him.[7] Tiran(un)'s letter shows that Gagik

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3 *Response* (cf. fn. 2) p. 960 (Question 8).

4 Timotʿēos Vardapet, 'Յառաջաբան համառաւտ ի Մնեղոց' [Concise Prologue to *Genesis*], ed. Y. Kʿeosēyean, in *Library of Armenian Literature*, vol. 10 (cf. fn. 1) p. 920, § 273.

5 M. E. Stone, *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Traditions. Fifth Through Seventeenth Centuries*, Atlanta, 2013, pp. 57, 373, 393 (§ 3).

6 For an overview of this period in Armenian history, see: N. Garsoïan, 'The Independent Kingdoms of Medieval Armenia', in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. I, ed. R.G. Hovannisian, New York, 1997, pp. 143–185; N. Garsoïan and J.-M. Thierry, 'L'indépendance retrouvée: royaume du Nord et royaume du Sud (IXᵉ–XIᵉ siècle)', in *Histoire du peuple arménien*, ed. G. Dédéyan, Toulouse, 2007, pp. 243–293, with a bibliographic guide on pp. 294–296; A. and J.-P. Mahé, *Histoire de l'Arménie*, Paris, 2012, pp. 127–174 (chapter 5 'Royaumes 884–1066'); R.H. Hewsen, *Armenia. A Historical Atlas*, Chicago, 2001, maps 25, 52, 94, 95, 98–101.

7 We have analysed the para-Biblical sources of this exegetical motif and its interpretation in the iconographic programme of the church at Ałtʿamar in a series of recent studies: I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, 'IV. Gagik Arcruni (908–943/44), un roi théologien. Le Christ selon sa "Lettre concernant la foi" et Adam dans le programme iconographique de l'église de la Sainte-Croix à Ałtʿamar', in Id., *Christ in Armenian Tradition: Doctrine, Apocrypha, Art (Sixth–Tenth Centuries)*, Leuven, 2016, pp. 315–347, esp. p. 337; Id., 'Kingship and Hospitality in the Iconography of the Palatine Church at Ałtʿamar', in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 52/3, 2016, pp. 479–516, esp. pp. 496–498; Id., 'Adam in the Church at Ałtʿamar (915–921) and in a Pseudepigraphal Homily on *Genesis:* the Creator's Companion, a King and a Herald of the Things to Come', in *Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik*, eds. Ch. Böttrich et al., Leipzig, 2020, pp. 306–332.

was not the only tenth-century Armenian ruler to nurture interest in this Biblical scene.[8]

Besides, Byzantine sources of the eleventh century show that taming animals and the animals' obedience to man could be regarded as a symbol of the emperor's dominion, of his influence in foreign territories and of peace in the remotest parts of his domain.[9] Thus, the court philosopher Michael Psellos (1018–c. 1081) asserts that in the hippodrome, whenever the elephant, the most prominent amongst the animals, draws near to the emperor's tribune, it restrains its temper, becoming meek; then, apprehending the emperor's majesty (τοῦ σοῦ κράτους αἰσθάνεται), it gently bends its knee before him and presses its forehead against the ground.[10] This passage helps us to understand how the scene of giving names to the animals could be conceived within the imagery of kingship: the typological relation between Adam and the king does not imply its lineal extension to other protagonists of this scene: in other words, the animal kingdom is not a figure of the kingdom of an earthly lord, nor the animals are the *typoi* of his subjects. The obedience of the animal world rather expresses the aura of the royal charism, the measure of the influence exercised by the august person on the world.

According to Tiran(un), the kings composed their letter

in an hour of extreme dangers [brought] by the squalls of snowstorms, [which] raised, one after another, bulks of billows [as high] as the mountains.

ի ժամու այղչափի վտանգից ի մրրկաց բքացելոց եւ կուտակս յալեաց լեռնացելոց յարուցելոց զկնի մի զմիսոյ:[11]

The heading of Tiran(un)'s letter and these introductory lines will prompt us in the present work to examine a number of questions relating to the date of this document: the identity of the writer and of his correspondents, the acceptation of the collective noun Ałuankʿ (here translated either as 'The Albanians' or 'Albania') at the time of the correspondence, the territory governed by Tiran(un)'s correspondents (styled in the letter as two 'kings'), the origin of their royal dignity and the dramatic events to which the *Response* alludes. We hope that this discussion may add a few strokes

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8 Cf. also Prince Gregory Pahlawuni (Grigor Magistros), (c. 990–1059), in Grigor Magistros, 'Առ Մանուչէ' [To Manučʿē], in Id., Տաղասացութիւնք [*Poetical Compositions*], Venice, 1868, pp. 6–7; Stone (cf. fn. 5) p. 373.

9 N.P. Ševčenko, 'Wild Animals in the Byzantine Park', in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, eds. A. Littlewood et al., Washington, D.C., 2002, p. 78; P. Brown, '"Charismatic" Goods. Commerce, Diplomacy, and Cultural Contacts along the Silk Road in Late Antiquity', in *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe,* ca. *250–750,* eds. N. Di Cosmo et al., Cambridge, 2018, p. 96.

10 Michael Psellos, '4. To Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos', in *Michaelis Pselli Orationes panegyricae*, ed. G.T. Dennis, Stuttgart, 1994, p. 62, ll. 161–169.

11 *Response* (cf. fn. 2) p. 957, § 2, n. 9; cf. A. Mnacʿakanyan, Աղվանից աշխարհի գրականության հարցերի շուրջը [*Concerning the Literature of Caucasian Albania*], Yerevan, 1966, p. 208.

to the dim profiles of the two kings and of their two brothers, as well as elucidating the manner in which they and their contemporaries conceived of their reign.

The tenth and the eleventh centuries being a period of great instability in the south-eastern Caucasus, the available Armenian, Georgian and Arabic sources often do not allow us to reconstruct the chronology, the identity of the actors and the political geography of the region. The *Response* provides us with very little information about its author or its recipients. Various figures in the tenth and the eleventh century bore the name Tiranun. We shall be facilitated in determining the most likely writer by turning first to the two kings and to their tiny kingdom.

2 Caucasian (or Caspian) Albania and 'The Eastern Regions' of Armenia

Of all the Armenian states that arose in the wake of the fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate, the tiny principalities and kingdoms that emerged in the course of the tenth and the eleventh century on the eastern spurs of the Lesser Caucasus would prove, surprisingly, to be the most enduring in the age of the Turkic and Mongol invasions. They, and their reigning houses, were also at the origin of the *melikʻ*s' statelets of Karabagh, which would survive right until the Russian annexation of the region in 1813 when the local dynasts (*melikʻ*s) would be dispossessed by the Imperial administration.[12]

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12 Cf. C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington, D.C. 1963, pp. 214, 216–217, nn. 244, 250. The extant sources do not allow us to discern the origins of the ruling houses of Karabagh before the ninth century; cf. B. Martin-Hisard, 'Constantinople et les archontes du monde caucasien dans le *Livre des cérémonies*, II, 48', in *Travaux et Mémoires*, XIII, 2000, p. 413. Beginning from the ninth century, however, the picture becomes much clearer. For the sweep of time between the ninth and the eighteenth centuries, the genealogical tables of the ruling dynasts of Gardman, of Pʻaṙisos and of Xačʻēn, on the territory of the Highland Karabagh, and of the Catholicoi of Albania related to them, as well as of their ancestors, have been composed by Cyril Toumanoff, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de la Caucasie chrétienne (Arménie – Géorgie – Albanie)*, Rome, 1976, pp. 230–233 ('Princes de Siounie'), pp. 236–240 ('Princes de Khatchēn et de Gardman, Princes puis Rois d'Albanie [Cis-cyrane: Gardman/Parisos]'), pp. 243–245 ('Hasan-Djalalides, Dynastes [Méliks] de Khatchēn'), p. 246 ('Ouloubékides-Schahnazarides, Dynastes [Méliks] de Gélarkounik/Gélam, puis de Varanda'), pp. 250–252 ('Aytinides-Abovides-Béglarides, Dynastes [Méliks] de Goulistan'); the stemmas on pp. 238–240 have successively been amended, and those on pp. 243, 246, 250 supplemented, in Id., *Supplément au manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de la Caucasie chrétienne*, Rome, 1978, pp. 38–40. Most of the sources of these genealogical trees are discussed in Id., *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (quoted above in this note). An amended stemma of the princely houses of the Eastern Regions from the ninth to the thirteenth century has been proposed by Alekʻsan Hakobyan (= Yakobean/Akopjan): A. Yakobean (Hakobyan), 'Խաչէն-Խոխանաբերդ ամրոցը եւ նրա իշխանատոհմը Թ–ԺԳ դարերում (քննական ակնարկ)' [The Fortress Xačʻēn-Xōxanaberd and its Princely Dynasty in the Ninth–Thirteenth Centuries (A Critical Examination)], in *Handēs Amsōreay* 2010, insert; see also R. H. Hewsen, 'The Meliks of Eastern Armenia. II', in *Revue des Études Armé-*

The Armenian toponym *Ałuankʻ*, the Middle Persian *Aran* (the name also adopted by the Arabic authors as *ar-Rān*) and the Georgian *Rani* all designated the *Albania* (Ἀλβανία) known to the Classical authors, although the boundaries implied by these names do not coincide. Even if we limit ourselves to the Armenian sources, the toponym *Ałuankʻ* could, from an early date,[13] refer to diverse territories on both banks of the middle Kur;[14] their populations had diverse ethnic origins and spoke different languages. The most important source for the history of these lands between the fourth and the tenth century is the composite *History of the Albanians* (hereafter: *HA*) written in Armenian between the eighth and the end of the tenth century and attributed to Moses of Dasxuran, or of Kałankatoykʻ.[15] Numerous events of those narrated in this work cannot be verified by any other source; hence its chronological difficulties persist despite the various attempts that have been undertaken since the nineteenth century at resolving them.

If we follow the witness of the tenth-century author of book III of *HA*, the murder of the Presiding Prince of Albania Varaz-Tərdat II in 822 brought the Mihranid house (of Parthian origin) of Albania to an end.[16] The Mihranid Albania encompassed not only the ancient Albanian lands expanding over the left bank of the middle Kur, the south-eastern spurs of the Greater Caucasus and the pre-Caspian plains; it also included the easternmost lands of historical Armenia, Utikʻ and Arcʻax,[17] situated on the right bank of the river. The ancient Albanian kingdom, being more loyal to the Sasanian overlords than Armenia, was rewarded with these lands after the Armenian Arsacid kingdom had been abolished by the Sasanians in 428;[18] the annexation of

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niennes, X, 1973–1974, pp. 286–287; on Karabagh before the Russian annexation, see Id. (cf. fn. 6), maps 145 and 148.

13 At least since Movsēs Xorenacʻi, Պատմութիւն հայոց [*History of the Armenians*], eds. M. Abełean et al., Tiflis, 1913, p. 113 (book II, chapter 8); cf. N. Adoncʻ, ʻԲագրատունեաց փառքʼ [The Glory of the Bagratids], in Երկեր [*Works*], vol. I, Yerevan, 2006, p. 515.

14 Kur is the Armenian name of the river which to the Classical authors was known as Κῦρος and is called Mtkuari in Georgian, Kor in Persian, Kür in Azeri and Kura in Russian.

15 The first two books of the *History of the Albanians* were written in the eighth century, whereas the third book (judging from the closing chapters 22 and 23) was completed at the end of the tenth century; the composition of this work will be discussed in section 3 below; see also fnn. 21 and 28 below.

16 See *HA*, book III, chapter 20, in Movsēs Kałankatuacʻi, ʻՊատմութիւն Աղուանից աշխարհիʼ [*History of the Land of the Albanians*], ed. G. Gasparean, in Մատենագիրք հայոց [*Library of Armenian Literature*], vol. 15/2 (Tenth Century), Antelias, 2010, p. 403.

17 Utikʻ mainly occupied the lowlands adjacent to the right bank of the middle Kur (east and north-east of Lake Gełakʻuni). Arcʻax lies on the south-eastern spurs of the Lesser Caucasus, i.e., along the upper basins of the right tributaries of the Kur and of the left tributaries of the Araxes (east and south-east of Lake Gełakʻuni); cf. N.G. Garsoïan, *The Epic Histories Attributed to Pʻawstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmutʻiwnkʻ)*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, pp. 498, 445–446.

18 A. Krymskij, ʻСтраницы из истории северного или кавказского Азербейджана (классической Албании)ʼ [Pages from the History of Northern, or Caucasian, Azerbejdžan (Classical Albania)], in *Сергею Фёдоровичу Ольденбургу, к пятидесятилетию научно-общественной деятельности, 1882–1932* [*Volume Dedicated to S.F. Olʼdenburg*], Leningrad, 1934, p. 295; K. Trever, *Очерки по исто-*

Utikʿ must have ensued immediately, whereas Arcʿax was probably not annexed until shortly after 451. At an early date, the Mihranids themselves also put down their roots in the ancient Armenian district of Gardman, in the low course of the river Šamkʿor which flows through Arcʿax and then Utikʿ before emptying into the Kur. After the suppression of the Albanian royalty by the Sasanians shortly before 510, the Mihranids came to play a dominant role in the government of the Sasanian province of Aran, later acquiring the aforementioned office of the Presiding Prince of Albania. The Šamkʿor valley and those adjacent to it will be in the focus of our discussion.[19]

During the later part of the fifth century, on the territory of Utikʿ, by the Kur, near the ancient Armenian city of Partaw, was founded the fortress of Pērōzapāt (later Pērōzkavād) which would replace Kabala (Kapałak), situated less accessibly on the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus, as the new administrative centre of Aran: first as the capital of the tributary kings, then as the new seat of the Persian viceroy and later as that of the Arab officials. In 551–555, or soon afterwards, the see of the Albanian Catholicos was also transferred to Partaw from the ancient Čʿoł (Čoray) on the pre-Caspian plain on account of Khazar incursions.[20] From the first part of *HA* (books I and II), written by an eighth-century author native of Utikʿ,[21] we learn that the location of this city – chosen on the opposite bank of the Kur – offered better protection from hostile incursions.[22] The Kur is a broad and deep river, yet one not easily navigable:[23] the accumulation of mountain debris deposited in the river-bed

рии и культуре кавказской Албании IV в. до н. э. – VII в. н. э. [*Essays on the History and the Culture of Caucasian Albania. Fourth Century* все–*Seventh Century* се], Moscow, 1959, p. 225; V. Minorskij (= V. Minorsky), *История Ширвана и Дербенда X–XI веков* [*History of Shirvān and Derbend in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*], Moscow, 1963 (a revised and amplified edition of Id., *A History of Sharvan and Darband in the 10th and 11th Centuries*, Cambridge, 1958), p. 29; Toumanoff (1963, cf. fn. 12), pp. 475–484; A. Akopjan (Hakobyan), *Албания – Алуанк в греко-латинских и древнеармянских источниках* [*Albania – Ałuankʿ in the Græco-Latin and Ancient Armenian Sources*], Yerevan, 1987, pp. 111–117; R.H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (AŠXARHACОYCʿ). The Long and the Short Recensions*, Wiesbaden, 1992, p. 142.

19 See the map attached to this study.

20 Drasxanakertcʿi, *History of the Armenians* (cf. fn. 35) pp. 163–164 (chapter ii.4). Situated on the right bank of the river Gülgerı-çay, opposite the present-day village Nügdi on its left bank (twenty km south-east of Derbent/Darband); cf. M. Barxutareancʿ, Աղուանից երկիր և դրացիք [*The Country of Albania and Its Neighbours*], Tiflis, 1893, pp. 105–107.

21 The provenance of the author of books I and II is known from his own declaration: see book II, chapter 11, in *HA* (cf fn. 16) p. 184. Furthermore, Kałankatoykʿ (and, admittedly, also Dasxuran [var. Dasxurēn]), with which the author of the *History of the Albanians* was associated in the later centuries, is also situated in Utikʿ. The aforementioned text – in which the village Kałankatoykʿ is mentioned – does not imply, however, that the writer stemmed from the same.

22 See book II, chapter 4, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) pp. 163–164; this location also facilitated the Sasanians' control of Albania: Krymskij (cf. fn. 18) pp. 295, 298 (n. 3); later, as we shall see in section 5, this location would also facilitate the Islamisation of Albania.

23 See the discussion in: Trever (cf. fn. 18) pp. 42–44; V. Bartol'd (= W. Barthold), 'Место прикаспийских областей в истории мусульманского мира' [The Place of the Pre-Caspian Regions in

'District of Ganjak': map drawn by Vardan Mirzoyeanc̣, Tiflis 1899 (60 × 45 cm; scale 1: 500 000). [Reproduced in Rouben Galichian, History of Armenian Cartography Up to the Year 1918, London/ Yerevan, 2017, p. 85. After 120 years it still remains one of the best maps of this region. The writer is truly grateful to Rouben Galichian for kindly providing him with a digital reproduction of this document. The ancient sites are indicated in transcription by the author of the present paper.]

obstructs its stream and creates numerous meanders along its course. The city was set at the delta of the river Tərtu (Tʿartʿaṙ, one of the chief right tributaries of the Kur), beside the very first foothills of the Lesser Caucasus and close to one of the most important crossings over the Kur,[24] with a view commanding the plains beneath and holding in check the populations penetrating the South Caucasus from the north. Yet it is precisely from this city that, between the end of the eighth and the middle of the tenth century, the expansion of Islam to the highlands rising behind it would commence.

After the centre of Albania had shifted onto the right bank of the Kur, a territory that had still largely (or even predominantly) been inhabited by Armenians, the lin-

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the History of the Muslim World], in Сочинения [Works], vol. II/1, Moscow, 1963, pp. 658–659, 686–688.

24 The crossing was situated near the present-day city of Mingəçevir, Azerbaijan (not to be confused with the Persian province of Ādharbāydjān south-east and east of Lake Urmiya); cf. Trever (cf. fn. 18) p. 66.

guistic and ethnic demarcation between the two countries progressively faded. The name *Ałuankʿ* spread not only onto the former Armenian provinces, but also onto other Christian lands lying on the right bank of the middle course of the Kur.[25] Nevertheless, after the fall of the Mihranid house the two banks of this river were destined to have separate political histories (save for two short interludes), and only their ecclesiastical unity would endure for a much longer time.[26] When their prospects of expansion in the easterly direction would be counteracted by the Muslims, the rulers of the river's right bank would divert their attention westwards, trying to set a foothold in the heights framing Lake Gełakʿuni (later known as Lake Sewan), thus securing lasting cultural bonds between the right bank of the middle Kur and central Armenia (see section 4 below).

Various Armenian sources betray the awareness of a certain alterity proper to the lands lying on the eastern and the north-eastern slopes of the Lesser Caucasus. This awareness is perceptible, for example, in the denominations 'The Eastern regions' (Արեւելից կողմանքն), 'The Eastern country' (Արեւելից աշխարհն), 'This Land of the Easterners' (երկիրս Արեւելեայցս) and 'Our Eastern [land]s' (Մեր արեւելեայքս) under which the eighth-century Armenian author from Utikʿ assembles all the districts of the right bank of the Kur.[27] As for his native land of Utikʿ, occupying a long stretch of the bank, this he calls 'The Eastern Border[land]s' (Սահմանք Արեւելից), for at the centre of his frame of reference is the Ararat valley, Armenia's heartland.[28] Most likely, he does so because he himself is of Armenian stock. Such a perception of these lands could be a result of the time that they had remained incorporated into the Mihranid kingdom and into the province of Aran where they must have been exposed to the Sasanian politics of Iranianisation; it could also have had more remote origins: during the Arsacid period Arcʿax and especially Utikʿ had never been fully Armenianized, either culturally or linguistically.

Atmospherically as well, the Eastern Regions belong to a different world: the mountains framing them to the west and north-west prevent the waters originating in the Caspian Sea from advancing to the Armenian plateau; these lands have therefore a humid climate and mild temperatures. Livestock thus could winter there in the open, which favoured husbandry and agriculture.[29] Furthermore, the ground of the

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25 Adoncʿ (cf. fn. 13) p. 515; Toumanoff (1963, cf. fn. 12) pp. 477–478, 480–481, n. 189; A. Ełiazaryan, Արաբական խալիֆայության Արմինիա վարչական շրջանը [*The Administrative Province Armīniyya of the Arab Caliphate*], Yerevan, 2010, pp. 72; Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 142–149, 244–245.
26 Martin-Hisard (cf. fn. 12) pp. 406, 413, 496.
27 See for ex. *HA* (cf. fn. 16) pp. 39, 51, 64, 65, 135, 136, 149, *passim*; cf. Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 239, 247–248, 254–255, 268.
28 See book I, chapter 27, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 136; A. Hakobyan has identified within *HA* a cluster completed between 682 and 684. A critical edition of this cluster has been published by him in: Ananun [Anonymous Author], '684 թուականի պատմութիւն' [The 684 History], ed. A. Yakobean (Hakobyan), in Մատենագիրք հայոց [*Library of Armenian Literature*], vol. 5 (Seventh Century), Antelias, 2005, here p. 799.
29 Barxutareancʿ (cf. fn. 20) p. 56.

Eastern Regions is much better watered than the Armenian high plateau with its porous soil of volcanic origin. The right tributaries of the middle Kur, densely 'ruling' its right bank between the Joroy Get (Joraget/Ałstew/Lopʻna) in the north-west and the Tərtu in the south-east, render these lands an exception on the map of the whole of historical Armenia. Strabo distinguishes Sakasènè (Šakašēn), a district stretching along the bank of the Kur (opposite the mouth of the Kambeč, its left tributary), in Utikʻ, and adjacent in the south-west to Gardman, as 'the best land of Armenia' (Str., XI.VIII.4).[30] To describe the province of Arcʻax, the eighth-century writer of *HA* employs three composite adjectives: խորախորիմ, անտառայար and մայրաստանիկ,[31] i.e., 'having deep ravines, dense forests and dark thickets.'[32] The series of these qualifiers, extremely rare or even unattested elsewhere, is clearly employed by him with the aim of highlighting the uniqueness of Arcʻax's landscape.[33] Such distinctive climatic conditions influenced the settlement, the distribution of different populations and the economic life of the Eastern Regions since most remote times. The originality of their historical itinerary is also strongly indebted to this natural specificity.

The idea of the 'East' in Armenian historiography, from its inception, had been associated with Iran, whereas in the tenth century 'The Eastern regions' were those most closely exposed to the Muslim rulers implanted in the pre-Caspian regions. The Arabs had succeeded in Islamizing mainly the lowlands adjoining the Caspian coast. By contrast to those lowlands, in the wooded mountainous valleys with their narrow 'bottomless ravines,'[34] unsuitable for pasturage of large herds (especially so in winter), Christian dynasts held sway. The woods[35] were particularly thick in the north of the region and on the northward slopes of its gorges and mountains.[36] This highland area was separated from the plains not only by the Kur, but also by marshlands frequent along its banks.[37] During hostile raids, the gorges of the Eastern Regions thus

30 One of the most recent editions of Strabo's *Geography* is that prepared by Stefan Radt: *Strabons Geographika*, vol. 3 (Buch IX–XIII), ed. S. Radt, Göttingen, 2004, p. 343, ll. 28–31.

31 մայրաստանիկ: a word deriving from the unattested * մայրաստան, 'the country of dark forests.'

32 See book I, chapter 28, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 140; this is a closer translation than 'deep-valleyed' as was proposed by Ch. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxurançi*, London, 1961, p. 56; on the same point, cf. also Stepʻanos Ōrbēlean, Պատմութիւն նահանգին Սիսական [*History of the Province Sisakan*], ed. K. Šahnazareancʻ, vol. 1, Paris, 1859, p. 122 (chapter 21).

33 Cf. also book I, chapter 28, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 140, n. 8; cf. 'The 684 History' (cf. fn. 28) p. 802, n. 25.

34 S. Barxudarjan (= S. Barxudaryan), *Страницы из истории Арцаха и армяно-албанских отношений* [*Pages from the History of Arcʻax and of the Armenian-Albanian Relationships*], Yerevan, 2011, p. 124; see also Barxutareancʻ (cf. fn. 20) p. 48.

35 Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʻi, 'Պատմութիւն հայոց' [History of the Armenians], ed. G. Tēr-Vardanean, in Մատենագիրք հայոց [*Library of Armenian Literature*], vol. 11/1 (*Tenth Century; Historiography*), Antelias, 2010, p. 500 (chapter 47, § 6).

36 Barxutareancʻ (cf. fn. 20) p. 54.

37 Drasxanakertcʻi, *History of the Armenians* (cf. fn. 35) p. 556 (chapter 63); M. Barxutareancʻ (cf. fn. 20) p. 55; Id., Արցախ [*Arcʻax*], Baku, 1895, p. 2.

became the best hiding places for the Christian populations of the surrounding territories; Christians fled there not only from the east but also from the west.[38] The area was covered by a web of forts, fortresses and fortified monasteries built chiefly along the upper stream of the numerous right tributaries of the Kur and along that of the left tributaries of the Araxes.[39] The forts and fortresses were usually erected on steep crags surrounded by woods. Such a position made the forts almost impregnable, especially so for the invaders unfamiliar with the terrain. The forts also offered protection to the monasteries which were customarily built on the slopes beneath. By travelling and sojourning in different forts, the princes could assure control over a sizeable territory.

After the fall of the Mihranid kingdom, various houses, of Albanian, Armenian and Georgian origin, emerged on the territories of the former kingdom of Albania that had once straddled both banks of the Kur; at least four of these (Albanian and Armenian), rising before the end of the tenth century, pretended to the title of the lords of Albania.[40] In Armenian, this concept was mainly expressed by means of two terms and of their derivatives: *išxan*, the word which in Arsacid Armenia had denoted a dynastic ruler, and *tēr*, the head of a noble patriarchal family responsible for its social obligations. This claim indicates the prestige exercised by the ancient kingdom of Albania long after its fall. Yet, as has been suggested above, neither

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38 The account contained in book II of *HA* may indicate that in c. 640 Arcʿax also became a refuge for the Armenians fleeing from the region of Gełam, i.e., the eastern and south-eastern shores of Lake Gełakʿuni (cf. վասն չար նեղութեան ժամանակի); see book II, chapter 50, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 350; Stepʿanos Ōrbēlean also describes the province of Arcʿax as a refuge, defining it as 'inexpugnable' (ամուր աշխարհն Արձախայ): Id. (cf. fn. 32) vol. 1, p. 110 (chapter 19). We should also bear in mind that the ancestors of four out of the five houses of the *melik*ʿs who ruled Karabagh before the Russian conquest had not stemmed from these highlands but had migrated there in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries from the regions of Utikʿ, Sōdkʿ, Siwnikʿ and Łoṙi; see Raffi, Խամսայի մելիքությունները (1600–1827). Նյութեր հայոց նոր պատմության համար [*The Houses of the Xamsa Melikʿs (1600–1827). Materials for Modern Armenian History*], in Id., Երկերի ժողովածու [*Collected Works*], vol. 9, Yerevan, 1987, pp. 420–438.

39 For the basins of the rivers Šamkʿor, Artʿenay Ĵur and Ganjak, see the maps in S. Karapetyan, *Northern Artsakh*, Yerevan, 2007, pp. 220, 448 and 63. A fortress in the full sense of the word was the stronghold of Giwlistan, perched on a sheer crag north-east of Mt. Məṙaw (3 724 m.), in the headwaters of the stream Heran (Azeri: İncə). Judging from the remains of ancient fortifications reconstructed in the eighteenth century, the castle of Giwlistan was surrounded by a double wall; see scheme '9. Գյուլիստանի բերդ' [9. The Castle of Giwlistan], in A. Łulyan, Արցախի և Սյունիքի մելիքական ապարանքները [*The Melikʿs' Castles of Arcʿax and Siwnikʿ*], Yerevan, 2001, p. 37.

40 Cf. Toumanoff (1976, cf. fn. 12) pp. 69–70 ('B.6. Princes de Schakē/Schakikhi, puis de Hérétie, Rois d'Albanie [Trans-cyrane: Schakē et Hérétie]': end of the eighth–beginning of the eleventh century); pp. 71–72 (C.7. 'Princes de l'Autre Haband, dits Rois d'Albanie, puis Rois de Siounie': beginning of the tenth–middle of the thirteenth century), pp. 112–114 ('E.18. Rois de Lori et [titulaires] d'Albanie': end of the tenth–middle of the thirteenth century); pp. 236–240 ('D.44. Princes de Khatchēn et de Gardman, Princes puis Rois d'Albanie [Cis-cyrane: Gardman/Parisos]' and their later ramifications: first half of the ninth century–nineteenth century); pp. 238–240, amended in Id. (1978, cf. fn. 12) pp. 38–40.

of these statelets would be able to revive the ancient Albanian identity, whether territorial, linguistic or ideological: the Armenian Catholicos John of Drasxanakert (c. 848–929?), who was personally acquainted with these lands, witnesses in his *History of the Armenians* that his contemporary Albanian princes recognised themselves as belonging to the same 'people' (ժողովուրդ) of the Armenians.[41] This, however, was not necessarily the case of all the divergent populations occupying distinct natural habitats of the region (e.g., the Alpine meadows, the slopes and the lowlands), and particularly of the population inhabiting the lowlands of Utikʿ, whose linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity endured into the tenth century and even much later.[42]

By proclaiming themselves lords of Albania, the Armenian and Georgian dynasts aspired to become the aggregating forces for the Christian populations scattered about the ravines of the middle Kur basin, of Armenian, Georgian, Albanian and of other North-east Caucasian and Iranian origins, and speaking in a variety of tongues.[43] These dynasts also laid claim – in a merely titular way or with the prospect of future expansion – to the river Kur itself, abundant in fish, and even to the fertile plains[44] which lie beyond it and which had once represented the heart of the ancient kingdom of Albania, as well as to the salt pans and naphtha wells of the pre-Caspian area.[45]

Because the Albanian lowlands enjoyed much warmer winters, the routes from there to Georgia, Persia, Caspian ports and even the land of the Khazars beyond the Čʿoɫay Gates (also known as the Caspian Gates, near Darband) remained practicable throughout the year.[46] Although not without obstacles, the Kur could also be used for navigation.[47] The accessibility of these routes acquired a particular relevance from the 920s, when the relative peace made possible a rapid development

41 Drasxanakertcʿi, *History of the Armenians* (cf. fn. 35) p. 492 (chapter 44).
42 Drasxanakertcʿi, *History of the Armenians* (cf. fn. 35) pp. 516 (chapter 52) and 543 (chapter 59).
43 A.K. Alikberov, 'Народы и языки кавказской Албании. О языковом континууме как альтернативе койне. Язык письменности и язык базара' [Peoples and Languages of Caucasian Albania; on the Linguistic Continuum as an Alternative to Koine; the Language of Written Culture and the Language of the Market Place], in *Albania caucasica*, vol. I, ed. A.K. Alikberov et al., Moscow, 2015, pp. 108–112.
44 Cf. the praise of the Muqan (Mowakan) plain at the confluence of the Kur with the Araxes by Kirakos of Ganjak (1200–1271), in Kirakos Ganjakecʿi, Պատմութիւն հայոց [*History of the Armenians*], ed. K. Melikʿ-Ōhanĵanyan, Yerevan, 1961, pp. 234–235 (chapter 20).
45 See book I, chapter 5, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 38; Barxutareancʿ (1895, cf. fn. 37) p. 14.
46 See book II, chapter 39, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) pp. 302–303 (cf. 'The 684 History' [cf. fn. 28], p. 869); the author also specifies that olive trees grew in the lowlands, which were very rare on most of the territory of the Armenian plateau: see book I, chapter 5, *Ibid.*, p. 38. Concerning Bardhaʿa (the ancient Partaw), its region and the river Kur, see also al-Iṣṭakhrī: the excerpts from his 'Kitab al-Masalik wal-Mamalik', translated and commented in J. Laurent and M. Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, Lisbon, 1980, pp. 513–514, 516; see also the Arabic geographer of the second half of the tenth century ibn Ḥawḳal, *Ibid.*, pp. 523–524; al-Muḳaddasī, *Ibid.*, p. 535.
47 See al-Iṣṭakhrī, in Laurent and Canard (cf. fn. 46) p. 516; ibn Ḥawḳal, *Ibid.*, p. 527; Minorsky (cf. fn. 125), p. 13; Minorskij (cf. fn. 18) pp. 53–54, 100, 118, 145–155.

of the economy of Armenia and of the international trade across the South Caucasus; these transformations were accompanied by an important growth of the cities, and notably of Partaw and its Islamic successor, Bar<u>dh</u>aʿa.[48] The routes connecting Bar<u>dh</u>aʿa and its north-western successor Gan<u>dj</u>a (which will be discussed in section 5 below) to Armenia almost unavoidably crossed the Eastern Regions. The consolidation of the new Christian statelets in that area in the tenth century is not unrelated to these new economic conditions.

Vis-à-vis the Armenian Bagratids reigning from the Axurean valley, the title of the lords of Albania led to claims of independence and provoked numerous conflicts.[49] The measure of the independence enjoyed by the rulers of the Eastern Regions during different periods and the exact boundaries of their domains are difficult to determine.[50] Thus, the account of *HA* is contradicted by Stephen of Tarōn (Asołik, i.e., 'The Cantor,' c. 935–c. 1015), the author of a historiographical trilogy reaching the year 1004, which relies on the archives of the Bagratid capital of Ani where the author stayed in the service of Catholicos Sargis of Sewan (992–1019). In the *History of the Writer's Own Times*, the third book of his work, Asołik mentions Xačʿēn and Pʿaṙisos (the latter, as we shall see in section 4, largely overlapping with the ancient Gardman mentioned above), i.e., districts pertaining to the ancient provinces of Arcʿax and of Utikʿ, amongst the territories over which Gagik Bagratuni (989/90–c. 1017/20) extended his rule after he had risen in 990 to the throne of Ani.[51]

The Church of Albania itself aspired to autonomy. After the earthquakes that between 863 and 893 had destroyed the ancient patriarchal see of Duin, the Armenian Catholicos had for a long time no fixed residence. This instability decreased his influence, encouraging centrifugal tendencies in the Eastern Regions, and in the days of Catholicos George II of Gaṙni (878–898), probably following the restitution of Albanian kingship on the left bank of the Kur by Prince Hamam,[52] the Albanian catholicoi ceased receiving consecration from the catholicoi of Armenia, even attempting to extend their influence westwards, over the vast land of Siwnikʿ and the districts lying north of Lake Gełakʿuni.[53]

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48 H. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, Lisbon, 1965 (second revised edition), pp. 138–139.

49 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 420; B. Ulubabyan, Խաչէնի իշխանությունը X–XVI դարերում [*The Xačʿēn Principality in the Tenth–Seventeenth Centuries*], Yerevan, 1975, p. 103; Martin-Hisard, 'Constantinople et les archontes du monde caucasien' (cf. fn. 12) pp. 413–414.

50 Cf. Ulubabyan (cf. fn. 49) p. 89.

51 See book III, chapter 30, in Stepʿanos Tarōnecʿi, 'Պատմութիւն տիեզերական' [*Universal History*], ed. G. Manukean, in Մատենագիրք հայոց [*Library of Armenian Literature*], vol. 15/2 (Tenth Century), Antelias, 2010, p. 808.

52 C. Zuckerman, 'À propos du *Livre des cérémonies*, II, 48', in *Travaux et Mémoires*, XIII, 2000, pp. 568–569, 582; see section 3 below.

53 Stepʿanos Ōrbēlean (cf. fn. 32) vol. 2, pp. 18–19 (chapter 52); M. Ōrmanean, Ազգապատում [*National History*], vol. I, Constantinople, 1912, coll. 1087–1096; J.-P. Mahé, 'L'Église arménienne de 611 à

3 The Recipients of Tiranun's Letter and their Brothers

One of the difficulties in identifying the recipients of the *Response* resides in the fact that a number of princely and kingly names (amongst which Atərnerseh, Gərigor, Hamam, Pʿilippē, Senekʿerim, Sewaday and Yovhannēs) reappear frequently in the annals of the Eastern Regions; the same name was often borne by contemporary dynasts who belonged to different houses ruling over neighbouring lands.[54] Customarily such names were inherited over a generation or passed from uncle to nephew. The recurrence of identical names indicates an attempt at claiming authority by a reference to the recognised ancestors of a single family. It reflects the aspiration to assert historical continuity under the conditions of material precariousness and the lack of political stability in the region. Tellingly, the onomastic references are but seldom to the common ancestors of the Armenians. The abundance and the persistence of names of Arabic derivation (between the ninth and the eleventh century: Abd al-Malikʿ, Abʾl Asad, Abuʾli, Abu-Setʿ, Ali, Hamam, Muawia, Sahl, Sewada, to which many others would be added beginning from the twelfth century) are indicative of a distinct cultural and political identity in process of crystallisation; the relations with the close Islamic neighbours played an essential role in this process. It is by their Arabic names that the Armenian princes presented themselves to these neighbours and to unexpected acquaintances. We may even wonder whether or not the religious identity of their bearers was clear at all times and to all of their interlocutors.[55] Sometimes, such names represented etymological renderings of Christian Armenian names, but they became so tightly attached to the persons bearing them that their baptismal names were frequently omitted by the Armenian historians.

As we have seen, the *Response* is addressed to the kings Atərnerseh and Pʿipē. The latter name must reproduce a popular pronunciation of the name Pʿilippē, i.e., Philip.[56] This was by no means a common name in the Armenian historical re-

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1066', in *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, vol. 4, eds. G. Dagron et al., Paris, 1993, pp. 507–511 ('La réaction antichalcédonienne').

54 Cf. V. Minorsky, 'Caucasica IV: Sahl ibn Sunbāṭ of S̲h̲akkī and Arrān. The Caucasian Vassals of Marzubān in 344/955', in Id., *The Turks, Iran and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages*, London, 1978, VII, pp. 504–505.

55 Such names were a part of the culture for which Marshall Hodgson coined the qualifier 'Islamicate'; see M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Chicago, 1974, vol. I, p. 59; see also S. Lisicjan, *Армяне Нагорного Карабаха. Этнографический очерк* [*The Armenians of the Highland Karabagh. An Ethnographic Essay*], Yerevan, 1992, p. 44.

56 The inscription found on a family tomb discovered in Tigranakert, in Arcʿax, and datable presumably to the first decade of the tenth century mentions the prince of Albania Hamam and his brothers Pʿłipē and Snpat. The form 'Pʿłipē' must be regarded as a missing link in the transformation of the name Pʿilippē/Pʿiłippē into Pʿipē. The family name Pʿłipean found in the *History of the Albanians* is derived from that form; see *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 403; S. Barxudaryan, 'Արցախի, Ճարիի և

cords during the previous centuries, but occurred repeatedly amongst the princes of Siwnik, at least since Prince P'ilippē (821–848) ruling in the district of Vayoc' Jor (which lies south of Lake Gełak'uni, between the Vardenis chain and the massif of Siwnik').[57] During the ninth century P'ilippē's dynasty also ruled over south-eastern districts of Arc'ax.[58] The origin of this name in Siwnik' can even be traced to a remoter period when, in 572, Prince P'ilippos Siwni had, according to Sebēos, fought with alternating success against the Persians and in c. 598 was beheaded at the order of King of Kings Khosrow II.[59] This name was also inherited by those descendants of the Siwni princes who received in inheritance districts in Arc'ax and in Utik', and we even encounter it during the later centuries in the families of the *melik*'s of Karabagh, most of which were also related to the Siwni family.[60] Traces of this name can be recognised in the name of the village P'ip'[61] on the right bank of the river Šamk'or, in the name of the town P'lip' in the upper course of the river Art'enay Jur (another right tributary of the Kur) and even in the Turkic names of two localities, each in proximity to a pass through the Greater Caucasus: of the Lezgian village Filfili opposite the Albanian Gates[62] (near the ancient Albanian capital Kabala) and of the fort Filiplu near the village Ermanid (close to the site of the ancient Č'ołay, the first see of the Albanian Catholicos).[63] These names are remote echoes of the works of construction undertaken by the princes of Siwnik' and Albania, as well as by the *melik*'s who ruled during the subsequent centuries in Karabagh and in the pre-Caspian regions. Some of the ruins of these constructions survive to this day.

In our task of identifying the two kings we may be helped by the following lines from book III of *HA*, which was stopped, as we shall shortly see, in c. 985. Apart from

Փադխասի իշխանությունները IX–X դարերում՝ [*The Principalities of Arc'ax, Šak'i and P'arisos in the Ninth–Tenth Centuries*], in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 1971/1, p. 66.

57 Ōrbēlean (cf. fn. 32) vol. 2, pp. 39–40; H. Ačaṙyan, Հայոց անձնանունների բառարան [*Dictionary of the Armenian Personal Names*], vol. 5, Yerevan, 1962, pp. 201–203; Toumanoff (1963, cf. fn. 12) pp. 230, 232.

58 Apart from numerous names of Arabic origin adopted in their families, various Armenian names of the rulers of Arc'ax between the ninth and the twelfth century also reveal non-classical forms: Musē < Movsēs, Kata < Katarinē, Zak'arē < Zak'aria, Ivanē < Yovhannēs. This recurrent phenomenon may reflect a certain dearth of written culture and the remoteness of the main centres of learning.

59 See Sebēos, in Պատմութիւն Սեբէոսի [*Sebēos's History*], ed. G. Abgaryan, Yerevan, 1979, p. 70; Toumanoff (1963, cf. fn. 12) p. 214.

60 R. Hewsen, 'The Meliks of Eastern Armenia. A Preliminary Study', in *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, IX, 1972, p. 304, n. 52; on the early history of the Siwni dynasty, see *ibid.*, p. 310; Id. (cf. fn. 12) p. 298.

61 Barxutareanc' (cf. fn. 20) pp. 193–194.

62 To be distinguished from Darial (the 'Ossian Gates'). See S.N. Murav'ëv (= S.N. Mouraviev), 'Птолемеева карта кавказской Албании и уровень Каспия' [Ptolemy's Map of Caucasian Albania and the Level of the Caspian Sea], in *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii* 1983/I, p. 139, fig. 6; S.N. Mouraviev, 'La transgression "ptoléméenne" de la Caspienne (date: IVe–IIe ss. av. J.-C.; maximum: +10/+20). Trois pièces du dossier', in *Geographia antiqua* 1992/I, p. 141.

63 Barxutareanc' (cf. fn. 20) p. 58; Barxudarjan (cf. fn. 34) pp. 136–137.

the heading of the *Response*, chapter 23 of book III is the only source known to us where the names Atərnerseh and P'ilippē appear jointly. In the introductory lines we are told that the chapter recapitulates the knowledge available to the author concerning the dynasts who, since the fourth-century Vačʻagan the Brave,[64] 'had dominion over these Eastern Regions, [regions] of the Albanians' (ունել զպետութիւն Արեւելեայց կողմանցս՝ Աղուանից).[65] In the concluding lines of this chapter there is a question of four sons of Prince Išxananun Sewaday (to whom we shall revert in the next section). It will emerge from the discussion that follows that his two younger sons are the most plausible candidates to be the recipients of the *Response*:

Իշխանանուն [Սեւադայ] ծնանի որդիս Դ. զՅովհաննէս, զԳրիգոր, զԱտրներսեհ եւ զՓիլիպպէ: Իսկ զերէց որդին Իշխանանին՝ զՅովհաննէս, որ եւ Սենեքերիմ կոչեցաւ, ընտրեաց աջ Բարձրելոյն՝ կոչելով ի թագաւորութիւն. զկանզոից խափանեալ թագաւորութիւնն Տէրն ամենակալ ի ձեռն սորա նորոգեաց, զոր թագաւորն Պարսից շքով եւ մեծամեծ զարդուք զարդարեաց զնա. տայ նմա եւ զբաց հաւր իւրոյ եւ զնոյրին երիվարն:[66]

Išxananun [Sewaday] begets four sons: Yovhannēs, Gərigor, Atərnerseh and P'ilippē. As for Išxananun's eldest son, Yovhannēs, who was also called Senekʻerim, the Most High's right hand chose [him], calling [him] for kingship: through him, the Lord Pantocrator renovated (*norogeacʻ*) the kingdom interrupted since long (*vałnĵucʻ xapʻaneal*). The Persian king adorned him with mantle and with magnificent decorations; he also donated him his father's crown and his steed.

The author speaks of the restitution of the kingdom by Senekʻerim, a descendant of Vačʻagan the Brave and the author's contemporary, in terms similar to those employed by him in the previous chapter with respect to Prince Hamam[67] who in 893/4 had established a new kingdom of Albania with the capital in Šakʻē[68] on the left bank of the Kur:

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64 Cf. book I, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) pp. 39 (chapter 6), 75–76 (chapters 14–15); on Vačʻagan the Brave see A. Hakobyan's contribution in this volume.

65 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 417.

66 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 420; cf. A. Yakobean (Hakobyan), 'Բուն Աղուանքի եւ Հայոց Արեւելից կողմանց թագաւորութիւնները Թ–Ժ դարերում' [The Kingdoms of Albania Proper and of the Eastern Regions of Armenia in the Ninth–Tenth Centuries], in *Handēs Amsōreay* 2011, col. 212.

67 Agatangel Krymskij aptly proposed to see in the Arabic name *Hammam* an etymological rendering of the name *Gregory*, very prominent in Armenia; see Id., 'Страницы из истории северного, или кавказского, Азербайджана (классической Албании). Шеки' [Pages from the History of Northern, or Caucasian, Azerbajdžan (the Classical Albania). Šeki], in A. Krim'skij, *Твори в пяти томах* [*Works in Five Volumes*], vol. 4, ed. O. Ganusec', Kiev, 1974, p. 594.

68 Although tiny homonymous towns also exist in Sōdkʻ and elsewhere in Armenia, this locality has, most likely, to be identified with Šakʻē and its region, which were also known to Arab geographers as S̲h̲akkay, S̲h̲akkī and S̲h̲akkan. The city was situated on the left bank of the Kur, south-west of the present-day city of Şəki (Nuxi), Azerbaijan. See: Adoncʻ (cf. fn. 13) pp. 513–514; K. Juzbašjan (= K. Yuzbašyan), *Армянские государства эпохи багратидов и Византия: IX–XI вв.* [*The Armenian States of the Bagratid Era and Byzantium: Ninth–Eleventh Centuries*], Moscow, 1988, pp. 56–57; Mar-

> The pious Hamam, who became the king of Albania, renovated (*norogeacʻ*) the fallen (*korcaneal*) kingdom of this House of Albania in a way similar to Ašot Bagratuni [who had restored] the kingdom of Armenia.

> Բարեպաշտն Համամ, որ եւ Աղուանից եղեւ թագաւոր, նոյնպէս զկործանեալ թագաւորութիւն տանս Աղուանից նորոգեաց, որպէս Աշոտ Բագրատունի՝ զՀայոց թագաւորութիւնն:[69]

Whilst writing the history of Albania, the tenth-century author assumes the fragmentation of its territory, renouncing any attempt at identifying a singular princely branch as its legitimate ruler or as the suzerain house. To his mind, kingship in Albania is not to be restricted to a single court.

HA informs us that in the year of his coronation ('in the same year,' ի նոյն ամի) Senekʻerim also received regalia from the Byzantine *magistros* Dawitʻ: 'a crown of rare beauty and royal purple [attire]s (*ciranikʻ*)' (թագ զարմանազան եւ ծիրանիս թագաւորական) which the *magistros* 'sent in honour and praise of this man succoured by God.'[70] Following Nikołayos Adoncʻ (Nikolaj Adontz) and later scholars, we are inclined to identify him with the *magistros* (and, later, *kouropalatès*[71]) Dawitʻ of Upper Tao (961–1000) who belonged to the Georgian branch of the Bagratuni (Bagrationi) family. Since the ninth century both titles had frequently been bestowed upon Dawitʻʼs direct ancestors.[72] Both Aristakēs of Lastiver (c. 1000–c. 1085) and Asołik paint Dawitʻ in superlative terms, almost as an embodiment of the good Christian ruler. Following Asołik's witness, Dawitʻ was endowed with rare human and political qualities, thanks to which he enjoyed authority amongst Georgian, Armenian and Albanian princes – both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian – and came to exercise a protectorate over various Christian kingdoms and principalities of the South Caucasus. Native of the Georgian-Armenian marchlands (Tao, largely overlapping with the ancient Armenian Taykʻ) and surrounded by a bilingual court, Dawitʻ was able to assemble not only Georgian, but also Armenian (from the kingdoms of North and South, as well as from Siwnikʻ) and Armenian-Albanian forces against common enemies. In his youth he himself led these troops, and even when old, thanks to the immense authority that he had gained amongst the Geor-

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tin-Hisard (cf. fn. 12) pp. 497–498; Zuckerman (cf. fn. 52) pp. 564–567; Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 12) coll. 78–79.

69 See book III, chapter 22, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 413; cf. Dowsett (cf. fn. 32) p. 221, n. 6.

70 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 420.

71 According to Karēn Yuzbašyan's estimation, Dawitʻ received the title of *kouropalatès* in 990–991, i.e., c. five years after the *History of the Albanians* had been completed; see Juzbašjan (cf. fn. 68) pp. 135, 138–139. According to W. Seibt and H. Métrévéli, however, Dawitʻ should have received this title at a date long preceding 985: W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie*, Vienna, 1976, p. 44; J. Lefort, 'Histoire du monastère d'Iviron, des origines jusqu'au milieu du XIᵉ siècle', in *Actes d'Iviron. I (des origines au milieu du XIᵉ siècle)*, eds. J. Lefort et al., Paris, 1985, p. 22 (n. 6).

72 Adoncʻ (cf. fn. 13) pp. 519–520; cf. Toumanoff (1976, cf. fn. 12) pp. 116–118 ('Bagratides G').

gians and the Armenians, he was still able to summon diverse troops to fight under a common banner:[73]

> This man was meek and humble, more than all [the other] kings of our times. And he became the cause of peace and of edification all over the East, and especially over Armenia and Georgia. For he halted the threat of wars [besetting these countries] from everywhere [...]. And all kings willingly showed him obedience.[74]

By conferring on Senekʻerim a crown, Dawitʻ gained him as a member of his virtual 'league' of South-Caucasian princes: in 988/9, joint forces of Georgians, Armenians of the Bagratid kingdom of Ani, of Vaspurakan and of Siwnikʻ, as well as Albanians, would support him in resisting an army of 'Sarmatians,' i.e., nomads from the Northern Caucasus and from the northern coasts of the Black sea, who were led by King of Abkhazia right to the banks of the Kur.[75] Senekʻerim must have been amongst those princes who responded to Dawitʻ's appeal.

The last phrase of chapter 23 recounts the royal anointment (աւծումն բագաւորական) administered to Senekʻerim by the Patriarch, i.e., the Catholicos of Albania. The importance of Senekʻerim's coronation and anointment, which are narrated as the conclusive events not only of book III but of the entire *HA*, can hardly be overstated: the *History* that starts its account from 'the first man created by God' (book I, chapter 1), the settlement of Noah's descendants about the earth, the ancestors of the Armenians and the Albanians (ibid., chapters 2–3), and the first kings of the Persians, the Armenians and the Albanians (ibid., chapters 3–4)[76] concludes it by narrating the *renovation* of an ancient kingdom in Albania, which has not 'disappeared' (as the account of *HA* has sometimes been interpreted in scholarship) but – as we have seen in the passages quoted above – has only been 'interrupted.' To the mind of the tenth-century historian, this renovation is an accomplishment of the plan of God who, at the dawn of human history, had created the Albanians, the Armenians and other peoples of the world, predestining them to become kingdoms. It is against this background that the first-created man, to whom such an important place is dedicated in Tiran(un)'s letter, could be regarded as the *typos* of the renovator of an ancient kingdom.

Chapter 23 of book III – the last chapter of *HA* to possess a narrative character – leads us to suppose that its writing was completed shortly after Senekʻerim's coronation. No information contained in this chapter can, however, help us to date this

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73 See book III, chapters 28, 41 and 43, in Tarōnecʻi, *Universal History* (cf. fn. 51) pp. 806, 818–819, 822–823.

74 See book III, chapter 13, in Tarōnecʻi, *Universal History* (cf. fn. 51) p. 822; see also Պատմութիւն Արիստակիսի Լաստիվերցւոյ [*Aristakēs Lastivertcʻi's 'History'*], ed. K. Yuzbašyan, Yerevan, 1963, p. 22 (chapter 1).

75 See book III, chapter 28, in Tarōnecʻi, *Universal History* (cf. fn. 51) pp. 805–806.

76 Cf. the inception of chapter 4: 'Here commences [the history] of the primary throne (նախագահութիւն) of Albania', in book I, chapter 4, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 37.

event. Yet the book is concluded by a list of the Albanian catholicoi (chapter 24), which can allow us to determine the date until which the writing of *HA* continued. Recently, Alekʽsan Hakobyan, the author of a major study devoted to the history of Albania and of the Eastern Regions, has shown that two errors slipped into chapter 24 at a very early stage of the textual transmission of *HA*. Hakobyan's study of the manuscript tradition of *HA*, in the course of which he compared the data of chapter 24 with other available historiographic sources of the region (and notably, with Anania of Mokkʽ, Uxtʽanēs, Kirakos of Ganjak, Mxitʽar of Ayrivankʽ and Mxitʽar Goš), enabled him to amend the chronological list of the catholicoi. He rectified the period of Catholicos Gagik's ministry and suppressed the duplication of the name Dawitʽ.[77] Following this scholar, after the 400th year of the Armenian era (i.e., 951–952 CE) and until the accession to ministry of Movsēs, the last catholicos mentioned in the list, not forty or forty-one years (as in two received recensions) but only thirty-one must have elapsed.

Another of Hakobyan's valuable observations regards the rule of this last Catholicos. He notices that the indication of its duration – six years in all the manuscripts[78] – is not followed by any mention of the ministering catholicos in his own day, as could be expected by a reader accustomed to analogous lists. The scholar then concludes that the original book closed with an indication of Movsēs as the ministering Catholicos and that the duration of his ministry was added opposite his name by the author of the copy upon which all the known recensions of *HA* depend. It is to this same copyist that Hakobyan also imputes the chronological errors in the list, which were then repeated by all the successive copyists.[79] We are inclined to accept Hakobyan's hypothesis: a copyist must have presumed to add chronological information in an attempt at homologizing with the previous entries the last name standing in a 'homœoteleutic' list, when he ought as a copyist to have abstained from introducing a new name, that of the current catholicos. Consequently, the first copy must have been prepared after Movsēs's death in 988/9, whereas the book must have been completed before that date but after the accession to the throne of that Catholicos in 982/3. In sections 5 – 6, this conclusion will enable us to propose an approximate date for Senekʽerim's coronation and, consequently, the dates relating to the activity of his brothers Atərnerseh and Pʽilippē.

4 The District of Gardman–Pʽaŕisos

The coronation of Senekʽerim was a culminating moment in the history of the ruling house of Pʽaŕisos, a district whose main axis lay along the river Šamkʽor in the north-

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77 Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 214 – 215.
78 See book III, chapter 24, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 426.
79 Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 215 – 216, 220 – 223; Hakobyan's reconstruction of the text is, unfortunately, not reflected in the critical apparatus of G. Gasparean's edition of *HA*, 2010 (cf. fn. 16).

west of the Eastern Regions. The princely titles of Senekʿerim's ancestors had since long been endorsed by the Caliphate for their services. *HA* tells us how Sahl[80] Səmbatean (died after 855), who had been a prince of Šakʿi/Šakʿē[81] north of the Kur, seized the famous Bābak al-Khurramī, who between the years 820 and 837 had headed a revolt against the Caliph and with whom Sahl had previously collaborated. In 837 Sahl surrendered the rebel to the commander of the Caliphal army Afshīn. If we follow the witness of *HA*, Sahl received from the Caliph (i.e., al-Muʿtaṣim) as a reward the title of Prince of princes, so as to rule over all the territories of the Caliphal province of Armīniyya:

> Եւ ի նոյն ամին [յերկու հարիւր ութսուն եւ վեց թուին Հայոց] նոյն տէրն Սահլի Սմբատեան ձերբակալ արարեալ զապստամբն Բաբան՝ զմարդախողխող, աշխարհաւեր, արիւնարբու զազանն, եւ ետ ի ձեռս ամիրմոմնոյ։ Եւ ընդ վասատակոցն առնու յարքունեացն վարձս բարիս։ Զի առնու իշխանութիւն ի վերայ Հայոց, Վրաց եւ Աղուանից՝ տիրել իշխանութեամբ ամենեցուն արքայաբար։[82]

And in the same year [286 of the Armenian era, i.e., 837–838 CE] the same lord Sahl [son of Səmbat] captured the rebel Baban, a man-slayer, a world-destroyer, a bloodthirsty beast, and committed [him] to the hands of the Caliph.[83] And for his services he receives from the Crown considerable rewards; for he receives the princely authority (*išxanutʿiwn*) over the Armenians, the Georgians and the Aluanians: to rule over all [of them] with his princely authority [and] in a kingly manner (*arkʿayabar*).

The author of book III certainly exaggerates the extent of the dominion possessed by Sahl who, by the time of writing, must already have become a semi-legendary figure; the frequently changing frontiers that intersected the Eastern Regions could amplify this confusion. The triple indication of his realm reflects, nevertheless, the enduring aspiration of the rising house of Albania to weld both banks of the Kur under their sceptre.[84] These lines also reveal a crucial point pertaining to the tenth-century writer's editorial conception; to his mind, Sahl had prepared the restitution of the Albanian kingdom long before royal titles would be conferred on his heirs: first on Hamam, on the left bank of the Kur, then on Senekʿerim, on the river's right bank. Sahl had anticipated these future kings by ruling over the lands lying on both banks, and precisely by doing so 'in a kingly manner' (արքայաբար).

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80 According to Krymskij, the name Sahl could be an Arabic interpretation of the name Philip: see Id., 'Pages from the History of Northern, or Caucasian, Azerbejdžan (the Classical Albania). Šeki' (cf. fn. 67) pp. 591–592, n. 5.

81 Tʿovma Arcruni, Պատմութիւն տանն Արծրունեաց [*History of the House of the Arcruni*], ed. G. Tēr-Vardanean, in *Library of Armenian Literature*, vol. 11/1 (*Tenth Century; Historiography*), Antelias, 2010, p. 207 (book III, chapter 11).

82 See book 3, chapter 21, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 408; cf. the reading proposed by Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) col. 179, n. 6.

83 'Caliph': Arm. *amirmomni* < Arab. *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, i.e., 'Commander of the Believers.'

84 Zuckerman (cf. fn. 52) pp. 567–568.

On the right bank of the Kur, the first stronghold of Sahl's successors was set in the headwaters of the Tərtu, the most important river of the Eastern Regions,[85] which flows down from the Ałahečkʻ/Zangezur chain (the watershed between Siwnikʻ to west and central Arcʻax to east; 2 600–3 400 m of altitude) due north-east. They built forts in the Tərtu basin and along other right tributaries of the Kur, which empty into it upstream of the mouth of the Tərtu. Before 850, Sahl's successor Atər-nerseh (died after 862) built the fort Hand (Handaberd) on the right bank of the Upper Tərtu's left tributary Lew and a palace at the springs of the Tərtu, near the royal baths of the ancient Albanian kings in the village of Vaykunikʻ (Vayunikʻ).[86]

After they had secured their hold on the Tərtu basin, Sahl's successors could prevail in central Arcʻax: John of Drasxanakert specifies that Atərnerseh – Sahl's son according to both *HA* and John of Drasxanakert,[87] whom the latter styles as Great Prince – resided in 'the fortress of Xačʻēn.'[88] This fortress can be identified with Xōxanaberd whose remains subsist on the top of a high wooded hill opposite the hill of Ganjasar (on the top of the latter would be built in 1216 a monastery[89] which would become the new seat of the Catholicos of Albania). Xōxanaberd occupies a particularly advantageous position, offering wide and distant views which could make it possible to establish a system of visual communication by beacons across the entire district and beyond. Xōxanaberd was also connected by paths to other forts in the district.[90] For Tʻovma Arcruni, Atərnerseh is 'Prince of Albania,' while for Arab authors he is 'Prince of ar-Rān.'[91] Atərnerseh's elder son Gərigor (died c. 885) continued the consolidation of his family's domains, building the fort Hawaxałacʻ on the homonymous right tributary[92] of the Tərtu river, which flows into it downstream of the mouth of the Lew.[93] Hawaxałacʻ participated in the web of communication centred at Xōxanaberd. At the very beginning of the tenth century, one of Gərigor's sons would be able to found there an autonomous principality of Xačʻēn.[94]

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85 Not counting the river Ałavnoy/Hagari, a tributary of the Araxes, in the south of the Eastern Regions, which is beyond the scope of the present enquiry.

86 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 419.

87 See, however, Minorsky (cf. fn. 54) pp. 522–523; Martin-Hisard (cf. fn. 12) pp. 407–413.

88 Book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 419; Drasxanakertcʻi, *History of the Armenians* (cf. fn. 35) p. 436 (chapter 26).

89 On Ganjasar, see B. Ulubabian and M. Hasratian, *Gandzasar*, Milan, 1987.

90 S. Sargsyan, Խաչենի ամրոցները [*The Fortresses of Xačʻen*], Stepanakert, 2002, pp. 79–80.

91 Arcruni (cf. fn. 81) p. 207 (book III, chapter 11).

92 The stream otherwise known as Tʻutʻxu; Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) col. 184.

93 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 419; Barxudaryan (cf. fn. 56) p. 73; Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) col. 183; Š. Mkrtčjan, *Историко-архитектурные памятники Нагорного Карабаха* [*Historical and Architectural Monuments of the Highland Karabagh*], Yerevan, 1989, p. 45.

94 Sargsyan (cf. fn. 90) p. 80; Yakobean, Պատմա-աշխարհագրական եւ վիմագրագիտական հետազոտութիւններ (Արցախ եւ Ուտիք) [*Studies in Historical Geography and Rock Inscriptions*], Vienna, 2009, pp. 52, 220–245.

The Tərtu is the only river to cut through the Ałahečkʻ chain before invading the eastern slopes of the Lesser Caucasus. Flowing, in its middle course, along the southern slopes of the Məṙaw chain (3 200 – 3 700 m), it is alimented by numerous streams descending from them. The valley of this full-flowing river became one of the main lines of communication between the Eastern Regions and Siwnikʻ.[95] The control of the Tərtu valley enabled Sahl and his successors to assert their authority also behind the mountain chains of Ałahečkʻ and of Areguni (the latter stretching along the northern and eastern shores of Lake Gełakʻuni and representing a watershed between the ancient Gardman and Siwnikʻ),[96] thus approaching the southern and eastern shores of Lake Gełakʻuni.[97] We hear, for example, of Atərnerseh's wife building the Noravankʻ monastery in the district of Sōdkʻ, in Siwnikʻ.[98] Hakobyan also notices that in the memorial inscription made on the *xačʻkʻar* (a stela with decorated cross carved in stone) erected in 881– 882 CE in Mec Mazray (Masrik),[99] in Sōdkʻ, Atərnerseh's son Gərigor declares himself Prince of Siwnikʻ and of Ałuankʻ (i.e., of Albania).[100] This double title reflects a result of the expansion enacted by the previous generations on both slopes of the mountains framing Lake Gełakʻuni.

We thus notice that at least two of Sahl Səmbatean's successors, Atərnerseh and his son Gərigor, who were established in the Tərtu valley, inherited Sahl's princehood of Albania. In the beginning of the tenth century, Atərnerseh's grandson, Sahak Sewaday (died after 923), established himself in the north-western part of the Eastern Regions, between the Areguni mountains and the Kur; he subdued several of the right tributaries of the middle Kur[101] upstream of the Tərtu and gave origin to a distinct principality[102] which would later be referred to as Pʻaṙisos. In all likelihood, Sahl's claim to lordship over Albania was also inherited by the rulers of Pʻaṙisos: below we shall see that Sahak Sewaday's grandson Išxananun Sewaday was recognised as 'prince of Albania,' whereas in section 6 we shall speak of his sons who would be recognised – six generations after Sahl – as kings of Albania. In the end of the tenth century, Pʻaṙisos was thus the first to acquire the pre-eminent position in the Eastern regions, which in course of the twelfth century would pass to Xačʻēn.

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95 According to A. Hakobyan (oral communication; Hakobyan's unpublished Habilitation thesis [2014] examines various routes that connected the two provinces during the High Middle Ages). See also H. Manandyan, Հին Հայաստանի գլխավոր ճանապարհները ըստ Պևտինգերյան քարտեզի [*The Main Routes of Ancient Armenia According to the* Tabula Peutingeriana], Yerevan, 1936, p. 202, map on p. 203; Mkrtčjan (cf. fn. 93) pp. 33 – 34.

96 In Azeri, the latter chain is known as Şahdağ, 2 700 – 3 360 m.

97 Barxudarjan (cf. fn. 34) p. 91.

98 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 419.

99 Situated on the right bank of the river Mazray springing from the Sōdkʻ Pass between the Areguni and the Ałahečkʻ chains.

100 See Nº 1358, in S. Barxudaryan, Դիվան հայ վիմագրության [*Archive of Armenian Epigraphy*], vol. 4, Yerevan, 1973, p. 334; Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) col. 183.

101 Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) coll. 183, 187– 190.

102 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 419.

The stronghold of P'aṙisos was set in the upper basin of the river Šamkʿor, in proximity to the centre of the ancient principality of Gardman which had once dominated the Šamkʿor valley. The centre of that ancient principality, the fort Gardman, was located on the left bank of the homonymous stream (a right tributary of the Šamkʿor), perched atop a crag overhanging the Šamkʿor.[103] As for the fortress P'aṙisos, its ruins have been recognised near the village Qalakənd (Azeri: 'Castle Town,' a name singling out this fortress amongst numerous fortifications in the region), atop a crag rising on the left bank of the stream P'aṙisos (a left tributary of the Šamkʿor).[104] It was thus also set in the valley of the river Šamkʿor, but upstream of the fort Gardman and on a site farther removed from the banks of the Šamkʿor than was the fort Gardman, which made the new stronghold of the valley even less accessible. This fortress and the upper basin of the Šamkʿor would later constitute the core of the tiny kingdom of Senekʿerim, Sahak's great grandson. *HA* specifies that Sahak Sewaday also succeeded in subduing the valleys of other tributaries of the Kur, which empty into it upstream of the mouth of the Šamkʿor, at least as far as the gorge of the river Joroy Get, thus approaching the Armenian-Georgian marchlands.[105] Along the Joroy Get had passed one of the ancient trade routes: it connected the Araxes valley to the upper Kur valley, i.e., the main axes of, respectively, Armenia and Georgia.

The control over the valleys of the rivers Tərtu, Šamkʿor and Joroy Get, as well as over the two main passes across the Areguni mountains, the Sōdkʿ and the P'aṙisos,[106] was essential for the success of Sahak Sewaday's descendants: it allowed them to join the two poles of their inheritance lying on both slopes of the Areguni and the Ałahečkʿ chains, i.e., in the Eastern Regions and in Siwnikʿ.[107] Thereby they came to dominate the heights around Lake Gełakʿuni, one of the highest areas of the whole of the Armenian plateau, thus avoiding isolation from the rest of Armenia in face of the Islamic potentates of the pre-Caspian plains. Moreover, the domains of Sahak Sewaday's descendants could now be linked not only to cen-

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103 The location of the fort Gardman is discussed by M. Yovhannisean, Հայաստանի բերդերը [*The Fortresses of Armenia*], Venice, 1970, pp. 479–485. This ancient toponym was preserved in the old Azeri name of the nearby village, Qırtmanıq (nowadays changed to Əmirvar). Near the fort an ancient monastery existed, which was also a bishopric; Adoncʿ (cf. fn. 13) p. 525; Karapetyan (cf. fn. 39) pp. 147–148; *HA* associates the foundation of the fort Gardman with Prince Vardan the Brave, in c. 480: see book II, chapter 17, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 226; Barxutareancʿ (1895, cf. fn. 37) p. 194.

104 The fortress (situated between the modern villages Qalakənd and Miskinli) is known in Azeri as Koroğlu qalası, being associated with the hero of a popular romance, the rebel and bard Koroğlu/Köroğlu. The surviving ruins allow us to discern a chapel within the massive enclosure of the fortress; see Barxutareancʿ (1895, cf. fn. 37) p. 209; Yovhannisean (cf. fn. 103) p. 500; Karapetyan (cf. fn. 39) pp. 273–280.

105 Cf. Ṙ. Matʿevosyan, Տաշիր-Ջորագետ (X դ.–XII դ. սկիզբ) [*Tašir–Joraget (Tenth–Beginning of the Twelfth Century)*], Yerevan, 1982, pp. 53–54.

106 Barxudarjan (cf. fn. 34) p. 93.

107 Cf. Barxudaryan, (cf. fn. 56) pp. 73–74.

tral Armenia,[108] but also to the markets of Naxčawan and of Duin; they could also, via the Kur valley, be connected to Šamaxi (S̲h̲ammāk̲i̲ya), to S̲h̲īrvān, to the Caspian ports, to Ardabīl and to Tabriz downstream of the Kur, and to Tiflis and to Georgia up the stream.

The foundations so laid enabled Sahak's descendants to achieve recognition beyond the Eastern Regions. Our information about his grandson Išxananun, who had duly inherited his grandfather's second name, Sewaday, confirms this. From Asołik and Step'anos Ōrbēlean (c. 1260–1304) we know that Išxananun Sewaday begot not only four sons but also (at least) two daughters, one of whom he married to the king of Kars, Mušeł Bagratuni, and the other to the Siwni prince Səmbat who between 970–987 would become the first king of Siwnik'.[109] The close ties with Siwnik' were thus upheld, but they were no longer exclusive. In section 6 we shall see that Išxananun's last child could hardly be younger that twenty-one when Senek'erim was crowned, whilst his both sisters were likely older. This means that the marriages of Senek'erim's sisters must have preceded his coronation. By arranging these marriages, Išxananun Sewaday doubtlessly paved a way to the crown for his eldest son.

The fame attained by Išxananun Sewaday is also mirrored in the epithet 'the great and glorified prince of Albania' (մեծ եւ փառաւորեալ իշխան) attached to him by Step'anos Ōrbēlean, a metropolitan bishop of the province of Siwnik'.[110] It cannot be excluded that such an epithet had a hereditary character, because Vardan Arewelc'i (i.e., Vardan the Easterner, a writer stemming from the region of Ganjak/Gandja and writing between 1267 and 1271) uses a very similar term in mentioning Gərigor, i.e., Išxananun Sewaday's second son, in his *Chronicle:* upon speaking of the 'district of P'aṙisos,' he styles Gərigor as 'the glorious prince' (փառաւոր իշխանն) of this district.[111] No such epithets are attached, however, to these two figures in the earlier sources, which may suggest that they were appended to them later by attraction to the royal titles of Senek'erim and his two sisters.

Although unambiguous references to P'aṙisos as a principality before the beginning of the eleventh century are lacking, there are grounds to suppose that the whole district, and not only its central fortress, had already been recognised under that or a kindred name before. Thus, amongst the districts subjugated by Sahak Sewaday and listed in *HA* separately from Gardman, we find the name of P'aṙən, a toponym which must represent a variant of the later-prevailing form P'aṙisos.[112] Thence we can also conclude that Gardman and P'aṙən were two districts governed by different rulers. In

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108 The route from Bard̲h̲a'a to Duin crossed Sōdk'; see Manandyan (cf. fn. 95) pp. 198–199.

109 See book 3, chapter 17, in Tarōnec'i, *Universal History* (cf. fn. 51) p. 767; Ōrbēlean (cf. fn. 32) vol. 2, chapter 55, p. 43; Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) col. 184.

110 Ōrbēlean (cf. fn. 32) vol. 2, chapter 55, p. 43.

111 Vardan Arewelc'i, Հաւաքումն պատմութեան Վարդանայ վարդապետի [*Vardan Vardapet's Historical Compilation*], chapter 56, Venice, 1862, p. 100.

112 See book III, chapter 23, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) p. 419; Toumanoff (1963, cf. fn. 12) p. 484; Barxudarjan (cf. fn. 34) p. 93; Hewsen (cf. fn. 6) pp. 118–119.

the anonymous account ascribed to the ninth-century historian Šapuh Bagratuni, the collective noun P'arisunkʿ, i. e., 'the [district of the inhabitant]s of P'arisən,' is mentioned amongst those subdued by King Səmbat Bagratuni (890–914).[113] In an account pertaining to the 930s, the author also mentions *išxan P'aŕisoy Hmaek*, 'the prince of P'aŕis Həmaek.'[114] Here, P'aŕis most certainly designates not a fort but the district over which Həmaek exercised his rule, for it was highly uncommon in Armenia to refer to a prince after the name of his main residence.

The names P'aŕən/P'aŕnēs/P'arisən/P'aŕis/P'aŕisos must be related to one of the peoples already mentioned by Strabo (Str., 11.7.1) in his description of 'the Median mountains and those of the Armenians' which, according to him, frame the western coast of the Caspian sea (αἳ τελευτῶσαι πρὸς θάλατταν ποιοῦσι τὸν μυχὸν τοῦ κόλπου). Strabo lists the peoples that inhabited the mountainous region which expands 'from the summits to the sea' (παρώρεια [...] μέχρι τῶν ἄκρων ἀπὸ θαλάττης). The Albanians and the Armenians, also present on the seaward slopes of these mountains, did not represent, according to Strabo, the main population of that region. The identification of its chief inhabitants is not always easy, yet amongst the six names listed by the Geographer we can recognise two neighbours: the Οὐτίοι (which should correspond to the Uti of the Armenian sources, i. e., the native population of Utikʿ and the ancestors of the present-day Udi people)[115] and the Παρράσιοι who should correspond to the inhabitants of P'aŕisos.[116] The location of the region described by Strabo is linked, however, to the complex question of the movable shoreline of the Caspian sea. According to Sergej Murav'ëv's estimation, in various periods since antiquity the sea expanded beyond the present-day point of confluence of the Kur with the Araxes, even submerging a portion of the middle Kur valley upstream of this point. The populations of the Caspian shores would follow these fluctuations, drawing near the mountains when the sea flooded the lowlands.[117]

We have thus seen that the district of Gardman/P'aŕisos plays a distinct role in *HA*. According to the list of the Albanian catholicoi from chapter 24, as amended by Hakobyan, two prelates, Dawitʿ (958/9–964/5) and Movsēs (982/4–988/9), came 'from the prelacy of the P'aŕisos monastery' (յառաջնորդութենէն Փառիսսայ վանաց).[118] Of all the monasteries and other localities mentioned in the list, such a specification is to be found only here. It may indicate a high degree

113 Շապուհ Բագրատունւոյ Պատմութիւն [*Šapuh Bagratuni's 'History'*], Edjmiatzin, 1921, p. 65.

114 *Šapuh Bagratuni's 'History'* (cf. fn. 113) p. 81; Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) coll. 223–224.

115 See, however, the reservations expressed on this point by Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 81–82.

116 Radt, *Strabons Geographika* (cf. fn. 30) pp. 332–334.

117 See S. Murav'ëv, *Mathesis. Из истории античной науки и философии* [*Mathesis. From the History of Ancient Science and Philosophy*], Moscow, 1991, p. 142, fig. 6 ('The Hydrography of the Pre-Caspian Regions Between the Fourth and the Third Century BCE, Which Lies in the Basis of the Representations of Demodamantes, Patroklos, Eratosthenes and Strabo') p. 170, n. 60.

118 See book III, chapter 24, in *HA* (cf. fn. 16) pp. 425–426.

of institutionalisation proper to the Pʿaṙisos monastery, situated as it was near the central fortress of the principality and close to the princely palace; a reader of the list may conclude that such an institutionalisation had not been achieved elsewhere in the Eastern Regions. Furthermore, this specification may also indicate the writer's particular familiarity with that monastery and, even, that he himself – as once was already suggested by Nersēs Akinean – was the author of *HA*, Movsēs Dasxurancʿi/ Kałankatuacʿi.[119]

5 The Islamic Neighbours of Pʿaṙisos

In the east and in the south-east, the Eastern regions faced the pre-Caspian plains, which had largely been Islamized by the eighth century. It is on that territory that in the course of the tenth century the Kurds,[120] as later the Turks, the Mongols and other semi-nomadic invaders, would take root. However, from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the tenth century the main centres of Islamic power in the Lesser Caucasus developed precisely along the right bank of the Kur, thus occupying the main line of communication of the Lesser Caucasus and verging on its highlands. By extending their control over the western edges of the ancient kingdom of Albania, the successive Muslim rulers of Bardhaʿa and of Gandja would represent the most direct threat to the Armenian statelets of the Eastern Regions.

The earliest Islamic centre on the Kur was situated at Partaw which had been occupied by the Arabs for the first time as early as the middle of the seventh century.[121] Its military fortress, built a century later and known in the Muslim sources as Bardhaʿa, became the second seat of the Arab administration of the province of Armīniyya. Its advantageous position, from which the main crossing over the Kur could be supervised, allowed it also to develop into the main commercial centre of the south-eastern Caucasus, even to become known as the 'Caucasian Baghdad.'[122] Ac-

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119 N. Akinean, Մովսէս Դասխուրանցի (կոչուած Կաղանկատուացի) եւ իր Պատմութիւն Աղուանից [*Movsēs Dasxurancʿi (Named Kałankatwacʿi) and his History of the Albanians*], Vienna, 1970, pp. 48–49; Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 240–241; James Howard-Johnston, however, rejects this idea and inclines to date the book's writing by the 990s, in Id., 'Caucasian Albania and Its Historian', in *From Albania to Arrān. The East Caucasus between the Ancient and Islamic Worlds (ca. 330 BCE – 1000 CE)*, ed. R. Hoyland, Piscataway, 2000, p. 352, nn. 60–61.

120 See: A. Ter-Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, Lisbon, 1976, pp. 110–111.

121 Near the present-day city of Bərdə, Azerbaijan.

122 Along the Kur valley (upstream) and via the ancient Albanian city of Ganjak (Gandja during the Arab period), Bardhaʿa was linked to Tbilisi; via Šamkʿor (Shamkūr), and through the valley of the river Šamkʿor, it was connected to Duin (the Dabīl of the Islamic authors). Again along the Kur valley (downstream) it was linked to Šamaxi in Shīrvān and, thence, to Caspian ports and to Darband/Derbent; through the Caspian Gates, it was also connected to the Khazar country. Cf. Trever (cf. fn. 18) p. 266; M. Alʾtman, *Исторический очерк города Ганджи* [*A Historical Essay on the City of Gandja*],

cording to al-Muḳaddasī, an Arab geographer of the second half of the tenth century, Bardhaʿa remained the largest city of the whole South Caucasus for the subsequent two centuries.[123]

The loss of Bardhaʿa's military importance, followed by its economic decline, was conditioned by the raids of the Rus' who, mooring to the South Caspian shore since 912,[124] sailed upstream of the Kur. During the ensuing period Gandja near the ancient city of Ganjak, at the delta of the homonymous river (a right tributary of the Kur, which empties into it upstream of Bardhaʿa), became the new centre of gravity for Muslim power in the region. A fortress had already existed there since the middle of the ninth century, built by the Arab ancestors of the Sharvān-shāhs (who would become the dominant force in the pre-Caspian plains during the subsequent centuries).[125] In 970–971 Gandja was occupied by the Kurdish[126] Shaddādids who within a short time expanded from there to Šamkʿor (Shamkūr); Šamkʿor was situated on the left bank of the homonymous river, close to the river's mouth, where a fortress had existed as well since the middle of the ninth century.[127]

The shift of the main military centre from Bardhaʿa to Gandja inaugurated a change of the Islamic rulers' ambitions: no longer merely to dominate the plains, but also to set a foothold in the Lesser Caucasus.[128] The axis Bardhaʿa – Gandja – Shamkūr hindered, and definitively so after the Shaddādids' conquests, the attempts of Sahl's successors to join under one sceptre the two banks of the Kur.[129] Gandja became the main competitor of the Armenian and the Georgian dynasts for the control

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vol. I, Baku, 1949, p. 12; Ter-Ghewondyan (cf. fn. 120) p. 141; Manandian (cf. fn. 48) pp. 139–140, 162–163.

123 Cf. al-Muḳaddasī, an Arab geographer of the second half of the tenth century, in N. Karaulov, 'Свѣдѣнія арабскихъ географовъ IX и X вѣковъ по Р. Хр. о Кавказѣ, Арменіи и Адербейджанѣ' [The Data Provided by the Arab Geographers of the Ninth and the Tenth Centuries AD Concerning the Caucasus, Armenia and Ādharbāydjān], in Сборникъ матеріаловъ для описанія мѣстностей и племён Кавказа [Collection of Sources Pertaining to the Description of the Localities and of Tribes of the Caucasus] 38, 1908, p. 7; cf. al-Muḳaddasī, in J. Laurent and M. Canard, L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886, Lisbon, 1980, p. 535; ibn Ḥawḳal, Ibid., p. 523.

124 In the region of Muqan, according to Minorskij's appreciation: Id. (cf. fn. 18) pp. 84, 68, 76.

125 Close to the present-day city of Gəncə (formely: Кәнчә, Kirovabad, Elizavetpol'), Azerbaijan. The ancient Ganjak was situated six or seven km to the north-east from the actual Gəncə; cf. Al'tman (cf. fn. 122) p. 6, 10–11; Minorskij (cf. fn. 18) pp. 29–32, 35–38, 155–156, 191 (n.10); Trever (cf. fn. 18) p. 266; Minorsky, Studies in Caucasian History, London, 1953, p. 39.

126 Cf. Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) pp. 33–34.

127 Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) pp. 25, 39; Minorskij (cf. fn. 18) p. 82; A. Ter-Ghewondyan (cf. fn. 120) p. 100; Karapetyan (cf. fn. 39) p. 21; Barxutareanc' (1895, cf. fn. 37) p. 37; Ełiazaryan (cf. fn. 25) p. 97. In the eleventh-century Georgian 'Chronicle of K'art'li' (Matiane K'art'lisa) we find a confirmation that at the beginning of that century the city was fortified: ქართლის ცხოვრება [The Life of K'art'li] ed. S. Qauxčʻišvili, Tbilisi, 1955, p. 279, ll. 7–8.

128 Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) pp. 26–27, n. 8.

129 Cf. Zuckerman (cf. fn. 52) p. 568.

of the former Albania. At the same time, however, Gandja also developed into a flourishing commercial centre profitable for the entire region. Al-Iṣṭakhrī, a Persian geographer writing in Arabic at the end of the first half of the tenth century – the first to leave us a description of the entire Muslim world – praises the city and the surrounding country in the highest terms.[130] The Muslim colonisation of the Kur valley rendered access to the river and to the routes running along its right bank problematic for the Christians, yet it did not obstruct it completely. The list of goods sold on the markets of Gandja and of Bardhaʿa indicates that various Armenian principalities were involved in that trade.[131]

The consolidation of the Armenian statelets in the upper courses of the right tributaries of the Kur and the development of Islamic polities along its banks occurred, therefore, almost synchronically: thus, in the middle of the ninth century, Sahl's successor Atərnerseh was establishing himself on the Kur right tributaries (first centred in the Tərtu valley and towards the end of the century further north-west, in the Šamkʿor valley), preferring them to Šakʿē where Sahl had once ruled, whilst the Arab ancestors of the Sharvān-shāhs – expanding from pre-Caspian regions – were building a military fortress in Gandja. Contacts, and clashes, in the gorges of the rivers Tərtu, Ganjak and Šamkʿor must have been inevitable. Later, the seizure of power in Gandja and in Shamkūr by the Shaddādids occurred shortly after Senekʿerim's coronation and his installation in Pʿaṙisos. The 'Persian king' who sent Senekʿerim 'a mantle and magnificent decorations' was, most likely, the Daylamī emir of Ādharbāydjān, to whom the Armenian princes paid tributes.[132] This, as Hakobyan has stressed, must have happened whilst the Daylamī rulers still held Gandja and the Kur valley, i.e., before the Shaddādids' conquests in this region.[133] Explaining the causes of this seeming synchrony lies beyond the scopes of our study, yet the ultimate north-western barrier of expansion for each appears to be the wedge-shaped strip of land lying between the Kur and the low course of the Kur's left tributary Kambeč (Cambysos; Georgian: Iori), where almost no significant settlements have been documented; in later times this desolate land, occupying the south-western part of the ancient Armenian/Albanian district of Kambečan, came to be known under the Azeri name of Ceyrançöl ('The Desert of Gazelles'). On its opposite side, this land also created a natural frontier between Georgia and the Eastern Regions, obstructing Georgia's enlargement downstream of the Kur.

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130 See the excerpt translated in J. Laurent and M. Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, Lisbon, 1980, pp. 513 – 514.

131 Cf. also al-Muḳaddasī (writing, admittedly, in the 980s), in J. Laurent and M. Canard, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, Lisbon, 1980, p. 539; Al'tman (cf. fn. 122) p. 12; Manandian (cf. fn. 48) pp. 146 – 147; Trever (cf. fn. 18) p. 266.

132 Cf. Krymskij, 'Pages from the History of Northern, or Caucasian, Azerbejdžan (the Classical Albania). Šeki' (cf. fn. 67) p. 599.

133 Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 213 – 214.

Christian princes could develop their polities and maintain for a long time their autonomy at such a short distance from the Muslim potentates[134] because of the particularly rugged terrain that characterises the Eastern Regions. Yet such a close neighbourhood conditioned the development of intricate relations between the two parts, which are reflected, for example, in the names of Arabic derivation borne by Armenian dynasts and which would also characterise the rulers of these lands in subsequent centuries. Various Muslim chieftains even served Armenian princes in the Eastern Regions and in Siwnikʻ, receiving from them lands as reward. Thus, from the historical compilation written by Ahmad b. Lutfullāh (died in 1702), a Turkish author writing in Arabic,[135] we hear of two Kurdish chieftains, the brothers Lashkarī Abul-Ḥasan ʿAli and al-Marzubān, who between 955/6 and 967 served the lord of Dayr-zūr (name which, apparently, designates the district of Vayocʻ Jor in Siwnikʻ) as mercenaries.[136]

Unlike Lashkarī and al-Marzubān, their brother Faḍl (Faḍl I, 985/6 – 1031) refused to serve a Christian ruler. In the Armenian sources Faḍl I is known under the familiar name *Pʻatlun*. His activity directly concerns the last years of Senekʻerim's reign. Asołik's two references to Senekʻerim may imply that he ruled in association with his younger brother Gərigor: the first time, Asołik speaks of the mother of King Abas of Kars (Abas died in 1029), who was 'the sister of the kings (*tʻagaworkʻ*) of Pʻaṙisos Senekʻerim and Gərigor' (* քոյր թագաւորացն Փառիսոսոյ Սենեքերիմայ եւ Գրիգորի*).[137] The second time, the historian mentions the two brothers whilst speaking of the cessation of the princely house ruling over the district of Pʻaṙisos, without, however, indicating that its last scions were kings:

> Յայսմ ժամանակի, ի ՆՇԲ թուականին իշխաննն Փառիսոսոյ, որ ի Հայկազնեայ ազանց՝ բաւեալ մինչեւ ցՍենեքերիմ եւ ցԳրիգոր՝ սպառեցան մահուամբ։ Զորոց զաշխարհն բաժանեալ հակառակութեամբ ի միջի իւրեանց արքային Հայոց Գագիկ եւ Փատլուն ամիրային Գանձակայ։

> At that time, in the year 452 [1003 – 1004 CE], the Princes of Pʻaṙisos, who [stemmed] from the descendants of Hayk's tribe, [after they] had lasted until Senekʻerim and Gərigor, were extinguished through death. Their domain was divided through the confrontation between the King of Armenia Gagik and Pʻatlun, the Emir of Ganjak.[138]

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134 The fortress Pʻaṙisos is distant only c. 40 km from S̲h̲amkūr and c. 55 km from Gand̲j̲a, as the crow flies.

135 Ahmad b. Lutfullāh had access to numerous sources, and notably to the *History of Darband and of Shirvān* (*Taʾrikh al-Bāb wa Sharvān*) completed towards 1075 by an expert in religious law who lived in close neighbourhood of Gand̲j̲a, to the *History of Arrān* written by an author from Bard̲h̲aʿa and to other local chronicles. His work is preserved in an abridged Turkish translation of 1730; see Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) p. 9; cf. pp. 3 – 5; Minorskij (cf. fn. 18) pp. 15 – 19.

136 See the text translated by Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) p. 12, cf. p. 14; and commented by him on pp. 39 – 40, 71 – 72.

137 See book 3, chapter 17, in Stepʻanos Tarōnecʻi, *Universal History* (cf. fn. 51) p. 767.

138 See book 3, chapter 48, in Stepʻanos Tarōnecʻi, *Universal History* (cf. fn. 51) p. 827; cf., however, Adoncʻ (cf. fn. 13) p. 518.

Since *HA* knows nothing of Gərigor's reign, we may suppose that he was associated with his brother's kingship in the course of c. twenty years that elapsed between the completion of that book and Asołik's writing. From the sources transmitted by Ahmad b. Lutfullāh we learn that on usurping, in 985–986, the rule over Gandja (the Ganjak of the Armenian sources) from the Shaddādids, in 993 Faḍl extended his sway to Bardha'a.[139] Vladimir Minorsky suggested that these sources may allow us to contextualise the account of P'atlun's (i.e., Faḍl's) conquests and his raids against the Armenian statelets in the Kur valley, of which we read in Vardan of Ganjak. Indeed, Vardan knows of the three brothers (Lashkarī, al-Marzubān and Faḍl), although he dates their arrival in the highlands of the Lesser Caucasus differently. Speaking of the elder two, however, the Armenian historian only mentions their service of 'the glorious prince' Gərigor, i.e., Senek'erim's brother, in the district of P'ařisos.[140] Thence we may conclude that the two Kurdish chieftains served various Armenian princes and that they could not have reached P'ařisos earlier than 955/6.

Vardan also lists Šašuał, Šōt'k' and Tanjik' as localities seized by Faḍl after he had taken hold of Gandja. Of these, only the second locality can securely be identified with the district of Sōdk' opposite the easternmost shore of Lake Gełak'uni. Departing from his base in Gandja, or in Shamkūr, Faḍl would, most likely, have attained it via the territory of P'ařisos, then crossing either the P'ařisos or the Sōdk' Pass. Such an itinerary would support the views locating Šašuał in the north or the north-west of the Eastern Regions.[141] As for Tanjik', it could be identified with Tanjik in the west of Vayoc' Jor.[142] It is sensible to imagine Faḍl's advance in a south-westerly direction reaching, eventually, the west of Vayoc' Jor, short of Duin (Dabīl), the seat of a Muslim emir. Furthermore, according to Vardan, as a result of his raids Faḍl also succeeded in enforcing his rule over Xač'ēn (central Arc'ax), Gorozu (later, Dizak, the south-eastern district of Arc'ax) and the region of the Sewordik' (on the bank of the Kur, north-west of Shamkūr),[143] even threatening the prince of the Joroy Get valley, as well as some rulers on the left bank of the Kur.[144] Both the vectors parting from Gandja (or Shamkūr), to Sōdk' and to Joroy Get, imply that

139 See the text translated by Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) pp. 16–17; commented *Ibid.*, p. 40.

140 Vardan Arewelc'i, *Historical Compilation* (cf. fn. 111) p. 100.

141 Barxutareanc' (1895, cf. fn. 37) p. 433 (n. 55); Yovhannisean, *The Fortresses of Armenia* (cf. fn. 103) p. 526; Հայաստանի եւ հարակից շրջանների տեղանունների բառարան [*Dictionary of the Toponymy of Armenia and of the Adjacent Regions*], vol. 1, eds. T'. Hakobyan et al., Yerevan, 1986, p. 906.

142 *Dictionary of the Toponymy* (cf. fn. 141) vol. 5, eds. T'. Hakobyan et al., Yerevan, 2001, pp. 32–33; map 94 ('The Eastern Armenian Kingdoms and Principalities'), in Hewsen (cf. fn. 6), D/3.

143 For a recent hypothesis concerning this region and its population, see Martin-Hisard (cf. fn. 12) pp. 407–412.

144 Vardan Arewelc'i, *Historical Compilation* (cf. fn. 111) p. 100; Minorsky (cf. fn. 125) pp. 40–41; Mat'evosyan (cf. fn. 105) p. 47; several years later, Gagik Bagratuni and the king of united Georgia Bagrat III (1008–1014) would join their forces against Faḍl; see S. H. Rapp Jr., 'Georgian Images of Caucasian Albania', in *From Albania to Arrān* (cf. fn. 119), p. 215.

Faḍl's military activity could affect the kingdom of Pʿaŕisos. Asołik's account of the simultaneous death of Senekʿerim and Gərigor, combined with his reference to Faḍl's raids, induces us to suspect that the brothers' death was related to them; Senekʿerim and Gərigor could have lost their lives in course of one of Faḍl's expeditions.

HA, which closes with the coronation of Senekʿerim, does not know of Faḍl who must have emerged soon after the book had been completed. As for Asołik, according to him the principality of Pʿaŕisos was destroyed following Faḍl's raids. The *Response*, as well as the epigraphic sources identified by Hakobyan, call into question Asołik's affirmation: the principality of Pʿaŕisos must have endured also after the death of the two kings, admittedly until the middle of the eleventh century. Before Asołik stopped writing his book in 1004/5, no information had reached him about the further developments in the Eastern Regions.[145] Meanwhile, Atərnerseh and Pʿipē could have avoided Faḍl's troops, securing themselves in one of the numerous forts of the district. As we saw in section 1, the *Response* contains an indication that the correspondent of the two brothers was informed of some very recent upheavals: he states that the kings wrote to him 'in an hour of extreme dangers.'[146] This can be an allusion to Faḍl's raids.

6 The Albanian Kings and their Correspondent: The Time and the Places

In section 3 we saw that the concluding chapter of *HA* mentions four sons of Prince Išxananun Sewaday: Yovhannēs also called Senekʿerim, Gərigor, Atərnerseh and Pʿi-lippē. In section 4 we also noticed that Stepʿanos Ōrbēlean styles Išxananun as 'the great and glorified prince of Albania.' Asołik's references to Senekʿerim and Gərigor as two 'kings' of Pʿaŕisos, which were discussed in the previous section, allow us to hypothesise that 'the Albanian Kings Atərnerseh and Pʿipē' from the heading of the *Response* are their younger brothers who likewise reigned in association. As we have pointed out, no other source mentions these two names jointly. Yet the possibility that Atərnerseh and Pʿipē reigned as 'kings of Albania' – thus inheriting of the charism of their ancestors Sahl Səmbatean, Atərnerseh, Gərigor and their father Išxananun – contemporaneously with Senekʿerim and Gərigor must be excluded, since they are unknown as such either to *HA* or to Asołik; they must have been recognised as kings only after the death of their elder brothers in 1003/4.

When was Senekʿerim born? Since he was the first scion of his family to be crowned and since his coronation was recognised by an Islamic and by a Byzantine dignitary, he must previously have had a chance to convince each of them that his

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145 Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) coll. 215, 226–229; cf. Yovhannisean, *The Fortresses of Armenia* (cf. fn. 103) pp. 439–440.

146 *Response* (cf. fn. 2) p. 957, § 2.

authority was not merely nominal; therefore, he must have been proclaimed a king on reaching a mature age, hardly being younger than thirty-three. If Senekʿerim was crowned in c. 968 – i.e., at a date, it will be remembered, shortly preceding the Shaddādids' seizure of power in Ganḏja in 970 – 971[147] – we can date the births of Senekʿerim and his younger brother Gərigor to, respectively, 935 and 936/7: the date for Gərigor's birth should be chosen as early as possible in order to match the data regarding Lashkarī Abul-Ḥasan ʿAli's and al-Marzubān's arrival in Armenia. Thus in c. 960, i.e., four years after their arrival in Vayocʿ Jor, Gərigor, called by Vardan 'the glorious prince' of the district of Pʿaṙisos, could engage the two Kurdish chieftains in his service whilst being twenty-four years old; it is hard to imagine that he could do it being much younger.

How long after Senekʿerim were his two youngest brothers born? In section 4 we saw that, apart from three brothers, Senekʿerim also had (at least) two sisters. We do not know when they were born in respect to their brothers, but even if Senekʿerim was Išxananun's eldest child, his sixth child should not have been more than ten years younger than Senekʿerim. This means that when Senekʿerim reached the age of thirty-three, both his sisters, as we have suggested, must already have been married. Furthermore, following the order in which his sons are listed in the passage from *HA* cited above and bearing in mind their two sisters, we must also conclude that between Senekʿerim and Pʿipē at least two children were born to Išxananun (Gərigor and Atərnerseh) and probably four (Gərigor, Atərnerseh and both sisters) or even more, of whom we have no records. This means that Pʿipē was born from three to twelve (if Išxananun had more than two daughters) years after Senekʿerim. For a reason that will become clear in what follows, we should opt for a late date for Pʿipē's birth, c. 945. Consequently, Atərnerseh and Pʿipē could be, respectively, sixty and fifty-eight years old when their elder brothers died, or even a little younger.

This age matches that meagre information about Tiran(un)'s correspondents that we are able to glean from his *Response:* as we remember, the Vardapet praises the 'inexhaustible wisdom and the exquisite discernment' of their questions: such a remark reaching from a spiritual authority would better befit very mature, or even elderly recipients. Yet if we bear in mind that in their letter the kings formulated two hundred exegetical questions, we have to assume that at least the youngest, Pʿipē, was not exceedingly old; hardly over sixty-five. The correspondence probably took place shortly after their proclamation as kings. The Vardapet alludes to their previous acquaintance and to a letter, or even letters, that had reached him from his correspondents in not too remote a past: there we read that he receives their present request 'with ever vivid affection' (յաւէրժ ողձալի փափագանաւք); and that by their 'exquisite' and 'wise' writing Atərnerseh and Pʿipē 'console [him] again, for a second

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147 Adoncʿ (cf. fn. 13) p. 517; Akopjan (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 18) pp. 213 – 214; Zuckerman (cf. fn. 52) pp. 581 – 582.

time' (վերստին երկրորդեալ մխիթարէք).[148] Their long acquaintance can also offer an explanation for the use of the familiar form of the youngest brother's name in the heading of the *Response*, *P'ipē* instead of *P'ilippē*. No trace of that previous exchange has reached us, yet we cannot exclude the possibility that Senek'erim's youngest brothers were in one way or another involved in the former's correspondence with the learned monk, of which we shall speak below.

Who was then the correspondent of Atərnerseh and P'ipē? Of the four occurrences of the name Tiranun pertaining to this period in Hrač'eay Ačaŕean's encyclopædic *Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names* three refer to the northern and the northeastern districts of Armenia: Xač'ēn, middle of the tenth century; Hałpat, c. 990; Kapan, first half of the eleventh century.[149] The earliest Tiranun known to us was also an Easterner: he is mentioned by Mxit'ar of Ayrivank' (1222–c. 1291) in his concise *Chronography of the World* as the catholicos of Albania who in 601–602 wrote *Solutions for Five Hundred Difficult Questions* (Լուծմունf ՟Շ դ[ու]ար բանից).[150] This may suggest that the composite name Tiranun (< *tēr* and *anun*; lit. 'The Lord's Name,' analogous to the name of his correspondents' father, Išxananun, lit. 'Prince's name') was enrooted and especially widespread in those districts of Armenia.[151] The promising title of the catholicos's piece indicates that its genre was akin to that of the *Response*, i.e., it was a work of exegesis. Indeed, in a thirteenth-century miscellaneous manuscript – one which also preserves the *Response* to Atərnerseh and P'ipē – we find short notes on Biblical books, which are claimed to derive from another 'Response' written by Catholicos of Albania Tiranun who was asked concerning five hundred problems.[152] These notes follow a long list of miscellaneous questions and answers (esp. regarding the Bible, liturgy, calendar and psalmody, but not doctrine).[153] Yet in Mxit'ar's list of the Albanian catholicoi Tiranun does not appear, which makes the historian's attribution of this document uncertain.[154] If, nevertheless, the author of the *Solutions* did stem from the Eastern Regions, this document could be known to the initiators of the correspondence and even be used by them as a model in formulating their own two hundred questions.

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148 *Response* (cf. fn. 2) p. 957.

149 Cf. Ačaŕyan (cf. fn. 57) vol. 5, pp. 157–158, nn. 1,2,4.

150 Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i, Պատմութիւն ժամանակագրական [*Chronographical History*], ed. K'. Patkanean, Petersburg, 1867, p. 64.

151 On the tight cultural contacts between the regions of Tašir and Xač'ēn, see Lēō, Պատմութիւն Ղարաբաղի հայոց բեմական հոգեւոր դպրոցի. *1838–1913* [*History of the Spiritual School of the Armenian Diocese of Karabagh, 1838–1913*], Tiflis, 1914, pp. 49–50; L. Melik'set'-Bek, "Վարդապետf Հայոց հիւսիսային կողմանց" և նրանց ինfնութիւնը ['*The Doctors of the Northern Regions of Armenia' and their Identity*], Edjmiatzin, 2016, pp. 65–66.

152 Ms *Matenadaran* 3710, f. 377 V.

153 Ms *Matenadaran* 3710, ff. 375R–377 V.

154 Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i, *Chronographical History* (cf. fn. 150) p. 24.

The same manuscript that contains fragments attributed to Catholicos of Albania Tiranun, also contains a copy of the *Response* to Atərnerseh and Pʻipē.[155] In his final note, the copyist indicates that in the manuscript from which he copied the *Response* parts of the questions were missing.[156] Hence we can infer that the omission of the kings' questions in the *Response* hindered the copyist's understanding of the text. In commenting on its literary form, Asatur Mnacʻakanyan aptly observed that apart from a discrete Patristic library, which would enable them to formulate their questions, the kings must have kept a copy of their letter dispatched to the Vardapet:[157] the author of the *Response* could omit quoting the kings' questions only if he was confident that his august correspondents followed such an established custom.

In some manuscripts the author of the *Response* is referred to as Tiran, although the two names are etymologically unrelated. The name Tiran, of a Middle Persian origin, was, unlike the name Tiranun, widely attested in Armenia, and the transformation of Tiranun into Tiran in the process of transmission of the *Response* is more plausible than the reverse transformation. It could also have been facilitated by the normative elision of the vowel 'u' (ու) in the genitive of the original name, as it is cited in the headings of his letters: Տիրանննյ/Տիրաննյ/Տիրանայ. Whatever the reason for this transformation, the uncertainty of the Vardapet's name in the manuscript tradition suggests that he was not a widely known figure.

From a number of documents we also hear of a Tiran writing to Senekʻerim. It is sensible to surmise that the sparse writings addressed to three brothers and preserved under the same name were all written by the same Vardapet. Bozoyan has edited an excerpt from this document relying on eight eighteenth-century manuscripts, *From the Letter Concerning the Faith, by Tiran, an Armenian Vardapet, Who Wrote it to Sinakʻerem* [*sic*] (Ի հաւատոյ բղբէն Տիրանայ [Տիրանոյ] հայոց վարդապետի, զոր գրեաց առ Սինաքերեն).[158] Excerpts from this letter are also quoted in the florilegium of theological writings, *The Book of Confirmation and the Root of Faith*, attributed to the Cilician Armenian theologian and preacher Vardan of Aygek (Vardan of Maratʻa, c. 1170–1235).[159] Unlike the *Response* to Atərnerseh and Pʻipē, in these lines we are able to recognise three traditional elements of theological debates between the Armenians and the Chalcedonians: the refutation of dyophysite and dyothelite Christology, the polemics against the Byzantine use of leavened bread

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155 Ms *Matenadaran* 3710, f. 347R, see: Mnacʻakanyan (cf. fn. 11) pp. 207–209; Ցուցակ ձեռագրաց Մաշտոցի անվան Մատենադարանի [*Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Maštocʻ's Matenadaran*], vol. I, eds. Ō. Eganyan et al., Yerevan, 1965, col. 1068.

156 Ms *Matenadaran* 3710, f. 347R; cf. Bōzoyean (cf. fn. 1) p. 956.

157 Mnacʻakanyan (cf. fn. 11) pp. 208–209.

158 In *Library of Armenian Literature* (cf. fn. 1) vol. 10, p. 997; cf. also G. Zarphanalean, Հայկական հին դպրութիւն [*Ancient Armenian Scholarship*], Venice, 1897 (revised edition), p. 794.

159 Vardan Aygekʻi, Գիրք հաստատութեան և արմատ հաւատոյ [*The Book of Confirmation and the Root of Faith*], ed. Š. Hayrapetean, Yerevan, 1998, pp. 63, 206–207, 262, 405, 383.

and of wine mixed with water in the Eucharistic liturgy and the apology of the theopaschite language (which in the original document must have been a component of a more specific subject: the defence of the Armenian version of the liturgical hymn Trisagion).[160] One of these excerpts, containing polemics against the admixture of water into the Eucharistic wine, was also known to the fourteenth-century theologian from Siwnikʿ Yovhannēs of Orotan who quotes it almost word for word.[161]

Excerpts from the same letter of Tiran to Senekʿirim (*sic*), are also preserved in the thirteenth- to fourteenth-century Ms *Venice* 266 (an anthology of doctrinal texts *oskepʿorik*):[162] a fragment from this letter, which regards the refutation of the doctrine of two natures in Christ and the apology of the theopaschite language, has been published by Mesrop Grigorean.[163] Quotations from the epistolary exchange between Senekʿerim and Tiran(un) are also preserved elsewhere. A miscellaneous manuscript of the seventeenth or eighteenth century contained an excerpt, on two or three pages, from the profession of faith penned by Tiran Vardapet and addressed to Sinakʿērem (*sic*).[164] The same *Letter Concerning the Faith*, Հաւատոյ թուղթ, must also have been known to Abēl Mxitʿareancʿ who, writing in 1876, estimated that it belonged to the hand of Tiran, the same who, according to this scholar, also wrote the *Response* to Atərnerseh and Pʿipē.'[165]

Vardan of Aygek also refers to one Tiran in a letter addressed to clergy, from which we learn that a certain prince wrote to Tiran with a request for counsel and that Tiran responded to the prince with moral exhortation. Vardan of Aygek quotes an excerpt from Tiran's letter.[166] Senekʿerim and Tiran[un] could, therefore, have exchanged several letters which treated different topics, ethical and doctrinal, whereas Atərnerseh and Pʿipē could have been involved in this correspondence. On neither

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160 On the Byzantine-Armenian doctrinal controversies and on the condemnation of Armenian liturgical practices by the Church of the Empire, see Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Christ in Armenian Tradition* (cf. fn. 7) pp. 255–256, 276–280, 322–325.

161 See E. Bałdasaryan, 'Հովհաննես Որոտնեցու դավանաբանական գրույթյունը Կոստանդին Ե. Սսեցի Կաթողիկոսին' [Yovhannēs Orotnecʿi's Doctrinal Work Addressed to Catholicos Constantine V of Sis], in *Ējmiacin*, 1973/2, pp. 27–28; cf. Vardan Aygekcʿi, *The Book of Confirmation* (cf. fn. 159) p. 262.

162 B. Sargisean, Մայր ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց մատենադարանին Մխիթարեանց ի Վենետիկ [*The Main Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Mekhitarist Library of Venice*], vol. 2, Venice, 1924, ff. 58a–b, in col. 862.

163 M. Grigorean, 'Տիրանուն վարդապետ կապանեցի' [Tiranun the Vardapet of Kapan], in *Handēs Amsōreay* 89 (1975), coll. 305–306; cf. Vardan Aygekcʿi, *The Book of Confirmation* (cf. fn. 159) pp. 206–207.

164 This manuscript was preserved in a private collection in Marseille and was described in 1922 by F. Macler; see Ms *Marseille*, p. 232, in F. Macler, 'Notices de manuscrits arméniens ou relatifs aux Arméniens vus dans quelques bibliothèques de la péninsule ibérique et du sud-est de la France', in *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 1922, p. 248.

165 A. Mxitʿareancʿ, 'Տիրան վարդապետ. անծանօթ մատենագիր Ժ. դարու' [Tiran Vardapet: An Unknown Scholar of the Tenth Century], in *Ararat* 1876, p. 95.

166 Ժողովածոյք առակաց Վարդանայ [*Collection of Vardan's Parables*], ed. Y. Tašean, Venice, 1990, p. 65.

occasion is Senekʿerim called 'king,' yet the fragments that have reached us may not necessarily report the full headings of the letters. Besides, in section 5 we observed that Asołik names Senekʿerim and Gərigor alternately as 'kings' and as 'princes.' Consequently, those fragments do not allow us to conclude that Senekʿerim corresponded with Tiran[un] only before his coronation.

What can be asserted concerning Tiran(un)'s provenance? The Tiran who lived during Faḍl's raids was a monk from a monastery in the province of Basēn:[167] it is hard to imagine that the kings of Albania would seek instruction from a figure who resided in a monastery of such a remote land and who was not known for important literary activity. Another candidate, Tiranun the Philosopher of Kapan (in Siwnikʿ), who was born not before the middle of the 980s,[168] could only be a correspondent of the two younger brothers because of his young age. It is difficult to imagine that kings would chose as a spiritual counsellor a man forty years their junior and that the latter would thank (as we have seen above) such correspondents for 'consoling' him (մխիթարեմ). Furthermore, although in the *Response* his provenance is not indicated, the author seems nevertheless to suggest that he writes from a land more remote than Siwnikʿ is from Pʿaṙisos: we read that he rejoices at the kings' letter 'as at a reward and a gift sent from heaven [...], or as a destitute indigent [who is] comforted at receiving a promise of good things, [which] reaches [him] from a remote country (*i heṙastanē*)' (ի զգալնութեան ստացեալ զաւետիս բարեաց ի հեռաստանէ եկեալ առնշին կարաւտելոյ).[169] Such a metaphor could be employed in order to highlight the distance separating the writer from his recipients.

The length of the *Response* suggests that at the time of writing to Atərnerseh and Pʿilippē, i.e., after 1003, Tiran(un) could not be very old. Aristakēs of Lastiver mentions one Tiran(un) amongst three learned men active in the days of King Gagik (989–c. 1017/20) and of Catholicos Sargis I of Sewan (992–1019); these were monastic doctors (*vardapetkʿ*) attached to the patriarchate (կաթուղիկոսարան) in Ani.[170] There is, once more, uncertainty regarding this name, and in the first edition of Aristakēs we find in the list not *Tiranun*, but *Tiran anun* (i.e., two separate words instead of a composite name), which could mean '[and the one whose] name [was] Tiran.'[171] If

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167 A. Matʿevosyan, Հայերեն ձեռագրերի հիշատակարանները Ե–ԺԲ դդ. [*Colophons of the Armenian Manuscripts, Fifth–Twelfth Centuries*], Yerevan, 1988, p. 130; Bōzoyean (cf. fn. 1) p. 955, n. 8.

168 Պատմութին Մատթէոսի Ուռհայեցւոյ [*The History of Matthew of Edessa*], Jerusalem, 1869, p. 123 (book I, chapter 74). Tiranun of Kapan, who is mentioned here, cannot have been born before the middle of the 980s. We have, therefore, to decline the hypothesis of Małakʿia Ōrmanean who suggested that the Tiranun to whom sparse writings are attributed should be identified with Tiranun of Kapan; see Ōrmanean (cf. fn. 53) vol. I, col. 1272.

169 *Response* (cf. fn. 2) p. 957.

170 *Aristakēs Lastivertcʿiʾs 'History'* (cf. fn. 74) p. 26 (chapter II); cf. Bōzoyean (cf. fn. 1) p. 956.

171 Պատմութիւն Արիստակեայ վարդապետի Լաստիվերցւոյ [*The* History *of the Vardapet Aristakēs Lastivertcʿi*], Venice, 1844, p. 6; K. Juzbašjan, in *Повествование вардапета Аристакэса Ластивертци* [*The Account of the Vardapet Aristakēs Lastivertcʿi*], ed. Id., Moscow, 1968, p. 144 (chapter II, n. 6).

Tiran(un) was born in c. 935, he was approximately seventy years old when corresponding with Atərnerseh and Pʻilippē, i.e., approximately ten years their senior. Such an age matches well the tone of his letter; this date of birth would also allow the author to be active during both Gagik's kingship and Sargis's patriarchate, until c. 1008. He is, therefore, the most plausible candidate to be the correspondent of Senekʻerim, Atərnerseh and Pʻilippē.

Conclusion

The results of our enquiry into the epistolary exchanges between three kings from the 'Eastern Regions' of Armenia and a theologian, some of whose elements will inevitably remain hypothetical, can be recapitulated as follows. The correspondent of Išxananun Sewaday's sons was called Tiranun. In the manuscript transmission, his rare name was later transformed into the more frequent, and shorter, name Tiran. Tiranun himself must have stemmed from the Eastern Regions, which can explain his early acquaintance with Išxananun Sewaday's family, the heirs of the 'Princes of Albania.' On various occasions he corresponded with the eldest son, Senekʻerim, regarding customs and doctrine, whilst the names of his younger brothers could also be mentioned in this epistolary exchange. Tiranun maintained contacts with his country of origin also while serving in Ani, and was informed of its vicissitudes; thus, he seems to be aware of the raids that Faḍl I had launched on the Eastern regions since 985. He also upheld his friendly relations with the family ruling in Pʻaṙisos and must have had a first epistolary exchange with Išxananun Sewaday's two younger sons already before their enthronement. There was a dearth of established religious authorities in the Eastern Regions, and on becoming kings in 1004–1005, Atərnerseh and Pʻilippē approached the same learned doctor with their exegetical queries.[172]

One of the points of particular interest for the kings of renewed Albania was the episode of Adam's naming of the living creatures in *Genesis*. Analogously to the iconographic programme of the palatine church built c. eighty-five years earlier at Ałtʻamar by Gagik Arcruni, the first king of Vaspurakan, in the Eastern Regions this Biblical scene must have been evoked in the context of renewed reflection on the idea of kingship. Adam giving names to the animals and reigning in their midst was regarded as a *figura* of the king's dominion and of his ability to establish peace in his lands. The first king of a country, i.e., the founder of a dynasty and of a

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172 Our reconstruction of the correspondence thus diverges on several points from that proposed by Hakobyan who dates it to the middle of the eleventh century. Should we follow his hypothesis, Atərnerseh and Pʻilippē would no longer be two brothers upholding the throne of their deceased elder brothers, but princes ruling in different districts of the Eastern Regions, whereas Senekʻerim would become a purely hypothetical figure. As for Tiranun, he would become their neighbour; see Yakobean (Hakobyan) (cf. fn. 66) coll. 227–228.

kingdom, was seen as the originator of a new world like Adam, whilst in the restitution of an ancient kingdom a restoration of Adam's royal prerogative was perceived. The *History of the Albanians* is revelatory in this sense: whilst its account commences from Adam and then defines the relationship that the first kings of the Armenians and of the Albanians entertained with the primæval human beings, it concludes with the renovation of kingship in Albania at the end of the tenth century: the writer regards this event as a new beginning in the history of a people which traces its origin back to Adam.

We have also observed a specific form of political authority which was exercised in the Eastern Regions at the turn of the first millennium. These are some of its salient features: various dynasts pretended to the same title of lords of Albania, whilst no relation of suzerainty can be discerned between them;[173] brothers could share the royal throne of the same realm; the younger brother of a king could join in his kingship; the survivors of a family were responsible for the safeguard of the ancestral domain, inheriting their elder brothers' royal title. This state of affairs is not problematised by their contemporary Armenian historians, either because they accept it as normative or because they recognise in it some ancient traits. Indeed, we can discern in these features some characteristics of the ancient Armenian dynastic principle which was codified by the customary law. Following it, each prince, *išxan*, reigned sovereignly over his province, whilst the male descendants of his family shared his realm, assuming their social obligations in the order of age.[174] Such common features lead us to suppose that the form of inheritance that prevailed in the Eastern Regions during the tenth and eleventh centuries resembled the structure of the archaic Armenian society. It is this type of kingship – whereby different members of a family based in different forts could take over the crown from one another – that enabled the principality of P'aṙisos to endure the raids of Faḍl I. This social structure must also have enabled the Armenian dynasts scattered about the wooded gorges of the Eastern Regions to reconstitute autonomous polities in the age of the Turkic and Mongol invasions, thus giving origin to the *melik'*s' statelets of Karabagh. This theme, however, would merit a study apart.[175]

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173 Cf. Zuckerman (cf. fn. 52) p. 574; in this, the Armenian-Albanian rulers contrast with the Vač'utean princes who, whilst ruling in the thirteenth century the central Ararat valley, recognised the Zak'areans' suzerainty, cf. H. Margarean, 'Վաչուտեանների իշխանական տան պատմությունից' [*From the History of the Vač'utean Princely House*], in *Šoḷakat'*, Istanbul, 1995, pp. 31, 34, 37–50.

174 Cf. Toumanoff (1963, cf. fn. 12) pp. 33–144.

175 Karabagh is the name under which the Eastern Regions have most commonly been known since the fourteenth century at the latest. In Azeri, Qarabağ – a toponym also attested elsewhere over the expanses of Asia – literally means 'Black Garden,' its most immediate reference being, admittedly, the region's fertile soil (whose tint, though, is rather reddish than black). The writer was offered another explanation as a child back in the 1970s in Baku whose Armenian population had mostly originated from Karabagh: the region owed its name to the black mulberries with which the region abounds and whose ripe fruits deeply taint the ground between May and July. In reality, this word can have a more complex genesis and derive from the original Armeno-Turkic syntagm *Qara

Bałkʻ, later assimilated to Qara-bağ under the influence of popular etymology (the mediæval realisation of the Armenian phoneme [ł] and the Azeri [ğ] being almost identical). The district of Bałkʻ, in the southernmost bow of the Araxes, was a part of the patrimonial domain of the Siwni family. The relations of Arcʻax with this family and with Bałkʻ had been tight since remote times (cf. *HA* [cf. fn. 16], p. 234 [book II, chapter 19]; Stepʻanos Ōrbēlean [cf. fn. 32], vol. I, p. 286; Hewsen [cf. fn. 12], pp. 281–286; Martin-Hisard, 'Constantinople et les archontes du monde caucasien' [cf. fn. 12], p. 402). Most of the ruling houses of Karabagh were also related to the same family. As for the lexeme *qara* (lit. 'black'), in stable syntagms attested in onomastics, in ethnonyms and in toponyms of various Turkic languages it can mean 'large,' 'major' or 'greater'; 'prominent' or 'chief'; 'great' or 'mighty' (for ex., Turk. *kara ev* [literally: 'black house'] meaning 'large tent'; Mong. хар мөрөн [literally: 'black river'] meaning 'Large, Deep River' and denoting the river Amur). To this semantic field is related another acceptation of *qara*, that of the 'north' as the main compass point of the Turkic world. In 1166 the region of Bałkʻ, the southernmost district of the Siwni domain, was captured by the Turks, whereas soon after 1182 the north of this domain (comprising, notably, the upper basin of the Tərtu, the former principalities of Gardman and Pʻaṙisos, as well as that of Giwlistan) passed in inheritance to Qara Gərigor, the son of Prince of Xačʻēn Hasan the Great, a remote descendant of Gərigor Atərnersehean (the great grandfather of Išxananun Sewaday) and the progenitor of several dynasties of *melik*ʻs. Gərigor's surname 'Qara,' making of him Gregory the Mighty, may not be unrelated to the genesis of the toponym Qarabağ. *Qara Bałkʻ* could, therefore, originally mean either 'the Major [portion of] Bałkʻ,' 'the Mighty [One's lot of] Bałkʻ' or the land situated to the north of Bałkʻ. On the etymology of *qara*, see: O. Pritsak, 'Orientierung und Farbsymbolik', in *Seculum* 5/4, 1954, p. 37; Id., 'Qara. Studie zur türkischen Rechtsymbolik', in *Zeki Velidi Togan'a armağan*, Istanbul, 1955, pp. 246–255; A. Kononov, 'Семантика цветообозначений в тюркских языках' [The Semantics of Colours in Turkic Languages], in *Tjurkologičeskij sbornik*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 161–165.

C. The Good Christian Ruler in Post-Roman Traditions

Florian Hartmann

The Good Ruler from a Papal Perspective: Continuities and Discontinuities in Papal Letters from the Fourth to Eighth Centuries

Examining papal perspectives about and towards the good ruler presents two challenges. The first challenge is the relatively long time period from the fourth to eighth centuries with which this volume concerns itself.[1] The second challenge is related to specific source-critical problems that arise because popes almost exclusively conveyed their thoughts on the good ruler in letters,[2] as no pope of this period penned a Mirror of Princes (Fürstenspiegel). The broad catalogue of virtues such as the one outlined by Ambrose of Milan for church dignitaries does not resonate with historiography composed in the popes' inner circles.[3] Some emperors were regarded as especially "good" by both tradition and church historians, so their catalogue of virtues could, in theory, permit drawing inferences about the idea(l) of a good ruler.[4] However, because the popes did not themselves participate in this retroactive "mythologizing" of individual emperors, we must rely almost solely on papal letters, the majority of which can be termed "dogmatic letters" or having theological, Christological, or canonical contents.[5] Perusing the papal letters, it soon becomes apparent that the particular reasons for writing a letter usually determined the specific labelling of the good ruler in each individual case. These reasons and the notions of the good ruler mirrored therein experienced only minor shifts throughout these 500

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1 On account of this timeframe, the bibliography will be limited to absolutely necessary works.
2 Philippe Blaudeau, Le siège de Rome et l'Orient. Étude géo-ecclesiologique (448–536) (Collection de l'École française de Rome 460), Rome 2012, p. 13–133, on the letters p. 29–49. On the transmission of the papal letters of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see Achim Thomas Hack, Codex Carolinus. Studien zur päpstlichen Epistolographie im 8. Jahrhundert (Päpste und Papsttum 35,1), Stuttgart 2006, p. 26–29.
3 Amongst the copious publications on Ambrose and on this specific text, see Hartmut Leppin, Zum politischen Denken des Ambrosius. Das Kaisertum als pastorales Problem, in: Die christlich-philosophischen Diskurse der Spätantike. Texte, Personen, Institutionen, ed. Therese Fuhrer (Philosophie der Antike 28), Stuttgart 2008, p. 33–49, containing further literature.
4 Hartmut Leppin, Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II. Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret (Hypomnemata. Untersuchungen zur Antike und ihrem Nachleben 110), Göttingen 1995, p. 161 f.
5 Blaudeau (cf. fn. 2) p. 30; on the genre of papal letters of late antiquity, see Detlef Jasper and Horst Fuhrmann, Papal Letters in the Early Middle Ages, Washington, D.C. 2001; on style and continuity, see Klaus Herbers, Briefsammlungen des 9. Jahrhunderts. Überlieferung und Gebrauch zur Zeit der papstgeschichtlichen Wende, in: Brief und Kommunikation im Wandel. Medien, Autoren und Kontexte in den Debatten des Investiturstreits, ed. Florian Hartmann, Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna 2016, p. 319–334; and see also, Hack (cf. fn. 2).

years.[6] In the following pages I will therefore examine how the popes of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages addressed the emperors and subsequent rulers in Europe and what they demand of them. The results should contribute to a better insight into papal notions of what constituted a good ruler.

1 Forms of Address in Late Antique and Early Middle Age Papal Letters to the Emperor

The forms of address used by popes to address the emperors in their letters provide a first indication of their thoughts on the good ruler. Ever since Emperor Constantine I (306–337) established imperial influence on church matters during the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and in doing so made it common practice for emperors to be present during ecumenical councils,[7] popes and councils have primarily cited orthodoxy and a willingness to promote and support the church as the most important qualities of an emperor so involved in the church.[8] In the course of the "Christianisation of the Empire,"[9] the Roman synod of 378 and Pope Damasus I (366–384) especially praised the Emperors Gratian (367–383) and Valentinian I (364–375) for having had the fore-

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6 For general information on the papacy during this period of transition, despite some outdated assessments, see Erich Caspar, Geschichte des Papsttums. Von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft 2. Das Papsttum unter byzantinischer Herrschaft, Tübingen 1933; see similarly Jeffrey Richards, The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476–752, London 1979. The popes' assessment of imperial rule is, however, systematically omitted in these works; see also Thomas F. X. Noble, The Republic of St. Peter. The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825, Philadelphia 1984. This is true for more general surveys to an even greater extent, i.e., Walter Ullmann, Short History of the Papacy. Reprint with corrections, London 1974; Bernhard Schimmelpfennig, Das Papsttum. Grundzüge seiner Geschichte von der Antike bis zur Renaissance, Darmstadt 1984; Klaus Herbers, Geschichte des Papsttums im Mittelalter, Darmstadt 2012; see also Neil Christie, From Constantine to Charlemagne. An Archeology of Italy AD 300–800, Hampshire 2006.
7 For examples of imperial influence, see Judith Herrin, The Formation of Christendom, Oxford 1987, p. 63 f., 100 f., 116 f.; see also Eugen Ewig, Zum christlichen Königsgedanken im Frühmittelalter, in: Das Königtum. Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen, Lindau/Konstanz 1956 (Vorträge und Forschungen 3), p. 7–73, esp. p. 9–13. Who presided over the Council is controversial to this day, cf. Josef Wohlmuth, Einführung, in: Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta, vol. 1: Konzilien des ersten Jahrtausends. Vom Konzil von Nizäa (325) bis zum Vierten Konzil von Konstantinopel (869/70), ed. Josef Wohlmuth, Paderborn u. a. 1998, p. 1; for further reading, see ibid., p. 4; on the relations between Church and Empire since the fourth century, see the survey by Blaudeau (cf. fn. 2) p. 155–161; on Constantine's role during the Council, see more recently Klaus Rosen, Konstantin der Große. Kaiser zwischen Machtpolitik und Religion, Stuttgart 2013, p. 279–288.
8 On the beginnings, see the stimulating study by Paul Veyne, Quand notre monde est devenu chrétien (312–394), Paris 2007. On the early councils, see Myron Wojtowytsch, Papsttum und Konzile von den Anfängen bis zu Leo I. (440–461). Studien zur Entstehung der Überordnung des Papstes über Konzile (Päpste und Papsttum 17), Stuttgart 1981.
9 Ewig (cf. fn. 7) p. 11.

sight to fulfil all the synod's requests in advance, "[f]or already from the outset of your reign you were inspired by the divine spirit to make sure that in the religion of the Lord you upheld the teachings of the holy apostles."[10] Orthodoxy and loyalty towards Rome were of utmost importance.

On reviewing papal letters from the fourth to eighth centuries, both these qualities of a good emperor are reflected in the forms of address with which popes referred to them. While Achim Thomas Hack was not able to discover any regularity within titles using abstract nouns in his study of early medieval epistolography,[11] letters of late antiquity are nonetheless more significant in this respect.

The variety of forms of address could be highly diverse in letters composed in a colloquial style and concerning topics of a comparatively less explosive nature. For example, in his letter to Emperor Zeno (474–491), Pope Simplicius (468–483) used five different abstract nouns to address the emperor, namely *vestra clementia* (3x), *vestra pietas* (2x), *vestra magnanimitas, vestra mansuetudo* and *vestra religiositas.*[12] While this range seems diverse, variable, and rather arbitrary, a later example concerning Emperor Anastasios I (491–518) demonstrates how forms of address could be specifically adapted to particular situations. Tensions between the Popes Anastasius II (496–498) and Gelasius I (492–496) and Emperor Anastasios, whom they accused of an affinity towards miaphysitism, are clearly reflected in the way he is addressed. By endorsing his predecessor Zeno's Henotikon, which was composed with the purpose of mitigating the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, Anastasios had merely attempted to reintegrate the opponents of the Council. However, this course of action was at times understood and discredited by the popes as a renunciation of conciliar decisions.[13] In the face of the emperor's alleged affinity to the heresy of monophysitism, in 496 Pope Anastasius used the address *vestra pietas* four times, *vestra serenitas* four times, *vestra clementia* four times and *vestra tranquillitas* once

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10 All English translations of Latin quotes here and in the following are by Florian Hartmann. Ambrosius, Epistularum liber X. Epistulae extra collectionem 7, ed. Michaela Zelzer (CSEL 82/3), Vienna 1982, p. 191–197; see also Ursula Reutter, Damasus, Bischof von Rom (366–384). Leben und Werk, Diss. (masch.), Jena 1999, p. 167; on the authorship of this letter, see ibid., p. 173. English translation according to Ambrose of Milan, Political Letters and Speeches, transl. by J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz with the assist. of C. Hill. Liverpool, 2005.

11 Hack (cf. fn. 2) p. 395: "Allein die Existenz von zwei Dutzend unterschiedlichen Möglichkeiten, den fränkischen Herrscher anzusprechen, lässt den Gedanken an ein allzu enges System "kanzleimäßiger" Titulierungen von vornherein als unplausibel erscheinen."

12 Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae, a S. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II., ed. Andreas Thiel, Braunsberg 1867, ND Hildesheim 1974, I, Ep. 6, p. 186–189.

13 At least the Henotikon had provided some hope of unifying the East in this respect. From among the copious literature on the Henotikon, see Friedhelm Winkelmann, Die östlichen Kirchen in der Epoche der christologischen Auseinandersetzungen (5. bis 7. Jahrhundert) (Kirchengeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen I, Alte Kirche und frühes Mittelalter 6), Berlin 1980, p. 97 f. On these proceedings, see Mischa Meier, Anastasios I. Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches, Stuttgart 2009, p. 103 f.; on the Council of Chalcedon and for further reading, see Lionel R. Wickham, Chalkedon, TRE 7 (1981), p. 668–675; on the sources, see Wohlmuth (cf. fn. 7) p. 75 f.

in a letter to Emperor Anastasios.[14] *Pietas*, undoubtedly not coincidentally, came to the fore during a time in which the emperor was being accused of lacking *pietas*. Therefore, the salutation has an exhortative nature. And by using it, the pope deliberately invokes the emperor's lack of *pietas*. In Pope Gelasius' well-known letter to the same Emperor Anastasios in 494, in which the "doctrine of the Two Swords" is first developed,[15] only one abstract noun appears in addressing the emperor: *pietas*, used eight times.[16] These findings already indicate which qualities of a good ruler were a priority from the perspective of the popes of late antiquity. But they primarily convey how strongly the use of abstract nouns in forms of address was dependant on the specific occasion for the letters.[17] If however, the specific circumstances determine both diction and forms of address of letters then, based on nouns used in forms of address, enduring, timeless, and uniform idea(l)s of a good emperor can only be named with difficulty. In this way, each individual case of theological controversy, sometimes carried out between emperors and popes in late antiquity, necessitated an emphasis on the emperor's – apparently lacking – *pietas* and orthodoxy. At times, this led to a narrowing of the range of topics of abstract nouns with which the emperor was addressed.[18]

In the early Middle Ages, the range of abstract nouns widened again. In letters by eighth-century popes to the Carolingians, recorded in the so-called *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*,[19] Achim Thomas Hack has found no less than 24 different abstract nouns. *Vestra benignitas, bonitas, christianitas, vestrum regale culmen, vestra excellentia, vestra regalis potentia, vestra praecellentia* are especially frequent, but also *vestra clementia* and *vestra eximietas*. In this context, the rarity of *religiositas* and the complete absence of *pietas* is striking.[20] These findings are symptomatic. They can arguably be explained considering the fact that in these letters, dating from 732 to approximately 790, the popes did not discuss any theological controversies with their Carolingian

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14 Epistolae Romanorum pontificum (cf. fn. 12) Ep. 1, p. 615 – 623.

15 On this letter, see Jan-Markus Kötter, Zwischen Kaisern und Aposteln. Das Akakianische Schisma (481– 519) als kirchlicher Ordnungskonflikt (Roma Aeterna 2), Stuttgart 2013, esp. p. 107– 110; Meier (cf. fn. 12) p. 109 – 114; Blaudeau (cf. fn. 2) p. 161– 169; indispensable to this day on both Gelasius and this letter is Walter Ullmann, Gelasius I. (Päpste und Papsttum 18), Stuttgart 1981, on the letter p. 198 – 212. On the development of this doctrine in the following centuries, see Hartmut Hoffmann, Die beiden Schwerter im hohen Mittelalter (Deutsches Archiv 20), 1964, p. 78 – 114.

16 Epistolae Romanorum pontificum (cf. fn. 12) Ep. 12, p. 349 – 358.

17 The shaping of the letter by the context in which it was written is especially emphasised by Alan Cottrell, Auctoritas and Potestas. A Reevaluation of the Correspondence of Gelasius I on Papal-Imperial Relations, in: Medieval-Studies 55 (1993), p. 95 – 109.

18 A quantitative analysis of the abstract nouns has not yet been done, but a cursory reading is already suggestive of the trend described here.

19 Codex Carolinus, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach (MGH Epp. III, Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini aevi I), Berlin 1892, p. 469 – 657; see also the recent German translation Codex epistolaris Carolinus. Frühmittelalterliche Papstbriefe an die Karolingerherrscher, ed. and trans. by Florian Hartmann and Tina B. Orth-Müller, Darmstadt 2017.

20 Hack (cf. fn. 2) p. 362 – 366.

addressees and did not accuse them of heresies.[21] Iconoclasm and the debates on the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 are not yet mentioned in these letters. After all, Rome and the papacy were considered by the Carolingians to be the keepers of the authentic transmission until well into the 780s. Perhaps for this reason, criticism of *pietas* by the popes at the time seemed unthinkable.[22] Against this backdrop, the popes had to remind their Carolingian correspondents of their *pietas* much less frequently, in contrast to many an emperor of late antiquity, particularly as Christological debates which threatened the religious unity of the empire apparently made such admonitions necessary. If, however, the abstract nouns can be linked to individual occasions for letters, then they are not so well suited to an analysis of ideal rulership from a papal perspective that transcends time. For although, as mentioned, a variety of abstract nouns can be demonstrated in individual cases – depending on the specific circumstances of the letter – this variability does not hold for other criteria for reconstructing ideals of rulership.

2 Orthodoxy of the Emperor

Perusal of the papal letters of the fourth to eighth centuries with respect to qualities of rulers emphasised outside of the salutation reveals that the range of prominent imperial virtues is consistently quite limited. This could be rooted in source-critical factors,[23] since papal letters have predominantly survived in collections of letters, particularly in collections of decretals, precisely because they contained canonical topics.[24] Or, to put it in another way, it was their canonical contents that assured the letters' survival in these collections.[25] Therefore, disputes on dogma or canon law[26] and the question of the Roman patriarch's discretionary competence, meaning

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21 While conflict ridden letters were exchanged between Pope Hadrian I and Charlemagne, amongst other things on the controversy over the worship of icons, these are not part of the large collection of the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*. On this controversy between Rome and France and the source material, see the diverse studies in Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur, ed. Rainer Berndt, 2 vols. (Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte 80), Mainz 1997, and see still Anne Freeman, Further Studies in the Libri Carolini, in: Speculum 40 (1965), p. 203–289.

22 Rudolf Schieffer, "Redeamus ad fontem". Rom als Hort authentischer Überlieferung im frühen Mittelalter, in: Roma. Caput et fons. Zwei Vorträge über das päpstliche Rom zwischen Altertum und Mittelalter, ed. Arnold Angenendt/Rudolf Schieffer, Opladen 1989, p. 45–70; and before Hubert Mordek, Kirchenrechtliche Autoritäten im Frühmittelalter, in: Recht und Schrift im Mittelalter, ed. Peter Classen (Vorträge und Forschungen 23), Sigmaringen 1977, p. 237–255, esp. p. 240 f.

23 On the transmission, see the short survey in Hack (cf. fn. 2) p. 26 f.

24 See the excellent survey in Jasper and Fuhrmann (cf. fn. 5) p. 22–41 in which they analyse the early collections.

25 In a similar vein, see Herbers (cf. fn. 5) p. 319, with reference to Giles Constable, Letters and Letter-Collections (Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 17), Turnhout 1976.

26 Blaudeau (cf. fn. 2) p. 30.

his claim of primacy, were guiding themes of most of the surviving papal letters to the emperors of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.[27] The prominence of this topics must not be due to the actual number of letters but can be ascribed to the specific transmission history. The pope claimed that in matters of faith his position should be enforced and regularly demanded of the emperor that he should conform to the ideal of a good ruler. The pope's ideal good ruler is one who is orthodox; meaning, one who follows the papal definition of the true faith.

The concept of 'petrinology' was further elaborated from the time of Pope Leo I (440–461) at the very latest. This idea of papal primacy based on the Apostle Peter became a sort of *ceterum censeo* in papal letters to the emperors.[28] It is the acknowledgement and support of this position, including the responsibility for the welfare of all Christians,[29] that Pope Leo I sees as the defining features of a good ruler – at least according to the evidence of his surviving letters. Other aspects clearly take a back seat in these writings and are, at most, hinted at. One example is Leo's letter to Emperor Theodosius II (408–450), prior to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, in which he defended Eutyches' (c. 380 – c. 456) conviction of heresy at a council held in Constantinople in 448 and emphatically demanded it should remain unchanged.[30] In his introduction, Leo praises the emperor's rule and specifies his high esteem thusly, "We are happy to see that you not only have a royal but also a sacerdotal spirit, because next to imperial and public concern you are concerned with the most pious affairs of Christian religion."[31]

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27 Bronwen Neil, The Papacy in the Age of Gregory the Great, in: A Companion to Gregory the Great, ed. Bronwen Neil and Mathew Dal Santo (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 47), Leiden/Boston 2013, p. 3–27, here p. 12 f., 15.

28 On the development of the doctrine of the primacy of the Holy See of St. Peter, see Ullmann (cf. fn. 15) p. 88–95; idem, Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy, in: JThS 11 (1960), p. 25–51; the "approfondissement pétrinologique" is analysed in more detail by Blaudeau (cf. fn. 2) p. 211 f. From amongst the copious scholarly literature, see also Theresia Hainthaler, Die Petrus-Idee bei Leo I. von Rom, in: Heiligkeit und Apostolizität der Kirche, ed. Theresia Hainthaler, Franz Mali and Gregor Emmenegger, Innsbruck 2010, p. 211–234; also, for further literature, see recently Hartmut Leppin, Der Patriarch im Westen und der Kaiser des Ostens. Einige Bemerkungen zur Dialektik von Schwäche und Stärke, in: Amt und Herrschaft in Antike, Mittelalter und Renaissance, ed. Bernd Schneidmüller, Stefan Weinfurter, Michael Matheus and Alfired Wieczorek (Die Päpste 1), Regensburg 2016, p. 139–164, p. 148.

29 On this responsibility for welfare, see ibid. with further comments.

30 See most recently George A. Bevan and Patrick T.R. Gray, The Trial of Eutyches. A New Interpretation, in: BZ 101 (2009), p. 617–657; for the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, see the following works Alois Grillmeier, Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, vol. 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalkedon (451), Freiburg u. a. ³1990, p. 751; Johannes van Oort and Johannes Roldanus (ed.), Chalkedon: Geschichte und Aktualität. Studien zur Rezeption der christologischen Formel von Chalkedon, Leuven 1998; a very good overview is given by Lionel R. Wickham, Chalkedon, ökumenische Synode (451), in: TRE 7 (1981), p. 668–675.

31 Leo Mag., ep. 24 (PL 54, col. 735): *vobis non solum regium sed etiam sacerdotalem inesse animum gaudemus. Siquidem praeter imperiales et publicas curas, piissimam sollicitudinem Christianae religionis habetis.*

Evidently, there existed an *animus regius* and certain *imperiales curae* that were traits of a good ruler. However, only religious qualities, expressed by supporting priestly duties for the protection of the Christian confession, are explained in more detail.

Given the resurgence of Christological controversies with Constantinople, admonishing the emperor seemed urgent to Leo I.[32] The emperor's *pietas*, promoted and foreseen by God, was thus the deciding quality of a good emperor for both the Holy Church and the *res publica Romana*.[33] Obedience to the pope was his foremost obligation, or in the words of Pope Felix II (483–492) *... ut supplicationem meam benignis auribus sicut princeps Christianus accipias*.[34] Whoever lends his ear to the pope acts like a (good) Christian ruler!

The narrowness of themes in this cursory summary of rulers' positive traits is striking: from the fourth to at least the sixth century, surviving letters almost exclusively refer to orthodoxy and by association to obedience to and honouring of the pope. There may be explanations for this. It must be noted that abstract deliberations on the good ruler rarely feature in papal letters. If allusions are found they were usually made for a specific reason, most often in situations in which the rulers did not exactly meet the papal ideals of a good ruler. This means that statements on the good emperor can usually be read as either criticism or disappointed expectations in specific situations. A more general idea(l) of the good ruler cannot be deduced on these grounds alone.

Furthermore, the popes rarely wrote to the emperors of their own accord. As has been mentioned, they were frequently beseeched to write to the emperor as a mediator on behalf of others. As a rule, those who approached the pope requesting his intercession with the emperor did so due to imperial positions on canonical or theological matters. It is on account of these specific contents that the papal letters have survived at all.[35] For example, it was pro-Chalcedonian circles, even in the Eastern

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32 On the tense relationship between Leo I and the emperors, see Blaudeau (cf. fn. 2); still worth reading is Hans Martin Klinkenberg, Papsttum und Reichskirche bei Leo dem Großen, in: ZRG kann. Abt. 38 (1952), p. 37–112.

33 From amongst Leo's letters, see in addition to the letters of disputed authenticity to Emperor Marcian (ep. 111 and ep. 142), the one to Emperor Leo I (457–474) ep. 145 (PL 54, col. 1113); also ep. 152, also addressed to Leo I: *Multo gaudio mens mea exsultat in Domino, et magna est mihi ratio gloriandi, cum clementiae vestrae excellentissimam fidem augeri per omnia donis gratiae coelestis agnosco et per incrementa diligentiae devotionem in vobis animi sacerdotalis experior. Nam in vestrae pietatis alloquiis non dubie patet quod per vos in totius Ecclesiae salute Spiritus sanctus operetur, et quantum universorum fidelium precibus sit optandum, ut in omnem gloriam extendatur imperium, qui supra curam rerum temporalium religiosae providentiae famulatum divinis et aeternis dispositionibus perseveranter impenditis, ut scilicet catholica fides, quae humanum genus sola vivificat, sola sanctificat, in una confessione permaneat; dissensiones quae de terrenarum opinionum varietate nascuntur, a soliditate illius petrae supra quam civitas Dei aedificatur.* For contextualisation, see Herbers (cf. fn. 6) p. 37.

34 Pope Felix II (483–492) to Emperor Zeno, ed. Andreas Thiel, Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae, a S. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II, Braunsberg 1867, Ep. 1, p. 223.

35 See Jasper and Fuhrmann (cf. fn. 5) p. 22–25.

Empire,[36] who called upon the pope to remain unyielding in his defence of the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, while the emperors, in the interest of unity in the imperial Church, signalled to the critics of Chalcedon a willingness to compromise.[37] The popes reacted to these demands from the pro-Chalcedonian parties as they were required to comply with these requests of intercession with the emperor on account of their office. This is also the reason theological questions appear to be much more prominent in the surviving letters, as they had a greater chance of being transmitted. This limited thematic scope is mirrored in the way the depiction of the good emperor is expressed. Thus, it is also due to source-critical factors and transmission history that the references to concepts of the good ruler in papal letters are unilaterally limited to his *pietas, orthodoxia* and *oboedientia* towards Rome.

In these letters the objective of ensuring peace and unity within the church by defending papal positions on doctrine and the papal claim to obedience in matters of faith is tangible. Consequently, a good ruler appears as one who secures peace within the church as peace within the empire depended upon it. This corresponds with the central assessment of Gregory the Great (590–604),[38] who praised Emperor Maurice's application in the service of peace within the universal church with the words, "Nobody is able to rule temporal things, as long as he is not able to rule divine concerns and as long as he does not understand that the peace of the state depends on the peace in the entire church."[39]

Gregory himself explicitly professed to Emperor Maurice (582–602) in the year 596 that loyalty towards the true faith, meaning the Roman faith, was most important:

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36 On the pope's chances of speaking for the Eastern Empire and enforcing his claim to teaching authority there, see Leppin (cf. fn. 28) p. 152.

37 Matthias Maser, Die Päpste und das oströmische Kaisertum im sechsten Jahrhundert, in: Das Papsttum und das vielgestaltige Italien. Hundert Jahre Italia Pontificia, ed. Klaus Herbers and Jochen Johrendt (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Neue Folge, phil.-hist. Kl. 5), Berlin and New York 2009, p. 39–68, here p. 49.

38 On the estimations in his letters and the description of relations to the emperor, see Ernst Pitz, Papstreskripte im frühen Mittelalter. Diplomatische und rechtsgeschichtliche Studien zum Brief-Corpus Gregors des Großen (Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 14), Sigmaringen 1990; and most recently Peter Eich, Gregor der Große. Bischof von Rom zwischen Antike und Mittelalter, Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich 2016.

39 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Dag Norberg (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 140/ 140 A), Turnhout 1982, V, 37, p. 308: *neminem recte posse terrena agere, nisi noverit divina tractare, pacemque reipublicae ex universalis ecclesiae pace pendere*; see for the letters of Gregory I also *John R. C. Martyn*, (trans.), The *Letters of Gregory the Great* (Medieval Sources in Translation 40), Toronto 2004, which I did not use for my own translation.

> Your military concerns and your countless solicitudes you tirelessly sustain by ruling the Christian state makes me as well as the entire world happy, because your piety takes always care for the protection of the faith solicitously, which makes glowing the empire of the lords.[40]

Beside all other – even military – service, devotion to the true faith counted most according to Gregory. That *pietas vestra* is used as an abstract noun denoting the addressee in the passage cited here is in line with papal letters since the fourth century, though the depiction of the good ruler in them was rather unspectacular overall.

The same is true for the kings of the *regna* in formerly Roman territories. In 601, Gregory outlined the most distinguished and principal duties of the ruler of the newly Christianised kingdom to the Anglo-Saxon King Æthelberht (c. 589–616). God had put the best candidate on the throne in choosing Æthelberht, but now as a good king the following was expected of him:

> Therefore, glorious son, solicitously retain the mercy you received by divine help, hurry to disseminate the Christian faith among the peoples subordinate to your power, intensify the zeal to impose correctly their conversion, persecute the cult of pagan idols, destroy profane buildings, uplift the moral conduct of your subjects by exhortation, fright, flattery, correction and by giving examples of good behaviour.[41]

An unmistakable focus on theological aspects of the good ruler is also evident in the ethics of rulership set out in Gregory's *Regula pastoralis*, which provides a mirror for bishops. Though directed at the clergy, relevance to temporal rulers is implied.[42] As both temporal and spiritual power originated in the divine world order, they were functionally related to one another.[43] For both spiritual and temporal rulers, responsibility for the salvation of their subjects had the highest priority.[44] The legitimacy of the emperor's position in the world was gained by the emperor's appointment by

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40 Greg. M, Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) VI, 64, p. 439: *Inter armorum curas et innumeras (!) sollicitudines, quas indefesso studio pro christianae reipublicae regimine sustinetis, magna mihi cum universo mundo laetitiae causa est, quod pietas vestra custodiae fidei, qua dominorum fulget imperium, praecipua sollicitudine semper invigilate.*

41 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) XI, 37, p. 930: *ideo, gloriose fili, eam quam accepisti divinitus gratiam sollicita mente custodi, christianam fidem in populis tibi subditis extendere festina, zelum rectitudinis tuae in eorum conversione multiplica, idolorum cultus insequere, fanorum aedificia everte, subditorum mores in magna vitae munditia exhortando, terrendo, blandiendo, corrigendo et boni operis exempla monstrando aedifica.*

42 As is generally known, Gregory never wrote a treatise on temporal rule, although thoughts on the matter do shine through in his *Regula pastoralis*; see Matthew Dal Santo, Gregory the Great, the Empire and the Emperor, in: A Companion to Gregory the Great, ed. Bronwen Neil and idem (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 47), Leiden and Boston 2013, p. 57–81.

43 Robert A. Markus, Gregory the Great and his World, Cambridge 1997, p. 86.

44 David Hipshon, Gregory the Great's *"Political Thought"*, JEH 33 (2002), p. 439–453.

God and was emphasised as early as Pope Siricius (384–399), more so by Leo I, and most strongly by Gregory the Great.[45]

On account of his pastoral duties as the successor of Saint Peter, the pope had to demand compliance with dogma – admittedly defined by the pope himself – of every Christian in the interest of each individual. This also applied to the emperor himself. In this matter, political importance was not of primary concern but rather the pope's pastoral duty of ensuring each person's salvation through conformity to the true faith. According to Ambrose of Milan (374–397) and later Pope Leo I, pastoral duties should determine the clergy's influence on temporal rulers.[46] Their main task was pastoral care, understood to be not merely the care of one's own soul, but of those of all believers.[47] In the words of Gregory the Great: *Ars artium regimen animarum.*[48] This responsibility can explain many an intervention outside of the pope's Latin sphere of influence.

That papal demands were not always met in the East is an entirely different affair. A good emperor would have listened to them, or, to quote Pope Symmachus (498–514): *Si Christianus princeps es, qualiscumque praesulis apostolici vocem debes patienter audire.*[49] Such were the ideas that shaped the evaluation of emperors: good meant orthodox and less good meant heretical. Thus, an idea of a "custodial function of priests" and an elaborate "theory of sacerdotal duties" had already existed in the fifth century; the de facto absence of the emperor from Italy enabled a "hierocratic role of the Church and the papacy" to emerge.[50]

This idea persisted into the seventh and eighth centuries. Gregory III (731–741) also relied on the Carolingian major-domo's loyalty to the successors of Saint Peter.[51] And following Pepin's elevation to King of the Franks, justified according to the so-called Nomen-Theory[52] which states that whoever bears the name King

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45 Dal Santo (cf. fn. 41) p. 66; see also Homes Dudden, Gregory the Great, 2, p. 248 f.; and later in a similar vein, see Robert Markus, Gregory the Great's Europe, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, p. 21–36, p. 34 and Eugen H. Fischer, Gregor der Große und Byzanz. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der päpstlichen Politik, ZRG kan. Abt 36 (1950), p. 15–144.

46 Leppin, (cf. fn. 3) p. 33–49.

47 See Peter Brown, Die Entstehung des christlichen Europa, Munich 1996, p. 168.

48 Greg. M., *Regula pastoralis*, I, 1, ed. I, 128.

49 Symm. Papa, Apologeticus adversus Anastasium imperatorem, Nr. 10, ed. Andreas Thiel, Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae, a S. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II, Braunsberg 1867, p. 700, c. 1.

50 However, Gerd Althoff, Die Entwicklung kirchlicher und päpstlicher Verantwortung für die Könige (9.–12. Jahrhundert), in: Schneidmüller (ed.) (cf. fn. 28) p. 197–214, p. 203 thinks this idea did not emerge until the ninth century.

51 Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (cf. fn. 19) Ep. 1, p. 476 f. (cf. also ibid. Ep. 5, p. 488; Ep. 6, p. 488 f.); Codex epistolaris Carolinus, ed. Hartmann and Orth-Müller (cf. fn. 19) Ep. 2, p. 36 f.; Ep. 11, p. 106 f.; Ep. 7, p. 82.

52 See Helmut Beumann, Nomen imperatoris. Studien zur Kaiseridee Karls d. Gr., in: HZ 185 (1958), p. 515–549, especially p. 529–535 on older literature. See also, though deviating from Beumann, Arno Borst, Kaisertum und Nomentheorie im Jahr 800, in: Festschrift für Percy Ernst Schramm 1, Wiesbaden 1964, p. 36–51, reprinted in: Gunther Wolf (ed.), Zum Kaisertum Karls des Großen. Beiträge und

should also have the power of a king and whoever wields the power of a king should bear the name and title of a king, Pope Stephen II (752–757) wrote the following to King Pepin (751–768), referring to this theory and the continuing Lombard threat:

> A sentence of the far-seeing and wise prophet Solomon reads the following: A good name is over compassion. A good name means to preserve with unsullied heart and clean conscience the fidelity that someone has promised and give proof of this fidelity by his deeds. A good name means to dispute with all energy for the enhancement of the holy Church of God, through which the salvation of all Christians springs from. A good name proceeds from you among all peoples if it would be based on deeds. Since our redeemer, the merciful and much merciful Lord, is positively disposed towards those he had recognised of being loyal adherents and defenders of his holy Church with their total purity of their convictions.[53]

Therefore, good rulership was founded on loyalty to Saint Peter, on his protection, and on the true faith. Stephen's brother and successor to the *cathedra* of Saint Peter, Paul I (757–767), seems hardly altered in this respect when he writes to Pepin:

> Through our urgent pleas we request that you, good and orthodox king, will be after God a strong protector and defender and that you continue steadily the good and pious work, you have already begun, in order to liberate the holy church of God.[54]

The vocative reads *bone, orthodoxae rex* and besides protection an *opus bonum et pium* is expected of him. Paul elaborates this further in addressing Pepin's sons Charlemagne and Carloman I. Following some initial remarks on Moses and Joshua, King David is presented as the chief example. As King David had been, both Carolingians were appointed by God with the task of elevating and vigorously defending his Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and the orthodox faith of the Christians.[55] In a similar

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Aufsätze (Wege der Forschung 38) Darmstadt 1982, p. 216–239; on the problematisation and later taking up of the discussion on the *nomen*, see Thomas Ertl, Byzantinischer Bilderstreit und fränkische Nomentheorie. Imperiales Handeln und dialektisches Denken im Umfeld der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen, in: FMSt 40 (2006), p. 13–42.

53 Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (cf. fn. 19) Ep., 7, p. 491: *Providi et sapientissimi Salomonis prophetica ita fertur assertio: Nomen bonum super misericordiam. Nomen quippe bonum est: fidem, quam quis pollicitus fuerit, inmaculato corde et pura conscientia custodire et operibus implere; nomen enim bonum est: totis viribus ad exaltationem sanctae Dei ecclesiae, per quam et salus christianorum existit, decertare. Bonum enim inter omnes gentes de vobis exiit nomen, si operibus fuisset impletum. Redemptor namque noster, misericors et multum miserator dominus, illis propitiator existit, quos omnino tota mentis integritate fideles et defensores sanctae suae ecclaesiae cognoverit.*

54 Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (cf. fn. 19) Ep., 32, p. 539: *Supplici deprecatione te, bone, orthodoxae rex, quesumus postulantes, ut sis nobis post Deum firmus protector ac defensor, constanter in eo, quod caepisti, bono ac pio redemptionis sanctae Dei ecclesiae permanens opere.*

55 Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (cf. fn. 19) Ep., 33, p. 540: *Olim omnipotens Deus, cernens populi sui Israhelitici lamentationem et impiam ab Aegyptiis illis infertam obpressionem, misertus est eis, mittens famulum suum Moysen, per quem, signa et prodigia exercens, eundem suum eripuit populum; et per eum, legem illis instituens, ad optatam eos illis perduxit requiem. Cui etiam Iosue, ut praeliaretur bella Domini, adnectit atque alios sui divini nominis cultores eis concessit auxiliatores. Sed in omnibus*

way, Paul later places Pepin alongside Moses by verbosely ascribing the following three qualities to Pepin, the ideal king:

> 1. ... you are divinely inspired to liberate the entire catholic and apostolic Church of God.
> 2. ... you repelled the schism of the heretics and the originators of heretic dogmas.
> 3. ... it is by you, that our redeemer, the mediator between God and humanity, brought peace to his Church and to the entire Christian people, which he had redeemed with his precious blood, and whose orthodox faith he well defended.[56]

Pepin is in accordance with the ideal ruler because he fights for the freedom of the church, protects of the true faith according to the pope's definition, and fights against enemies of the faith. While this sole reference to orthodoxy and support of the pope in letters of the eighth century is stylistically different, in essence it has not changed compared to the notions of Leo I or Gregory the Great. At its heart, loyalty to the pope and the duties that go with it are the manifestation and substance of good rulership.

3 Qualities beyond Orthodoxy

The range of qualities of a good ruler was probably not extended until the second half of the sixth century, initially to include military qualities. Until then, the popes had by and large peacefully cooperated with the barbaric kings of the Apennine peninsula, especially with the Ostrogoths[57] despite their being Homoean. Theodoric (475–526) had presented himself as a representative of the emperor and as protector of the Church, who respected the pope's rights and gave him the reverence he was due – especially during his first visit to Rome which, after all, lasted half a

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illis non ita complacuit eius divina maiestas, sicut in Davit rege et propheta, testante eodem misericordissimo Deo nostro in id, quod ait: "Inveni David servum meum secundum cor meum, in oleo sancto unxi eum", cui et regnum et semini eius in aeternum gloriose tribuit possidendum. Sic enim, praecellentissimi atque nobilissimi filii, a Deo instituti reges, isdem dominus Deus noster in vestra christianissima conplacuit excellentia atque, in utero matris vos sanctificans, ad tam magnum regale provexit culmen, mittens apostolum suum, beatum Petrum, per eius nempe vicarium, et oleo sancto vos vestrumque praecellentissimum genitorem unguens celestibus replevit benedictionibus et sanctam suam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam atque orthodoxam christianorum fidem vobis commisit exaltandum atque viriliter defendendam.

56 Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (cf. fn. 19) Ep., 42, p. 554 f.: *... ad liberandam sanctam universalem catholicam et apostolicam Dei ecclesiam divinitus es inspiratus.; . [...], hereticorum schisma et auctores impii dogmatis respuisti. [...] per te redemptor noster, Dei hominumque mediator, ecclesiae suae et universo populo christiano eius pretioso redempto sanguine pacem tribuit et eius fidei orthodoxę perfectam contulit defensionem.*

57 On the terminologies "Arian/Homoean," see the up-to-date deliberations of Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, Theoderich der Große. König der Goten, Herrscher der Römer. Biographie, Munich 2018, p. 474 f.

year. To Pope Gelasius the Homoean king of the Ostrogoths did not seem threatening unlike the Christological errors in the Eastern Empire.[58]

3.1 Protective Military Function

It was the appearance of the Lombards in Italy starting in 568 rather than the threats to Rome from Visigoths, Vandals, and Huns or the presence of the Ostrogoths under Theodoric that caused the popes to perceive a danger to their person, their city, and parts of their patrimony and possessions of the Roman Church. Gregory put these fears into words quite vividly.[59] Against the backdrop of increasingly dramatic portrayals of the Lombard threat in our sources, appeals for security came to the fore of papal letters[60] that up to this point had not been visible, because they had not been necessary. Suddenly a good emperor was one who could protect Rome, the pope, and the Church. Only now did the necessity of protective military power dawn on the popes[61] – not only in Rome or Italy,[62] but also on the fringes of the Roman Empire. Gregory I's abundant correspondence provides some material on this matter, for example in a letter to Gennadius (591–598), exarch of Africa:

> As our Lord has made Your Excellency sparkling in the light of victories won in hostile wars during this lifetime, you should fight the enemies of His Church with all your mental and physical force, so that His fame may gleam due to both victories, because you resist strongly the enemies

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58 For a short survey of the relationship between the Ostrogoths and the papacy, see Wolfgang Giese, Die Goten, Stuttgart 2004, p. 78–83, and also Wiemer (cf. fn. 57) p. 513 f.; 551–559.

59 Walter Pohl, Die langobardische Reichsbildung zwischen Imperium Romanum und Frankenreich, in: Völker, Reiche und Namen im frühen Mittelalter, ed. Matthias Becher and Stefanie Dick, Munich 2010 (Mittelalter Studien 22), p. 223–243, esp. p. 226, with an apocalyptical interpretation of Pope Gregory I by the Lombards: Greg. M., dial. 3.38 (PL 77, col. 316); Pohl's translation: "Denn entvölkert sind die Städte, verwüstet die Festungen, verbrannt die Kirchen, zerstört sind die Klöster der Männer und Frauen, öde die Landgüter und von jedem verlassen, der sie bebauen könnte, einsam und leer ist das Land, das kein Besitzer bewohnt, und wilde Tiere haben sich in den Orten niedergelassen, wo zuvor zahlreiche Menschen wohnten. Was in anderen Teilen der Welt geschieht, weiß ich nicht. In diesem Land jedenfalls, in dem wir leben, kündigt sich das Ende der Welt nicht nur an, es zeigt sich"; cf. idem, Das Papsttum und die Langobarden, in: Der Dynastiewechsel von 751. Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung, ed. Matthias Becher and Jörg Jarnut, Münster 2004, p. 145–161.

60 For some pointed remarks on this subject, see Herrin (cf. fn. 7) p. 141.

61 See Matthias Maser, Die Päpste und das oströmische Kaisertum im sechsten Jahrhundert, in: Das Papsttum und das vielgestaltige Italien. Hundert Jahre Italia Pontificia, ed. Klaus Herbers and Jochen Johrendt (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Neue Folge, phil.-hist. Kl. 5), Berlin/New York 2009, p. 39–68, here p. 66. However, this work overlooks the fact that a demand for protection appears here for the first time.

62 Concerning the Lombards, see for example, Gregory's request for help to Emperor Maurice in 595: Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) V, 36, p. 304 f.; see also ibid, V, 39, esp. p. 316 f.

of the Catholic Church in hostile wars fought for the Christian people and you are fighting ecclesiastical wars like the warriors of God.[63]

In the light of the emperor's lack of military power in Italy, his protective function, especially against the Lombards, was transferred to the Franks. Several requests for help by the pope have survived, primarily in letters addressed to Carolingian rulers, major-domos and kings, in which love of Saint Peter is defined as both an ideal and a commitment to military protection of the Roman Church; a series of letters that was started by Pope Gregory III (731–741) in 739:

> We are confident that you are the loving son of Saint Peter, Prince of the apostles, and our son and that you obey our commandments out of reverence for him in defence of the Church of God and of the people that belong to her, because we can no longer endure the persecution and oppression by the Lombards.[64]

3.2 *Iustitia* – Executive Authority and Jurisdiction

Military prowess was not the only quality of an ideal ruler. The emperor had been absent from Italy since the Lombard invasion. The popes also took on several administrative duties and were in contact with local rulers and exarchs towards whom they behaved more assertively than towards the emperor.[65] This is most evident in the registers of Gregory I (590–604). He also considered himself the temporal ruler of the city of Rome. The responsibilities of a good ruler were now also of concern to the pope and the rectors of the *patrimonia* and were very broad.[66] Gregory united temporal and spiritual duties.[67] For this reason he comments on matters concerning the

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63 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) I, 72, p. 80: *Sicut excellentiam vestram hostilibus bellis in hac vita Dominus victoriarum fecit luce fulgere, ita oportet eam inimicis ecclesiae eius omni vivacitate mentis et corporis obviare, quatenus eius ex utroque triumpho magis ac magis enitescat opinio, cum et forensibus bellis adversariis catholicae ecclesiae pro Christiano populo vehementer obsistitis et ecclesiastica proelia sicut bellatores Domini fortiter dimicatis.*
64 Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (cf. fn. 19) Ep. 1, p. 476 f: *... confidentes, te esse amatorem filium beati Petri principis apostolorum et nostrum, te quod pro eius reverencia nostris oboedias mandatis ad defendandam eclesiam Dei et peculiarem populum, quia iam persecutionem et oppresionem gentis Langobardorum sufferre non possumus.*
65 The coexistence of imperial and local administrative actors is described by Thomas S. Brown, Gentlemen and Officers. Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A. D. 554–800, Rome 1984.
66 Georg Jenal, Gregor der Große und die Stadt Rom (590–604), in: Herrschaft und Kirche. Beiträge zur Entstehung und Wirkungsweise episkopaler und monastischer Organisationsformen, ed. Friedrich Prinz (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 33), Stuttgart 1988, p. 109–145, esp. p. 111–113.
67 Ibid., p. 113, 144.

ethics of rulership to addressees other than the emperor, not only in letters but also in his "mirror for bishops," the *Regula pastoralis*.[68]

Front and centre is the universal, classical obligation of a ruler to dispense justice. In 591, Gregory wrote to Gennadius, exarch of Africa:

> In order that the mercy of Christ will protect your glory in this well-being, you should quickly as usual settle whatever seems to you to be wrong. Strengthened by the arms of justice you will fight the hostile attacks with the virtue of faith.[69]

And in the same year 591 Gregory began his letter to the *dux* Theodore of Sardinia with the exordium: "You have to show the justice you bear in mind in the presence of men in the light of your deeds."[70] Dispensing justice is a self-evident responsibility and virtue of every ruler, but apparently not one explicitly demanded of the emperors in Gregory I's letters. Gregory reiterates this demand not to the emperor himself, but in letters to numerous local temporal rulers, most prominently in 599 to the Frankish Kings Theuderic (511–533) and Theudebert (533–547 or 548) of whom he had repeatedly called on to conform to Roman creed. Thus, the following passage in the letter to these Frankish kings stands out against the style Gregory usually adopted in addressing the emperors: "The highest quality of kings is to maintain justice and to protect everybody's rights and to give subjects not what is possible by power but what is just."[71]

3.3 Welfare and Alms

Another virtue came to the fore in response to prevailing needs in Rome, the pope's city, that had until then barely been emphasised: *largitas* relating to alms. As ascribed to in Justinian I's (527–565) *sanctio pragmatica* and perceived in ministry since Gregory I, the welfare of Rome became of growing importance of the pope as the suc-

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68 Silke Floryszczak, Die *Regula Pastoralis* Gregors des Großen. Studien zu Text, kirchenpolitischer Bedeutung und Rezeption in der Karolingerzeit, Tübingen 2005; see also Hanspeter Heinz, Der Bischofsspiegel des Mittelalters. Zur Regula pastoralis Gregors des Großen, in: Sendung und Dienst im bischöflichen Amt (Festschrift für Josef Stimpfle), ed. Anton Ziegenaus, St. Ottilien 1991, p. 113–135.

69 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) I, 59, p. 70: ...*ut gloriam vestram in eadem properitate gratia Christi custodiat, quaecumque perpere committi cognoscitis, celeri sicut consuistis prohibitione compescite, ut armis iustitiae praemunitus hostiles impetus fidei virtute quanticius superetis.*

70 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) I, 46, p. 60: *Iustitiam quam mente geritis oportet coram hominibus luce operum demonstretis.*

71 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) IX, 227, p. 801: *Summum in regibus bonum est iustitiam colere ac sua cuique iura servare et in subiectos non sinere quod potestatis est fieri sed quod aequm est custodiri.*

cessor of the Roman Emperor or as the case may be the *praefectus urbi*.[72] In cooperation with the emperors, Gregory ensured a continuous supply of grain to the Eternal City. Welfare for the population of the city of Rome, in the form of Christian charity expressed by means of support and alms, became one of the primary responsibilities of the ruler for Gregory.[73] Most such demands are to be found in correspondence with papal administrators in Sicily,[74] but this indicator of good rulership was also mentioned to the emperor, for example to Emperor Maurice in 595: "The piety of lords which was used to rule his subjects mercifully, glowed due to this good assistance so that the shortage of all the poor was reduced by this generous consolation."[75]

3.4 Mission

Indications that – even military – (Christian) missions were the duty of a good ruler also intensified under Gregory I. He praised the exarch of Ravenna, Callinicus (596/7–602/3), following his victory over Slavic opponents, but added, "You will achieve even more against your enemies if you call those who you have identified as enemies of God under the yoke of the true God. The more sincerely and submissively you pursue the concerns of God with the men, the more strongly you pursue your concerns."[76]

As is well known, missionary duties of rulers would be increasingly emphasised among the Franks in the seventh and particularly in the eighth century.[77] It is, how-

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72 Marie-Luise Laudage, Caritas und Memoria mittelalterlicher Bischöfe, Cologne 1993, p. 47; Jenal (cf. fn. 66) p. 133 f.; see also Ludo Moritz Hartmann, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Verwaltung in Italien (540 – 750), Leipzig 1889, p. 101.

73 On responsibility for welfare in Gregory I's writings, see besides Jenal (cf. fn. 66), Florian Hartmann, Hadrian I. Frühmittelalterliches Adelspapsttum und die Lösung Roms vom Kaiser in Byzanz (Päpste und Papsttum 34), Stuttgart 2006, p. 42 f.; see also Raimund Hermes, Die stadtrömischen Diakonien, in: RQ 91 (1996), p. 1–120, here p. 10 – 12.

74 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) I, 65, p. 74 f: *Si proximorum necessitatibus habita compassione benigna mente concurrimus, nostris proculdubio petitionibus clementem Dominum repperimus:* see also a slightly later letter to the same addressee; *Egentibus, nostrae commentationis auxilio oportet nos, in quantum ratio patitur, benigna mente praebere subsidium*; ibid. I, 69, p. 77.

75 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) V, 30, p. 296: *Dominorum pietas, quae suos consuevit misericorditer famulos continere, ita benigna hic subventione resplenduit, ut cunctorum debilium inopia largitatis eius sit consolatione sublevata.*

76 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) IX, 155, p. 711: *hoc enim contra hostes vestros amplius praevaletis, si eos quos Dei esse hostes agnoscitis sub iugum veri Domini revocatis; tantoque vestras causas apud homines fortiter agitis, quanto Dei causas in hominibus sincera ac devota mente feceritis.*

77 See the foundational study by Lutz von Padberg, Mission und Christianisierung. Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart 1995; a more general study including late antiquity, see idem, Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter, Stuttgart 2009.

ever, remarkable that missionary responsibilities were assigned to rulers at a relatively late point in time. The emperors were never associated with this duty in papal letters dating from the fourth to sixth centuries.

3.5 Advisors

The importance of advisors in the ruler's entourage is rarely explicitly mentioned in sources. However, recent scholarship has been able to bring it to light more clearly. Remarks indicating a good ruler should not recklessly heed defamation can be observed frequently. Positive utterances, according to which a good ruler is characterised by having the capability of surrounding himself with competent advisors, are much rarer. One such example is a letter by Gregory I to Theoctista, the emperor's sister, in 601: "We have to thank our almighty God, because our most pious and benevolent emperors have – according to their kind – chosen to keep the close company of such people whose moral conduct gives us cause for joy."[78]

However, remarks of this kind are extremely rare. Being open to virtuous advisors was only mentioned in a small number of isolated cases, as were so many other aspects of good rulership. Collectively, the total of recurring characteristics of a good ruler in papal sources proves to be extremely limited. The individual cases just described demonstrate how broad a catalogue of virtues could theoretically have been, so that the unilateral focus on a limited number of recurring characteristics is all the more striking.

Conclusion

In summary, the numerous letters by the popes of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages would at first glance appear to contain abundant material on the question of the papal idea(l) of a good ruler. However, on closer examination one quickly comes to realise that statements on the image of the good ruler are altogether few and far between and their topics are very limited.

First, it must be stated that the popes of this era did not draw up fundamental ideas on the good ruler. There was no stable set of positive characteristics analogous perhaps to the cardinal virtues. Thus, the idea(l)s of the good ruler had to be distilled from individual letters, primarily from letters by the popes to the emperor himself.

This method must, however, take into consideration that the characteristics mentioned were determined by the letters' purpose and were thus dependent on the in-

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78 Greg. M., Registrum Epistolarum I–II, ed. Norberg (cf. fn. 39) XI, 27, p. 902: *emporers Magnas omnipotenti Deo gratias agere debemus, quod piissimi et benignissimi imperatores nostri tales de suo genere iuxta se propinquos habent, de quorum conversatione nobis omnibus grande sit gaudium.*

tentions of the writer, the individual situation, and the political context in which each letter was composed. It should also be pointed out that the correspondence between popes and emperors of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages were transmitted intentionally in collections of decretals for later canonical use and mainly dealt with canonical, dogmatic, or ecclesio-political matters. If the pope wanted to win over the emperor to his side, it seems perfectly obvious that orthodoxy, loyalty to the pope, and the struggle against enemies of the faith would be the deciding, almost exclusively mentioned characteristics of a good emperor in these letters.

This reasoning is also suggested by the fundamental rules of epistolary rhetoric. *Ars dictaminis* (the art of letter-writing), though it was not committed to writing in generally binding epistolary stylistics until the twelfth century, is structurally rooted in the basic principles of rhetoric of the ancient world. It describes the following compositional structure for a successful letter:[79] In the *exordium*, the salutation is followed by a proverb or a maxim expressing a common opinion. In the course of the letter, the legitimacy of its specific concerns should be derived from this generally accepted maxim: Bene of Florence describes the exordial *proverbia* "as general, clear and related sentences that can easily be called *exordia* (beginning phrases), because it is from them that the theme of the entire letter develops its effect and strength."[80] So, the maxim sets up the contents of the request expressed at the end of the letter.

What follows from this argumentative logic is that generally accepted statements, such as those on the good ruler, were not chosen arbitrarily. Instead, as a rule, they related to characteristics that were to determine the action of the addressee according to the specific concern voiced in the letter. If, for example, the writer wanted to call on the emperor to support a specific papal definition of faith, it would be appropriate to invoke orthodoxy as a generally accepted virtue of a ruler in the *exordium*. In the *narratio*, the danger to the true faith by heretics is conjured up in order to then infer the demand that the receiver should attend to his duty according to the introductory maxim, defend the orthodoxy, and take action against heretics.

In the light of this logic of epistolary theory, it is quite unsurprising that the virtues of rulers – at least according to the findings in papal letters shown above – are focused around theological matters. Other needs were not expressed by popes to the emperors until the sixth century or they have not survived. It was not until imperial

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79 Martin Camargo, Ars dictaminis. Ars dictandi (Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 60), Turnhout 1991.

80 Bene Florentinus, Candelabrum, ed. Gian Carlo Alessio (= Thesaurus Mundi: Bibliotheca scriptorum latinorum mediae et recentioris aetatis 23), Padua 1983, p. 208 f.: *quasdam sententias generales et lucidas et probatas, que bene possunt exordia nominari, quia thema totius epistole inde trait efficaciam et vigorem*; see also Magister Gaufredus, Summa de arte dictandi, ed. Vincenzo Licitra, in: idem, La Summa de arte dictandi di Maestro Goffredo, in: Studi medievali, 3ª serie 7 (1966), p. 865–913, here p. 885–913, especially p. 892: *Exordium sive proverbium est oratio sententiam continens prodeuntem a consuetudine vel a natura*.

presence withdrew from Italy – with consequences for the safety of Rome, the Roman Church, and the administration in Italy – that new needs became apparent to the popes. The popes expected rulers to see to these needs and so relayed them, while in earlier centuries such qualities had been taken for granted and were thus simply not mentioned.

It is not until the sixth century that other qualities of a good ruler are increasingly addressed, primarily protection from external enemies due to the threat from the Lombards. Furthermore, the duties of administrating and safeguarding justice and disciplining sinners became more prominent. Additional recurring but less prominent qualities of a good ruler were promoting the Christian mission, heeding capable and trustworthy advisors, and generously giving alms.

In conclusion, indications of papal perspectives on the good ruler can be found almost exclusively in the popes' letters. The overwhelming majority of papal letters of late antiquity were transmitted in collections relating to canon law, as is reflected in their contents. The ideals of a good ruler depicted in them are tailored to specific situations and argumentative logic. This idiosyncrasy of transmission history explains the narrowness of topics mentioned relating to the ideal ruler. It is hardly coincidental that it is precisely in letters surviving in other contexts that a much broader thematic range is found. This holds true for both the registers of Gregory I and the eighth century papal letters surviving in the so-called *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*, compiled at the court of Charlemagne.

Thus, a broadening of the catalogue of virtues of the ideal ruler from the papal perspective can be traced from the sixth century onwards. However, safeguarding the true faith, protecting the unity of the Church, combating heresy, and securing papal primacy continue to make up the bulk of the semantic field. In this respect, the long period from the fourth to eighth century, from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages, was only subject to gradual change.

Wolfram Drews

The Image of the Christian Ruler in the Catholic Monarchy of Visigothic Spain: Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae*

King Wamba (672–680) was arguably the last strong ruler of Visigothic Spain able to assert royal power against aristocratic factions and ecclesiastical authorities alike. He is famous in medieval history first and foremost for the ecclesiastical inauguration ritual at the beginning of his reign, which involved the first attested royal unction in medieval Europe. The description of Wamba's royal inauguration comes from bishop Julian of Toledo, who was later involved in Wamba's deposition. In his *Historia Wambae*, he describes Wamba as an exemplary Christian ruler, a *princeps religiosus*, imbued with Christian virtues. He contrasts the ideal figure using the usurper Paul as an example of a bad, un-Christian ruler, depicted as a tyrant supported by hostile forces from the outside. The *Historia Wambae* may have been written after Wamba's deposition, reflecting political interests of aristocratic elites during the reign of his second successor, king Egica. The literary figure of Wamba is completely different from the historical Wamba. Julian of Toledo aptly constructs the image of an ideal Christian ruler, following literary models from the Roman past, such as Sallust, and the Old Testament. Christian kingship appears as a fusion of both Roman and biblical traditions but geared to the conditions of late Visigothic Spain and, in particular, to its leading ecclesiastical circles, which interestingly had been in opposition to the historical Wamba. The ideal Christian king appears to be a literary projection serving the political interests of particular social elites.

The Deposition of King Wamba

In the Visigothic kingdom, succession was always a dangerous matter; the anonymous Frankish chronicler, known since the early modern period as Fredegar, describes the Goths as suffering from a Gothic disease because they repeatedly murdered their kings.[1] Such occurrences are attested until the beginning of the seventh century, but even afterwards violent successions resulting from usurpation occasionally took place. The fathers of the Fourth Council of Toledo tried to counteract these tendencies in 633 in the well-known royal canon declaring the person of a ruler "anointed by God" to be inviolable;[2] in practice, however, these provisions that

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1 Fred., chron. 4.82 (MGH SRM 2, 163): *morbus Gotorum*.

2 IV Tol. c. 75 (La colección canónica hispana, ed. Gonzalo Martínez Díez / Félix Rodríguez, vol. 5: Concilios hispanos II, Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra 5, Madrid 1992, 248–259).

were supposed to prevent usurpations were often ignored. An especially drastic violation occurred during the deposition of king Wamba in 680. After having suddenly lost consciousness – later sources speak of enemies having administered a temporary poison – the king went into a perpetual state of penitence at the instigation of courtiers and with the help of the metropolitan bishop Julian of Toledo (in office from 680 to 690) in order to thereby prepare him for his supposedly imminent death.[3] When the ruler recovered consciousness he could no longer discharge his governing duties, especially military ones; accordingly, he was compelled to sign several documents, among them the designation of his successor Erwig (ruled from 680 to 687).[4]

This succession, unusual by any account, definitely did not comply with the royal canon of 633; therefore, Erwig had himself (re)legitimised during the 12th Council of Toledo presided over by archbishop Julian. The same church assembly also granted Julian the newly created position of Primate of the Visigothic church. Considering this, it is not surprising that those who had obviously gained the most politically were later accused of orchestrating a bloodless coup against Wamba in the Asturian chronicle.[5]

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3 The only contemporary source can be found in the acts of the 12th Toletanum of 681: *Idem enim Vuamba princeps, dum ineuitabilis necessitudinis teneretur euentu, suscepto religionis debito cultu et uenerabili tonsurae sacrae signaculo, mox per scripturam definitionis suae hunc inclitum dominum nostrum Eruigium post se praelegit regnaturum et sacerdotali benedictione unguendum* (c. 1; La colección canónica hispana, ed. Gonzalo Martínez Díez / Félix Rodríguez, vol. 6: Concilios Hispánicos: Tercera Parte, Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra 6, Madrid 2002, 135–204, 151–152). Subsequently, the problem of how to deal with unconscious penitents who wanted to leave this status upon awakening was discussed by the fathers. This has often been understood as being connected to the end of Wamba's reign shortly before. However, Mayke de Jong has pointed to the fact that Chindaswinth had previously vacated the throne as a penitent in 653 after his son Reccesvinth had been designated his successor years in advance; Erwig also yielded the throne to Egica as a penitent in 687; see Mayke de Jong, Adding Insult to Injury. Julian of Toledo and his *Historia Wambae*, in: The Visigoths from the migration period to the seventh century. An ethnographic perspective, ed. Peter J. Heather, Woodbridge et. al. 1999, 373–402, 374: "Whatever the political pressures involved, something of a pattern suggests itself: the old ruler stepping down as a penitent, with his honour unimpaired, while a potentially disruptive struggle for succession was contained by a *designatio*." Cf. also Roger Collins, Julian of Toledo and the Education of Kings in Late Seventh-Century Spain, in: id., Law, culture and regionalism in early medieval Spain, Aldershot et al. 1992, vol. 3, 1–22, 16: "… the act of designation had clearly become a necessary or useful constitutional fiction."

4 On Wamba's deposition, see Suzanne Teillet, La déposition de Wamba. Un coup d'état au VIIe siècle, in: De Tertullien aux Mozarabes, II. Antiquité tardive et Christianisme ancien (VIe–IXe siècles). Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine (Collection des études augustiniennes. Série moyen âge et temps modernes 26), ed. Louis Holtz, Jean Claude Fredouille, Paris 1992, 99–113.

5 Cf. De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 373; Francis X. Murphy, Julian of Toledo and the Fall of the Visigothic Kingdom in Spain, Speculum 27 (1952), 1–27, 3 f. and 16 f.; Gregorio García Herrero, Sobre la autoría de la *Insultatio* y la fecha de composición de la *Historia Wambae* de Julián de Toledo, in: Jornadas Internacionales "Los visigodos y su mundo". Ateneo de Madrid, noviembre de 1990 (Arqueología paleon-

Wamba's Elevation to Kingship

With this in mind, a comparison to the perspective in Julian's only historiographical work is all the more surprising – a history of none other than king Wamba. Here, Wamba is depicted as a *princeps religiosus* chosen by God, who successfully puts down a usurpation. Comparing the beginning of the *Historia Wambae* to the circumstances of his deposition described above is especially revealing. Julian of Toledo reports that king Recceswinth, who had come to power in 649 as his father Chindaswinth's co-regent in defiance of the royal canon of 633, had died on the 1st of September 672 on his estate at Gérticos evidently without leaving behind a son or designated heir.[6] Subsequently, the royal canon was observed for the first and only time in Visigothic history.[7] According to Julian's account, the attendant courtiers, amongst whom remarkably enough no bishops or clerics are mentioned, spontaneously agreed upon Wamba as the new ruler[8] who, as was customary, initially refused to accept the royal honours offered to him; only upon threats of force did he reluctantly consent to assuming the royal office.[9]

At no point does Julian of Toledo indicate that Recceswinth had designated an heir before his death, which is surprising considering previous, often conflict-laden successions. It is also conspicuous that those present apparently agreed on Wamba as successor so quickly.[10] Julian takes care to emphasise the lawful appointment of the king, which in his opinion is expressed by Wamba's refusal to allow the royal unction to be carried out then and there; instead he is said to have stressed wanting to be consecrated and anointed in the customary location, meaning in Tol-

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tología y etnografía 4), ed. Antonio Méndez Madariaga, Teresa Montoro, Maria Dolores Sandoval León, Madrid 1998, 185–214, 201–203.

6 Roger Collins, Julian of Toledo and the Royal Succession in Late Seventh-Century Spain, in: Early Medieval Kingship, ed. Peter Hayes Sawyer, Ian. N. Wood, Leeds 1977, 30–49, 30.

7 Gregorio García Herrero, Julián de Toledo y la realeza visigoda, Antigüedad y cristianismo. Monografías históricas sobre la Antigüedad tardía 8 (1991), 201–256, 206.

8 Cf. Collins (cf. fn. 3) 15: "It seems, therefore, that Wamba was formally chosen by those present at the old king's death bed." While Wamba had been elevated by consensus, the usurper Paul later allowed himself to be hastily "elected" without the necessary consensus, as Julian makes clear in his narration; cf. De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 379. On the "class of court-based administrators" as executers of the (at first) apparently unopposed change of ruler in 672 Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, The Story of Wamba. Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae regis*, Washington, D.C. 2005, 37.

9 On the topical character of his refusal, see Collins (cf. fn. 6) 43; Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 122.

10 According to Julian's report, the principal elements of the first part of the inauguration were acclamation and the handing over of the regalia; preceded by being chosen by God and subsequent election by *gens* and *patria* from Julian's perspective (*quem totius gentis et patriae communio elegit, quem populorum amabilitas exquisivit:* Hist. Wamb. 2); Collins (cf. fn. 6) 45; Collins (cf. fn. 3) 17. On being chosen by God as the decisive factor of monarchic legitimacy, see also García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 223. In the face of frequent usurpations, double indications of correct procedures and being chosen by God were what remained: "Julian reaches... for elements of absolute legitimacy and finds them in ceremonial forms and supernatural tokens." (Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 167).

edo, the *urbs regia*.[11] Accordingly, the unction was not carried out until 19 days later. That Wamba was chosen by God became apparent on this occasion through two miraculous signs: in the moment of unction, a pillar of steam rose up from the ruler's head, in which a kind of bee manifested itself. Both elements have been interpreted by scholars to be references to biblical paradigms of election, such as the departure of the Israelites under the leadership of the Lord[12] described in the Old Testament.[13] The signs could also refer to ancient knowledge of natural history, in which bees were considered a war-like people that lived under the rule of a king (sic), hierarchically structured.[14] In total, Julian marks the inauguration of Wamba as mediated by the church and in the proper place, accompanied by signs of heavenly approval by which the reign of the king as a *princeps religiosus* commenced in a way that was right and proper.

The chapters at the beginning of the text devoted to the ascension merely serve as a prelude to Julian's account of the king's subsequent successful campaign against the usurper Paul, who led an uprising in Septimania, the Visigothic part of Gaul. But he was defeated by the rightful king in a swift campaign, as Julian emphasised, whereupon Wamba returned triumphantly to Toledo in September 673, almost exactly one year after his accession to the throne.

Medieval studies, being interested in rituals and symbolic communication, have focused primarily on the ruler's royal unction, which appears for the first time in medieval Western Europe in this text.[15] This interest in royal unction is understandable given its later importance, but it is striking that while Julian presents Wamba as the rightful ruler chosen by God, he later never refers to the king as being anointed by the Lord; in the text Wamba does not appear as a *rex unctus* but rather as a *princeps*

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11 The term *urbs regia* extends back to the 7th Toletanum (c. 6) in 646; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 18.

12 This is later accentuated by another sign: during the campaign, Wamba's troops are accompanied by angels: *Visum est... angelos... super castra ipsius exercitus volatione suae protectionis signa portendere* (Hist. Wamb. 23).

13 Cf. Ex 13:21.

14 On the symbolism of the bee, see Collins (cf. fn. 6) 46 f., with reference to Verg., georg. 4.88 – 90 and Isid., etym. 12.8.1: *reges et exercitum habent*. Cf. also Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 184 fn. 29. For the primarily pre-Christian origins of the bee-symbolism, see L. Koep, Art. Biene, RAC 2 (1954), 274 – 278; according to Ammianus Marcellinus (17.4.11) the symbol for "king" in Lower Egypt is supposed to depict a bee; in Hittite mythology, the bee appears as the messenger of the highest goddess. It is often considered to be an animal of oracle: "als Vertreterin des monarchischen Prinzips kündet sie die Ankunft eines fremden Herrschers (an)" (Koep [cf. fn. 14] 278, referring to Verg., Aen. 7.64 – 70).

15 For the ongoing debate on this topic, see Christoph Dartmann, Die Sakralisierung König Wambas. Zur Debatte um frühmittelalterliche Staatlichkeit, FMSt 44 (2010), 39 – 57. See also De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 375: "The text is an exercise in the 'good ritual' of legitimate kingship contrasted with its disorderly and rebellious counterpart." De Jong interprets the text as a didactic explanation of "boundaries of Gothicness... primarily defined by correct ritual... creating a world of Gothic order threatened by alien forces." (Ibid. 386).

religiosus.[16] The usurper Paul uses, or is supposed to have used, the phrase *rex unctus* in a polemical letter addressed to Wamba, in which he refers to himself as the anointed king of the East who – as can be conjectured – confronts the equally anointed king of the West.[17] The usurper's letter was transmitted together with Julian's *Historia* in manuscripts, but it would be wrong to ascribe its wording to the metropolitan bishop of Toledo offhand. Therefore, it can be said that while unction did have constitutive meaning as a ritual of inauguration with Old Testament origins, it is not present terminologically in the course of Julian's historical narrative. In the text, Wamba does not appear to the reader as a *rex unctus* or *christianus*, but rather as a *princeps religiosus.*

Julian of Toledo and his *Historia Wambae*

This find is not only surprising considering the reception and impact of royal unction in medieval ritual and modern scholarship but also regarding the author's biography. After Isidore of Seville, Julian of Toledo is considered to be the second greatest theological author of seventh-century Spain.[18] Most of his surviving works deal with theological topics such as eschatology, biblical exegesis and refutation of Judaism. Additionally, he played a major role in codifying Spanish conciliar canon law – the *Recensio Juliana* is named for him – and in collecting Visigothic liturgy; several prayers in the *Liber Ordinum* are assumed to be traceable to him. Most of his oeuvre is theological in nature, with the noteworthy exception of the *Historia Wambae,* his only historiographical work. Scholars have frequently studied it for both its contents and as the only surviving historiographical work from the Visigothic kingdom from the second half of the seventh century. The text is not a chronicle as such but rather a thematically concentrated, almost monographic, account of the events within a single year in Wamba's rule: "… a chronologically ordered record of contemporary his-

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16 Cf. Suzanne Teillet, Des Goths à la nation gothique. Les origines de l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VIIe siècle, Paris 1984, 605–607. Only treachery (*perfidia*) is mentioned in the final conviction of the rebels in the *Iudicium,* not their transgressions against an anointed ruler or even a violation of his sacredness; on this, see Dartmann (cf. fn. 15) 51 f. On the possibly reciprocal oath between a ruler and his subjects, see Gregorio García Herrero, El reino visigodo en la concepción de Julián de Toledo, Antigüedad y cristianismo Monografías históricas sobre la Antigüedad tardía 12 (1995), 385–422, 405 and Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 237 note 180; on the rebel's oath-breaking García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 222; on the "sacralización de las relaciones civiles" using *fides*-terminology, see García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 230. On the oath, see Hist. Wamb. 4: *ex more fidem populis redidit* and Teillet (cf. fn. 16) 589 f.
17 Ep. Pauli: CCL 115, 217. The latter's title could have been made up by Julian, possibly referring to political structures in the Merovingian kingdom (Austrasia); cf. Yolanda García López, La cronología de la *Historia Wambae*, Anuario de Estudios Medievales 23 (1993), 121–139, 132 note 34.
18 Ramón Gonzálvez Ruiz, San Julián de Toledo en el contexto de su tiempo, Anales Toledanos 32 (1996), 7–21.

tory."[19] The form of Julian's text is based on classical examples such as Sallust's *Coniuratio Catilinae*,[20] supplemented by late antique panegyrics.[21]

The quest for the possible addressee may be answered by referring to the extensive speech with which king Wamba addresses his troops during a campaign against the Basques. In order to convince them to go to war immediately with the troops of the usurper in Gaul once the battles in Cantabria have been concluded,[22] Wamba directly addresses the *iuvenes,* meaning young members of the elites fit to bear arms. Considering that recruiting military troops became increasingly difficult from the second half of the seventh century onwards – even causing Wamba to enact a controversial law in opposition to the interests of the clergy – it seems plausible that one of the goals of the *Historia* was to demonstrate the advantages of military service with its promise of glory to the young Visigothic elite.[23] Assuming the existence of a type of palace school in Toledo, in which aristocratic offspring were educated, it is conceivable that a work such as the *Historia Wambae,* and the three other texts of a completely different rhetorical character transmitted with it, could have served for purposes of political, moral and literary education.[24]

The *Historia Wambae* was transmitted coupled with three other texts; the previously mentioned provocative letter of the rebel Paul, an invective against the rebellious province of Gaul (*Insultatio vilis storici in tyrannidem Galliae*), and a *Iudicium in tyrannorum perfidia promulgatum*, that could have served Julian as both source and template. Careful linguistic analysis has shown that Julian can arguably be considered the only author of the *Historia*.[25] The *Iudicium* was probably written shortly after the usurpation's suppression;[26] dating the *Historia Wambae* itself is however highly contentious and problematic as will become evident later.

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19 De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 378.

20 Although only one quote is directly attested Hist. Wamb. 19; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 207 note 96.

21 Cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 95. The *Historia Wambae* is probably the work of Visigothic literature that most closely adheres to classical models; cf. Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, Historiography in Visigothic Spain, in: La storiografia altomedievale (Sett 17), Spoleto 1970, 261–311, 299. On the peculiarity that no comparable monographic account was written for the next 300 years, see Collins (cf. fn. 6) 38f., on panegyrics, see ibid. 43 and Collins (cf. fn. 3) 12.

22 Hist. Wamb. 9.

23 Cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 5) 199–201. On the work's didactic intent that might also have determined its rather archaic literary form, see Collins (cf. fn. 6) 40.

24 Cf. Collins (cf. fn. 3) 21f.

25 Joaquín Martínez Pizarro surprisingly still follows older scholarship on this point that considered Julian to have also authored the *Insultatio*, even though García Herrero has now shown that different linguistic usage and different moral attitudes to the problem of abortion rule out Julian's authorship; cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 5) 188 and 203–205. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 170f. does not draw the obvious conclusion from contrasting irreconcilable passages in the texts that they have different authors.

26 Unlike in the *Historia*, Wamba is referred to here as *gloriosus domnus noster*, in conformity with Visigothic linguistic use for a ruling monarch; cf. García López (cf. fn. 17) 128.

The Image of the King in the *Historia Wambae*

Julian depicts Wamba as an exemplary good ruler throughout, but he does not use terminology that is particularly theologically charged. The ruler is also not a *rex* but rather a *princeps*,[27] he is *religiosus* but not *christianus*, *christianissimus* or *religiosissimus*, even though especially these latter terms were often used in conciliar tradition.[28] The unction alludes to the Old Testament example of king David,[29] and the miracles described on this occasion also at least partly refer to – as explained above – biblical examples. However, Wamba is not addressed as a *novus David*; nor are the actions Julian ascribes to him in the course of his historiographical account revealing of any kind of *imitatio Christi* on the part of the ruler. Moreover, Wamba appears as the successor of the Roman emperors and of Old Testament kings, but not as a barbarian king.[30] In addition to royal unction, a further indication of succession to Old Testament kings is military tactics: on the campaign to Gaul, Wamba divides his army into three contingents as is described for both a campaign of Abimelech in the Book of Judges and for an expedition of king Saul in the First Book of Samuel.[31] Wamba's public performance of kingship suggests that successful Roman commanders and emperors also served as role models.[32] This is revealed not only by the most commonly used title *princeps* and the essentially late Roman ritual

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27 Preference for the term *princeps* could be ascribed to classical literary traditions that are omnipresent in the *Historia*; *rex* could have been associated with illegitimate rule and usurpation, also in line with Roman tradition. However, this is at odds with the use of *rex* in describing Old Testament kingship in the Vulgate, as well as in the title *Historia Wambae regis* and also in Visigothic legislation. In total, the term *princeps* appears 15 times in the text of the *Historia Wambae*, by no means always referring to Wamba himself; cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 213–217.

28 According to García López, the adjective *religiosus* that is also used to denote Wamba in the records of the 11th Toletanum which took place during his reign indicates the sacred status resulting from royal unction; cf. García López (cf. fn. 17) 128. Before the 11th Toletanum, the phrase *princeps religiosus* is not used in Visigothic sources. It is however used by Rufinus of Aquileia to describe Emperor Theodosius I; cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 252; cf. also Suzanne Teillet, L'*Historia Wambae* est-elle une oeuvre de circonstance?, Antigüedad y cristianismo 3 (1986), 415–424, 421: "... l'emploi de *religiosus* comme épithète de titulature est nouveau et exclusif. ... Wamba est 'religieux' non en tant que personne, selon le sens de cette épithète dans les *Vitae*, mais en tant que prince." This quality would correspond to the classical understanding of *sacer*, as opposed to *sanctus*. Cf. also García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 205. In the *Historia Wambae*, archbishop Argebadus of Narbonne addresses the king with the words *sacratissime princeps* (Hist. Wamb. 21); Julian also uses the salutation *sacratissime princeps* in the letter of dedication addressed to king Erwig for *De comprobatione sextae aetatis* (praef. 13).

29 Cf. 1 Sam 16:13.

30 Instead, external enemies are denoted as *circumpositas barbarorum gentes*, whereby the Visigothic kingdom implicitly takes the place of the Imperium Romanum or rather of the exponent of Graeco-Roman culture; cf. Hist. Wamb. 20 and Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 219.

31 Hist. Wamb. 10; Jgs 9:43; 1 Sam 11:11; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 130 and 194.

32 Cf. Teillet (cf. fn. 16) 587.

of appointment observed on the day he was elected – featuring acclamation and investiture without clerical involvement –,[33] but also by the triumph described at the end of the *Historia* during which defeated enemies were exhibited and humiliated in the *urbs regia*.[34]

Wamba proves to be a good ruler by his actions. Chiefly, he waged a successful military campaign against the Basques and against the predominantly Gallic and "foreign," i.e., Frankish and Saxon, troops of the usurper. He was a rigorous disciplinarian of his troops who penalised their trespasses with brutal punishments following Old Testament examples.[35] The king also appears as a strict but by no means vengeful judge of the rebels. Julian especially emphasises the ruler's qualities as a leader; he was able to motivate his troops and direct them in a wise manner both tactically and strategically and with constant forethought. As king, his role as military commander is central (the word *exercitus* appears 45 times in the text) and he predominantly interacts with his soldiers and enemies rather than with members of the elites or with advisors. The group led by the rightful ruler is primarily defined by what they distance themselves from: not only from the Basques and Franks, but also from Jews, "in other words aliens and outsiders, the persistent enemies of the *gens* and *patria* of the Goths."[36]

It is notable that many important areas of rulership are not addressed in Julian's account, which can only be partly due to the genre of the text and its central topic. The king does not appear as a legislator, although the historical Wamba definitely enacted laws, among them some that, like the military law, contradicted interests of the clergy.[37]

The fact that the ruler's relationship with members of the clergy is hardly described is also striking. Bishop Quiricus of Toledo is mentioned on the occasion of Wamba's unction, but subsequently Gothic bishops are no longer an issue in the text. Only an encounter in Gaul between the king and a bishop is narrated: a Septimanian, who had sided with the rebels but then humbled himself before the victor Wamba, begs him for mercy towards the defeated rebels, which Wamba relatively

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[33] Cf. Collins (cf. fn. 3) 17; Theodor Klauser, Akklamation, RAC 1 (1950), 216–233, esp. 221–225.
[34] Cf. Michael McCormick, Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West, Cambridge 1986, 306–317. On the significance of "late Roman secular traditions" in Julian's depiction, see Collins (cf. fn. 6) 44 and Collins (cf. fn. 3) 16. Mockery of the defeated rebel is rooted in elements of ritual inversion; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 219 note 129: "... a ritual inversion that goes back to imperial practice but for which there is evidence only from Merovingian Gaul and Visigothic Spain."
[35] On circumcision as punishment, see Hist. Wamb. 10: *Testantur hoc praecisa quorundam adulterorum praeputia, quibus pro fornicatione hanc ultionis inrogabat iacturam*. Cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 132f., who considers this to be a literary hyperbole modelled on the Old Testament.
[36] Collins (cf. fn. 3) 15. On the *externae gentes*, see Teillet (cf. fn. 16) 625–632 and García Herrero (cf. fn. 16) 420.
[37] On the alteration of this military law under Erwig in accordance with ecclesiastical interests, see Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 67.

briskly declines to do. The *princeps religiosus* Wamba interacts neither with church officials within his domain nor with charismatic religious leaders. Instead, there is one passage describing the king thanking God with psalms after his victory with his arms uplifted, a scene in which he is presented in a quasi-priestly position.[38]

The figure of Wamba is almost entirely depersonalised; his personal character remains completely faint.[39] Julian's Wamba is the stock character of a successful, strong-willed ruler with foresight who does not rely on any council. He is given shape merely by contrast to the usurper Paul, who is likewise stylised and described as cowardly, weak-willed and impious; the latter is made clear when the usurper misappropriated a crown that had been donated to a martyr's grave and which was ultimately restored to its intended religious purpose by Wamba.[40]

Wamba's orthodoxy arises from his scrupulous observance of details in the legitimate ecclesiastical ritual of accession, from restoring misappropriated church property, and from anti-Jewish measures.[41] Whether these three criteria can also be ascribed to the historical Wamba or whether they might not more likely just correspond with the interests and preferences of Julian of Toledo, cannot be resolved with certainty; although no anti-Jewish laws by Wamba have survived,[42] a corresponding interest of behalf of Julian is attested. He authored anti-Jewish writings[43] and, as the metropolitan bishop of Toledo, would also have had a pronounced interest in royal unction being carried out in the *urbs regia*.

According to Julian, the good ruler is the legitimate ruler, who was duly chosen according to the will of God and properly invested in his office. This tradition is ultimately rooted in Old Testament kingship which was significant in the Visigothic

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38 Hist. Wamb. 25.

39 Cf. Teillet (cf. fn. 28) 422: "un prince idéalisé jusqu'à l'allégorie." This has been plausibly interpreted as reinforcing the official character of Wamba's kingship; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 45.

40 Hist. Wamb. 26.

41 On the restoration of church property, see Hist. Wamb. 26; on anti-Jewish actions as part of a series of laudable measures – from Julian's perspective – following his victory, see Hist. Wamb. 28: … *statum quoque rerum mira pace componit. Lecta illic praesidia bellatorum dimittit, radices ab ea omnis rebellionis detersit, Iudaeos abegit…* At the very outset the *Insultatio*, perhaps revised by Julian, contains many anti-Jewish invectives directed at incriminated Gaul; cf. Insult. 1 (*quae Iudaeorum potius quam fidelium Christi amicitiis incubabas*) and 2 (*sed super haec omnia Iudaeorum consortiis animaris, quorum etiam infidelitatem, si libens adtendis, iam in tuis transisse filiis recognoscis, dum hii, qui in te christianitatis titulo praefulgebant, ad Hebraeorum probati sunt transisse perfidiam*).

42 Cf. García López (cf. fn. 17) 134.

43 The treatise *De comprobatione sextae aetatis* is tellingly dedicated to king Erwig; on this, see Julio Campos, El "De comprobatione sextae aetatis libri tres" de San Julián de Toledo, Helmantica 18 (1967), 297–340; Julio Campos, El "De comprobatione sextae aetatis libri tres" de San Julián de Toledo. Sus fuentes, dependencias y originalidad, Semana española de teología 1967, Madrid 1970, 245–259. The fact that Julian considered hostility towards Jews especially important is evident in his invectives towards Gaul; cf. Hist. Wamb. 5: … *quod peius his omnibus est, contra ipsum salvatorem nostrum et dominum Iudaeorum blasfemantium prostibulum habebatur?*

kingdom since at least the time of Isidore of Seville.[44] In Julian's tradition is combined with the public performance of kingship that is only selectively based on Old Testament models and instead adheres to traditions of antiquity to a much greater extent.[45] However, no historical *exempla* are cited, neither from the Old Testament nor the Christian Roman empire; Wamba does not appear as a new David, Solomon, or as a new Constantine.[46]

A de-historicised image of an ideal *princeps religiosus* emerges from Julian's account that has no identifiable features whose roots lie outside of Spain, meaning no references to Roman or Biblical models. While Spain at least implicitly emerges as the home or rather origin of the ideal *princeps*, Gaul is stylised as its paradigmatic opposite, the home of usurpers and tyrants.[47] There was already a literary model for this in the Visigothic kingdom, the *Vita Desiderii* written by king Sisebut at the beginning of the seventh century. It describes the martyrdom of a Frankish bishop who had to suffer under unjust Merovingian kings.[48] While Julian uses Gaul as a negative contrast, he does not even acknowledge the Byzantine empire; he uses its literary traditions but never refers to specific historical occurrences in the Eastern Roman Empire. This could be interpreted as Spanish-Gothic self-confidence, which concerns both political and church matters. The obviously high confidence of the Visigothic church was repeatedly made clear in the second half of the seventh century, for example in the course of Julian's correspondence with several Roman popes. The Visigothic elite claimed independent jurisdiction especially in the area of religious orthodoxy,[49] resulting in an awareness of political superiority that is clearly visible in the *Historia Wambae*.[50]

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44 Cf. Marc Reydellet, La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville (Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 243), Paris 1981, 505–597. The Isidorian concept of kingship does not occupy a particularly prominent place in the *Historia Wambae*; for instance, the notion that a bad king should be seen as punishment for the sins of his people is missing; cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 214 f.

45 The victorious campaign can likewise be seen as part of a strategy of legitimation; only a successful campaign serves as the final confirmation of the new ruler's authority; cf. De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 377.

46 Surprisingly, David only plays a minor role to Visigothic authors; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 131; cf. however 133: "Wamba becomes a figure of David, exacting the Lord's revenge."

47 On the altered understanding of the term *tyrannus,* that in the Visigothic kingdom referred solely to violent assumption of power, see Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 134 f.

48 Jacques Fontaine, King Sisebut's *Vita Desiderii* and the Political Function of Visigothic Hagiography, in: Visigothic Spain. New Approaches, ed. Edward James, Oxford 1980, 93–129; Juan Carlos Martín, Verdad histórica y verdad hagiográfica en la *Vita Desiderii* de Sisebuto, Habis 29 (1998), 291–301; Georg Scheibelreiter, Der fromme König und die böse Königin. Sisebut und seine *Passio Desiderii*, MIÖG 118 (2010), 8–26.

49 Cf. Francis-Xavier Murphy, Julian of Toledo and the Condemnation of Monotheletism in Spain, Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck, Gembloux 1951, 361–373; Martin Strohm, Der Konflikt zwischen Erzbischof Julian von Toledo und Papst Benedikt II. Ein Faktum von ökumenischer Bedeutung, Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum 15 (1983), 249–259.

While the text embraces many traditions of antiquity in both language and form, its content can be read as a step in the direction of constituting an early medieval discourse aimed at turning the elites of a barbarian kingdom with Roman provincial origins into carriers of the (self)-consciousness of a chosen people, defeating its enemies in the tradition of the biblical people of Israel under the command of an orthodox king.[51] In this respect, the *Historia Wambae* marks a stage in the history of the medieval reception of the Old Testament; namely, the construction of divinely ordained Christian kingship.[52] However, Julian of Toledo's description negatively stands out in one way – he does not derive the ruler's orthodoxy from his interaction with church officials or his personal religious practices and pious donations but rather from his measures against Jews. This observation is in line with inferences that can be made from an analysis of Visigothic conciliar and royal legislation; some kings and council fathers obviously felt the urge to prove their own orthodoxy by means of anti-Jewish measures above all.[53] It is, however, remarkable that this does not apply to the historical king Wamba. He did not pass anti-Jewish laws himself, nor did any councils in session during his reign enact such measures. The discrepancy observed between the historical Wamba and the image of Wamba that emerges from Julian of Toledo's overall description is all the more striking. The "good Christian Ruler" is presented with an obvious anti-Jewish attitude not otherwise attested to by authors of the early Middle Ages.

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50 Cf. J. N. Hillgarth, Introduction: CCL 115, XI; García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 240: "La circunstancia de que este rito (sc. la unción) fuera practicado en Occidente durante mucho tiempo sólo por los visigodos debió sugerir a nuestro autor la idea de una especie de guía espiritual del reino visigodo sobre los demás reinos surgidos de las ruinas del Imperio occidental."

51 Cf. De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 383: "Gothic identity is embodied by both *gens* and *patria*. ... in terms of the moral purity of the New Israel." Cf. also García Herrero (cf. fn. 16) 414 f. However, it is noteworthy that Julian uses the term *Gothus* only four times in his whole oeuvre; in fact, exclusively in direct discourse in the *Historia Wambae*. The existing legal regulation that kings had to be of Gothic descent is not mentioned at all; cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 237.

52 Attempts at downplaying the influence of the Old Testament are less than convincing; in contrast, see Collins (cf. fn. 6) 43. On the reception of the Old Testament, see De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 375 and Eleonora Dell'Elicine, El sacerdote, et rey y el recuento del pasado. Las tensiones en la *Historia Wambae* de Julián de Toledo, in: Política y religión en el Mediterraneo antiguo, ed. Marcelo Campagno, Buenos Aires 2009, 355 – 366.

53 Cf. Alexander Pierre Bronisch, Die Judengesetzgebung im katholischen Westgotenreich von Toledo (Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden A/17), Hannover 2005.

Reflections on Dating the *Historia Wambae:* The Historical Context of Julian's Historiography

The discrepancies between the historical and the historiographical Wamba have stimulated discussions concerning the dating of the text.[54] It has traditionally been dated to the year 675, i.e., during Wamba's reign, soon after the end of the campaign against the rebels in Gaul.[55] However, it is conspicuous that Julian emphasises the role of the metropolitan bishop at the outset even though he would at the time, if this dating was correct, have been no more than a simple cleric who would not have expected to occupy this position himself in the future. In addition, the image of Wamba outlined in the text does not correspond to what would be expected from a panegyric composed during the lifetime of a ruler.[56] Furthermore, the mention of norms that are supposed to have been in force during the time of Wamba point to the subsequent reign of king Erwig instead.[57] It is also striking that very few rebels are referred to by name in the *Historia Wambae* whereas its much shorter source, the *Iudicium*, contains significantly more names.[58] The fact that the rebels were convicted and dispossessed under Wamba,[59] only to be subsequently pardoned and reinstalled in their former rights and estates by his successor Erwig, suggests that Julian wrote his text at a time when both the previously mentioned standard of punishment had been changed and the rebels had already been pardoned. A remind-

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54 On this recently, see Dell'Elicine (cf. fn. 52) 355–368; before, see García López (cf. fn. 17) 121–139 and García Herrero (cf. fn. 5) 184–213.

55 Considering the depersonalised account of the king Hillgarth's idea that "the *Historia*… may possibly have been commissioned by the king and certainly bears the stamp of official history" is surprising (Introduction: CCL 115, VIII). An apologetic position with respect to the work's "official" character is also advocated by Gonzálvez Ruiz (cf. fn. 18) 417. Martínez Pizarro follows the traditional dating, completely ignoring the relevant scholarly work done by García Herrero; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 56 f. and passim.

56 Cf. García López (cf. fn. 17) 122. The author subsequently brings forward further arguments, for instance that in the 13 passages in which Wamba is denoted as *princeps religiosus* he is never referred to by the possessive pronoun *noster*, in contrast to labelling the troops as *nostri* or *nostrorum exercitus*; cf. ibid. 129.

57 Likewise García López (cf. fn. 17) 123: "Los lugares donde se cruzan la *Historia* y las políticas del periodo inicial ervigiano parecen cobrar mucho más sentido si se retrasa la fecha tradicional de la monografía." The penalty of *decalvatio* (*ut praecipitur*) cited in Hist. Wamb. 27 as a replacement for the death penalty was not introduced until the reign of Erwig; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 96.

58 Cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 5) 196: The *Iudicium* mentions 54 rebels, by contrast the *Historia* speaks only of seven. Cf. also García Herrero (cf. fn. 16) 401: "El *Iudicium*, indudablemente, se encuentra mucho más cerca del espíritu oficial de la corte wambana que el propio relato de Julián." Cf. also García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 247: "En ésta (sc. la *Historia Wambae*), pues, prima el carácter ejemplar de un relato dirigido más a mostrar tipos ideales que personajes concretos."

59 Cf. Iudic. 7; the *Historia Wambae* is revealingly silent on this; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 239.

er of their former condemnation would no longer have seemed expedient in this account authored at a later date.[60]

At that time Julian was already metropolitan bishop and primate of the Spanish church, which would make his special interest in emphasizing his predecessor's role during the ritual of unction plausible.[61] Julian was still in office when Wamba's successor Erwig was replaced by his son-in-law Egica who was apparently also a relative of Wamba, perhaps his nephew. If the *Historia* was not written until Egica's reign (687–702) this would explain why Wamba's rule was remembered in an almost hagiographical manner.[62] This would also explain why the historiographical Wamba differs on several prominent counts from the historical reality attested by other sources: Julian does not mention the military law that was criticised and decidedly opposed by the church nor his decrees restricting acquisitions by the church.[63] He is also silent on the fact that Wamba established a rival court bishopric that competed with the metropolitan bishop within his own episcopal city. This bishopric was consequently eliminated under king Erwig at the instigation of Julian, who had also been instrumental in Erwig's accession, and is therefore not mentioned in the *Historia*.[64]

Contrary to what previous scholarship proposed, it therefore seems logical to assume a later time of origin for the *Historia*, either during the reign of Erwig or even that of Egica.[65] The *princeps religious* Wamba is therefore described retrospectively, after his overthrow in which Julian was personally involved. Only in his new position as metropolitan bishop and primate did Julian construct the idealised and depersonalised image of the former ruler that conformed more closely to the ideals of the Visigothic church than to actual ruling practices of the historical king Wamba, who had often been in opposition to the interests of the clergy. It is precisely in the area of

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60 Cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 7) 219; Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 55; Thomas Deswarte, La trahison vaincue par la charité. Julien de Tolède et les rebelles, in: La trahison au Moyen Âge. De la monstruosité au crime politique, Vᵉ–XVᵉ siècle, ed. Maïté Billoré, Myriam Soria, Rennes 2009, 353–368.

61 The letter of dedication to Julian's anti-Jewish work *De comprobatione sextae aetatis* was addressed to king Erwig. Erwig probably corresponded much more strongly to Julian's ideal ruler than the historical Wamba; for instance, Erwig was the first king to start counting his years of reign from the time of his royal unction; cf. García López (cf. fn. 17) 132 fn. 31. The ideology in the *Historia* is similar in many respects to revisionist tendencies in Visigothic legislation under Erwig, which are also present in the records of the 12th Toletanum; cf. ibid. 135f.; on terminological parallels between the *Historia* and the council of 681, see García Herrero (cf. fn. 16) 401–404.

62 Cf. García Herrero (cf. fn. 5) 202 and 206: "Los primeros años del reinado de Egica pudieron constituir la coyuntura adecuada para despertar tal interés en nuestro autor."

63 Cf. J. N. Hillgarth, Introduction: CCL 115, XIIf.

64 Julian and Erwig were close even before the end of Wamba's reign, at least to the extent that Julian dedicated a no longer surviving work, the *Libellus de divinis iudiciis*, to him; cf. Collins (cf. fn. 6) 37.

65 Likewise Dell'Elicine (cf. fn. 52) 361: "Escrita *con posterioridad* a la destitución de Wamba ..., la *Historia* de Julián estaría efectivamente reforzando por medios intelectuales las políticas de Ervigio." Cf. also García Herrero (cf. fn. 16) 395.

church politics that Wamba, as described in the text, appears curiously vague; actions ascribed to him in this area amount to nothing more than the restoration of church property robbed by the usurper and measures against Jews. The latter especially corresponds more closely to Julian's personal expectations than to the true religious politics of the historical Wamba, even though he is described throughout as a *princeps religiosus.*

The Image of the Ruler as a Reflection of Political Interests

Julian's Wamba, the *princeps religious* depicted in retrospect, is for the most part a scholarly projection and construction. Accordingly, the *Historia Wambae* has been described as "the most ideological text of the Visigothic sources."[66] On the one hand, the text served to propagate military heroism in order to recruit members of the Visigothic elite into military service. On the other hand, it was used to firmly entrench the ideal of the ruler's proper inauguration in the *urbs regia* with substantial participation of the metropolitan bishop as a prerequisite to the successful rule of a divinely anointed king over the chosen people.[67] In a time when the kingdom was already weakened by the deposition of Wamba, an ideal of a strong ruler was presented, a ruler who is triumphantly victorious over both internal and external enemies.[68] The unity of *princeps*, *gens* and *patria* propagated already in the underlying text of the *Iudicium* is thereby further accentuated in the *Historia.*[69]

However, fundamental areas of the exercise of rulership, such as interaction with worldly and clerical elites, are almost entirely omitted. This omission might, on the one hand, be ascribed to the subject matter of the monographically conceived *Historia*. On the other hand, it could indirectly point to the fact that Julian's ideal of the institutionalised form of such interactions, the ecclesiastical councils of Toledo,

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66 Manuel Cecilio Díaz y Díaz while discussing De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 399. Cf. also García Herrero (cf. fn. 5) 206: "En lo esencial, debemos seguir considerando la *Historia Wambae* como la página más brillante de la historiografía española del siglo VII, al tiempo que la formulación más clara y concluyente de la teoría de la realeza, el poder y el estado que nos ha legado la época."

67 Cf. Dell'Elicine (cf. fn. 52) 361: "... un texto exhortativo dirigido a la elite y, por su intermedio, al pueblo elegido."

68 The usurper's personal ambition that goes against the *ordo* serves as a contrast: ... *regalia indumenta, quae tyrannidis ambitione potius quam ordine praeeunte perceperat, tabefactus deposuit* (Hist. Wamb. 20).

69 Cf. Iudic. 1: ... *ad eversionem patriae gentes, ad interitum principis*...; ibid. 2: *In tyrannidem enim contra praedictum principem, gentem et patriam vertens*... Wamba's ability to unify his subjects is in stark contrast to the usurper Paul's incompetence who is permanently contradicted by his subordinates; cf. Martínez Pizarro (cf. fn. 8) 111. On the *consensio animorum*, see Hist. Wamb. 23. Cf. also De Jong (cf. fn. 3) 375: "... forcefully projects the image of a unified Christian *gens* and its king." On the association of *gens* and *patria* also Teillet (cf. fn. 16) 621–625.

did not take place during Wamba's reign.[70] As Julian could not describe such a council, the procedure of Wamba's election and inauguration depicted at the beginning functioned as an illustration of the king's proper interaction with members of the elite from Julian's perspective. After all, the author makes it clear in the course of his narrative that Wamba's military success is based on exactly the prerequisite of properly institutionalised rulership. The fact that such interactions are never again mentioned during the main section of the *Historia* could also be understood to be the author's implicit criticism of Wamba's actual ruling practices. *Mutatis mutandis* the *Historia* could be taken as a prophetic text to be understood as urging the chosen people to proceed on the proper path preordained by God under the leadership of the anointed ruler, whereas the negative example of the usurper serves as a warning of what is to be expected for those who trespass against the will of God.[71]

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70 As metropolitan bishop and primate Julian presided over a total of four councils under kings Erwig and Egica, in 681, 683, 684 and 688; cf. Collins (cf. fn. 6) 37.

71 On the text's character as a "discurso *oracular,*" see Dell'Elicine (cf. fn. 52) 365.

Daniel Ziemann

Goodness and Cruelty: The Image of the Ruler of the First Bulgarian Empire in the Period of Christianisation (Ninth Century)

1 Introduction

As in other medieval societies that converted to Christianity during the early Middle Ages, the image of the good Christian ruler in the First Bulgarian Tsardom was closely linked to the process of Christianisation, which took place in the ninth and early tenth centuries. The main virtues of the Christian ruler were naturally derived from the Byzantine world, where the process of (re-)Christianisation started. While during the short period between 866 and 870 Western and mainly papal influences played a significant role, the main role model of the Christian ruler in Bulgaria was the Byzantine emperor. The Bulgarian ruler aimed at imitating and, as in the case of Symeon the Great (893–927), even surpassing the image of his great neighbour.[1] Despite dependence on the Constantinopolitan model in terms of Christian virtues, however, the image of the good Christian ruler in Bulgaria developed in a specific and particular way that served as a role model for later centuries. Especially after the decline and fall of the First Bulgarian Tsardom in 1018 and its renaissance at the end of the twelfth century, the first Christian rulers were taken as good examples of Christian rulership in order to create political continuity and stability.[2]

The Christian ruler was, in fact, not much different from his pagan predecessor. The successful ruler justified his rule through military victories, though the role of the Roman Emperor changed after the adoption of Christianity from emphasizing

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1 Concerning the image of the ruler, see Georgi Bakalov, Srednovekovnijat bălgarski vladetel (titulatura i insignii). Sofia 1995; Georgi N. Nikolov, Centralizăm i regionalizăm v rannosrednovekovna Bălgaria (kraja na VII–načaloto na XI v.). Sofia 2005; Angel N. Nikolov, Političeska misăl v rannosrednovekovna Bălgarija (sredata na IX – kraja na X vek). Sofia 2006; for Symeon the Great, see: Ivan A. Božilov, Car Simeon Veliki (893–927). Zlatnijat vek na srednovekovna Bălgarija. Sofia 1983; Jonathan Shepard, 'Symeon of Bulgaria – peacemaker', *Godišnik na Sofijskija universitet, "Sv. Kliment Ohridski" Naučen centăr za slavjano-vizantijski proučvanija "Ivan Dujčev"* 83 (1991), no. 3, p. 9–48; Angel Nikolov, Carskata titla na Simeon I kato istoriografski i političeski problem, in: Treti meždunaroden kongres po bălgaristika, 23–26 maj 2013 g. Krăgla masa "Zlatnijat vek na car Simeon: Politika, religija i kultura". Sofia 2014, p. 30–40.
2 Ivan A. Božilov / Vasil T. Gjuzelev, Istorija na srednovekovna Bălgarija VII–XIV vek. Sofia 1999 (Istorija na Bălgarija v tri toma, T. 1), p. 426–429; Alexandru Madgearu, The Asanids: The political and military history of the second Bulgarian Empire (1185–1280) (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450 vol. 41). Leiden 2017, p. 64–65.

the aspect of military leadership towards the supplicant who prays for his troops.[3] This image contained, however, some flexibility, as examples like Emperor Heraclius (610–641) represents a more active Christian ruler.[4]

The ruler relied on severe punishment of his enemies; a successful rule was mostly accompanied by fear and terror for those who might challenge it.[5] In many cases, Christianisation did not change the mechanisms of rule. The Christianisation itself was frequently embedded into a narrative of victory over opponents; God intervened in favour of the Christian ruler. These mechanisms sometimes posed a challenge for Christian church authorities who were involved in the conversion process and tried to convey a model of a good Christian ruler who was supposed to govern with mercy, humility, and peacefulness. This paper discusses the ambiguous relation between pagan and Christian elements in the image of the ruler by referring to the pagan rulers Krum and Omurtag and Boris/Michael, the first Christian ruler.

In order to clarify the historical setting, the paper starts with a brief summary of the main political events between the seventh and early eleventh century.[6]

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3 Olivier Hekster, Fighting for Rome: the emperor as a military leader, in: Lukas De Blois, Elio Lo Cascio, Olivier Hekster, and Gerda De Kleijn (eds.), *Impact of the Roman army (200 BC–AD 476): economic, social, political, religious, and cultural aspects:* Proceedings of the Sixth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 B.C.–A.D. 476), Capri, March 29–April 2, 2005, (Impact of empire (Roman Empire, 27 B.C.–A.D. 406), 6), (Leiden, Boston (Mass.), 2007), p. 91–105.

4 Walter E. Kaegi, The Heraclians and holy war, in: Johannes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis (eds.), *Byzantine war ideology between Roman imperial concept and Christian religion:* Akten des internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011) (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung, 30/ Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Denkschriften 452), Vienna 2012, 17–26.

5 For the pagan ruler, see: Bakalov (cf. fn. 1) p. 107–131; Veselin Beševliev, Părvobălgarite. Istorija, bit i kultura. Plovdiv 2008, p. 275–281; Nikolov (2006, cf. fn. 1) p. 29–38.

6 The following section summarises the political history of the First Bulgarian Empire; there is abundant literature on the topic. For a more detailed account of the history of the First Bulgarian Empire, see Vasil N. Zlatarski, Istorija na bălgarskata dăržava prez srednite vekove. Tom. 1: Părvo bălgarsko carstvo. Čast 1: Epoha na huno-bălgarskoto nadmoštie. Sofia ³2002, idem, Istorija na bălgarskata dăržava prez srednite vekove. Tom. 1: Părvo bălgarsko carstvo. Čast 2: Ot slavjanizacijata na dăržavata do padaneto na părvoto carstvo. Sofia ³2002; Dimităr Angelov / Petăr Petrov / Borislav Primov (eds.), Istorija na Bălgarija. Tom vtori: Părva bălgarska dăržava. Sofia 1981; Božilov / Gjuzelev (cf. fn. 2) p. 74–338; Georgi Bakalov (ed.), Istorija na Bălgarite. Tom 1: Ot Drevnostta do kraja na XVI vek. Sofia 2003, p. 177–322; Georgi Atanasov / Veselina Vačkova / Plamen Pavlov (eds.), Bălgarska nacionalna istorija Tom III: Părvo bălgarsko carstvo (680–1018). Veliko Tărnovo 2015; for the pagan period, see also Veselin Beševliev, Die protobulgarische Periode der bulgarischen Geschichte. Amsterdam 1981; for the period until the end of the ninth century, see Daniel Ziemann, Vom Wandervolk zur Großmacht. Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.–9. Jahrhundert) (Kölner historische Abhandlungen, Bd. 43). Cologne 2007; for an overview in English concerning the archaeology, see Uwe Fiedler, Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region. A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence and the State of Current Research, in: Florin Curta / Roman Kovalev (eds.), The other Europe in the Middle Ages. Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Cumans (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 2). Leiden, Boston 2008, p. 151–236; the period from 775–831 is the topic of Panos Soph-

2 Historical Background

While the territory of the First Bulgarian Tsardom had been already Christianised in late antiquity, the invasions and political changes of the fourth to sixth century CE drastically changed the landscape of the Roman provinces of Mysia inferior and Scythia, the heartland of what later became the First Bulgarian Empire. In this region it is quite likely that a complete exchange of the population took place and, consequently, a drastic rupture in terms of culture, religion, and economy. The Roman infrastructure collapsed and was not even reused by the new invaders.[7] The central places of the First Bulgarian Empire like Pliska and Preslav had no Roman or Greek past; Pliska was not situated on a Roman road.[8] It was not until during and after the ninth century, when the Bulgarians expanded towards the Byzantine Black Sea coast and the province of Thrace south of the Balkan Mountains, that they took over a still-intact Roman and Byzantine infrastructure and reused it. It was during this expansion into deeply Romanised and Christianised territories that more and more Christian elements entered the Bulgarian realm.

The First Bulgarian Empire – if one can use this expression at all – was founded in 680/1, when a peace treaty was concluded between the Bulgarians and the Byzantines under Emperor Constantine IV. The peace treaty was the consequence of a severe military defeat of the Byzantine army at a place called Onglos, probably near the mouth of the Danube River. As a result, the Bulgarians invaded the region between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains. In this peace treaty, the Byzantine Emperor recognised the Bulgarians as the rulers of the territories between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains and agreed to pay a regular tribute. From that time on until the end of the tenth century this area was the political centre of the First Bulgarian Empire.[9]

OULIS, Byzantium and Bulgaria, 775–831 (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, v. 16). Leiden, Boston 2011.

7 Florin CURTA, Invasion or inflation? Sixth- to seventh-century Byzantine coin hoards in eastern and southeastern Europe, *Istituto Italiano di Numismatica. Annali* 43 (1996), p. 65–224 (concerning the numismatic evidence).

8 A resource on Pliska that is still very useful is Karel ŠKORPIL / Feodor I. USPENSKIY, Materialy dlja bolgarskih' drevnostej, Aboba-Pliska. *Izvestija Russkogo arheologičeskogo družestvo v Konstantinopole* 10 (1905); for more recent overviews, see: Ljudmila DONČEVA-PETKOVA / Joachim HENNING (eds.), Părvoprestolna Pliska. 100 godini arheologičeski proučvanija. Frankfurt am Main 1999; Janko DIMITROV / Rašo RAŠEV, Pliska. Šumen 1999; Rašo RAŠEV, Bălgarskata eziceska kultura VII–IX vek. Sofia 2008, p. 45–105; Andrej ALADŽOV, Arheologičeska karta na Pliska. Sofia 2014; concerning Preslav see: Totju K. TOTEV (ed.), 1100 godini Veliki Preslav = 1100 Jahre Veliki Preslav. Velikopreslavski naučen săbor (16–18 septemvri 1993 g.). tom 1/2. Šumen 1995.

9 The main sources for these events are Carl de BOOR (ed.), Theophanis Chronographia vol. 1: Textum graecum continens. Leipzig 1883, p. 356–360; Cyril MANGO (ed.), Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. Short history (DOT 10). Washington, D.C. 1990, 35–36, p. 86–91; for the secondary literature, see the respective passages in the literature of fn. 4.

The newly established political entity consisted of a social stratum of warriors, mostly of Protobulgarian or Bulgar origin, and Slavic groups who most likely paid tribute and were obliged to participate in military campaigns. The so-called "Protobulgarians" or "Bulgars" received their name in scholarship in order to distinguish them from the later Christian "Bulgarians" who spoke a Slavic language. It is generally assumed that from the seventh and eighth century onwards the Bulgars slowly merged with the Slavs and original inhabitants of the territory, finally forming a common people mainly referred to as "Bulgarians."[10]

The origins of the Bulgars are highly debated in both Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian scholarship. They probably came from Central Asia; scholars have suggested different theories for their origins and migration.[11] Bulgars appear in Byzantine and Latin sources at the end of the fifth century. The term Bulgars, mostly Boulgaroi in Greek and Vulgares in Latin sources, might be some sort of umbrella term for different groups like the Kutrigurs, Utigurs and others who dwelt north of the Black Sea around the sixth and seventh century. Other groups that were called Bulgars in the available sources formed part of the Avar Empire and joined the Avars in their military campaigns, e. g., the siege of Constantinople in 626. A Bulgar ruler called Kubrat is mentioned in Byzantine sources. He supposedly reigned over the so-called "Great Bulgarian Empire" north of the Black Sea in the middle of the seventh century. The Byzantine chroniclers apparently condensed a more complex situation into the story of Kubrat and his five sons, who did not keep united and parted from each other after their father's death.[12] The third son, called Asparuch, was supposedly the leader of the group that entered the territory between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains and defeated the Byzantine army under Emperor Constantine IV in 680/1. After the peace treaty the Bulgars remained in this area and consolidated their political entity.[13] Khan Tervel, c. 701–721, supported the effort of the Byzantine

10 Dimităr Angelov, Obrazuvane na bălgarskata narodnost. 2. preraboteno i dopălnitelno izdanie. Sofia 1981.

11 Ivan Šišmanov, Kritičen pregled na văprosa za proizhoda na prabălgarite ot ezikovo gledište i etimologite na imeto "bălgarin", *Sbornik za Narodni Umotvorenija, Nauka i Knižnina* 1900 (16–17), p. 505–753; Alexandăr Burmov, Kăm văprosa za proizhoda na bălgarite, in: idem (ed.), Izbrani proizvenedija v 3 toma. Tom 1: Srednovekovnata istorija na Bălgarija. Sofia 1968, p. 19–49; Beševliev (cf. fn. 6) p. 303–313; Ziemann (cf. fn. 6) p. 32–38; for a recent summary on the discussions about the origins, see: Rašo Rašev et al. (eds.), Bălgarska nacionalna istorija Tom II: Drevnite bălgari, Starata Velika Bălgarija i nejnite naslednici v iztočna Evropa prez srednovekovieto. Veliko Tărnovo 2013, p. 15–82.

12 Daniel Ziemann, Zwischen Geschichte und Mythos: Großbulgarien unter Khan Kubrat (7. Jh.), *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 1 (2010), p. 17–49, for the more widespread view, see Zlatarski (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 7–71; Angelov (cf. fn. 10) p. 1–211; Beševliev (cf. fn. 6) p. 299–328; Angelov / Petrov / Primov (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 23–90; Božilov / Gjuzelev (cf. fn. 2) p. 57–73; Bakalov (ed.), Istorija na bălgarite. Tom 1: Ot drevnostta do kraja na XVI vek, p. 11–33; Rašev (cf. fn. 11) 107–248.

13 On the exact dating, see Giuseppe De Gregorio / Otto Kresten, Ἐφέτος – "In diesem Jahr". Zur Datierung des Bulgarenfeldzugs des Kaisers Konstantinos IV. (Sommer/Herbst 680), *RSBN* 43 (2006), p. 21–56.

Emperor Justinian II to regain his throne and was rewarded with a great amount of gold.[14] During the second half of the eighth century, the Bulgarian Empire underwent a period of political instability. Military defeats by the Byzantines, who frequently invaded Bulgaria under Emperor Constantine V, led to inner turmoil and frequent replacement of the ruling khan.[15]

The turning point came at the beginning of the ninth century. In 811, a disastrous military campaign led by Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros (802–811) ended in a complete defeat at one of the passes of the Balkan Mountains.[16] The Bulgarian khan, Krum (c. 803–814), used the victory to enter the Byzantine provinces and proceeded as far as the walls of the imperial city, which he could not conquer. One of Krum's successors, Khan Omurtag (c. 815–c. 831), started a large-scale building program in Bulgaria. He adopted Byzantine models of imperial representation and called himself "ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἄρχων" (ruler by [the grace of] God).[17]

During his reign, Bulgaria and Byzantium concluded a 30-year peace treaty, the so-called "deep peace," that allowed for more intensive mutual contacts on various levels. These contacts helped to increase Christian missionary activities in Bulgaria, mainly from Byzantium, but also partially and on a smaller scale, from the West. One of Omurtag's sons, Enravota, may have become a Christian. Theophylact of Ohrid, in the early twelfth century, tells the story of Enravota dying as a martyr.[18]

The official Christianisation took place in 864/5 under Khan Boris (852–889), who, under Byzantine military pressure, was baptised together with at least some of his nobles. He adopted the Christian name Michael from his godfather, the Byzan-

14 DE BOOR (cf. fn. 9) p. 374–375; MANGO (cf. fn. 9) p. 102–105; Ada ADLER (ed.), Suidae Lexicon. Leipzig 1928–1938, beta, Βούλγαροι (Bulgars), 423, p. 483.

15 ZLATARSKI (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 207–234; ANGELOV / PETROV / PRIMOV (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 120–129; BOŽILOV / GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 2) p. 114–118; ZIEMANN (cf. fn. 6) p. 213–234; SOPHOULIS (cf. fn. 6) p. 15–17, 89–103.

16 DE BOOR (cf. fn. 9) p. 490–491, an English translation and commentary: Cyril A. MANGO / Roger SCOTT / Geoffrey GREATREX (eds.), The chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern history, AD 284–813. Translated with introduction and commentary. Oxford, New York 1997, p. 672–673, 675–676; Francesca IADEVAIA (ed.), Scriptor incertus. Testo critico, traduzione e note. Introduzione di Emilio Pinto. Messina 1987, p. 27–33; Ivan DUJČEV, La Chronique byzantine de l'an 811, in: IDEM (ed.), Medioevo bizantino-slavo vol. 2. Saggi di storia letteraria (Storia e letteratura. Raccolta di studi e testi, 113). Rome 1968, p. 425–489; ZLATARSKI (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 255–260; ANGELOV / PETROV / PRIMOV (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 134–138; BEŠEVLIEV (cf. fn. 6) p. 240; BOŽILOV / GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 2) p. 128–131; ZIEMANN (cf. fn. 6) p. 247–258; SOPHOULIS (cf. fn. 6) p. 191–216.

17 Veselin BEŠEVLIEV, Părvobălgarski nadpisi. Sofia ²1992, p. 77–80.

18 Theophylacti Achridensis historia martyrii XV martyrum Tiberiupolitanum, in: Ilija ILIEV (ed.), Theophylakti Achridensis archiepiscopi Bulgariae scripta ad historiam Bulgariae pertinentia, secunda pars (Grăcki izvori za bălgarskata istorija, 9, 2). Sofia 1994, 42–79, ch. 29–33, p. 63–67; new edition: Eirini-Sophia KIAPIDOU (ed.), Θεοφύλακτος Αχρίδος, Μαρτύριο των Δεκαπέντε Μαρτύρων της Τιβεριούπολης; Κριτική έκδοση απόδοση στα νέα ελληνικά και υπομνηματισμός/ Théophylacte d'Achrid, Martyre des quinze martyrs de Tibérioupolis; édition critique, restitution en grec moderne et commentaire. Athens 2015.

tine Emperor Michael III (842–867).[19] A rebellion against the neophyte by members of the nobility was suppressed.[20] Soon after the suppression of the rebellion in 866, Boris/Michael invited papal missionaries to Bulgaria and distanced himself from the Byzantine Church. This short period of papal influence came to a sudden end in 870. At a meeting in Constantinople, the Bulgarians decided to bring Bulgaria under the jurisdiction of the Byzantine Church; the crucial point was clearly the degree of independence. While the popes, first Nicholas I (858–867) and then Hadrian II (867–872), refused the consecration of an archbishop, the Byzantines seem to have granted, at least in the long run, an autocephalous Bulgarian Church under a patriarch.[21]

During the reign of Boris/Michael the students of Cyril and Methodius, Clement, Naum, Angelarius, and others, were received in Bulgaria after their expulsion from Moravia. They were involved in creating ecclesiastic structures in Bulgaria and implementing what later developed toward a Slavic Orthodox liturgy. The Glagolithic and later Cyrillic alphabet allowed for writing in the Bulgarian language. Theological and other works were translated into Old Bulgarian and a network of monasteries grew quickly with the special support of Boris/Michael, who took the monastic habit himself after 889.[22]

The rule of the oldest son of Boris/Michael, Vladimir, also called Rasate, probably from 889–893, might have intensified the links to the Eastern Frankish Empire. He was accused of planning to abandon the Christian faith, but this remains uncertain. Vladimir was deposed from the throne and replaced in 893 by Symeon, Boris/Michael's third son, who ruled from 893 to 927. He intensified the translation of Greek literature and theology and enabled the establishment of an intellectual circle, the so-called school of Preslav.

During a considerable period of his reign, Symeon was in conflict with the Byzantine Empire. He started to attack the Byzantine Empire after the decision to move the trade from Constantinople to Thessalonica in 894. Later on, the Bulgarians had to endure a devastating invasion by the Hungarians, who crossed the Danube River on Byzantine ships, probably in 895/6. Symeon managed to retaliate, invade, and destroy the dwelling places of the Hungarians and Pechenegs and instigated the move of the Hungarians to the Carpathian basin.[23]

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19 A good overview of the sources and the abundant literature can be found in Gerhard Podskalsky, Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien 865–1459. Munich 2000, p. 48–53.
20 Daniel Ziemann, The rebellion of the nobles against the baptism of Khan Boris (865–866), in: Joachim Henning (ed.), Post-Roman towns, trade and settlement in Europe and Byzantium (Millennium-Studien, v. 5/2). New York 2007, p. 613–624.
21 Vasil Gjuzelev, Knjaz Boris I. Bălgarija prez vtorata polovina na IX v. Sofia 1969, p. 178–260; Hans-Dieter Döpmann, Die Bedeutung Bulgariens für die Trennung der östlichen und westlichen Christenheit. Theologische Habilitationsschrift Universität Berlin. Berlin 1965.
22 For Climent see Krasimir Stančev, Kliment Ohridski, in: Petăr Dinekov (ed.), Kirilo-Metodievska Enciklopedija 2 1995, p. 320–335 with the sources and literature; Ilija Iliev, Sv. Kliment Ohridski (Srednovekovna biblioteka 4). Plovdiv 2010.
23 Božilov (cf. fn. 1); Shepard (cf. fn. 1).

In 913, a famous ceremony took place; Byzantine sources relate that Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos crowned Symeon with his own *Epirriptarion*, a cloth with which the patriarch covered his head. At the same time, both sides agreed on a marriage between Symeon's son and a daughter of the Byzantine emperor. After these events Symeon called himself Emperor of the Romans. But soon afterwards a change in the Byzantine government annulled the treaty and returned to a more aggressive policy. From 914 until Symeon's death in 927, both sides engaged in frequent wars; most battles ended with victories for Symeon. The most important of these battles was the one near Acheloi close to the Black Sea coast in 917.[24] With Symeon's death in 927, both parties finally reached a long-lasting peace and a marriage took place between Peter, Symeon's son and successor, and the Byzantine princess Maria, who was probably named Irene (meaning "peace") after the marriage.

With Tsar Peter (927–969), Bulgaria entered a period of decline. Territorial expansion came to a halt while raids by the Hungarians continued. The Bulgarians were dealt a decisive blow between 968 and 971, when the Kievan Rus under Svjatoslav invaded Bulgaria and conquered its capital, Preslav. In 971, the Byzantine emperor John Tsimiskes, entered Bulgaria, defeated the Rus, conquered the important administrative centres, and deposed the Bulgarian Tsar Boris II (969–971). Bulgaria became a Byzantine province. Nevertheless, during the years after the death of Emperor John Tsimiskes in 976, a certain Samuil (997–1014) and his brothers headed a movement of rebellion against the Byzantine rule. In 986, the Byzantine army was severely defeated at Trajan's gates, near today's Ihtiman in Bulgaria. After his brothers died (or he murdered them), Samuil managed to establish an independent rule centred in the south-western region of the Bulgarian territory near Prespa and Ohrid in today's Macedonia. Samuil managed to create a powerful tsardom and tried to link his image to that of previous Bulgarian tsars. After a period of military success, the tide turned toward the Byzantines roughly after the year 1000. In 1014, the Bulgarians suffered a heavy defeat at the battle of Kleídion, (also referred to as the battle of Belasica). Samuil died soon afterwards.[25] In 1018, the First Bulgarian Empire came to an end when the Byzantine Emperor Basileios II entered the centres of power in triumph and turned Bulgaria into a Byzantine province.

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24 On Aheloi, see: Angel Nikolov / Nikolaj Kănev (eds.), Simeonova Bălgarija v istorijata na evropejskija jugoiztok: 1100 godini ot bitkata pri Aheloj/ Emperor Symeon's Bulgaria in the History of Europe's South-east: 1100 Years from the Battle of Achelous. I. Sofia 2018.

25 Srđan Pirivatrić, Samuilovata dăržava. Obhvat i harakter. Sofia 2000; Anton Săbotinov, Bălgarija pri car Samuil i negovite naslednici (976–1018 г.), Tom 1. Sofia 2008; Vasil T. Gjuzelev / Georgi N. Nikolov (eds.), Evropejskijat jugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – načaloto na XI vek. Istorija i kultura: meždunarodna konferencija Sofia, 6–8 oktomvri 2014 g. Sofia 2015.

3 The Image of the Bulgarian Khan as a Pagan Ruler

The title of the pagan ruler of Bulgaria was *khan* ("kana" in the Protobulgarian inscriptions).[26] For the late seventh and eighth century, Byzantine chroniclers do not present many details about the Bulgarian rulers. Additional information is only available about Khan Tervel, who helped Emperor Justinian II to regain the imperial throne in 705. As a reward for his support, Tervel received the title of *kaisar*.[27] The Suda (a tenth-century encyclopedia) even mentions material compensation.

> In the reign of Justinian Rhinotmetos Terbelis [Tervel], the chieftain of the Bulgars flourished; and this same Justinian and Constantine, the son of Heraclius, were tributary to him. For he laid on its back the shield that he had had in war, and his own whip that he used on his horse, and started pouring money in until he covered both of them. Having stuck his spear in the ground up to the end and put plenty of silk garments at its length and having filled boxes with gold and silver he started giving it away to the soldiers, using his right hand for the gold and the left one for the silver.[28]

The Suda is, of course, a dubious source for events at the beginning of the eighth century,[29] but it conveyed a certain image, in this case that of the typical barbarian

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26 Beševliev (cf fn. 17) p. 72–74; Ivan Venedikov, Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo na Bălgarija prez IX i X vek. Sofia 1979, p. 14; Beševliev (cf. fn. 5) p. 275–281; Cvetelin Stepanov, The Bulgar Title KANASUBIGI: Reconstructing the Notions of Divine Kingship in Bulgaria, AD 822–836, *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), no. 1, p. 1–19.

27 Mango (cf. fn. 9) 102–105; a lead seal mentions the title of *kaisar:* Georges Zacos / Alexander Veglery, Byzantine Lead Seals. Volume I. Part 3: Nos. 2672–3231 – Imperial and allied seals: V to XIV centuries; non-imperial seals: VI to IX centuries. Basel 1972, No. 2672, p. 1441; Nicolas Oikonomidès, A collection of dated Byzantine lead seals. Washington, D.C. 1986, p. No. 26, p. 39; for Tervel, see: PmbZ 7250; Ziemann (cf. fn. 6) p. 180–210.

28 Adler (ed.), Suidae Lexicon, beta, 423 Βούλγαροι (Bulgars), p. 483: ὅτι ἐπὶ Ἰουστινιανοῦ τοῦ Ῥινοτμήτου ἤκμαζεν ὁ Τέρβελις, ὁ τῶν Βουλγάρων ἀρχηγός· καὶ αὐτὸς Ἰουστινιανὸς καὶ Κωνσταντῖνος, ὁ Ἡρακλείου υἱὸς, ὑπόφοροι τούτῳ ἦσαν. τὴν γὰρ ἀσπίδα, ἣν εἶχεν ἐν πολέμῳ, ὑπτίαν ἔθηκε καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μάστιγα, ᾗ ἐχρῆτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου, καὶ ἕως οὗ ἐσκέπασεν ἀμφότερα, χρήματα ἐνετίθει. καὶ τὸ δόρυ ἐν τῇ γῇ παρεκτείνας μέχρι τῶν περάτων καὶ ἐς ὕψος πολὺ σηρικὴν ἐσθῆτα ἐτίθει, καὶ κιβώτια πλήσας χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐδίδου, τὴν μὲν δεξιὰν χρυσίου πληρῶν, τὴν δὲ λαιὰν ἀργυρίου; the translation is taken from: https://mcl.as.uky.edu/suda-line-database-complete.

29 Herbert Hunger, Was nicht in der Suda steht, oder: Was konnte sich der gebildete Byzantiner des 10./11. Jahrhunderts von einem "Konversationslexikon" erwarten?, in: Wolfram Hörandner / Erich Trapp (eds.), Lexicographica Byzantina. Beiträge zum Symposion zur byzantinischen Lexikographie (Wien, 1.–4.3.1989) (Byzantina Vindobonensia, 20). Vienna 1991, p. 137–153; Giuseppe Zecchini (ed.), Il lessico Suda e la memoria del passato a Bisanzio. Atti della giornata di studio (Milano, 29 aprile 1998) (Munera. Studi storici sulla Tarda Antichità, 14). Bari 1999.

chieftain who received great quantities of money and expensive goods as a reward for his military support.

Other rulers of the eighth century are mainly described within the accounts of the numerous military confrontations, mostly expeditions against the Bulgarians by emperors Constantine V (741–775) and Leo IV (775–780).[30] In the case of the Bulgarian Khan Telerig (768–777), Theophanes relates that he asked Emperor Constantine V to send him a list with the names of the emperor's friends in Bulgaria as he wanted to flee to Byzantium and needed the help of these friends. After he received the list, the chronicler confirms that he ordered the capture and killing of these people while Constantine V, angry about his own naiveté "plucked his grey hairs for a long time."[31] In this example, the cunning and cruelty of the Bulgarian khan is emphasised and combined with the naiveté of Constantine V, whose whole reign Theophanes depicted quite negatively.

The Bulgarian ruler became the focus of Byzantine historiography at the very beginning of the ninth century, when Bulgarian armies expanded into Thrace and along the Black Sea coast and threatened the empire. After 811, with the Bulgarian expansion and the constant military threat to Constantinople, Byzantine authors focused more on the paganism of the Bulgarians and emphasised the contrast between Christian *Romaioi* and pagan invaders.

In 813, Khan Krum (c. 803–814) launched a large-scale expedition against the imperial city and besieged it. According to Byzantine chroniclers, he celebrated pagan rites in front of the walls of Constantinople. Theophanes and the so-called *Scriptor incertus* mention sacrifices in front of the Golden Gate. Theophanes says about Krum that after "performing his foul demonic sacrifices in the coastal meadow of the Golden Gate he requested the emperor to affix his spear in the Golden Gate itself. When the latter had refused he returned to his tent."[32] The *Scriptor incertus* has a longer description of the rites, including sacrifices of men and animals and the acclamation of his army while Khan Krum marched between his wives, who had formed two lines and offered him praise and adoration.[33] How far these accounts present a trustworthy insight into pagan cults is dubious. What the passage does show are the literary strategies of the author. Krum is a counter-model, someone

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30 Petăr D. ANGELOV, Bălgarija i bălgarite v predstavite na vizantijcite (VII–XIV vek). Sofia 1999, p. 160–161; for the events see SOPHOULIS (cf. fn. 6) p. 143–172.

31 DE BOOR (cf. fn. 9) 448; MANGO / SCOTT / GREATREX (cf. fn. 14) p. 618.

32 DE BOOR (cf. fn. 9) p. 503; MANGO / SCOTT / GREATREX (cf. fn. 14) p. 686; Ilse ROCHOW, Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes. Quellenkritisch-historischer Kommentar zu den Jahren 715–813. Berlin 1991 (Berliner Byzantinistische Abeiten, 57) p. 320–321.

33 IADEVAIA (cf. fn. 16) p. 50–52; Staffan WAHLGREN (ed.), Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae chronicon (Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae, Vol. 44). Berlin, New York 2006, p. 46*; ZLATARSKI (2002a, cf. fn. 6) 271; BEŠEVLIEV (cf. fn. 6) 255; ANGELOV / PETROV / PRIMOV (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 139; ANGELOV (cf. fn. 30) p. 163–168; BOŽILOV / GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 2) p. 135–136; Warren T. TREADGOLD, The Byzantine revival, 780–842. Stanford 1988, p. 200–201; Warren T. TREADGOLD, A history of the Byzantine state and society. Stanford, CA 2000, p. 431.

who performs the contrary of what a good Christian ruler is expected to do. Further-more, the aim of the passage seems to be directed against the Byzantine emperor, who was unable to prevent the Bulgarians from appearing with a great army before the gates of Constantinople and celebrating their rituals without interference. Both Theophanes and the *Scriptor incertus* emphasise the contrast between pagans and Christians. According to them, the Bulgarians are pagans and their military success is the result of the sinfulness of the Christians in Byzantium at that time.

This scene reappears under slightly different conditions a few years later. Now, the Byzantine emperor, Leo V (813–820) is directly involved; he initiated the second period of iconoclasm in Byzantium, which earned him bad press in Byzantine histori-ography.[34] The scene takes place in the framework of the conclusion of a peace trea-ty with the Bulgarians around 816. Genesios relates that, "Leo cared little for Chris-tian practices, and in fact confused them in the peace treaties he made with the Huns, by assigning the performance of our customs to them, and imposing their re-ligious practices upon himself and his subjects."[35] Theophanes Continuatus' text re-veals an even greater degree of discontent with these rituals:

> In matters of the faith he was affected with a mighty rage and to such an extent that he thought it wrong even to utter the name of God. For, arranging in sworn manner the thirty-year treaty and negotiating the accords for peace with those Huns who are called Bulgars, when it came time to confirm and ratify these through oaths, he did not use our oaths by God and the heavenly Pow-ers or by her who became the mother of Christ God in the flesh as overseers and witnesses of what was said and transacted. But, like some barbarous soul estranged from the reverence of God, he used dogs and the things to which lawless nations make sacrifice as witnesses of what was transacted, and he cut off the bits whereof the latter delight in taking their fill and did not feel disgust at putting these in his mouth as confirmation; and he thus commended to the Bulgars, so it seemed, the Christian faith, to which they would one day be brought through us.[36]

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34 Leslie Brubaker / John F. Haldon, Byzantium in the iconoclast era c. 650–850. A history. Cam-bridge [etc.] 2011, p. 366–385.

35 Joseph Genesius, Regum libri quattuor. Berlin 1978 (Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae, v. 14, ser. Berolinensis), I, p. 20–21; the English translation is from Anthony Kaldellis, Genesios on the reigns of the emperors (Byzantina Australiensia, 11). Canberra 1998, p. 24.

36 Michael Featherstone / Juan Signes Codoñer, Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nomine Fertur Libri I–IV. Recensuerunt Anglice verterunt indicibus instruxerunt Michael Feather-stone et Juan Signes-Codoñer, Nuper repertis schedis Caroli De Boor adiuvantibus (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis, Volumen LIII). Boston, Berlin 2015, book 1, ch. 20, p. 50: περὶ δὲ τὴν πίστιν ἐμαίνετο κραταιῶς, καὶ τοσοῦτον ὡς μὴ δὲ θεὸν ὀνομάζειν ἐδόκει τούτῳ καλόν. καὶ γὰρ τὰς τριακοντούτας σπονδὰς τοῖς Οὔννοις δὴ τούτοις τοῖς καλουμένοις Βουλγάροις ἐνωμότως ποιῶν καὶ εἰρηνικὰς συμβάσεις καταπραττόμενος, ἐπεὶ δι' ὅρκων ταύτας ἔμελλε βεβαιοῦν τε καὶ ἐμπε-δοῦν, οὐ τούτοις δὴ τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἐχρῆτο, θεὸν καὶ οὐρανίους δυνάμεις ἢ τὴν κατὰ σάρκα γενομένην μητέρα Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, τῶν λεγομένων τε καὶ πραττομένων ἐφόρους καὶ μάρτυρας· ἀλλ' οἷά τις ψυχὴ βάρβαρος θεοσεβείας ἀπῳκισμένη, κύνας μὲν, καὶ οἷς τὰ ἄνομα ἔθνη θύουσιν ἐχρῆτο μάρτυσι τῶν πραττομένων, καὶ ἀπέτεμνεν καὶ διὰ στόματος ἄγειν οὐκ ἐμυσάττετο εἰς βεβαίωσιν, οἷς ἐκεῖνοι χαίρουσιν ἐμφορούμενοι, τὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν δὲ πίστιν ἐκείνοις μέλλουσί ποτε ἐφ' ἡμῶν διαβιβάζε-σθαι πρὸς ἐκείνην, ὡς ἔοικε, κατεπίστευσεν, the translation p. 51.

It is possible that during the ceremony the Bulgarians performed Christian rites while the emperor performed Bulgarian ones in order to consolidate the treaty.[37] Whether the Bulgarian khan was present is not mentioned, though he would be the natural counterpart for the performance of pagan rites by the emperor. It is therefore not clear whether the text implies the performance of Christian rites by the Bulgarian ruler himself or just by an embassy of high dignitaries. In any case, the passage from Theophanes Continuatus is hardly a reliable source as to the details of the rite. Instead, the text is mainly concerned with vilifying the emperor and focuses once again on the otherness of the Bulgarians as pagans who perform ridiculous and disgusting rites.

4 The Bulgarian Ruler as a Persecutor of Christians

If a Bulgarian khan engaged in the persecution of Christians, it would have been Khan Omurtag (c. 815–c. 831). His image in some later sources is that of a persecutor of Christians;[38] this image is closely connected to the military defeats that the Byzantines experienced during that time. A growing interest in their neighbours increased with the military threat that was imminent from 811, when Emperor Nikephoros' army was heavily defeated in one of the passes of the Balkan Mountains, which became a traumatic event for Byzantium.[39] A historic account of the disastrous campaign written not long after the events was, some scholars suggest, later reworked into a commemorative piece that resembled a hagiographic text to commemorate the Christians who had died in the battle. The final version of the text that contained an additional concluding paragraph was written after 864, some decades later than the events.[40] It does not accuse the Bulgarian ruler of having initiated the killing of Christians, but it was in line with other, mostly later, texts that dealt with the destiny

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37 The passage is also mentioned in Carolus DE BOOR (ed.), Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula Histoica. Accedit Ignatii Diaconi Vita Nicephori. Lipsiae 1880, p. 206–207, which might have been used by other sources, see ZLATARSKI (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 303–304; BEŠEVLIEV (cf. fn. 6) p. 376–380; ANGELOV / PETROV / PRIMOV (cf. fn. 6) p. 148; BOŽILOV / GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 2) p. 145; ZIEMANN (cf. fn. 6) p. 299–301; SOPHOULIS (cf. fn. 6) p. 283–284.
38 ANGELOV (cf. fn. 30) p. 169–174; Georgi ATANASOV / Veselina VAČKOVA / Plamen PAVLOV (eds.), Bălgarska nacionalna istorija. Tom III: Părvo Bălgarsko Carstvo (680–1018). Veliko Tărnovo 2015, p. 178–179.
39 SOPHOULIS (cf. fn. 6) p. 216–217.
40 DUJČEV (cf. fn. 16); Paul STEPHENSON, "About the Emperor Nikephoros and How He Leaves His Bones in Bulgaria": A Context for the Controversial "Chronicle of 811", *DOP* 60 (2006), p. 87–109; Panos SOPHOULIS, The Chronicle of 811, the Scriptor incertus and the Byzantine-Bulgar wars of the early ninth century, *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 1 (2010), p. 381–388; for a different dating, see Athanasios MARKOPOULOS, La Chronique de l'an 811 et le Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio: problèmes des relations entre l'hagiographie et l'histoire, *REB* 57 (1999), p. 255–262.

of Christian prisoners in Bulgaria. The motif of the persecution of Christians by the Bulgarian ruler was used in these later texts.

Examples of these texts are the life of Basileios, later Emperor Basileios I (867–886),[41] some *synaxaria* for the martyrs who died as Christian captives in Bulgaria at the hands of their persecutors,[42] and hagiographic texts like Theophylact of Ohrid's *Martyrdom of the Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis*.[43] This text relates how Khan Omurtag (who is called Mortagon) killed his own son Enravota for his refusal to abandon his Christian faith. All of these texts were written after the Christianisation of the Bulgarians.

The life of Basileios refers to the campaign of Khan Krum in 813 and the conquest of Adrianople. It describes the death of Archbishop Manuel of Adrianople, who, together with his flock

> preserved their Christian faith in all its purity and converted many Bulgarians to the true faith in Christ (for that nation had not yet been converted to the right belief); they sowed the seeds of Christian teaching in many places, drawing the Scythians away from their pagan error and leading them toward the light of the knowledge of God. For this reason, Mutragon [most probably Omurtag, D.Z.], Krum's successor, was moved to anger against them, and, after subjecting them to much torture, delivered the most holy Manuel, and many others similarly denounced, to a martyr's death, for he failed in his attempts to persuade them to abandon Christ. And thus it happened that many of Basileios' relatives attained the glory of martyrdom, so that he, too, shared in the honour coming therefrom.[44]

41 Ihor Ševčenko (ed.), Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nomine Fertur Liber V Quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris Amplectitur (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae Series Berolinensis, 42). Berlin 2011, p. 18–23.

42 Hippolyte Delehaye (ed.), Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi adiectis synaxariis selectis opera et studio. Propylaeum ad acta sanctorum Novembris. Brussels 1902, p. 415–416; Menologion Basilii, in: Patrologia Graeca 117, 20–613, col. 276D–277A. Sophoulis (cf. fn. 6) p. 270–275.

43 Iliev (cf. fn. 18) ch. 29–30, p. 63–64; Dimo Cheshmedjiev, Notes on the Cult of the Fifteen Tiberioupolitan Martyrs in Medieval Bulgaria, *Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Center for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe* 2011 (1), p. 143–156; Eirini-Sophia Kiapidou, Critical remarks on Theophylact of Ohrid's Martyrdom of the fifteen martyrs of Tiberiopolis: the editorial adventure of a text from the Middle Ages, *Parekbolai* 2 (2012), p. 27–47.

44 Ševčenko (cf. fn. 41) ch. 4, p. 18–21: ἔντα τὴν οἰκείαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστιν ἀνόθευτον διασώζοντες, ὅ τε θαυμάσιος ἐκεῖνος ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ ὁ σὺν αὐτῷ λαός, πολλοὺς τῶν Βουλγάρων πρός τὴν ἀλητῆ πίστιν μετήγαγον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (οὔπω γὰρ ἦν τὸ ἔθνος μετηγμένον πρός τὴν εὐσέβειαν), καὶ πολλαχοῦ τὰ τῆς χριστιανικῆς διδασκαλίας κατεβάλοντο σπέρματα, τῆς ἐθνικῆς τοὺς Σκύθας πλάνης μεθέλκοντες καὶ πρὸς τὸ τῆς θεογνωσίας μετάγοντες φῶς. ἐφ᾽ οἷς πρὸς ὀργὴν κατ᾽αὐτῶν κινηθεὶς Μουτράγων ὁ τοῦ Κρούμου διάδοχος, αὐτόν τε τὸν ἱερώτατον Μανουὴλ καὶ πολλοὺς τοὺς ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὡ⟨ς⟩ οὐκ ἴσχυεν πειράσας πεῖσαι ἀποστῆναι Χριστοῦ, μετὰ πολλὰς αἰκίας τῷ διὰ μαρτυρίου θανάτῳ παρέπεμψεν. καὶ οὕτω συνέβη πολλοὺς τῶν τοῦ Βασιλείου συγγενῶν μαρτυρικῆς εὐκλείας τυχεῖν, ὡς μηδὲ τῆς ἐντεῦθεν σεμνότητος αὐτὸν ἀμοιρεῖν.

Other texts, like the synaxarion of Constantinople, present similar accounts.[45] Some of them were later translated into Old Church Slavonic. This synaxarion presents several Bulgarian rulers as persecutors of Christian captives:

> This Krum captured forty thousand people, among them the most holy bishop. He had the bishop thrown on the ground and stamped all over the poor wretch. After Krum ended his life in an evil way, Dukum took the power. He too, died in torments. Then Ditseng, a severe and merciless man, became commander of the Bulgarians. He cut up the great churchman Manuel in two, cut off his arms at the shoulders, and threw him to the dogs. Wounded by blindness [Ditseng] was then killed by his own [people]. Mertagon took power and dealt inhumanely with all Christians who did not forsake Christ. He took the life of others, torturing them with ropes and chains. He had the holy churchmen George of Deultum and Bishop Peter, who professed [their faith in] Christ our God and persisted in keeping with Christ's pious injunctions beaten with rods in an inhuman and beastly way and their saintly heads cut off by the sword. And a great many people, three hundred and seventy seven in number, he condemned to be put to the sword. The officers John and Leont were cut down with the sword. He had Leont, the saintly eunuch and bishop of Nicea, pierced with a sword through the thighs. And Parod, the holy priest, condemned to stoning. Many others, after subjecting them to different tortures, he had put to death. Indeed, not only the wicked Mertagon but the other rulers as well who inherited the rule over the Bulgarians put to torture and death many Christians thus soliciting for them eternal life.[46]

45 Ziemann (cf. fn. 6) p. 283; Sophoulis (cf. fn. 6) p. 270 – 271.

46 Delehaye (cf. fn. 42) 415 – 416: Ἐπεὶ δὲ Κροῦμος, ὁ Βουλγάρων ἔξαρχος, ἐγκρατὴς ἐγένετο τῆς πόλεως, ἐξέβαλεν ἔξω πάντας, χιλιάδας τὸν ἀριθμὸν τεσσαράκοντα· σὺν αὐτοῖς δὲ καὶ τὸν ἁγιώτατον ἐπίσκοπον ἐκβαλὼν κατὰ τοῦ αὐχένος ὑπὸ γῆν ῥιφέντα πεπάτηκε. Κρούμου δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἀπορρήξαντος, Δούκουμος τὴν ἀρχὴν δέχεται· καὶ αὐτοῦ κατὰ πόσας τεθηνκότος, Δίτζευγος ἄρχων τῶν Βουλγάρων γνωρίζεται, δεινὸς καὶ στυγητός· ὃς τὸν μέγαν ἀρχιερέα Μανουὴλ μέσον διχάσας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας τοῖς ὤμοις ἀποτεμὼν βορὰν τοῖς κυσὶ παρέδωκεν. Ὃς ἀορασίᾳ πληγεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκείων ἀναιρεῖται, Μουρτάγων δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν δεξάμενος, ἅπαντας τοὺς χριστιανοὺς μὴ πειθομένους τὸν Χριστὸν ἀρνήσασθαι, ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ποιεῖ, καὶ οὓς μὲν δεσμοῖς καὶ στρεβλώσεσιν ὑποβάλλων, οὓς δὲ ἀπανθρώποις αἰκίαις τιμωρούμενος, τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς ἀπερρήγνυ. Τὸν δὲ ἐν ἁγίοις ἀρχιερέα Δεβελτοῦ Γεώργιον καὶ Πέτρον ἐπίσκοπον ῥάβδοις ἀπανθρώπως κατακόψας, ψίφει τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ἀπέτεμε, Πάρδον δὲ τὸν ἱερώτατον πρεσβύτερον λιθολευστούμενον θανάτῳ πικρῷ κατεδίκασεν· ὡσαύτως καὶ ἕτερον πλῆθος τριακοσὶν ἑβδομήκοντα ἑπτὰ ἢ καὶ πλεῖον ὑπαρχόντων τῇ θέσει εὐνούχου, ξίφει τὴν γαστέρα διέρρηξε· καὶ ἕτερον Λέοντα καὶ Ἰωάννην τοὺς τῶν χριστιανῶν στρατηγοὺς καὶ Γαβριὴλ καὶ Σιόνιον μαχαίρᾳ ἀπέτεμε· Γεώργιον τὸν γενναιότατον καὶ ἑτέρους πολλοὺς διαφόροις αἰκίαις τιμωρησάμενος ἐθανάτωσεν. Οὐ μόνονν γὰρ οὗτος ὁ μιαρώτατος Μουρτάγων ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ κατὰ διαδοχὴν Βουλγαρικοὶ γενόμενοι ἄρχοντες πάντας τοὺς; τὸν Χριστὸν ὁμολογοῦντας ἀνήρουν. Translation from: Kiril Petkov, The voices of medieval Bulgaria, seventh–fifteenth century. The records of a bygone culture (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450 – 1450, vol. 5). Leiden 2008, p. 13 – 14 who refers to Christo H. Kodov, Opis na slavjanskite răkopisi v bibliotekata na Bălgarskata Akademija na naukite. Sofia 1969, p. 141.

5 The Pagan Ruler and the Usage of Christian Elements

While the image of Khan Omurtag as a persecutor of Christians was well established in some later Byzantine sources, an interesting counter-image of the same ruler was used in contemporary Bulgarian sources. These are sources that reflect the ruler's vision of himself and the way he wanted to be presented.

The presence of a Christian population might have caused the Bulgarian khan to integrate Christian elements into his self-representation. However, the main reason seems to be the use of the Byzantine emperor as a role model. After the 811 victory over the Byzantine army of Nikephoros I, the Bulgarian ruler made increasing use of Byzantine elements as an integral part of the image of himself that he intended to create. In some of the inscriptions that he ordered to be carved at central places in Bulgaria, he called himself "ruler by [the grace of] God" (ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἄρχων).[47] The title was taken up by his followers as well. The title ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἄρχων appears mainly in important places in the power centres of northern Bulgaria, but also at some places in the south. The title can be found, e.g., at monuments in Pliska, one of the central places of the Bulgarian realm and one of the main residences of Khan Omurtag. Scholars have debated which god Khan Omurtag meant, the Christian God or maybe Tangra, who was the highest deity of the pagan Bulgars, and maybe related to the Turkic god Tengri. There is no definite answer to this question. The title does not appear alone and is normally accompanied by "kana sübigi"; sometimes the latter title is used without the Greek one. Various interpretations have been suggested for the meaning of "kana sübigi" and the use of both titles. For Josef Marquart, "kana sübigi" was the translation of the Old Turkic title "tängridä bolmyš qan" or "tängri jaratmyš qan," the khan appointed by heaven.[48] But this interpretation is just one among others.[49] Veselin Stepanov has expressed the opinion that "kanasubigi" means "Ruler from (by) God/Heaven," while ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἄρχων is simply a translation of this title.[50]

Some hints point to the Christian god, however. There are parallels to the Byzantine emperor and how he called himself (ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ βασιλεύς), as is seen on Byzantine

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47 Beševliev (cf fn. 17) p. 77–80.

48 Josef Marquart, Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften. Mit einem Vorwort und Anhang von Prof. W. Bang in Löwen. Leipzig 1898, p. 40–42, fn. 1.

49 An Indo-Iranian origin is suggested by: Tatjana Slavova, Vladetel i administracija v rannosrednovekovna Bălgarija. Sofia 2010, p. 278–279.

50 Stepanov (cf. fn. 26); concerning this problem, see also Florin Curta, Qagan, khan, or king? Power in early medieval Bulgaria (seventh to ninth century), *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 37 (2006), p. 1–31; Stefan Yordanov, Srednovekovnijat bălgarski apokrifen vladetel i kolegijata na hana i kagana v političeskata praktika na Părvoto bălgarsko carstvo. II. Hanăt/ kanăt v titulnata praktika i socialno-političeskata dejstvitelnost na srednovekovnoto bălgarsko obštestvo, *Epohi* 23 (2015), no. 1, p. 65–80.

coins and seals.[51] A gold medallion shows Khan Omurtag with insignia that were also quite frequent on coins with a depiction of the Byzantine emperor minted in Byzantium.[52] The connection of these imperial insignia with the Christian faith in Byzantium was certainly not unknown to the Bulgarian court. Furthermore, the inscriptions carved in the Greek language assume a readership that read primarily Greek, which might not have been the case for most of the inhabitants, although it is quite likely that Christians living in Bulgaria could understand Greek.[53] It is therefore possible that the title ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἄρχων addressed a Greek-speaking, maybe mostly Christian, audience, while "kana sübigi" satisfied the need to have the traditional Protobulgarian title as well.

As these examples demonstrate, the presence of Christians and Christian elements in Bulgaria and at the khan's court is well attested. The pagan ruler followed patterns of self-representation that were not much different from those of a Christian ruler. How long pagan traditions from earlier historical periods survived is much debated. Some Protobulgarian inscriptions suggest how the khan would like to be seen by his people. An inscription by Khan Malamir 831/2–836 has the following passage:

> The ruler gave to the Bulgars to eat and drink many times and to the boilas and bagains [he gave] great presents. May god grant to the ruler from god to live one hundred years together with kavhan Isbul.[54]

This inscription is not only interesting from the point of view of probable Christian elements; it also gives an interesting insight into the way the ruler wanted to be seen. He is emphasizing his generosity and respect for the different social ranks. *Kavhan* Isbul is presented as co-ruler, suggesting some sort of dual rulership. *Kavhan* is the title of a high-ranking official, usually the highest military commander, in medieval Bulgaria.[55]

Pointing to Christian elements in the inscriptions does not imply that the khan converted to Christianity, as one inscription makes a clear distinction between Christians and others. This inscription, from the time of Khan Presian (c. 837–852), com-

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51 Beševliev (cf fn. 17) p. 77–80.

52 Škorpil / Uspenskiy (cf. fn. 8) 387 with fig. 51; Petăr Slavčev / Ivan Jordanov, Zlatni medaljoni na chan Omurtag (814–831), *Arheologija* 21 (1979), no. 2, p. 25–31, p. 26 with fig. 1; Beševliev (cf. fn. 17) No. 86, p. 249 and fig. 185 and 186; Violeta Neševa, Izobraženija na vladeteli ot Părvoto bălgarsko carstvo, in: Prinosi kăm bălgarskata arheologia 1. Dekemvrijski dni na bălgarskata srednovekovna arheologia "Prof. d-r Stančo Vaklinov". Sofia 1992, p. 125–130, 127, and 128, fig. 3; Fiedler (cf. fn. 6) p. 192–193.

53 Beševliev (cf fn. 17) p. 47–49.

54 Beševliev (cf fn. 17) No. 58, p. 224–226: κὲ ὁ ἄρχον πολάκης ἐδοκεν τοὺς Βούλγαρης φαγῖν κὲ πῖν κὲ τοὺς βοιλαδας κ(ὲ) βαγαινους ἔδοκεν μεγάλα ξένηα. ὁ Θ(εό)ς ἀξηόση ζίσιν τὸν ἐκ Θ(ε)οῦ ἄρχονταν ἔτι Ἰσβουλον τ[ον καυχανων; the translation in Petkov (cf. fn. 46) p. 12.

55 Beševliev (cf. fn. 5) p. 283–292; Vasil Gjuzelev, Kavhanite i ičirgu boilite na Bălgarskoto hanstvocarstvo. Plovdiv 2007; Tatjana Slavova, Vladetel i administracija v rannosrednovekovna Bălgarija. Sofia 2010, p. 5–12.

pares the reliability of the Bulgars with that of the Christians, in this case certainly meaning mainly the Byzantines:

> When someone tells the truth, god sees. And when someone lies, god sees that too. The Bulgars did many favors to the Christians, but the Christians forgot them. But god sees.[56]

Christian elements were adopted during the course of the ninth century as part of an attempt to establish a more centralised way of governing. The title, the inscriptions, the gold medallion of Khan Omurtag with its similarities to Byzantine customs, all have to be seen in a broader context of the re-organisation of the army and large building programs which left traces in the impressive archaeological remains of Pliska and Preslav, the two main centres of early medieval Bulgaria.[57] It may be misleading, however, to subsume these developments under the heading of Christian elements. It seems that the driving force was political and social, the monopolisation of power and creation of a more densely organised administration. The representation of the ruler by means of inscriptions, buildings, and coins reflected a changing concept of rulership that focused more on the person of the ruler himself than on the consensus with the higher social strata. The nobility, the higher ranks of the Protobulgarian families, continued to lose their influence on the politics of the realm. This becomes even clearer after the conversion of the khan, which was badly received by the higher nobility. This new centralised way of governing found a natural role model in how the Byzantine emperor shaped his image as a ruler.[58] It is therefore quite natural that some elements that were known from the Byzantine emperor found their way to the Bulgarian court. Christian aspects were a key component of the image of the emperor; they were inseparably connected with other non-Christian elements. Taking over the model of the Byzantine emperor made the adoption of Christian components unavoidable. This could entail the mere usage of symbols and signs without referring to their content. In the long run, however, it turned out to be impossible to ignore the intrinsic implications of these symbols. The title "ruler by God" sooner or later led to a redefinition of this God.

While the image of the pagan ruler discussed in this section was mainly based on sources that reflected the self-image of the khan, the image of the Christian ruler depended on the view from the outside, meaning sources derived from neighbouring Byzantium, and, at least for the reign of Khan Boris/Michael, Western sour-

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56 Beševliev (cf fn. 17) No. 14d, p. 140–151: Ἥ [τη]ς τὴν ἀήθηαν γυρευη, ὁ θ(εὸ)ς θεορῖ.κ(έ), ἤ της ψεύδετε, ὁ θ(εὸ)ς θεορῖ. Τοὺς Χριστιηανοὺς οἱ Βούλγαρις πολα ἀγαθὰ ἐπυισα(ν) κ(ὲ) οἱ Χριστηανοὶ ἐλησμόνησαν, ἀλλὰ ὁ θ(εὸ)ς θεορῖ; the translation in Petkov (cf. fn. 46) p. 12–13.

57 Zlatarski (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 318–331; Angelov / Petrov / Primov (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 161–188; Božilov / Gjuzelev (cf. fn. 2) p. 153–157; Ziemann (cf. fn. 6) p. 306–309, 317–332 (concerning Pliska); Sophoulis (cf. fn. 6) p. 298–306.

58 Georgi Bakalov, Vizantijskijat culturen model v idejno-političeskata struktura na Părvata bălgarska država, *Istorija* 3 (1994), 4–5, p. 13–27.

ces. This does, not, however, mean that he did not consciously create an image of himself. He did so as much as his predecessors, as will be discussed below.

6 Christians in Bulgaria before 864/5

The image of the good Christian ruler was naturally connected to the baptism of the Bulgarians and the creation of ecclesiastic structures. Boris, who called himself Michael after his baptism in 864/5, was able to appear as a new Constantine.[59] Very soon after his death he was – probably – venerated as a saint.[60] His conversion was not a spontaneous act; it was the outcome of a longer development that has to be seen in a broader European context as it coincided with similar developments in East Central Europe.[61] Inside Bulgaria, too, there were movements that prepared the way for the official conversion.

With the decisive defeat of the Byzantine army led by Emperor Nikephoros in 811, Bulgaria expanded into the Byzantine province of Thrace. As noted above, military campaigns of the Bulgarian Khan Krum during the following years led the Bulgarians to the walls of Constantinople. While the imperial city itself remained inaccessible, the Bulgarians devastated the hinterland, conquered the city of Adrianople, and took many Christian prisoners.[62] Furthermore, the territorial expansion included former Byzantine regions that became part of the Bulgarian realm. With the inhabitants of the newly incorporated territories and the captives from the military expeditions, the Bulgarian khan ruled over a considerable number of Christians who mostly spoke Greek. In an inscription from 813 or 814, Greek Christian names appeared on a list of high ranking military officers.[63] Theophanes mentions the *spatharios* Eumathios, an expert in siege engines who fled to the Bulgarian court during the campaign of Emperor Nikephoros in 809.[64] At least during the ninth century, there seem to have been Byzantines or Greek-speaking inhabitants not only at the court but also in other spheres and areas of the Bulgarian khanate. The phenomenon of the "Protobulgarian inscriptions" that were carved using Greek as the language of choice has already been mentioned. The expansion of the Bulgarian realm paved the way for Byzantine

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59 PODSKALSKY (cf. fn. 19) p. 60; Dimo ČEŠMEDŽIEV, Imperator Konstantin Veliki i knjaz Boris I Mihail: Pobedata nad ezičnicite, in: Miša RAKOCIJA (ed.), Niš i Vizantija. Šesti naučni skup, Niš, 3. – 5. Jun 2007. Dani Sv. cara Konstantina i carice Jelene. Zbornik radova 6. Niš 2008, p. 357–368.

60 See Angel NIKOLOV, Problemăt za kanonizacijata na knjaz Boris-Mihail, in: NIKOLOV / KĂNEV (eds.), Simeonova Bălgarija, p. 214–221.

61 For a broader picture, see the respective passages in Florin CURTA, Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250 (Cambridge medieval textbooks). Cambridge, New York 2006.

62 ZLATARSKI (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 247–292; ANGELOV / PETROV / PRIMOV (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 130–147; BOŽILOV / GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 2) p. 126–143; ZIEMANN (cf. fn. 6) p. 241–287; SOPHOULIS (cf. fn. 6) p. 217–286.

63 BEŠEVLIEV (cf fn. 17) no. 47, p. 186–193.

64 DE BOOR (cf. fn. 9) p. 485, MANGO / SCOTT / GREATREX (cf. fn. 14) p. 665.

cultural influence, which was intrinsically connected to Christianity. It is quite likely that Christians lived continuously in Bulgaria and were able to practice their religious customs undisturbed during the eighth and at the beginning of the ninth century.[65] It was only under the rule of Khan Omurtag (c. 815–c. 831) that persecutions of Christians are mentioned.[66] There were certainly limits to the free exercise of religion, however, as the building of churches cannot be proven for the period before the Christianisation in 864/5.[67]

7 Boris/Michael – The Zealous Fighter

Although the Christianisation of Bulgaria was embedded in a longer process of contacts and interconnections, the baptism of the Bulgarian ruler Boris appears to have been an expected but sudden event. It marked a significant change but was not a surprise and not a completely new start. A few years before the baptism, a letter from Boris (852–889, † 907) to King Louis the German (843–876), to which pope Nicholas I (861–867) alluded, revealed that Boris had already planned to convert to Christianity.[68] Boris's new name, Michael, was taken from his godfather, the Byzantine Emperor Michael III (842–867). The baptism took place in 864 or 865, the result of Byzantine military pressure, but the exact circumstances of the baptism are not entirely clear; where it happened and who was present are still debated.[69] The available sources present slightly different versions of the event.[70] The decision, however, turned out to be irreversible; Bulgaria remained a Christian empire. During his reign, Boris/Michael strongly supported the spread of the Christian faith in Bulgaria.

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65 Peter Schreiner, Das Christentum in Bulgarien vor 864, in: V. Gjuzelev/ R. Pillinger (eds.), Das Christentum in Bulgarien und auf der übrigen Balkanhalbinsel in der Spätantike und im frühen Mittelalter: 2. Internationales Symposium, Haskovo (Bulgarien), 10.–13. Juni 1986. 1987, p. 51–61; Bistra Nikolova, Rannoto hristijanstvo v Bălgarija predi pokrăstvaneto. Teorii i realnost, in: Totev (ed.), 1100 godini Veliki Preslav I, p. 182–194; Georgi Bakalov, Hristijanski tradicii po bălgarskite zemi do pokrăstvaneto, in: Vasil Gjuzelev / Hristo Trendafilov (eds.), Preslavska knižovna škola. Tom 5. Izsledvanija v čest na prof. d. ist. n. Totju Totev. Sofia 2001, 22–31; Ziemann (cf. fn. 6) 345–348.
66 Sophoulis (cf. fn. 6) 270–274.
67 Ljudmila Dončeva-Petkova, Arheologičeski svedenija za hristijanstvoto v Bălgarija predi i neposredstveno sled pokrăstvaneto, in: Totev (ed.), 1100 godini Veliki Preslav I, p. 196–205.
68 Ernst Perels, Nicolai I. papae epistolae, in: idem (ed.), Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistulae VI, Karolini aevi IV. Berlin 1925, p. 257–690, 293.
69 For the most detailed overview of the sources and the literature concerning the baptism, see Podskalsky (cf. fn. 19) p. 52–53; see also Zlatarski (2002b, cf. fn. 6) p. 1–43; Angelov / Petrov / Primov (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 213–219; Božilov / Gjuzelev (cf. fn. 2) p. 171–175; Ziemann (cf. fn. 6) p. 356–365.
70 Anni Lesmueller-Werner / Ioannes Thurn (eds.), Iosephi Genesii Regum Libri quattuor (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae – Series Berolinensis, 14). Berlin, New York 1978, IV, 16, p. 69; Featherstone / Signes Codoñer (cf. fn. 36) IV, 14 p. 232–235; Wahlgren (cf. fn. 33) 131, 25, p. 243; Pseudo-Symeon in Immanuel Bekker (ed.), Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon magister, Georgios monachus. Bonn 1838, p. 665; Iliev (cf fn. 18) ch. 34, p. 67–68.

A Bulgarian embassy who presented 115 questions to Pope Nicholas I initiated a four-year period of Latin missionary work.[71] At the end, however, Boris/Michael was left disappointed by not having been granted his chosen candidate, Formosus of Porto, as patriarch of Bulgaria. He therefore returned to the church of Constantinople, which was much less hesitant to grant the Bulgarian church a certain degree of independence. At a meeting with a papal embassy and the Byzantine emperor after the fourth council of Constantinople in 870, the final decision was made in favour of the Eastern church.[72] With some short interruptions in the twelfth and thirteenth century, Bulgaria remained an Orthodox country.

The conversion had an impact on governance and the relationship between the ruler and the nobility who did not always welcome the new religion.[73] Boris/Michael used the new religion to centralise his power structures and reduce the influence of noble families. Instead, Byzantine clerics became influential at the ruler's court. In the questions to Pope Nicholas, these clerics are held responsible for the merciless punishment of the rebels. The role model for a new interpretation of the ruler's position was the Byzantine emperor. Some interesting aspects from the habits at court demonstrate this relationship:

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71 Ernst PERELS, Responsa Nicolai papae ad consulta Bulgarorum, in: IDEM (ed.), MGH Epp. VI, Karolini aevi IV, p. 568–600; concerning the Responsa Nicolai papae ad consulta Bulgarorum see Josef HERGENRÖTHER, Photius, Patriarch von Konstantinopel; sein Leben, seine Schriften und das griechische Schisma. Nach handschriftlichen und gedruckten Quellen, vol. 1–3. Regensburg 1867–1869, I, p. 607–616; Dimităr DEČEV, Răkopisite na tăj narečenite "Otgovori na papa Nikolaj I po dopitvanijata na bălgarite", *Izvestija na Bălgarskija Arheologiceski Institut* 7 (1933), p. 322–340; Dimităr DEČEV, Otgovorite na papa Nikolaj I po dopitvanijata na bălgarite (Responsa Nicolai papae I ad consulta Bulgarorum anno 866). Tekst i prevod. Vtoro izdanie (Universitetska biblioteka, 213). Sofia 1940; Ivan DUJČEV, Die Responsa Nicolai I. papae ad consulta Bulgarorum als Quelle für die bulgarische Geschichte, in: IDEM (ed.), Medioevo bizantino-slavo Vol. 1. Studi di storia politica e culturale. Rome 1965 (Storia e letteratura Raccolta di studi e testi, 102), p. 125–148; Ivan DUJČEV, I Responsa di papa Nicolò I ai bulgari neoconvertiti, in: IDEM (ed.), Medioevo bizantino-slavo Vol 3. Rome 1971 (Storia e letteratura Raccolta di studi e testi, 119); Hristo KOLAROV, Otgovorite na Papa Nikolaj I po dopitvanijata na bălgarite kato istoričeski izvor za razprostranjavaneto na hristijanstvoto v Bălgarija prez IX v., *Trudove na Visšija pedagogičeski institut Veliko Tărnovo* 5 (1968), p. 3–34; Peter LEISCHING, Der Inhalt der Responsa Nikolaus I. ad consulta Bulgarorum im Lichte westkirchlicher Quellen, *Kanon, Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für das Recht der Ostkirchen* 3 (1977), p. 240–248; Lothar HEISER, Die Responsa ad consulta Bulgarorum des Papstes Nikolaus I. 858–867; ein Zeugnis päpstlicher Hirtensorge und ein Dokument unterschiedlicher Entwicklungen in den Kirchen von Rom und Konstantinopel. Trier 1979; PODSKALSKY (cf. fn. 19) p. 55 with fn. 233; Tamás NÓTÁRI, Some Remarks on the Responsa Nicolai papae I. ad consulta Bulgarorum, *Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Legal Studies* 4 (2015), no. 1, p. 47–63.
72 ZLATARSKI (2002a, cf. fn. 6) p. 43–152; ANGELOV / PETROV / PRIMOV (cf. fn. 6) II, p. 219–228; BOŽILOV / GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 2) p. 175–186; ZIEMANN (cf. fn. 6) p. 370–412.
73 GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 21) p. 102–122; ZIEMANN (cf. fn. 20).

> Article 42. You state that when your prince sits at the table to eat according to custom no one sits next to him, even his wife, but all of you sit on low chairs at a distance from him and eat on the ground.[74]

The answers of Pope Nicholas I recommend sitting together with the others and alludes to the example of Jesus. Imitating the Byzantine *basileus* clearly meant breaking with long-established customs, although exactly how the pagan ruler interpreted his position is unknown. It seems, however, that the role of the higher nobility was more prominent during the pagan period. Some inscriptions might even suggest a dual rulership, but this is debated.[75] The new Christian ruler emphasised his authority and it seems that converting to Christianity was a way for him to establish a different, more autocratic, way of governing that reduced the role and influence of the leading families.

Immediately after the baptism, a revolt led by some leading noble families broke out. The available sources, which were certainly derived from the Bulgarian court, present a model of pagan resistance against the new faith. Whether this was really the whole story is difficult to say, but it seems that the new religion was associated with a diminished role for the nobility, the driving force of the rebellion. The description of the rebellion uses the well-known model of the Christian ruler who defeats pagan resistance with the help of God.

The events are known mainly from Western sources, *the Annals of Saint Bertin*, and the responses of Pope Nicholas I to the Bulgarians' questions from 866. The responses to the 115 questions that were posed to Pope Nicolas by a Bulgarian embassy in Rome concern general questions about the Christian faith. They also comprise questions about normal life, habits, customs, behaviour, and how much they should be changed after Christianisation. Thus, the responses also provide abundant information about Bulgarian society.[76] Among many other issues, they mention the rebellion led by some noble families and Boris/Michael's cruel revenge:

> And so, you tell us how with God's mercy you accepted the Christian faith and how you made all your people convert, but how after they converted they rose unanimously against you with great hatred arguing that you gave them no good law and they wanted to kill you and install another prince, and how you, fortified with God's power, overcame them and captured them all with your own hands ordinary people and magnates, and how all the leaders and nobles were put to the sword with all their kin, and the less noble and the not so distinguished suffered no harm....[77]

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[74] PERELS (cf. fn. 71) ch. 42, p. 583: *Asseritis, quod rex vester cum ad manducandum in sedili, sicut mos est, ad mensam sederit, nemo ad convescendum, etiam neque uxor eius, cum eo discumbat, vobis procul in sellis residentibus et in terra manducantibus*; the translation in PETKOV (cf. fn. 46) p. 27.

[75] BEŠEVLIEV (cf. fn. 5) p. 283–292; GJUZELEV (cf. fn. 55).

[76] PERELS (cf. fn. 71); HEISER (cf. fn. 71).

[77] PERELS (cf. fn. 71) ch. 17, p. 577: *Igitur referentes, qualiter divina clementia Christianam religionem perceperitis qualiterque populum vestrum baptizari omnem feceritis, qualiter autem illi, postquam baptizati fuerunt, insurrexerint unanimiter cum magna ferocitate contra vos, dicentes non bonam vos eis*

The *Annals of Saint Bertin*, compiled by archbishop Hincmar of Reims, under the year 866 have even a more elaborate version with God interfering in the battle more or less directly:

> But his leading men were very angry and stirred up his people against him, aiming to kill him. All the warriors there were in all the ten counties of that realm came and surrounded the king's palace. But he invoked Christ's name and came forth against that whole multitude with only forty-eight men who, burning with zeal for the Christian faith, stayed loyal to him. As soon as the king came out from the city gates, there appeared to him and his companions seven clerics, each holding a burning candle in his hand, who thus advanced ahead of the king and his men. Now to the rebels it seemed that a great flaming mansion was falling on them, and the horses of the king's men, so it seemed to their opponents, advanced walking on their hind legs and struck them down with their front hooves. Such great terror gripped the rebels that they could not get themselves ready either to flee or to fight, but flung themselves on the ground unable to move. The king killed fifty-two of the leading men who had been most active in stirring the people up against him, but he let the rest of the people go away unharmed.[78]

While the *Annals of Saint Bertin* present the image of the Christian ruler who defeats the enemies of the Christian faith with the help of God, the responses by Pope Nicholas I do not join in glorifying the image of Boris/Michael. He clearly expected to be praised for killing just the leaders and nobles while he spared the others and, under the pressure of his advisors, the Bulgarian khan asked whether the slaughter of the rebels together with their families had to be counted as a sin. The pope was clear in his answer, assuring him that it was indeed a sin to kill innocent people. According to Pope Nicholas I, such a severe punishment was not in accordance with the Christian way of life.

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legem tradidisse, volentes etiam vos occidere et regem alium constituere, et qualiter vos divina cooperante potentia adversus eos praeparati a maximo usque ad modicum superaveritis et manibus vestris detentos habueritis qualiterque omnes primates eorum atque maiores cum omni prole sua gladio fuerint interempti, mediocres vero seu minores nihil mali pertulerint; for a commentary, see HEISER (cf. fn. 71) p. 421–422; the English translation in PETKOV (cf. fn. 46) p. 25.

78 Felix GRAT / Jeanne VIELLIARD / Suzanne CLÉMENCET (eds.), Annales de Saint-Bertin, publiées pour la société de l'histoire de France. Paris 1964, p. 133: *Quod proceres sui moleste ferentes, concitaverunt populum adversus eum, ut illum interficerent. Quotquot igitur fuerunt intra decem comitatus, adunaverunt se circa palatium eius. Ille vero, invocato Christi nomine, cum quadraginta tantum octo hominibus, qui erga christianam devotionem ferventes sibi remanserant, profectus est contra omnem illam multitudinem; et mox ut portas civitatis exiit, apparuerunt ei et his qui cum eo erant septem clerici, et unusquisque eorum tenebat cereum ardentem in manu sua, sicque praecedebant regem et illos qui cum eo erant. Eis vero qui contra eum insurrexerant visum erat, quod magna villa ardens super eos caderet, et equi eorum qui cum rege erant, sicut contrariis videbatur, erecti incedebant et cum anterioribus pedibus eos percutiebant; tantusque timor eos apprehendit, ut nec ad fugiendum nec ad defendendum se praepararent, sed prostrati solo se movere nequibant. Rex autem ex proceribus, qui populum maxime adversus eum incitaverunt, interfecit numero quinquaginta duos, reliquum autem populum inlaesum abire permisit*; the English translation can be found in Janet NELSON, The Annals of St Bertin: Ninth Century Histories, vol. 1 (Manchester medieval sources). Manchester, New York 1991, ad an. 866, p. 137.

... and you wish to know if, on account of those who lost their lives, you had committed a sin. Indeed, this could not have been done without sin and without guilt on your part, since you had the younger generation, which had not shared in the plans of their parents and did not rise in arms against you slaughtered, the innocent perishing alongside the guilty. ... But because you sinned on account of your zeal for Christianity or out of ignorance rather than vice, you shall receive absolution and grace by Christ's mercy as soon as you do penance.[79]

The question of guilt faded with time and the image of Boris/Michael as a staunch defender of the Christian faith came to form an essential element of his later holiness. Patriarch Nicholas refers to Boris/Michael's victory against the rebels in one of his letters to Symeon, Boris/Michael's son and successor. The letter was written in 922/3 in the context of the military confrontation between the Bulgarians and Byzantium. Patriarch Nicholas wants to prevent Symeon from continuing the war against Byzantium and refers to his father as a saint and good example, "who kept peace with the Romans and lived a pious life." In this context he also remarked that Boris/Michael, "by the Divine Power... triumphed over those who would have murdered him."[80]

By this time, the story of divine support for the neophyte against his adversaries was already established and part of cultural memory. In the tenth century, on 28 March, the Bulgarian church celebrated Prince Michael's victory over the rebellion that had been instigated against him because of the Christianisation.[81]

A miracle of Saint George, perhaps from the tenth century, emphasises the baptism and also depicts Boris as chosen by God in the context of his zealous fight for the true faith. The relevant passage still has traces of the memory of the resistance:

> I am from the newly converted Bulgarian people, whom God enlightened through His chosen one, Prince Boris, called in the holy baptism Michael. With Christ's strength and the sign of the cross he overcame the tough and unyielding Bulgarian tribe and illuminated with the light of understanding their hearts darkened by the evil-scheming satanic endeavor; turned them away from the dark, deceiving, stinking, and abominable to God sacrifices and led them from darkness to light and from falsehood and iniquity to the truth; cast out their reeking

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79 Perels (cf. fn. 71) ch. 17, p. 577: *de his nosse desideratis, qui vita privati sunt, utrum ex illis peccatum habeatis. Quod utique sine peccato evasum non est nec sine culpa vestra fieri potuit, ut proles, quae in consilio parentum non fuit nec adverus vos arma sustulisse probatur, innocens cum nocentibus trucidaretur ... Verum quia zelo Christianae religionis et ignorantia potius quam alio vitio deliquistis, poenitentia subsequente per Christi gratiam indulgentiam de his et misericordiam consequemini;* Petkov (cf. fn. 46) 25.

80 Romilly J. H. Jenkins / Leendert G. Westerink (eds.), Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople. Letters. Washington, D.C. 1973 (DOT 2), No. 25, p. 174: εἰ καὶ διὰ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως ὑπέρρος γέγονε τῶν φονευτῶν, p. 175 (English translation).

81 Nikolov (cf. fn. 60) 217; A. Turilov, Dve zabytye daty bolgarskoj cerkovno-političeskoj istorii IX v. (K voprosu formirovanija bolgarskogo varianta cerkovnogo mesjacoslova v epohu Pervogo carstva), *Palaeobulgarica/Starobălgaristica* 23 (1999), no. 1, p. 19; A. Turilov, Slavica Cyrillomethodiana. Istočnikovedenie istorii i kul'tury južnyh slavjan i drevnej Rusi. Mežslavjanskie kul'turnye svjazi epohi srednevekov'ja. Moskva, p. 120.

and polluted foods and destroyed their sacrificial tables; strengthened them in the Orthodox Christian faith with the holy books....[82]

The image of Boris/Michael as a zealous fighter for the Christian faith was connected to more events. Besides the rebellion of the nobles, the image is used to describe events that happened some decades later, after Boris/Michael resigned from the throne in 889 and decided to become a monk. He left the throne to his oldest son, Vladimir, also called Rasate, who did not follow his father's path. Regino of Prüm describes it in his account:

> Meanwhile his son, whom he had made king, retreated far from his father's intentions and deeds and began to act like a despoiler, giving himself over to drunkenness, carousing and lust, and making every effort to recall the recently baptised people to the pagan way of worship. When the father heard about this he was incensed with great anger. He removed his holy habit, took up his sword-belt, put on his regal clothing and, gathering the God-fearing to his side, pursued his son. He soon captured him without difficulty, gouged out his eyes and imprisoned him. Then he summoned an assembly of the whole kingdom and established his younger son as king, threatening him in front of everyone that he would suffer a similar fate if in any way he deviated from correct Christianity.[83]

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82 Editions of the text: Hrisanf Loparev, Čudo svjatogo Georgija o bolgarine. Pamjatnik vizantijskoj, perevodnoj literatury, St. Petersburg 1894, p. 19–24; B. St. Angelov, Skazanie za železnija krăst, *Starobălgarska literatura* 1 (1971), p. 121–155; p. 141–143; Hristo Kodov, Opis na slavjanskite răkopisi v bibliotekata na Bălgarskata Akademija na Naukite. Sofia 1969, p. 143–144; the following passage has been taken from Mirosław J. Leszka, "Opowieść o krzyżu żelaznym" jako źródło do dziejów wojny bułgarsko-węgierskiej z lat. 894–896, in: Slavia Antiqua 57 (2016), p. 77–96, here: 85–86: азь гй оу҃е петре игоумене. Ѿ езыка новопросвѣн҃аа бльгарскаа. ѥгоже просвѣти бъ҃, ст҃ы кр҃щениѥ. вь наша лѣта изъбран'никѡ свои борисомь. ѥгоже нарекоше вь ст҃ѣ кр҃щени михаиль. иже силою хв҃ою, побѣды крьстны҃ оружиѥ. и вел'ми непокоривы роѣ бльгар'скы. и омрачена срд҃а. злокьзьн'наго дiавола дѣиствомь. свѣтѡ б҃горазоумiа просвѣти и Ѿ тьмнии и б҃гомрьскыѥ жрьтвь ѿврати извѣ ис т'мы на свѣть. Ѿ льсти крив'ды на истинѫ. см҃рад'наа врашнаа и нечиста. и трѣбьⷮща й расип҃. и оутв'рьдї е ст҃ими кнꙑгамы; the translation can be found in Petkov (cf. fn. 46) p. 44; Podskalsy (cf. fn. 19) p. 476 with further literature; Ančo J. Kalojanov / Marija A. Spasova / Todor D. Mollov (eds.), "Skazanie za železnija krăst" i epohata na car Simeon. Veliko Tărnovo 2007; Yanko Hristov, Za njakoi momenti v cikăla razkazi "skazanie za železnija krăst", *Naučni izvestija* 6 (2010), 1–2, p. 89–93; Yanko Hristov, Shtrihi kăm "Skazanie za železnija krăst". Blagoevgrad, 2012.

83 Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi. Recognovit Fridericus Kurze (Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum). Hannover 1890, p. 95–96: *Interea filius eius, quem regem constituerat, longe a paterna intentione et operatione recedens predas cępit exercere, ebrietatibus, comessationibus et libidinibus vacare et omni conamine ad gentilitatis ritum populum noviter baptizatum revocare. Quod cum pater audisset, nimio zelo accensus sacrum habitum deposuit et militiae cingulum resumpsit et cultu regio indutus, adsociatis sibi Deum timentibus, filium persecutus est: quem mox absque difficultate cępit, oculosque eius effodit, et in carcerem misit; deinde convocato omni regno suo filium iuniorem regem constituit, interminatus coram omnibus, similia fore passurum, si in aliquo a recta christianitate deviaret*, the English translation in Simon MacLean, History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe. The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg (Manchester Medieval Sources Series). Manchester, New York 2009.

Regino is the only detailed source for these events. Apart from Regino, only Constantine of Preslav, in his *Učitelno evangelie* (didactic gospel), mentions difficult times for Christians, but without mentioning any names. He recommends upholding the fulfillment of the divine order without fearing kings and refers to the martyrs as examples.[84]

The credibility of the accounts in both cases, the rebellion of the nobles and the reign of Boris/Michael's son Vladimir, is difficult to ascertain. Whether the main goal in both cases was indeed to abolish Christianity is not entirely clear. Instead, what is important here is the message that these texts convey: the image of the Christian ruler who defends the Christian faith against his enemies without hesitation. In the first case, Boris/Michael enjoys divine support, while in the second one, it is mainly his own effort that brings him his victory. His pious way of life in a monastery is, nevertheless, a precondition for acting against his successor. This is what Regino of Prüm's text emphasises. It seems that the first accounts about the rebellion of the nobles stem from the Bulgarian court itself. While the responses of Pope Nicholas merely quote a report that was presented to the pope, the *Annals of Saint Bertin* seem to reflect the official version of the events. The second case, the reign of Vladimir, was certainly not transmitted directly; I will return to this point below. At least in the first case, one can assume a more or less conscious creation of an image by Boris/Michael and his followers. This image eventually paved the way for his sanctification.

In this regard, an interesting passage appears in another Western source, the *Annals of Fulda*. For the year 896 the *Annals of Fulda* describe the calamities of the Hungarian invasion, when Boris/Michael's son Symeon ruled Bulgaria. According to the *Annals of Fulda*, after losing two battles against the Hungarians and seeing many people killed, the suffering Bulgarians turned to Michael, asking him for advice. He recommended three days of penance to repent the injustice against Christians and ask for God's help. Finally, the Christians prevailed in a hard battle where they suffered serious losses.[85] In this case, the ex-ruler no longer acted as a ruler but as a religious man who is already a mediator between men and God. The *Annals of Fulda* are otherwise well informed about Bulgaria and present information that cannot be found in other sources.[86]

Michael as a military leader is perhaps also represented in passages from Old Bulgarian apocalyptic literature, namely, the *Vision of Daniel*, the *Interpretation of Daniel*, and the *Narration of Isaiah*. All these texts are generally dated to the eleventh century, the time of the Byzantine occupation of Bulgaria. The texts are normally

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84 Arhiepiskop Antonij, Iz istorii hristianskoj propovedi: Očerki i izsledovanija. Sankt-Peterburg ²1895, p. 272; Gjuzelev (cf. fn. 21) p. 464.

85 Georg Heinrich Pertz / Friedrich Kurze (eds.), Annales Fuldenses sive annales regni Francorum orientalis (Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum 7). Hannover 1891, p. 129 – 130.

86 This refers to an embassy of the Bulgarian ruler Pertz / Kurze (cf. fn. 85) 121 – 122.

transmitted in later manuscripts and make use of previous examples from this genre by applying the motifs to a Bulgarian historical setting using figures from Bulgarian history.[87] The models come from Greek sources, translated and transformed. One example is the *Revelation of Pseudo-Methodius*, which was translated and used for the composition of other texts.[88] In some of the texts, Michael is the last king, who fulfils deeds that are normally associated with last kings or last emperors in various eschatological texts. In most of these cases, it remains unclear whether the figure of the historical Michael has left any traces or whether other rulers with the same name played a greater role.[89]

According to the *Interpretation of Daniel*, a *Michail kagan* appeared among the Bulgarians "when the beginning of the evils for the whole world came."[90] Since they did not give him the Bulgarian tsardom, he had to take it by force. Symeon and Peter succeeded him.[91] This passage seems to reflect the historical Michael to a certain extent.

Later, the same text tells the story of a tsar called Michael, who is described like the last emperor. He comes from Thessalonica; an Angel of God awakens him. Later Tsar Michael enters Rome. He defeats the "blond beards" at Glavinitsa. The text continues:

> And two torturers will arise from the east. With the first he will meet at Ovche Pole; and he will massacre the soldiers of Skopje at the Kiev spring. He will return here, and here will come two hordes of Ishmaelites and will conquer the whole of the Bulgarian land, and when the Kagan sets off he will join them near Sredets; and there will be a slaughter twice. And he will say in Boyana: 'Leave the loot here. Go to your homes.' And the Ishmaelites will start speaking: 'We will not give it up but we will fight!' And a great battle will occur – there is a spring with two spouts in that place. And there will be a great bloodshed so that a three-year-old stallion could drown in the blood. Here the Ugrians will defeat him and slaughter all his soldiers. And he will flee to Velbăzhd. And there again he will call together orphans and priests and deacons and monks – on the Vitosha Mountain, where many [holy relics] of saints from all over the world are gathered. And they will go forth against Ishmael bearing crosses. The patriarch will march ahead of them. The Ugrians will be afraid and will abandon the loot.[92]

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87 Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova / Anisava Miltenova, Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria. Sofia 2011, p. 27–46.

88 Ibid., p. 33–34.

89 Ibid., p. 87–118.

90 Ibid., p. 89, 173, 181 (English translation).

91 Ibid., p. 173, 181 (English translation).

92 Ibid., p. 174–175: и въстанета в м(ч)телѣ · ѿ въстока · и с прьвымь срѣщеть се на Ѡв’чи поли · изьбиѥть скопьские воѥ · на Киевѣ стоуден’ци · тоу же в’звратить се · и тоу пакы приде · двѣ чести из’маильтѣнь · и поплѣнить всоу землю бльгарьскоую · и шьдь каганъ състивить е на Срѣдьци · и тоу створить сѣча два · и речеть оу Боіанѣ ѡставите тоу плѣнь · идѣте же домомь · и начноуть гл͠ати измаильтене · не дадимь мы нь биѥмь се · и тоу строрет’/I/ раз’бои великь · и ѥсть же тоу стоуденць двоіа врата имы · [и] боудеть пролитие крьви мнозѣ · іако оутоноути оу крьви ждрѣбьцоу трилѣтьноу · и тѹ оудолѣють ѥмоу ѥгры · из’биють ѥмоу воѥ · а самь оубѣжить вь Вельблоуж(д)ь · и тоу пакы свереть сироты · и попе · и диіакы · и мнихы · вь Витоши горѣ · идѣже соуть сьбрани

In this case, there might be a reflection of the Hungarian invasions at the end of the ninth century, but if there is a memory of the historical events, it is barely visible. A different historical context would be also conceivable. The *Vision of Daniel* presents similar information; it is quite close to the *Interpretation of Daniel*. Michael is also presented as the last king. He is also one who fights against the enemies of the Christian God, which might be seen as a trace of the historical Michael. But a historical echo is barely noticeable. Other rulers called Michael could also have served as models:

> And when the month of August comes and the first day breaks, Michael will seize the kingdom; and the mountains will start opening, the fish will die in the rivers, and God will be forever with him. And he will enter Thessalonica from the west. And he will reign over his kingdom with huge force, and he will humble his enemies under his feet, and his scepter will rule in Thessalonica for thirty-three years. And his whole ire and wrath will be against the ones denying the Lord. And there will be peace all over the earth.[93]

The legend of the last king is also taken up by the *Narration of Isaiah*, in which King Michael goes to Rome and defeats the "blond beards."[94] As already mentioned, it is unclear how much the apocalyptic texts really refer to Boris/Michael. The motif of the zealous fighter might or might not be connected to his name, but other aspects of his image survived, namely, his pious conduct and retreat to a monastery.

8 Boris/Michael – The Pious Ruler

Soon after his baptism, Boris/Michael received advice about how to rule as a good Christian ruler from both Pope Nicholas I in Rome and Patriarch Photios in Constantinople (858–867 and 877–886). The responses noted above to the questions of the Bulgarians did not provide a mirror for princes or general rules of conduct. The responses refer strictly to the questions posed, answering them one by one.[95] Reading all the answers to the 115 questions gives the impression of a piece-by-piece construction of a picture of how a Christian ruler should behave. There is no systematic ap-

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мнози · сⷮ҃и ѿ всѣхь земль · и поидоуⷮ · сь крⷭ҃ты на Измаила · патиꙗрьхь/Ѵ поидеть прѣⷣ ними · начⸯноуть боꙗти се ѥгры, p. 182 (English translation).

93 Ibid., p. 158: мⷭ҃ца авьгоуста · настаюⷱщаго · поидеть прьвы дн҃ь · Михаиль црⷭ҃тво възьмь · и вьⷱноуть горы растоупати се · рыбы измирати вь рѣкахь · и г҃ь боуⷣеть с нимь вьсвегⷤ(д)а/Ѵ · и вьнидеть вь Солоунь ѿ запада · и дрьжить · цр҃ьство свое всею силою · и смѣрить враги свое поⷣ· нозѣ свои · и црⷭ҃твⷣѥть скипетрь вь Солоунѣ · лѣ(ⷮ) ·л·г· и боудеть вса ꙗрость ѥго · и на гнѣвь ѥго · и на ѿметавшеⷷ се г҃а · и оумирить се вса землѣ, p. 167 (English translation).

94 Ibid., p. 125 (on the "blond beards"), the text (Narration of Isaiah) p. 202, 213 (English translation); concerning the blond beards, see A. A. Vasiliev, The Emperor Michael III in Apocryphal Literature, *Byzantina Metabyzantina* 1 (1946), p. 237–248, 247sq.

95 Heiser (cf. fn. 71).

proach; instead, the broader context – the basic principles – have to be extracted from the concrete situations to which the questions refer.

The letter by Patriarch Photios of Constantinople, who wrote to Boris/Michael soon after his baptism, presents a different picture. In his letter, Photios produced a traditional mirror for princes (Τί ἐστιν ἔργον ἄρχοντος). The letter is quite long and contains an account of the seven general councils. After this dogmatic section, Photios turns to a didactic part, a detailed description of how a Christian ruler should behave. He should build churches and he should aim at being a part of the church and praying together with others. He should attend to his appearance; he should style his speeches in a moderate, ordered, and exalted way. He should not offer friendship too easily, but once made he should preserve it carefully. From friends he should ask for the truth, not for flattery. He should avoid envy but be envied by others. He should educate his people for the better. As soon as a ruler can compose himself, he can be regarded as a true ruler.[96]

With the responses and Photios's letter, Boris/Michael had information about how to behave as a good Christian ruler. The sources do not allow ascertaining whether Boris/Michael followed the advice or how far he regarded the letter by Photios as a personal guide for his governing. How his way of life was presented and how his deeds were integrated into the narrative of a good Christian ruler can be seen in lead seals from his time with inscriptions like "Lord God, help Michael, ruler of Bulgaria," "Christ, help your servant Michael ruler of Bulgaria" and "Mother of God, help your servant Michael ruler of Bulgaria." One lead seal refers to the time when he had already entered a monastery (889 – 907) ("Mother of God help your servant Michael the monk, from God, ruler of Bulgaria"). The lead seals show Boris/Michael's official title in Greek, ἄρχων Βουλγαρίας and all of them have a Christian connotation.[97]

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96 Leendert G. Westerink / Vasileios Laourdas, Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia. Leipzig 1983 – 1988 (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana), I, p. 2 – 39, see: Joseph R. Berrigan / Despina S. White, The Patriarch and the Prince. The letter of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople to Khan Boris of Bulgaria (The Archbishop Iakovos library of ecclesiastical and historical sources, no. 6). Brookline, Mass. 1982; Venance Grumel / Jean Darrouzès, Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople. Vol. I: Les actes des patriarches, fasc. 2 – 3: Les regestes de 715 à 1206, 2e éd. revue et corr. par Jean Darrouzès. Paris 1989, No. 478; Hergenröther (cf fn. 71) I, p. 601 – 604; Zlatarski (2002b, cf. fn. 6) p. 71 – 73; Ivan Dujčev, Au lendemain de la conversion du peuple bulgare. L'Épître de Photios, in: idem (ed.), Medioevo bizantino-slavo vol. 1, p. 107 – 123; Bonju Angelov, Poslanie Patriarha Fotija bolgarskomu knjazju Borisu, *Byzantinobulgarica* 6 (1980), p. 45 – 50; Gjuzelev (cf. fn. 21) p. 186 sq.; Günter Prinzing, Beobachtungen zu "integrierten" Fürstenspiegeln der Byzantiner, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988), p. 1 – 31; Liljana Simeonova, Diplomacy of the letter and the cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the papacy 860s–880s (Classical and Byzantine Monographs, 41). Amsterdam 1998, p. 112 – 156; Podskalsky (cf. fn. 19) p. 53 – 54 with fn. 228 – 229; PmbZ 6253, fn. 69 (p. 681).
97 Ivan J. Jordanov, Korpus na pečatite na srednovekovna Bălgarija. Sofia 2001 (Monetosečenija i monetna cirkulacija na Balkanite, 6), p. 31 – 36, e. g.: Χ(ριστ)ὲ βοήθη Μηχαὴλ ἄρχοντα Βουλγαρίας or Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθη Μηχαὴλ ἄρχοντα Βουλγαρίας; Petkov (cf. fn. 46) p. 33.

An inscription from Balshi in today's Albania, now lost, perhaps commemorated the date of the baptism: "... [Boris] christened Michael, with the people given to him by God in the year 6374 [866 CE]."[98]

Boris/Michael followed the advice to build churches and support missionary work. A Latin inscription from Preslav, the residence of the Bulgarian ruler at least from the time of Boris/Michael's son Symeon onwards (893), seems to attest to the short duration of the Latin mission.[99] Later, after the expulsion of the disciples of Methodius from Moravia in 886, Boris/Michael invited the disciples of Cyril and Methodius, Kliment, Naum, and Angelarius.[100] The *Life of Climent* praises the Bulgarian ruler for receiving these holy men.[101] Bishops were appointed and ecclesiastical structures were built up. Archaeological research has examined monasteries and churches, many of which might be dated to his reign.[102] Boris/Michael created at least an image of himself which tried to emphasise his piety and eagerness to fight for the new faith. This image finally laid the foundations for his canonisation; the image was even spread during his lifetime.

The account of Regino of Prüm (mentioned above) emphasises the pious conduct of the Bulgarian ruler:

> It is said that after he had received and understood the grace of baptism, the king of the Bulgars began to live with such perfection that, although by day he went among his people clothed in the trappings of royalty, by night he dressed in a sack and secretly entered the church and lay down prostrate in prayer on the stone floor, spreading only a blanket beneath him.
>
> Not much later he was moved by divine inspiration to give up his earthly realm so that he might reign with Christ in heaven for eternity. After appointing his elder son in his place he had his hair cut, took up the dress of the holy way of life and became a monk, dedicated to alms, vigils and prayers by day and night.[103]

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98 BEŠEVLIEV (cf fn. 17) No. 15, p. 151–152: [+ Ἐβαπτίσθη ὁ ἐκ θ(εο)ῦ ἄρχων Βουλγ]αρίας Βορης ὁ μετονομασθεὶς Μιχαὴλ σὺν τῶ ἐκ θ(εο)ῦ δεδομένω αὐτῶ ἔθνει ἔτους ϛτοδ΄-; PETKOV (cf. fn. 46) p. 36.

99 ŠKORPIL / USPENSKIY (cf. fn. 8) 509, fn. 1 (plate XCVIII 8); Veselin BEŠEVLIEV, Spätgriechische und spätlateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien. Berlin 1964, No. 54, p. 39–40.

100 For one of the most detailed overviews about the literature on Kliment, see STANČEV (cf fn. 22); see also ILIEV (cf. fn. 22); on Naum: Stefan KOŽUHAROV, Naum Ohridski, in: DINEKOV (ed.), Kirilo-Metodievska Enciklopedija (cf fn. 22) 2, p. 795–798.

101 Ilija ILIEV, Theophylakt von Ochrid, The Long Life of Saint Clement of Ohrid. A Critical Edition, *Byzantinobulgarica* 9 (1995), 62–120, ch. 48, p. 97.

102 DONČEVA-PETKOVA, Arheologičeski svedenija za hristijanstvoto; Rossina KOSTOVA, Bulgarian Monasteries, ninth to tenth Centuries: Interpreting the Archaeological Evidence, *Pliska – Preslav* 8 (2000), p. 190–202; Kazimir POPKONSTANTINOV / Rossina KOSTOVA, Architecture of Conversion: Provincial Monasteries in the 9th–10th Centuries, Bulgaria, in: D. D. ELŠIN (ed.), Arhitektura Vizantii i Drevnej Rusi IX–XII vekov. Materialy meždunarodnogo seminara (17–21 nojabrja 2009 goda) (Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Èrmitaža, 53). Sankt-Peterburg 2010, p. 118–132.

103 KURZE (cf fn. 83) p. 96: *Ferunt autem de huius gentis rege, quod a tanta perfectione post perceptam baptismi gratiam cęperit, ut diebus ornamentis regiis indutus coram populo procederet, noctibus vero sacce vestitus latenter ecclesiam intrans super pavimentum ipsius basilicae substrato sibi tantum cilicio prostratus in oratione iaceret. Non post multum tempus divina inspiratione commonitus regnum*

After this passage, Regino continues with the part noted above in which he describes how Boris/Michael's son Vladimir/Rasate attempted to deviate from his father's path and how Boris/Michael managed to depose him from the throne. Regino continues with how Boris/Michael spent the rest of his life:

> Having accomplished these things, he put down his sword-belt and, resuming the dress of holy religion, he entered the monastery and spent the rest of his earthly life in holy monastic conduct.[104]

Regino of Prüm is one of the few writers who shape the life of Boris/Michael according to the model of a good Christian ruler. It is unclear where Regino received his information. The part about the pious life of Boris/Michael and the short reign of his son is the second part of a longer passage on events that have something to do with Bulgaria. Regino put this second part into a passage for the year 868, linking it to the Christianisation of the Bulgarians, which actually happened between 864 and 866.

The second part, however, refers to a much later period. The reign of Vladimir/Rasate has to be dated from 889 to 893. That means that Regino did not know where to put the information he received about Boris/Michael entering a monastery and the deposition of his son. He decided to insert it under the year 868, certainly because of the Bulgarians as the common topic. The information about the Christianisation in the first part might have come from the court of Louis the German, who is explicitly mentioned, as well as from the papal court since the papal mission to Bulgaria is also briefly mentioned.[105] The events before and after 889 in the second part certainly have a different origin. Perhaps the information did not directly come to Prüm from the Bulgarian court. It is possible that the source of Regino's information was Constantinople, from where it might have passed to Lotharingia, possibly through Rome, although direct contacts with Bulgaria were also possible at the end of the ninth century.

At least in the eastern Frankish kingdom, information about the Bulgarians was available. Interestingly, the *Annals of Fulda* mention an embassy of King Arnulf of Carinthia to a Bulgarian king, Laodomir, in the year 892 to renew a peace treaty. The passage is presented in connection with the war against Zventibold (Svatopluk) of Moravia, where Arnulf even engaged the Hungarians.[106] Laodomir is generally interpreted as Vladimir, the Bulgarian ruler and son of Boris/Michael, who – according to Regino – wanted "to recall the recently baptised people to the pagan way of wor-

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terrenum dimisit, ut in caelis aeternaliter regnaret cum Christo; et ordinato in suo loco regem filium suum maiorem natu, comam capitis deposuit habituque sanctae conversationis suscepto monachus effectus est, elemosinis, vigiliis et orationibus die noctuque intentus.

104 Ibid., p. 96: *His ita patratis, deposito cingulo et resumpto sanctae religionis habitu in monasterium ingressus in sancta conversatione reliquum vitae presentis tempus duxit.*

105 Ibid., p. 95.

106 Pertz / Kurze (cf. fn. 85) p. 121–122.

ship."[107] This is one of the few traces of Vladimir's reign in the sources, which means that there was a direct link to Bulgaria from the eastern Frankish kingdom at the end of the ninth century. Thus, the information presented by the *Annals of Fulda* about the monastic life of Boris/Michael might have come from Bulgaria more or less directly.

The image of Boris/Michael as the good Christian ruler is complemented by other elements, such as the building of churches. The 28th of April was later celebrated for the blessing of the church of Saint Peter in Bulgaria, probably the so-called Great Basilica of Pliska.[108] The main achievement connected with him, remained, however, the conversion to Christianity. The monk Tudor Doksov, who also notes the date of Boris/Michael's death, remarks:

> That same year, on the second day of the month of May, on a Saturday night, died the servant of God, the father of the prince, who lived with pure faith in the orthodox confession of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, our great, honest, and pious Bulgarian prince Boris whose Christian name is Michael. This Boris converted the Bulgarians in the year 6374 [864] in the year eht behti. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.[109]

Boris/Michael probably became a saint in the Orthodox Church shortly after his death. He is commemorated on the day of his death, the 2nd of May. The assumption that he was sanctified shortly after his death is not unanimously accepted;[110] scholars who assume a canonisation have debated when and how this happened.[111] Looking at the available sources, it is quite likely that he was venerated as a saint fairly early. Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos (901–907, 912–925) already referred to Boris/Michael as a saint. In a letter from 922/3 he calls him "holy" and emphasises his struggle for peace: "... your holy father devoted much toil on behalf of those things pertaining to peace between Romans and Bulgarians...."[112]

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107 Kurze (cf fn. 83) p. 95–96; the English translation in MacLean (cf fn. 83).

108 Nikolov (cf. fn. 60) p. 218.

109 André Vaillant (ed.), Discours contre les Ariens de Saint Athanase. Version slave et traduction en français. Sofia 1954, p. 6–7. The words етъ бехти refer to an Old Bulgarian dating system; Zlatarski (2002b, cf. fn. 6) p. 30–31 and 345; Kazimir Popkonstantinov / V. Konstantinova, Kăm văprosa za černorizec Tudor i negovata prepiska, *Starobălgarska literatura* 15 (1984), p. 106–118; the translation in Petkov (cf. fn. 46) p. 43.

110 For example, Ivan Biliarsky considers tsar Peter (927–969) as the only canonized Bulgarian ruler: Ivan Biliarsky, Nebesnite pokroviteli: Sv. Car Petăr, *Istoričesko Bădešte* (2001), no. 2, 32–44; idem, St. Peter (927–969). Tsar of the Bulgarians, in: Vasil Gijuzelev / Kiril Petkov (eds.), State and church. Studies in medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium. Sofia 2011, p. 173–188, p. 175, 183.

111 See Nikolov (cf. fn. 60).

112 Jenkins / Westerink (cf. fn. 80) 176–177: ...τοῦ σοῦ ἁγίου πατρὸς ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης πράγμασιν τῆς μεταξὺ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Βουλγάρων πολλὰ καμόντος ἀπολαύειν ὑμᾶς ἀκολούθως τῶν ἐκείνου καμάτων ...

Earlier in the same letter he refers to Boris/Michael as "your father, of blessed memory."[113] In another letter, Patriarch Nikolaos mentions "the agency of your holy father"[114] and recalls the "time of peace [meaning the period of the 30 years peace that was concluded in c. 816] you were born to your holy father."[115] In the ruler's church in Preslav, the residence of Boris/Michael's successor, Symeon, M. Vaklinova has suggested that a sarcophagus with the letters MH from the archaeological site in Preslav would have fit well in a prominent place on the southern façade. The sarcophagus had been discovered 80 years previously at an unknown place.[116]

Miniatures with inscriptions identify Boris/Michael as a saint.[117] A later *služba* (service) for him can unfortunately not be dated exactly.[118] As noted above, the Bulgarian apocryphal literature presents Michael, whoever this name might refer to, as the last king. While he is often depicted as a warrior, he is also described as the king under whom the people enjoyed peace. The *Interpretation of Daniel* predicts peaceful years after the mythological King Michael defeats his enemies:

> And they will burn the arms for three years. And there will be good years under this king; and there will be life, which never existed nor will ever exist. And when he comes he will rebuild the holy churches, he will make silver altars. And all captives will return to Stroumitsa, and others in Glavinitsa for this land is called mother of all lands....[119]

Apart from peace, this text also takes up the motif of building churches. Similar observations can be made for the *Narration of Isaiah*, where King Michael goes to Rome and defeats the "blond beards." After he returns to his lands, called "New Jerusalem," he rests his crown. He is a king of peace:

> In those days [King Michael] will come to consecrate the holy churches and will build altars of silver, and he will give the people a knife instead of arms. Then he will beat the arms into tools, and the swords into sickles. Then [the common] people will be like boyars, the boyars – like voivodes, and the voivodes – like kings.

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113 Ibid., No. 25, p. 172–173.

114 Ibid., No. 27, p. 186–187.

115 Ibid., No. 27, p. 188–189.

116 M. Vaklinova / I. Štereva, Knjaz Boris I i vladetelskata cărkva na Veliki Preslav, in: Pavel Georgiev (ed.), Hristijanskata kultura v srednovekovna Bălgarija. Materiali ot nacionalna naučna konferencija, Šumen 2–4 maj 2007 godina po slučaj 1100 godini ot smărtta na Sv. Knjaz Boris-Michail (ok. 835–907 g.). Veliko Tărnovo 2008, p. 185–194; Nikolov (cf. fn. 60) p. 220–221.

117 Ivan Dujčev, Slavische Heilige in der byzantinischen Hagiographie, in: idem (ed.), Medioevo bizantino-slavo 2, p. 207–223, p. 215 sq.; Asen Vasiliev, Bălgarski svetci v izobrazitelno izkustvo. Sofia 1987, p. 41–47; Podskalsky (cf. fn. 19) p. 60 and fn. 258.

118 Podskalsky (cf. fn. 19) p. 60–61; N. Georgieva, Kăm văprosa za počitaneto na knjaz Boris I kato svetec, *Kirilo-Metodievski studii* 8 (1991), p. 178–188.

119 Tăpkova-Zaimova / Miltenova (cf. fn. 87) p. 175: и иж(д)егоуть wр8жиа ·г̄· лѣ(т) · и боудоуть лѣта добра въ того цара и боудеть жизнь · ꙗкоже не била николиже · ни имать быти · и пришьдь wбновить цьркви с҃тыхь · створит сребрьныѥ wлтаре · и възвратеть се плѣньници вьси въ Строумицоу · а дроузи вь Главьницоу · тѣ бо земли наричета се мати вьсѣмь земламь, p. 182 (English translation).

> After that Michael will go to his throne and will put his crown on the cross and will give up his spirit to God. Then the angels, secretly, will take his body and will lift it up to heaven.[120]

The so-called "Bulgarian Apocryphal Annals" from the eleventh century mention him as well. The broader historical context of its composition is probably the time when Bulgaria was a Byzantine province. The notion of "annals" is misleading since the original title is "The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah, How He Was Taken Up to the Seventh Sky by an Angel." It presents Boris/Michael in the following way:

> And after the death of king Izot again his son Boris took over the Bulgarian Kingdom and most pious and right-believing he was. And this king baptised the Bulgarian land and erected churches all around the Bulgarian land and on the Bregalnitsa River and here taking the kingdom over, he built white churches in Ovche Polje. And he marched to Dobrich and his life ended there. And he reigned for sixteen years without sin or woman. And his kingship was blessed, and he died at peace with God.[121]

The building of churches on the Bregalnitsa River is also mentioned in the *Life of the Martyrs at Tiberiopolis* compiled by Archbishop Theophylact of Ohrid (1088/92 – after 1126).[122] The *Synodicon* of Tsar Boril was translated during the time of Tsar Boril (1207–1218), who held a synod against the Bogomils on 11 February 1211; it keeps the baptism as the main element of his reign: "To Boris, the first tsar of the Bulgarians, called in the holy baptism Michael, who brought the Bulgarian people to knowledge of God through the holy baptism...."[123]

If one takes the importance of Boris/Michael for Bulgaria into account, it might be surprising that the sources about his life as well as his memory are, if we consider the whole picture, quite limited. The proofs for his veneration as a saint during the time after his death are also not abundant and some scholars use this fact to challenge the assumption altogether. But compared to the remains of the First Bulgarian Realm, this impression has to be reversed slightly. While Bulgarian sources for the

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120 Ibid., p. 201: въ тїе дни прїидеть ѡстити стїе цркви и съзиж(д)еть ѡлтари сребрьннїе · и да(с) лю(д)мь ножь мѣсто ѡрѹжїа · тог(д)а расковеть ѡроужїа на надѣлателное ѡрѹжїе · а мѵеве на срыпове · тог(д)а бѹ(д)ть лю(д)е ѕбози ıако болıаре · а болıаре ıако воеводи · а воеводи ıако црїе · … потомь Михаи(л) поидеть къ прѣстолѹ · и положить вѣнць свои на кр(с)ть и прѣда(с) д͠хь свои г͠ви · тог(д)а прїимоу(т) агг͠ли неви(д)мо · и понесоу(т) тѣло ıего на н͠бо, p. 213 (English translation).

121 Ibid., p. 281–282: И по ѹмр'тїю же Изота ц͠рıа пакы пр(ѣ)емь ц͠р(с)тво бл͠гар'ское · с͠нь е(г) Борись · и бы(с) бл͠гоч(с)тивь · и бл͠говѣр'нь ѕѣло · и тьи ц͠рь кр(с)ти в'сѹ зем(л)ю бл͠гарьскѹю · и съз(д)а цркви по земл(і) бль͠гар'стѣи · и на р(ѣ)цѣ Брѣгал'ници · и тѹ прїем' ц͠р(с)тво на Ѡв'чи поли · съз(д)а бѣли цркви · и прїиде на Добри(ч') · и тамо скон'ча живо(т) свои · и ц͠р(с)твов(а) же лѣ(т) ·ѕ͠і· грѣха не имѣ ни женїи · и бы(с) бл(с)вено цр͠ь(с)тво его · и скон'ча се съ миро(м)ь о г͠и, p. 292 (English translation); see also Petkov (cf. fn. 46) p. 196.
122 Iliev (cf. fn. 70) ch. 37, p. 69.
123 M. G. Popruženko (ed.), Sinodik carja Borila. Sofia, 1928, p. 77; Ivan Božilov, Anna-Maria Totomanova, Ivan Biljarski, Borilov sinodik. Izdanie i prevod. Sofia 2010 (online available at http://histdict.uni-sofia.bg/textcorpus/show/doc_33 last accessed on 19/01/2019): Бор҄исѹ прьв҄ом҄ѹ цр҄ѹ бль͠гарском҄ѹ наре́ченном҄ѹ въ ст͠ѣм' кр͡щⷰе нн҄ міⷯхаиⷧⷬь. ꙗⷤже бьлга́рскьıй ро҄ⷣ къ бг҄о разѹ҄мїю ст͠ый кр͡щенїе привѣⷲшⷪом …

whole period have mostly disappeared, the traces that the figure of Boris/Michael left in Bulgarian as well as foreign annals, chronicles, saints' lives, apocalyptic texts, and so on, is still quite remarkable. Bulgarian apocalyptic literature testifies to his presence in the cultural memory during the following centuries. The remains of his image as the first Christian ruler are, however, not very detailed. While the memory of the pagan revolt faded in time, his name remained connected to the baptism and the building of churches. The development of his sanctity was perhaps overshadowed by that of his grandson, Tsar Peter I (927–969), who was probably canonised shortly after his death.[124]

Concluding Remarks

The image of the good Christian ruler during the First Bulgarian Realm cannot be separated from broader developments in the Latin West and especially in Byzantium. Shortly after the Christianisation the neophyte Boris/Michael received in different forms clear instructions about how the good Christian ruler should behave. While Patriarch Photios sent a mirror of princes, a detailed account of how a good ruler should behave and govern his empire, Pope Nicholas answered questions posed by the Bulgarians, where he had to find a balance between praising the effort to promote and defend Christianity and condemning the execution of the rebellious nobles together with their families. The responses of Pope Nicholas I showed how different the image of a Christian ruler was from the ideals of a pagan one, but this refers to the level of ideals and images, not to the early medieval reality. The transition might not have been as drastic as the sources suggest.

The conversion to Christianity did not come as a sudden event. Long before the baptism, Christian elements had entered the self-representation of the ruler. Thus, the good Christian ruler was not a completely new invention. Christian elements were used earlier in the framework of self-representation and ideology during the pagan period, but these might have remained on the surface, e. g., on the level of representation, images on coins, inscriptions, and buildings. The requirements for the good Christian ruler refer to an inner attitude. Symbols and signs are not sufficient. Whether Boris/Michael internalised Christian attitudes is dubious. His brutal reaction against the rebels seems to suggest that the principles of government did not change fundamentally. It is hard to determine whether his decision to leave the throne and to enter a monastery is connected with the idea of penance for the cruel suppression of the rebellion.

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124 Miliana KAYMAKAMOVA, The Cult of the Bulgarian Tsar Peter (927–969) and the Driving Ideas of the Bulgarian Liberation Uprisings against the Byzantine Rule in the 11th–12th Century, in: The Bulgarian State in 927–969. The Epoch of Tsar Peter I, ed. by Mirosław Leszka and Kirił Marinow. Translated by Lyubomira Genova, Marek Majer, Artur Mękarski, Michał Zytka (Byzantina Lodziensia XXXIV). Łódź, Kraków 2018, p. 457–478.

As far as the image of the good Christian ruler is concerned, however, his self-representation and afterlife were more important and influential. Boris/Michael seems to have consciously promoted his image as a zealous fighter for Christianity and as a pious ruler. This image left its traces mainly in Western sources. His canonisation was probably prepared during his lifetime, but it was not as successful as it could have been although he was an ideal candidate for a popular saint. Though he finally became a saint, the traces of his cult are limited, for reasons that are not completely clear. Nevertheless, his image remained as the one who converted the Bulgarians to Christianity. Later sources also remembered him as a builder of churches. Some traces of the historical figure were transformed into the motif of the last king in the apocalyptic literature, but it is unclear how far it was he who served as a role model. Although Boris/Michael does not portray the full-fledged image of a good Christian ruler, he was the first Christian ruler of Bulgaria, who laid the foundations for Bulgaria as part of the Orthodox world.

Adam Łajtar, Grzegorz Ochała

A Christian King in Africa: The Image of Christian Nubian Rulers in Internal and External Sources

1 Introduction: Christian Nubia and her Inhabitants

The term "Nubia" designates the middle part of the Nile Valley to the south of the First Cataract. It has an ethno-linguistic character, as it originates from the name of an ethnic group which inhabited the land in question since the beginning of the Christian era. Members of this group, who still inhabit some parts of the Middle Nile Valley, call themselves Nubians and speak Nubian languages from the Nilo-Saharan language family.[1] The Nubians seem to have arrived in the Nile Valley around the beginning of Roman rule in Egypt, but we hear about them in the written sources only in late antiquity, when, taking advantage of the fall of the Meroitic kingdom in the mid-fourth century, they formed their own kingdoms: Nobadia in the north, between the First and the Third Nile Cataracts, with Faras or Qasr Ibrim as the capital; Alwa (sometimes referred to as Alodia) in the south, beyond the Fifth Cataract, with the capital in Soba; and Makuria in between, with Dongola as the capital.[2] At a certain moment, probably in the first half of the seventh century, the northern kingdom, Nobadia, was incorporated into its southern neighbour, Makuria, and ceased to exist as an independent entity. Before this happened, all three kingdoms accepted Chris-

1 For Nubians and Nubia, with focus on their medieval history, see W. Y. Adams, *Nubia, Corridor to Africa*, Princeton – London 1977, *passim*, especially 433–546, and D.A. Welsby, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia. Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile*, London 2002.
2 In fact, the written sources refer only to the formation of Nobadia (for which see, most recently, A. Obłuski, *The Rise of Nobadia. Social Changes in Northern Nubia in Late Antiquity* [= *JJP Supplement* 3], Warsaw 2014). Archaeological evidence forms the main body of evidence for the formation of the other two kingdoms.

tianity as the new state religion.[3] The process of Christianisation of Nubia is poorly known to us. John of Ephesus, who is our main source of information, speaks of three evangelisation missions, which were carried out mainly with Egyptian forces and means, though at least partly with the emperor's awareness and consent. The first and second missions, which took place in the years 542–545 and 569–575 respectively, reached Nobadia, while the third one, launched in the 580s, was headed for Alwa. Makuria was most probably Christianised in a separate missionary undertaking approximately at the same time as the second mission to Nobadia. The Christianisation of the Nubian kingdoms strongly impacted the Middle Nile Valley as the whole region incorporated Eastern Christianity's culture, including its patterns of literary and visual culture, organisation of the state, ideology of power, and social behaviour. The Nubian Christian kingdoms survived in the Middle Nile Valley for almost a millennium. Makuria was divided in the fourteenth century into several petty kingdoms, which could have retained their Christian character for a certain period. One of them, situated in the Second Cataract region, survived as a Christian state until at least the end of the fifteenth century, or even as long as the Ottoman conquest of northern Nubia in the 1570s. Alwa ceased to exist in the first half of the sixteenth century under pressure from the Muslim Funj people, who were moving down the Blue Nile. Its capital, Soba, was captured by the Funj warriors in 1504.

2 The Sources

We learn about the history and culture of the Christian Nubian kingdoms from two kinds of sources: internal and external. The internal sources, the amount of which is constantly increasing thanks to archaeological research, include material remains of human settlements and graves, sacred buildings with their decoration, objects of everyday use, as well as several thousand texts, both literary and documentary, in Greek, Sahidic Coptic, Old Nubian, and Arabic.[4] External sources are almost exclusively texts, mainly literary, composed for the most part in Arabic, and to a lesser degree in Coptic, Greek, Syriac, and Gəʿəz.[5] While the latter group are all of Christian provenience, the former originate from both Muslim and Christian milieus. The inter-

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3 For the Christianisation of Nubian kingdoms, see S. G. Richter, *Studien zur Christianisierung Nubiens* [= *Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients* 11], Wiesbaden 2002; J. H. F. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion. A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298–642 CE)* [= *Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta* 173], Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2008, 271–304.

4 For the written heritage of Christian Nubia with respect to the form and contents of texts, see G. Ochała, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches", *Dotawo* 1 (2016), 1–50.

5 Those sources were collected and translated into English by G. Vantini, *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*, Heidelberg – Warsaw 1975; the collection has recently been digitised and published online at <http://www.medievalnubia.info/dev/index.php/Giovanni_Vantini%27s_Oriental_Sources_Concerning_Nubia>.

nal sources are of considerably greater importance than the external ones. They are not only more numerous and more variable, but also more credible as genuine products of Christian Nubian culture. The external sources have in turn serious weaknesses in that they only transmit the perception of a distant land in the Middle Nile Valley by members of other cultures and hence they are not infrequently tendentious.

The sources at our disposal are, unfortunately, not very eloquent as far as Nubian kingship is concerned. Among the internal sources there is not even a single example of a historiographic work about the Nubians' own history and the role of kings in it; the Nubians most probably did not know this literary genre. Likewise, we find no texts in which the ruler's duties, prerogatives, *modi operandi*, etc. are clearly defined and described. What we have are official documents, scarce though they are, which were produced by the royal chancery and reveal kings in action in particular matters. Definitely more numerous are pieces of information about individual rulers, namely their names and titles preserved in dating formulae of different types of texts ranging from legal deeds to building and commemorative inscriptions. Moreover, we know a dozen or so full-scale royal portraits painted on walls of cult places.[6] In several cases, the portraits are supplied with legends identifying the depicted persons. Some examples of informal depictions of rulers also exist, such as graffiti on walls of buildings and decoration of pottery vessels. In Dongola, the capital of Makuria, the Polish archaeological mission has discovered a massive storied building of residential character, probably a royal palace.[7] Another construction in the same site, whose essential part is a hypostyle hall located on the first floor, is traditionally interpreted as a throne hall of the Makurian kings.[8] The external sources provide much more detailed information about the Nubian rulers, the character of their authority, *modi operandi*, their actions, individual personality features, etc. However, serious limitations of these sources (see below) must be always kept in mind when approaching Christian Nubian history through them. It should be emphasised here that the majority of accessible sources is relatively late. Dated between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, they are formally outside of the scope of this volume. We nevertheless have decided to use them extensively, because in many a case these late narrations are clearly based on much earlier sources;[9] also, it may be assumed that the phenomena described in the late period most probably originated in the

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6 On depictions of Christian Nubian rulers, see M. Woźniak, *Iconographie des souverains et des dignitaires de la Nubie chrétienne: les vêtements d'apparat*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Université Paris-IV, Paris 2013.

7 W. Godlewski, *Dongola – Ancient Tungul. Archaeological Guide* [= *PCMA Archaeological Guide* 1], Warsaw 2013, 24–29.

8 Godlewski (cf. fn. 7) 42–47.

9 Thus, for example, Al-Maqrizi, a polymath from Cairo (1364–1442), copied *in extenso* the description of Nubia composed in the tenth century by a merchant and diplomat Ibn Selim al-Aswani. For Al-Aswani and his description of Nubia, see G. Troupeau, "La 'Description de la Nubie' d' al-Uswānī (IVᵉ/Xᵉ siècle)", *Arabica* 1 (1954), 276–288; El-Hag H. M. Kheir, "A contribution to a textual problem: Ibn Sulaym al-Aswānī's *Kitāb akhbār al Nūba wa-l-Maqurra wa-l-Beja wa-l-Nīl*", *Arabica* 36 (1989), 36–80.

first millennium. The lion's share of the external sources refers to Makuria from the time after its unification with Nobadia; only single mentions pertain to the still independent Kingdom of Nobadia and the Kingdom of Alwa.

3 Nubian Royal Houses

Nubian royal history is poorly known. We are aware of names of some thirty kings along with their approximate dating,[10] but only in a few instances are we able to establish, even roughly, the duration of the reigns of particular sovereigns and hence accord them a proper place on the timeline. It is well known that Christian Nubian rulers formed dynasties, which changed over time. We hear of at least two such changes, in c. 725 and in the second half of the eleventh century. The dynasty ruling between the eighth and eleventh centuries was characterised by a patrilineal system of succession, whereby the crown was inherited by the firstborn (?) son of the current king, which is clearly visible in onomastics: for most of their rule, the members of this dynasty bear the names Georgios and Zacharias alternatively.[11] During the reign of the other dynasty, from the end of the eleventh century, the matrilineal succession principle was in force: the crown was handed over to the eldest (?) son of the current king's sister. Some members of the matrilineal dynasty attempted to break the tradition by nominating their own sons or succeeding their fathers. Such attempts inevitably lead to internal conflicts, which not infrequently ended in military interventions from Egypt. This, as a result, contributed significantly to the fall of Makuria. When there was no legal heir, a king could appoint another candidate of his choice. Such a situation is attested for Zacharias, son of King Merkourios (first half of the eighth century), who, according to the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, desiring a peaceful religious life as a monk (?), abdicated the throne in favour of his kinsman Simon; after Simon's death Merkourios adopted a certain Abraham, coming apparently from outside the royal family, and designated him as a new king.[12] Belonging to the royal family seems to have been an important factor governing the choice of a successor, not only by birth but also by marrying a king's daughter. The latter case could have eventually led to a change of dynasty, as indeed happened for the Zacharias-Georgios dynasty (first half of the eighth century): Ioannes, the founder of the dynasty and father of Zacharias I, did not belong

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10 On Nubian kings, see S. Munro-Hay, "Kings and Kingdoms of Ancient Nubia", *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 29 (1982–1983), 87–137; G. Ochała, "'When King Georgios Was the King of Dotawo': An Annotated List of Christian Nubian Rulers" (in preparation).

11 For Makuria under the rule of the "Zacharian" dynasty, see W. Godlewski, "Introduction to the Golden Age of Makuria (9th–11th Centuries)", *Africana Bulletin* 50 (2002), 75–98.

12 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 40–41.

to the royal family but was the husband of one of the royal women.[13] We come across analogous situations in the terminal period of Makurian history: chieftains of Muslim Bedouin tribes married daughters of Makurian kings and thus obtained rights to the throne of Dongola. Women held generally quite an important position in Christian Nubian hierarchy, and not only in the matrilineal system. From the first half of the tenth century, thus from the time of the patrilineal dynasty, comes the first attestation of the title "queen mother"[14] (Gr. μήτηρ βασιλέως, Nub. ⲅⲟⲛⲛⲉⲛ [read /ŋonnen/]), which recurs in sources until the very end of independent Christian Nubian statehood.[15] Judging by the protocols of Nubian legal texts, this was an important office[16] in the kingdom, always being listed in the second or third position after the king. It was held, so it seems, by either the current king's mother or his sister, the mother of the future king.

4 Terminology

Three generic terms for "king" are used in Christian Nubian texts. Greek sources unanimously use the Greek noun βασιλεύς (most often as an abbreviation ΒΛΣ resembling a *nomen sacrum*).[17] The same word may also appear as a Greek loanword in the Coptic linguistic context. Coptic texts, of course, also feature the native Egyptian noun ⲣⲣⲟ. In Old Nubian sources, in turn, king is exclusively called by the native Nubian word ⲟⲩⲣⲟⲩ, which derives from the noun ⲟⲩⲣ, "head," and is probably cognate with the Meroitic *qore*, "king."[18] In addition, we come across a number of nongeneric terms. Two ninth-century kings, Zacharias (father) and Georgios (son), are designated αὔγουστος (*Augustus*) and καῖσαρ (*Caesar*), respectively. The former is called "Augustus" in the filiation given in the epitaph of his son Ioannes († 883),[19] and the latter is called "Caesar" in the epitaph of his official Mariankouda (†

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13 Maqrizi gives the name of Zacharias' father (Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 644) and Michael the Syrian claims that "he was not of royal descent" (Vantinin [cf. fn. 5] 317).

14 This is Queen Mother Mariam who accompanied King Zacharias. She occurs in three texts: a Coptic legal document from Qasr Ibrim, 925 (unpublished [DBMNT 615]), a Coptic foundation inscription from Faras, 930 (*I. Khartoum Copt.* 2 [DBMNT 33]), and the beginning of a Coptic documentary text from Qasr Ibrim, 940/1 (unpublished [DBMNT 701]).

15 For the title of "queen mother," see B. Rostkowska, "The Title and Office of the King's Mother in Christian Nubia", *Africana Bulletin* 31 (1982), 75–78.

16 We indeed seem to be dealing with an office here, not merely an honorific title.

17 For *basileus* as a royal and imperial title, see G. Rösch, *ONOMA ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ. Studien zum offiziellen Gebrauch der Kaisertitel in spätantiker und frühbyzantinischer Zeit* [= *BV* 10], Vienna 1978, 37–39. The title *basileus* along with *basiliskos* was used already by pre-Christian rulers of the Nobades; see T. Hägg, "Titles and Honorific Epithets in Nubian Greek Texts", *SO* 45 (1990), 148–158.

18 C. Rilly, *Le méroïtique et sa famille linguistique* [= *Afrique et language* 14], Leuven 2010, 136–138.

19 *I. Khartoum Greek* 21 (DBMNT 15).

887);[20] both kings are apparently dead at the time of the epitaphs' composition. Obviously, the dynasty, which ruled Dongola at that time, made use of an antiquated Roman imperial titulature going back to the second century CE.[21] This use, however, does not conform with the original Roman model, in which *Caesar* became *Augustus* after the death of the latter. In our case, Georgios, who succeeded Zacharias, retained his title of a lower rank until his death. Because the titles *Augustus* and *Caesar* went out of use almost completely in the seventh century in the Eastern Roman Empire, the Nubians must have adopted them before that date, most probably at the time of Christianisation of the Nubian kingdoms in the mid-sixth century. The title *Caesar* is also attested in a fourteenth-century Greek inscription left in Deir Anba Hadra (St. Simeon Monastery) near Aswan by Joseph, archbishop of Dongola.[22] Therein he describes his career at the royal court in Dongola, which stretched over the rule of several kings. Joseph refers to them with the help of different terms: βασιλεύς, καῖσαρ, σκήπτωρ, ῥῆξ, κοίρανος, ἄναξ. It is hard to believe that these terms were actually used to address the king in fourteenth-century Nubia; they are rather employed here as a display of Joseph's erudition and his classical literary education.

King Moüses Georgios ruling Makuria and Alwa in the second half of the twelfth century bears the title αὐτοκράτωρ τοῦ λαοῦ, "absolute ruler of the people," in the Greek subscript to his letter to Patriarch Mark III (1180–1209) dated to 1186.[23] As with the use of καῖσαρ and αὔγουστος, we are dealing here with the adoption of the traditional Roman imperial terminology.[24] Interestingly, the title is not attested before the second half of the twelfth century in Nubia, although we may suppose that it came there already in the mid-sixth century. The addition of τοῦ λαοῦ, absent from Roman titulature, is equally interesting. It is uncertain what λαός means here exactly. Some suggestions are offered by the context. The title immediately follows a list of nations over which the king claims supremacy preceded by the epithet φοβερότατος πάντων τῶν βαρβάρων, "the most fearful towards all barbarians." The nations are those that appear in the titulature of the miaphysite Patriarch of Alexandria as his subordinates, as given in the address of the same letter: Alwans, Makurians, Nobadians, Dalmatai (perhaps inhabitants of Cyrenaica), and Axumites. Thus, we may surmise that λαός designates all Christians within the confines of the Alexandrian Patriarchate as

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20 *I. Khartoum Greek* 18 (DBMNT 12).

21 For the titles *augustus* and *caesar*, see Rösch (cf. fn. 17) 34–35 and 36–37.

22 This inscription was published in F. Ll. Griffith, "Christian Documents from Nubia", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 14 (1928), 134–145 (DBMNT 557). A new edition is in preparation by A. Łajtar, "The So-called Kudanbes Inscription in Deir Anba Hadra (St. Simeon Monastery) Near Aswan: An Attempt at a New Reading and Interpretation" (forthcoming).

23 Unpublished (DBMNT 610); the publication is in preparation by J. L. Hagen. For a tentative translation, see W. Y. Adams, *Qaṣr Ibrîm. The Late Mediaeval Period* [= *Egypt Exploration Society. Excavation Memoir* 59], London 1994, 227–229. The photograph of the Greek subscript can be found in J. M. Plumley, "New Light on the Kingdom of Dotawo", [in:] *Études nubiennes. Colloque de Chantilly, 2–6 juillet 1975* [= *Bibliothèque d'étude* 77], Cairo 1978, pl. 56.

24 For the title αὐτοκράτωρ, see Rösch (cf. fn. 17) 35–36.

opposed to non-Christians. In this way, the Nubian king puts himself in the position of the protector of the Christian populace of north-eastern Africa, a ruler comparable to the Byzantine emperor who is considered the protector of the Christian *oikoumene*. Finally, we need to mention the title δεσπότης, found only once in the titulature of Tokiltoeton, a ruler of Nobadia in the mid-sixth century.[25] This title, a constant element of imperial presentation in Greek, especially from the tetrarchic period onwards,[26] points to the ruler's absolute power.

Nubian kings were also given various epithets. They seem to occur only in Greek and Coptic texts of official character (legal deeds and foundation inscriptions). The most common among them was φιλόχριστος, "Christ-loving," attested also in the Coptic version ⲙⲁⲓⲭⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ.[27] Coptic texts also feature the rarer variant ⲙⲁⲓⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ, the translation of the Greek φιλόθεος, "God-loving," itself not attested in Nubia.[28] The title φιλόχριστος/φιλόθεος emphasises the king's religious attitude and his attachment to the true faith.[29] A similar notion is transmitted by the title ὀρθόδοξος, "orthodox."[30] To the epithets describing a religious attitude one needs to add also εὐσεβέστατος, "the most pious," indicating the ruler's piety perceived as a virtue.[31] The epithet θεόστεπτος, "crowned by God," known also in its Coptic translation (ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲥⲧⲉⲫⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲙⲟϥ), points to another aspect of royal authority, namely

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25 Attested in an official inscription from Ikhmindi (DBMNT 458); cf. 368 below. *Editio princeps:* S. Donadoni, "Un'epigrafe greco-nubiana da Ikhmindi", *Parola del passato* 14 (1959), 458–465 (= *SEG* XVIII 724; *SB* VIII 10074). The most recent edition of the text: F. W. Deichman, "Die Bauinschrift von Ihmindi", [in:] F. W. Deichmann, P. Grossmann, *Nubische Forschungen* [= *Archäologische Forschungen* 17], Berlin 1988, 81–88. The most recent study of the content: J. van der Vliet, "Gleanings from Christian Nubia", *JJP* 32 (2002), 191–194.

26 D. Hagedorn and K. A. Worp, "Von Kyrios zu Despotes: eine Bemerkung zur Kaisertitulatur im 3./4. Jahrhundert", *ZPE* 39 (1980), 165–177.

27 The epithet is attested for the following kings: Tokiltoeton (DBMNT 458; cf. fn. 25 above), Merkurios (Coptic foundation inscription of Bishop Paulos, Faras, 707; *I. Khartoum Copt.* 1; DBMNT 32), Chael (two legal deeds of land sale, northern Nubia, c. 784–812; unpublished, fragmentary transcript and translation in J. Krall, "Ein neuer nubischer König", *WZKM* 14 [1900], 236–240; DBMNT 634–635), Ioannes (two deeds of land sale, northern Nubia, 9th cent.; *P. Lond. Copt.* 449–450; DBMNT 630–631), Moüses Georgios (DBMNT 610; cf. fn. 23 above and 368–369 below).

28 It can be found as describing the following rulers: Kyriakos (deed of land sale, northern Nubia, 8th cent.; *CPR* IV 28; DBMNT 636), Ioannes (DBMNT 630–631; cf. fn. 27 above), Georgios V (fragment of legal document, Qasr Ibrim, 1071/2; J. M. Plumley, "A Coptic Precursor of a Medieval Nubian Protocol", *Sudan Texts Bulletin* 3 [1981], 5–8; DBMNT 609; the counting of kings is given after Ochała [cf. fn. 10]).

29 Rösch (cf. fn. 17) 65.

30 Found only once in internal sources, referring to Georgios I (DBMNT 12; cf. 365 above), and once in external literary sources, in the *History of the Patriarchs*, in connection with King Kyriakos (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 44).

31 Only kings Tokiltoeton (DBMNT 458; cf. fn. 25 above) and Moüses Georgios (DBMNT 610; cf. fn. 23 above and 368–369 below) are given this epithet. For the title εὐσεβέστατος, see Rösch (cf. fn. 17) 42–43, esp. fn. 53. The title, especially widespread in late-antique imperial titulature, goes back to the title εὐσεβής, which was given to Roman emperors from the second century ᴄᴇ.

that this power comes from God himself.[32] The title, which is very popular in the Eastern Roman empire, especially in the seventh–eighth centuries, is believed to be linked to the coronation of the emperor by the patriarch of Constantinople. One may wonder whether the Nubian use of this term is linked with the same custom, namely the coronation of the king of Makuria by the bishop of Dongola, the head of the Makurian Church.

The titulatures of two Nubian rulers deserve special attention, namely that of kings Tokiltoeton of Nobadia in the mid-sixth century and Moüses Georgios of Makuria in the second half of the twelfth century. The former is known thanks to an inscription commemorating the erection of the city walls of Ikhmindi (c. 100 km to the south of the First Cataract).[33] He is called there ἐπιφανέστατος καὶ εὐσεβέστατος ἀγαθὸς δεσπότης καὶ φιλόχριστος βασιλεύς, "the most distinguished and most pious good lord and Christ-loving king." In this titulature we have obviously two elements joined together, ἐπιφανέστατος καὶ εὐσεβέστατος δεσπότης and φιλόχριστος βασιλεύς. The former, which goes back as far as the tetrarchic imperial titulature, belongs to the sphere of civil authority,[34] while the latter, modelled on the titulature of Eastern Roman emperors, points at the religious aspect of power. The element ἀγαθός is, in our opinion, somewhat artificially added and finds no parallel in the Roman world.[35] It is, however, present in the titulature of King Moüses Georgios. This titulature is found in a draft of the letter of the king to Patriarch Mark III requesting ordination of a certain Iesou as bishop of a Nubian see, found in Qasr Ibrim.[36] In it, the king is described by a whole set of epithets including: εὐσεβέστατος, φιλόχριστος, φιλεκκλήσιος, φιλόπτωχος, φιλάνθρωπος, φιλόξενος, ἀγαθός, πρᾶος, εὔσπλαγχνος, μεταδότης, ἀνδράγαθος, τροφεύς, φοβερότατος πάντων τῶν βαρβάρων, "the most pious, Christ-loving, Church-loving, loving the poor, lover of men, lover of strangers, good, mild, kind, generous, one who behaves uprightly, foster-father, the most fear-

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32 The title is attested in Nubia only for king Merkurios (Coptic and Greek foundation inscriptions of Bishop Paulos, Faras, 707; Coptic: DBMNT 32; cf. fn. 27 above; Greek: *I. Varsovie* 101; DBMNT 67). Generally for the title θεόστεπτος, see Rösch (cf. fn. 17) 66 – 67, and H. Hunger, *Prooimion. Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden* [= *Wiener byzantinische Studien* 1], Vienna 1964, 56.

33 See fn. 25 above.

34 Note the use of the title ἐπιφανέστατος in the titulature of Phonen, king of the Blemmyes, as preserved in his own letter to Aburni, king of the Nobades (J. Rea, "The Letter of Phonen to Aburni", *ZPE* [1979], 147 – 162; T. Eide *et alii* [eds.], *Fontes historiae Nubiorum*, III: *From the First to the Sixth Century AD*, Bergen 1998, 1158 – 1165 [no. 319]). This text, predating the stela of Tokiltoeton by roughly a century and originating from a pagan milieu, shows that the process of adopting imperial titulature started well before the official Christianisation of the Middle Nile Valley.

35 The epithet ἀγαθός is, however, found in the titulature of Chosroes as presented in his letter to Emperor Justinian (Men., ex. gent. 1.176, 13 ff. [de Boor]).

36 See above, 366 and fn. 23.

ful towards all barbarians."[37] The sequence and meaning of these epithets is definitely not accidental.[38] At the beginning, there is a series of five compound adjectives with the element φιλο-, which are followed by adjectives and nouns of another morphology, mostly simple ones. The whole set is preceded by the adjective in superlative, εὐσεβέστατος, obviously not an original element of the list. From the point of view of semantics, the list starts with epithets describing the king's attitude towards God and His Church (εὐσεβέστατος, φιλόχριστος, φιλεκκλήσιος). Then follows a series of epithets that characterise his attitude towards men. Among them we find terms referring to general moral qualities (ἀγαθός, πρᾶος, εὔσπλαγχνος) as well as those reflecting the king's humanitarianism (φιλόπτωχος, φιλάνθρωπος, φιλόξενος, μεταδότης, τροφεύς). These groups are similar in their meaning, but while the former describes qualities the latter describes actions. In addition, there are two epithets referring to the king's manly virtues (ἀνδράγαθος, φοβερότατος πάντων τῶν βαρβάρων). The complete list presents the ideal of a Makurian king. He is simultaneously a pious Christian, a merciful ruler taking care of all his subjects, especially the marginalised ones (the poor, the strangers, etc.), and a fearful warrior protecting his realm. Of course, this is an ideal, but we can suppose that Nubian rulers aspired to it and realised it to a greater or lesser degree.

5 The Character of Nubian Kingship and Ways of Executing Power

There exists sufficient evidence of textual and iconographic character to suppose that Christian rulers of Makuria were perceived as chosen by God and His actors on earth. The very birth of the heir to the throne took place under the divine auspices.

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37 From among those, only φιλάνθρωπος is attested as an imperial epithet. The word is found to describe rulers already in Ptolemaic Egypt and continues to be used until the end of the Byzantine period. Its use, stemming from the classical Greek employment to designate gods' love towards men, served to underline the king's/emperor's god-like (and God-like) character (see Hunger [cf. fn. 32] 143–153). Interestingly, in late Byzantine period, φιλανθρωπία came to be used in the sense of 'Weltoffenheit, Gastfreundlichkeit gegenüber allen Nationen' (ibid. 148), which indicates that the occurrence of φιλόξενος immediately after φιλάνθρωπος in the titulature of Moüses Georgios is most probably not accidental.

38 This must be a literary creation, the exact sources of which are unknown, but surely should be sought in the panegyrical literature of late antiquity. A parallel is provided by the eulogy of Bishop Georgios of Dongola († 1113) preserved in his epitaph in Greek, immured above his tomb in a monastery on the outskirts of the capital of Makuria. Cf. A. Łajtar, "Georgios, Archbishop of Dongola († 1113) and His Epitaph" [in:] T. Derda, J. Urbanik, M. Węcowski (eds.), *ΕΥΕΡΓΕΣΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ. Studies Presented to Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka by Their Disciples* [= *JJP Supplement* 1], Warsaw 2002, 167–174, and A. Łajtar and J. van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead in Christian Nubia. The Texts from a Medieval Funerary Complex in Dongola* [= *JJP Supplement* 32], Warsaw 2017, 18–22 (no. I). We can assume the existence of a common source for both the eulogy and titulature of the king.

An exceptional painting preserved on a wall of a room in the so-called South-West Annex to the monastery located on the outskirts of Dongola shows the scene of a ritual dance in front of an icon of the Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus. The participants of the dance, clad in animal skins and masks, cry out phrases in Old Nubian, written down next to their heads, which makes the whole representation resemble a modern comic book.[39] With these exclamations, they ask Mary, the mother of Jesus, to help the queen mother (Old Nubian ⲅⲟⲛⲛⲉⲛ) to deliver a prince (Old Nubian ⲡⲟⲩⲣ).[40] The parallel Mary – Jesus / queen mother – heir is self-evident here. The heir, just like Jesus, is anticipated as God's anointed, the saviour of his people. In the previous paragraph, we have seen that the kings of Makuria bore the title θεόστεπτος/ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲥⲧⲉⲫⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲙⲙⲟϥ, "crowned by God," which can pertain to the act of coronation by the supreme authority of the Makurian Church, but can also characterise, quite generally, the royal power as coming from God. Visible proof of such a perception of the royal authority in Christian Nubia comes from painted representations of rulers in cult places. They are attested for the first time in the tenth century and were produced until the end of the tradition of decorating church walls in the fourteenth century. They show a king standing en face in a ceremonial dress holding regalia, whose set and form can change from period to period. Jesus, Mary, or an archangel stand behind the king holding their hand(s) on the ruler's shoulder(s). These representations are traditionally interpreted as scenes of protection, although they may also be perceived as scenes of presentation of the ruler to his subjects.[41] Importantly, these protection/presentation scenes are sometimes placed in church apses, that is in the central point of the liturgical space, in the lower register of decoration, among the apostles and below Christ bestowing His blessing.[42] In this way, the king's sub-

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39 M. Martens-Czarnecka, *The Wall Paintings from the Monastery on Kom H in Dongola* [= *Nubia* III, *Dongola* 3; *PAM Monograph Series* 3] Warsaw 2011, cat. no. 109 and 233 – 238.

40 V. van Gerven Oei, "A Dance for a Princess: The Legends on a Painting in Room 5 of the Southwest Annex of the Monastery on Kom H in Dongola", *JJP* 47 (2017), 117 – 135.

41 B. Mierzejewska, "Murals in the Bishops Chapel, Faras. The Visual Expression of the Ruler's Ideology in Nubia" [in:] S. Emmel *et alii* (eds.) *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses, Münster 20.–26. Juli 1996,* Bd. I: *Materielle Kultur, Kunst und religiöses Leben* [= *Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Oriens* 6/1], Wiesbaden 1999, 285 −296.

42 Known examples include church BV on the citadel in Dongola: king under protection of Archangel Raphael among the apostles (unpublished; personal communication of D. Zielińska); Upper Church at Banganarti: king or kings under protection of Archangel Raphael among the apostles preserved in the decoration of seven chapels (B. Żurawski [in:] B. Żurawski *et alii, Kings and Pilgrims. St Raphael Church II at Banganarti, Mid-eleventh to Mid-eighteenth Century* [= *Nubia* V, *Banganarti* 2], Warsaw 2014, 125 – 168); room 29 of the North-West Annex to the monastery on Kom H at Dongola: King protected by Archangel Michael among the apostles (Martens-Czarnecka [cf. fn. 39] cat. no. 46); the cathedral at Faras: king under protection of Mary among the apostles (the portrait of the king is a secondary addition here, the scene originally presenting Mary among the apostles; S. Jakobielski *et alii, Pachoras/Faras. The Wall Paintings from the Cathedrals of Aetios, Paulos and Petros* [= *PAM Monograph Series* 4], Warsaw 2017, 107 – 111 [cat. no 1]). Generally, on apsidal portraits of Nu-

jects taking part in the liturgy perceived their sovereign as the one who was blessed by Christ, protected by Mary or Archangels, and was equal to the apostles. According to an isolated narrative in al-Nuwayri's *Nihayat al-arab fi funun al-adab*, the subjects of the Makurian king prostrate themselves before him as if he were a god; although here such a behaviour may have been connected with an exceptional situation: the legitimisation of the king's rule against an usurpation enforced from outside.[43] Some Arabic sources even claim that the Makurian ruler was a god for his subjects. In his *Athar al-bilad*, the Arab geographer and historian al-Qazwini (died 1274) claims that "they fancy that he never eats, but they bring him food secretly, and if anyone of his subjects chanced to notice it, they kill him at once. ... (They) believe that he has the power of giving death and life, health or illness."[44] This narration, attractive as it may appear from the point of view of the present study, is definitely improbable. Al-Qazwini obviously copied the passage from *Mu'jam al-buldan* by Yaqut al-Rumi, traveller and geographer of Greek Christian origin (died 1229), who, however, was describing the king of Zaghawa, a nomad tribe from western Darfur.[45] Abu al-Makarim (died 1208), Coptic author of a description of churches and monasteries (*Tarikh al-Kana'is wa-al-Adyirah*), claims in turn that Nubian kings were at the same time priests and were allowed to "celebrate the liturgy within the sanctuary, as long as they reign without killing a man with their own hands."[46] Here also the information seems suspicious, all the more so since in another place Abu al-Makarim repeats it in reference to the king of Ethiopia.[47]

Al-Qazwini, quoted above, characterises the Makurian king as an absolute ruler. According to him, "his orders are promptly obeyed by his subjects, he has absolute power so that he can reduce to slavery anyone he wants and can freely dispose of their property."[48] A similar piece of information is transmitted by al-Aswani (quoted by Maqrizi) in his *Al-mawaʿiz wa-l-iʿtibar fi dhikr al-khitat wa-l-athar* (henceforth quoted as *Al-khitat*) in reference to the king of Alwa: "Their king can reduce to slavery any of his subjects he wants whether he be guilty of a crime or not, and they do not oppose him, rather they prostrate themselves before him. They do not revolt against his order, however unjust it may be; [on the contrary] they call out loudly

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bian rulers, see M. Woźniak, "The Chronology of the Eastern Chapels in the Upper Church at Banganarti. Some Observations on the Genesis of 'Apse Portraits' in Nubian Royal Iconography" [in:] A. Łajtar, A. Obłuski, and I. Zych (eds.), *Aegyptus et Nubia Christiana. The Włodzimierz Godlewski Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, Warsaw 2016, 629 – 646.

43 See below, 374.

44 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 383 – 384. The information is repeated by al-Bakuwi, *Talkhis al-athar wa-ʾajaʾib al-malik al-qahhar*, who adds that Nubian rulers claimed descent from Himyarite kings (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 565).

45 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 344.

46 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 333.

47 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 339.

48 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 383 – 384.

'May the king live! And let his order be executed!'"[49] The information that Nubian kings could turn their subjects to slaves is certainly imprecise, even though it may contain a grain of truth. A number of internal sources attest to the existence of slavery in Christian Nubia, and a form of slave trade between Nubia and Egypt is reported by external sources.[50] Although there is no firm evidence, it can be assumed that the slaves came mostly from raids into neighbouring lands, but at least some of them could have been native Nubians deprived of their freedom for various reasons;[51] it is implausible, however, to think that anyone could have been turned into a slave with no reason at all.

A frequently quoted opinion in modern Nubian scholarship is that the king of Makuria was the owner of all arable land in the country. This belief is rooted in a superficial reading of some Arabic sources and is definitely false. Numerous deeds of land sale known from Qasr Ibrim and elsewhere show that private persons were legal landowners who could do whatever they pleased with their possession.[52] The Makurian Church could also own land. Of course, the king had his own private estates; he also must have had his own private trading affairs too, extending beyond the confines of his realm.

Being neither the absolute lord of life and death of his subjects nor the sole owner of the land and everything in it, the king of Makuria, however, had all the instruments of power in his hand. His was first and foremost the legislative power. We hear of one crucial change of law enacted by the king, mentioned by al-Nuwayri in his *Nihayat al-arab fi funun al-adab:* "'Abdalla Barshanbū, when he became king (1317 – A.Ł. & G.O.), altered the laws of the kingdom and showed proud behaviour without precedent among the Nubian kings his predecessors. He treated the natives rudely and even cruelly, so that all hated his rule."[53] While this information is undoubtedly an element of creating a negative picture of the king, it does not alter the fact that such a change was possible. We come across mentions in the sources

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49 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 614.

50 Neither textual sources nor archaeology confirm the common opinion that Nubia became a major source of slaves for the Caliphate; see D. Edwards, "Slavery and Slaving in the Medieval and Post-Medieval Kingdoms of the Middle Nile", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 168 (2011), 87 – 94.

51 Maqrizi in *Al-khitat* puts the matter in the same light: "Under the peace treaty we have undertaken not to carry out raids into their territory, but not to prevent enemies from attacking them. Whomsoever their king reduces to slavery, or the slaves which they make when they raid each other, can be legally bought; but those whom the Muslims reduce to slavery through abduction or by stealing, are illegal business; some Muslims used to have Nubian slave girls as concubines" (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 643).

52 For Nubian land-sale deeds, see. G. R. Ruffini, *Medieval Nubia. A Social and Economic History*, Oxford 2012, *passim*, especially 22 – 31; M. Nowak and B. Wojciechowski, "Elements of Legal Practice in Christian Nubia", *JJP* 42 (2012), 205 – 214; and G. R. Ruffini, "Documentary Evidence and the Production of Power in Medieval Nubia", *Afriques (online)* 7 (2016), §§ 14 – 19 (http://journals.open edition.org/afriques/1871 [DOI: 10.4000/afriques.1871]).

53 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 485.

about royal decrees pertaining to various issues connected with administering the kingdom, such as the movement of people and goods within the country, circulation of Egyptian money, etc.[54] These ordinances can be of a very detailed character. An Old Nubian proclamation issued by King Moüses Georgios releases a church of Saint Epimachos from the duty of annual contributions for the bishop of Qasr Ibrim, which seems almost too trivial for the king to be involved personally.[55]

Second, the king had executive power, which he delegated to his officials; we know them and their hierarchy thanks to highly elaborate protocols of Nubian legal deeds, in particular Old Nubian land-sale contracts discovered at Qasr Ibrim.[56] Third, although we have no information about the Nubian kings' judicial power, we can assume that it also belonged to their competence.[57] Last but not least, the king was the commander-in-chief of the Makurian army. Arabic sources narrating military encounters between Muslim Egypt and Christian Makuria always show the Makurian army as headed by the king himself, as, for instance, during the armed intervention of King Kyriakos in Egypt in the 740s or the attack of King David on Aydhab in the 1270s.

It is also the king who signs peace treaties and truces with commanders of foreign (Muslim) armies, as in 652, after ʿAbdullahi ibn Abi Sarh's raid on Dongola, or at the turn of the thirteenth century, during the wars for the Makurian throne. He is, moreover, responsible for respecting those deals, including the famous *baqt*, a non-aggression and commercial treaty regulating Muslim-Nubian relations since the mid-seventh century.[58] In this capacity he is addressed in a letter sent in 758 by the governor of Egypt, Musa ibn Kaʿab, who complains about the Makurian's negligence in fulfilling the *baqt*'s provisions.[59] The king, on behalf of his people, swears an oath of allegiance to the Mamluks, when powerless Makuria becomes politically dependent on Egypt and rights to the throne are obtained thanks to a military inter-

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54 Reported by al-Aswani quoted by Maqrizi in *Khitat* (trans. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 603–604).

55 *P. QI* III 31 (Qasr Ibrim, 1155 [DBMNT 589]). For royal decrees in general, see Ruffini (cf. fn. 52) §§ 7–9.

56 See G. R. Ruffini, *The Bishop, the Eparch and the King: Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim* IV [= *JJP Supplement* 22], Warsaw 2014, 33–38.

57 As a matter of fact, we have no information whatsoever on the Christian Nubian judicial system; none of the attested titles of officials seems to indicate judiciary functions.

58 For the *baqt*, see R. Seignobos, *L'Égypte et la Nubie à l'époque médiévale. Élaboration et transmission des savoirs historiographiques (641–ca. 1500)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne 2016, chapter 2: "L'accord de 31/652 et le baqṭ".

59 J. M. Plumley, "An Eighth-Century Arabic Letter to the King of Nubia", *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 61 (1975), 241–245; M. Hinds and H. Sakkout, "A Letter from the Governor of Egypt to the King of Nubia and Makurra Concerning Egyptian-Nubian Relations in 141/758", [in:] Wadad al-Qada *et alii* (eds.), *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Ihsan Abbas on His Sixtieth Birthday*, Beirut 1981, 209–229 (reprinted in: M. Hinds, *Studies in Early Islamic History*, edited by J. Bacharach *et alii* [= *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* 4], Princeton 1996, 160–187).

vention sent from Cairo.[60] Finally, he represents Makuria in external contacts with both the Muslim and Christian worlds, the latter being most importantly the Alexandrian Patriarchate. The *History of the Patriarchs* relates several cases of the Makurian king asking the patriarch to ordain someone as a bishop,[61] the letter of King Moüses Georgios to Patriarch Mark III mentioned above being unique non-literary evidence of this practice.[62] The king received letters and delegations from the patriarch as well.[63] We hear also of Makurian rulers acting as an intermediary between Alexandrian patriarchs and Ethiopian kings.[64]

The king of Makuria relied on the stratum of hereditary nobility, who in Arabic sources are frequently referred to as "princes." From among these "princes" the highest officials of the kingdom were recruited: courtiers,[65] military commanders, and most probably bishops of the Makurian Church. The political significance of this elite stratum is clearly visible in the story of King Semamun (called Georgios Simon in the internal sources) from the years 1289–1291. The Mamluk military intervention launched at that time to place a puppet king on the Makurian throne forced Semamun to flee Dongola. He hid on an island located fifteen days' journey from Dongola, having at his side his closest family members, including the queen mother, as well as the "princes" and the bishop of Dongola with his clergy. The "princes," however, and the clergymen switched sides at some point and abandoned the king, taking the regalia with them. After the Mamluks had crowned the usurper and the Nubians swore loyalty to him, the army marched off to Egypt. Soon after "Semāmūn came back by night, called at the door of every prince personally and asked him to come out. Every prince who came out and saw him, kissed the ground before him and swore allegiance. Before sunrise, all the Nubian army had joined him. He went with them to the palace of the king, arrested the king (the one established by the Mamluks – A.Ł. & G.O.), sent for Ruknaddīn Baybars (the commander

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60 For the oath and its legal and political aspects, see P. M. Holt, "The Coronation Oaths of the Nubian Kings", *Sudanic Africa* 1 (1990), 5–9.

61 King Abraham demanded from Patriarch Michael I the deposition of the bishop of Dongola Kyriakos, with whom he was in conflict, and the consecration in his place of the royal candidate Ioannes (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 40–41); King Basil requested Patriarch Cyril (1077–1093) to make a son of the previous king, who died, a bishop (Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 217).

62 See above, 366 and 368–369 and fn. 23.

63 Thus, e. g., in the *History of the Patriarchs* a story is told about a certain bishop Merkourios whom Patriarch Christodoulos (1046–1077) sent as his envoy to the king of Makuria (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 214). Abu al-Makarim claims that "the fathers and patriarchs used to write letters to the kings of Abyssinia and Nubia, twice in the year" (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 340).

64 As, e. g., in the case of King Georgios IV, who, according to the *History of the Patriarchs*, was supposed to intervene on behalf of an anonymous Ethiopian ruler asking Patriarch Philotheos (979–1003) for a new *abun* for Ethiopia (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 205–207). Cf. A. Łajtar and G. Ochała, "An Unexpected Guest in the Church of Sonqi Tino (Notes on Medieval Nubian Toponymy 3)", *Dotawo* 4 (2017), 264.

65 It cannot be excluded that both groups – the highest officials and courtiers – are identical with one another; there is, however, too little data to assert this.

of the Egyptian garrison in Dongola – A.Ł. & G.O.) and asked him to go back to his Master to avoid clashes." The story ends with the description of an extremely cruel death inflicted by Semamun on the usurper.[66] The "princes" thus, disloyal as they appear from the story, seem to have held a real power to change the fate of the country and its rulers. Their opinion was important, and the king had to take it into account. In *Al-ta'rikh al-kabir al-muqaffa* (cited as *Al-muqaffa* further on) Maqrizi cites al-Aswani's account of his own embassy to Georgios, king of Makuria. He was sent by the governor of Egypt with a letter inviting the king to embrace Islam and soliciting the payment of the *baqt*. When al-Aswani arrived at Dongola, the king "summoned the [chief] men and the bishops of his kingdom as well as ʿAbdalla (al-Aswani – A.Ł. & G.O.) to have a discussion with ʿAbdalla."[67] As another fragment of al-Aswani's account shows, the "princes" could disagree with the king and they could express it openly. Al-Aswani mentions that, during his stay at Dongola, the Sacrifice Feast took place, the most important event in the Islamic liturgical year. The royal entourage "pressed the king to forbid all publicity for that ceremony, but the king would not pay heed to their request and answered: 'This man has left his home and family [to go] on a useful mission. Today is the greatest feast of their own religion: he wants to celebrate it with all possible pomp: you shall not prevent him from enjoying this opportunity.'"[68] Such a disagreement between the king and his retinue could have far-reaching consequences, as is attested by the account of the events of 1286 transmitted by Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir in his *Tashrif al-ayyam* (biography of sultan Qalawun): the envoys of the sultan were on their way back to Cairo from King Adur of Abwab, a land located somewhere in the Fifth Cataract region, when they were captured by a king of Dongola, who intended to kill them. He did not do this, however, because "the nobles and his entourage rushed to warn him: 'Do you intend to ruin our country and our homes?'" They subsequently rebelled against him and "made another king in place of him."[69]

The accounts of Arab authors quoted above, especially reminiscences of al-Aswani from his sojourn at Dongola, seem to point to the existence of a collective body (a council?) assisting the king in investigating various issues and taking decisions. The internal sources contain mentions of "elders" of the king, perhaps chiefs of clans or houses, which appears to fit such a picture. At an early stage of his career, Joseph, the fourteenth-century bishop of Dongola who left his commemorative inscription in Aswan,[70] was the head of the "elders" of King Ioel. The proclamation of King Moüses Georgios concerning the church of Saint Epimachos[71] alludes to the *modus operandi*

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66 The story is related in al-Nuwayri's *Nihayat al-arab fi funun al-adab* (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 480 – 483) and Maqrizi's *Kitab al-suluk li-maʿrifat duwal al-muluk* (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 687 – 689).

67 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 721.

68 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 722.

69 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 425 – 426.

70 See above, fn. 22.

71 See above, 373 with fn. 55.

of this council: in the prolegomena of the document the king writes that he was approached by the "elders" in this case just after he succeeded his uncle David on the throne.

The queen mother must have had a particular responsibility in advising the king and influencing his decisions. A telling example here is a story that happened in the 1290s and is related by Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir in his *Al-altaf* (the biography of sultan Al-Ashraf Khalil). The sultan sent a letter to an unnamed king of Makuria in which he claimed that the Makurian hostages held in Cairo, including the queen mother and her court, are treated very well and even receive regular pension. In response, the king dispatched his envoys who were supposed to tell the sultan "that (in the court of) the kings of Nubia, it was only the women who direct the kings; therefore he asked that his mother be sent back to direct him – not only his mother but also those who were with her."[72] We have already seen King Semamun escaping Dongola before the Mamluk army and taking with him, among others, the queen mother. Queen mothers are the only persons except kings and local bishops to be portrayed in Nubian churches. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the queen mother was the second most important personage in the Kingdom of Kokka, which came to existence in the region to the north of the Third Cataract after the fall of Makuria and most probably copied the latter's organisational structure and model of functioning. According to oral accounts concerning the end of its existence in the second half of the nineteenth century, the king had daily meetings with the queen mother, seeking her advice in current matters.[73]

The attitude of the Nubian king and his *modus operandi* was to a large degree shaped by his Christian viewpoint and moderated by the Church acting through her bishops. The kingship of Makuria is consistently presented in Arabic sources of Islamic background as an unbroken line of Christian rulers. When the governor of Egypt, Jawhar, proposed to King Georgios through his envoy al-Aswani that he change his faith, the king replied that Jawhar himself should become Christian instead.[74] An anonymous Makurian king (taking the date into account, it should be Kyriakos), "a tall, fine-looking man," when accepting the Marwanids escaping Egypt in 750, refused to sit on carpets spread on the ground claiming that "every king must humble himself before the majesty of God who raised him to power."[75]

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72 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 431.

73 For the Kingdom of Kokka and its administration, see A. Osman, "The Post-Medieval Kingdom of Kokka: A Means for a Better Understanding of the Administration of the Medieval Kingdom of Dongola", [in:] J. M. Plumley (ed.), *Nubian Studies: Proceedings of the Symposium for Nubian Studies, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 1978*, Warminster 1982, 185–197. The author of this article claimed to be a descendant of the kings of Kokka.

74 As related in Maqrizi's *Al-muqaffa* (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 721).

75 The story first appears in Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari at the end of the ninth century (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 66) and is subsequently repeated by many authors, including Ibn Wasif, Ibn Iyas, and Al-Qazwini. According to the last one, the king was supposed to say "God Almighty bestowed on me the royal power; therefore, it is my duty to correspond with humility" (transl. Vantini [cf. fn. 5] 384).

He then accused them of transgressing the divine law by indulging in luxuries and asked them to leave the kingdom after the habitual period of hospitality (three days). Although the king's words transmitted by the Arab authors are most probably fake, the story clearly shows the Christian moral attitude of Nubian kings, or rather the perception thereof outside Nubia. When in 836 Prince Georgios was on his way to Baghdad to discuss with the chaliph, the supreme authority of the Muslim world, irregularities in fulfilling the provisions of the *baqt*, he was zealous in exhibiting his Christian faith wherever he came, which was highly appreciated by members of other Oriental Churches encountered during the journey.[76] Georgios was accompanied by as many as three bishops, of whom only one came back to Makuria, the two other having died of hardships along the way. Let us remember here that a bishop (probably that of Dongola) was among others in King Semamun's retinue when he was fleeing the capital before the Mamluk intervention, and bishops (note the plural), together with the chief men of the kingdom, were summoned by King Georgios to hear al-Aswani's message. Bishops could criticise the king, when provoked by his behaviour. According to the biography of Patriarch Michael I (744 – 768) in the *History of the Patriarchs*, the bishop of Dongola Kyriakos, kept warning and instructing King Abraham, who was a "proud and wicked" ruler. This lead to an open conflict, as a result of which Kyriakos was deposed by the patriarch, who had been threatened by Abraham that Makuria would abandon Christianity if Michael supported the bishop.[77] Kyriakos removed himself to a monastery, where he lived until a very old age, but as long as he lived (so the *History of the Patriarchs*), no rain fell upon the royal city of Dongola – a clear sign that God had turned away from Abraham. A king's favourable attitude was, of course, praised by the Church. The *History of the Patriarchs* thus praises two Makurian kings: Merkurios and Kyriakos, both in the biography of Michael I mentioned above. The former is called there a "New Constantine" because "he became by his beautiful conduct like one of the Disciples."[78] The meaning of this phrase is obscure. The most common interpretation found in Nubian scholarship is that Merkurios made the Makurian Church subordinate to the miaphysite Alexandrian Patriarchate, which made him resemble the achievements of Constantine for the Church. No source, either internal or external, supports this interpretation, however. The latter king is characterised as an "honest and virtuous man"[79] and described as "the orthodox Ethiopian king of Makuria," "the Great King, upon whom the crown

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76 Our main source here is Michael the Syrian, who is quoting the lost chronicle of the Jacobite patriarch Dionysios of Tell Mahre, the eyewitness of the events. For Georgios' journey to Baghdad, see especially Seignobos (cf. fn. 58) chapter 4: "Un prince nubien à la cour des Abbasides: la mission diplomatique de Georgios (836)". From the earlier scholarship one can cite G. Vantini, "Le roi Kirki à Baghdad", [in:] E. Dinkler (ed.), *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit,* Recklinghausen 1970, 41 – 48.
77 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 41 – 42.
78 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 40.
79 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 43.

descended from Heaven," the one who "governed as far as the southern extremities of the Earth, for he is the Greek king, fourth of the Earth; and none of the other kingdoms stands up against him, but their kings attend him when he passes through their territory."[80] This pompous description is a manifestation of gratitude for Kyriakos' military intervention in Egypt in defense of the patriarch, expressed by the latter's secretary. It is at the same time an illustration of the atmosphere prevailing in eighth-century Christian communities in the Near East and North-East Africa, most clearly visible in Coptic and Syriac apocalyptic literature of that date: the Christian Nubian king Kyriakos, victorious in clashes with Islam, is the fourth and the last world king foretold by the prophets, the saviour of the Christians, whose reign precedes the end of the world.[81]

6 Royal Onomastics

Names of Nubian rulers are a source of interesting observations concerning the subject of this paper. They can be divided into two groups: Christian names and native Nubian names, whereby the former group is much larger than the latter. Among Christian names one can distinguish two subcategories: Biblical names and names of Christian saints. In the former subcategory, there are names of personages from both Old and New Testament. The repertoire of Old Testament names includes the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaak), the rulers of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah (Solomon, David), and prophets (Moüses, Ioel). While the names of Abraham, Isaak, David are quite common in Nubian onomastics in general, Solomon is rare and its choice for a member of the royal family (a possible future king) might have been ideologically inspired. The choice of names of New Testament origin (Zacharias, Symeon, Ioannes, Markos, Stephanos) is rather unusual. The two priests, Zacharias (provided the inspiration was indeed the father of John the Baptist) and Symeon, as a source of inspiration may be especially surprising. This may perhaps be connected with the putative priestly role of the Nubian king (see above).

Among the names of saints, we can distinguish the names of Archangels (Chael [most probably an abbreviated version of Michael] and Raphael) and the names of humans (Merkurios, Kyriakos, Georgios, Basil). The occurrence of the name Raphael in royal onomastics is surprising. A study of Nubian naming practices reveals that the Nubians avoided the use of the names of Archangels, unless modified (e. g., Chael, Michaelinkouda, Raphaelanya, etc.). Perhaps, thus, the royal family was exempt from this rule. As for other holy figures, one observes the presence of two war-

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80 Transl. Vantini (cf. fn. 5) 44–45.

81 See L. Greisiger, "Ein nubischer Erlöser-König: Kūš in syrischen Apokalypsen des 7. Jahrhunderts", [in:] S. G. Vashalomidze and L. Greisiger (eds.), *Der Christliche Orient und seine Umwelt. Gesammelte Studien zu Ehren Jürgen Tubachs anläßlich seines 60. Geburtstags* [= *Studies in Oriental Religions* 56], Wiesbaden 2007, 189–213.

rior saints, Merkurios and Georgios, which may be linked with military aspects of the kingship. Coincidentally, the name Basil, even though it has a saint as its source of inspiration, derives from the root designating royalty, and as such is perfect for a king.

Royal names of Nubian origin (Eirpanome, Tokiltoeton, Qalidurut, Mashkouda, Kudanbes, Siti, Paper) are difficult to interpret, because the study of Nubian native names is in its beginnings. Apart from the name Mashkouda (lit. 'servant of the sun'), the etymology of these names is unknown. It is worth observing that epichoric names occur only at the beginning of Christian Nubian statehood (mid-sixth to mid-seventh century) and its end (second half of the thirteenth–fifteenth century). Royal onomastics seems thus to reflect a general tendency observable in medieval Nubian culture, where local, perhaps still pagan, elements are visible in the first century of Christianity and then come to fore again in its last centuries.[82]

In general, Nubian royal onomastics is completely different than Eastern Roman imperial naming practices; there are no typical imperial names in Nubia, such as Constantine, Theodosius, Justinian, Justin, Anastasius, Tiberius, Leo, Zeno, or even Michael. The only two common elements are Ioannes and Basil, but they are otherwise present in Nubian naming practices as such.

Conclusion

The Christian Nubian king, as presented in accessible sources, is a type of absolute monarch. His power is connected with the office rather than the person. It has divine legitimacy and covers all areas of the kingdom's functioning: legislation, administration, judicial, military, and foreign affairs. At the same time, this power, however extensive, has its limitations. The king must respect the opinion of those who support his rule: the nobles and family members. He is also seriously restricted by local tradition reaching back to pre-Christian, African roots. On the other hand, the ruler's behaviour and attitude are shaped by his Christian faith, the keeper of which is the Church, represented by her bishops.

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82 On the margin of our discussion, it needs to be observed that Arabic names start to appear in royal onomastics in the latest period, which is connected to the progressing Arabisation and Islamisation of the Middle Nile Valley population.

D. The Good Ruler under Islamic Rule

Isabel Toral-Niehoff

Justice and Good Administration in Medieval Islam: The Book of the Pearl of the Ruler by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860–940)

The eyes rise up to a just ruler
With awe, for he can help, and he can harm.
And if you catch a glimpse of him,
you see signs of clemency and of frightful might.[1]

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تسمو العيون الى إمام عادل   معطى المهابة نافع ضرار

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Introduction

What were the qualities ascribed to the good ruler in medieval[2] Islam and how is he depicted? Which examples were used to illustrate the adequate behaviour of a monarch and what was the ruler's expected relationship to his entourage – ministers, counsellors and family?

The Arabic textual tradition includes a wealth of texts on political theory and good government that can serve as source basis to answer these questions. In fact, the question of who rules has been critical in Islamic history since it beginnings, and disagreement on this subject has been the cause of numerous conflicts, the first one taking place immediately after the death of the Prophet in 632 CE when the community disagreed on his succession.[3] Therefore, writings dealing with the

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1 The poem is attributed to the Umayyad poet al-Akhṭal and addresses the caliph Muʿāwiya b. Sufyān (reg. 661–680 CE). Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī, *Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-farīd,* 7 vols., ed. Aḥmad Amīn and Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Beirut, ed. 1990), I, 55; Aḥmad Ibn-ʿAbd-Rabbihī and Issa J. Boullata, *The Unique Necklace: = al-ʿIqd al-farīd. Translated by Professor Issa J. Boullata. Reviewed by Roger M.A. Allen,* Great books of Islamic civilization (Reading, 2007); vol.1, 29.

2 For a better understanding, I will use (the otherwise debatable) epithet "Medieval" to indicate that I am referring to the period between c. 650 and 1200 CE, leaving aside the problems of the application of a European chronology to Islamic History.

3 The Prophet, who died without living male offspring, did not provide clear succession rules, an uncertainty that caused the first so-called Civil War between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya (658–661 CE). As a matter of fact, succession crises were very frequent in Medieval Islamic history. Although normally ruled by dynasties, (male) primogeniture never became a rule in Islamic polities, and the prevalence of polygyny and the legitimacy of male descendants from concubines could multiply dangerously the number of potential successors. Women were excluded from political rule, though could be very influential. The most frequent system to guarantee some stability became designation. For succession rules in Early Islam, see Jens Scheiner, "Monarchische Aspekte frühislamischer Herrschaft", in *Monarchische Herrschaft im Altertum*, ed. Stefan Rebenich, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Kolloquien (Berlin, Boston, 2017), 578–81.

quality of the legitimate and good ruler, his appropriate conduct, and the effective organisation of government, abound in the vast ocean of medieval Arabic and Persian literature. They appear disseminated in a multiplicity of textual genres, such as treatises on ethics and political philosophy, mirrors of princes, advice literature, administration handbooks, legal books, historiography, literary anthologies and encyclopaedias. Since all these texts were developed by various social groups, they reflect diverse perspectives on the topic: whether that of the clerical class of administrators (*kuttāb*) and courtiers, the schools of legal scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*), theologians (*mutakallimūn*) or the circles of philosophers (*falāsifa*).[4]

Despite differences, readers familiar with the Christian and Jewish political traditions will encounter many well-known features. Several of these are the result of borrowings, adaptations and cultural exchanges between the entangled histories of these three cultures and religions, but others go back to the development on the same substrate, namely the Near Eastern late antique setting.

First, medieval Islamic political thought considered monarchy as the most recommendable form of human organisation and thus saw the persona of the monarch as the convergent focus and warrant of societal order.[5] To medieval Muslims, the rule of one seemed the most effective and stable form of government and the best means to avoid anarchy – a terrible state that was either associated with *jāhiliyya*,[6] the abhorrent time of tribal paganism before the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad, or with the terrible *fitna*, "trial" or "schism" of the community. The establishment of authority was considered a natural necessity for humans as social beings; however, according to Islamic political theory, the power of the legitimate ruler should be limited by moral and ethical boundaries. Thus, he was expected to follow appropriate rules of conduct and listen to his advisors and/or counsellors, which could open the door to informal modes of political participation.[7]

Another common feature to all three traditions is the way religion – traditionally the most powerful means to justify the rule of the one over the many in pre-modern times – was utilised to provide political legitimacy. In a monotheistic system like Islam, the sacralisation of the ruler himself is to be excluded,[8] and only God with

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4 The best survey on political thought in Islam is still the book Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic political thought*, [New ed.], The new Edinburgh Islamic surveys (Edinburgh, 2005); cf. also Gerhard Böwering, Mahan Mirza and Patricia Crone, eds., *The Princeton encyclopedia of Islamic political thought* (Princeton, N.J, 2013) and Gerhard Böwering, ed., *Islamic political thought: An introduction* (Princeton, NJ, 2015).

5 Scheiner (cf. fn. 3).

6 Cf. "Djāhiliyya" (ed.) *EI²*, L. Gardet, "Fitna", *EI²*.

7 This refers to the need of informal advice (*naṣīḥa*), a pervasive theme in mirrors, and not to the principle of formal consultation (*shūrā*), which is a much-debated issue among modern Islamic legal scholars. For further discussion, see Böwering (2015 cf. fn. 4) 71–73.

8 For the sacralisation of the monarch in Antiquity, see Stefan Rebenich and Johannes Wienand. Monarchische Herrschaft im Altertum. Zugänge und Perspektiven, in Stefan Rebenich, ed., *Monar-*

His infinite mercy and power could serve as source of legitimacy. Hence originated the theory – rooted in the late antique idea of monotheistic kingship – that God directly bestowed the monarch with authority.[9] The tension between the necessary humanity of the ruler and the enhancement of his persona as symbol of societal and political order, however, remained palpable.

The following study attempts to address the core questions of this volume by making a contextualised study of the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860 – 940 CE),[10] an exemplary text that has enjoyed a broad reception across the centuries.[11] The book is particularly interesting in the context of the transcultural and transepochal approach of this volume, since it is credited as one of the earliest examples of Arabic mirrors of princes, a genre that consists of advice to rulers and their executives on politics, statecraft and the conduct of warfare, diplomacy and espionage.[12] Mirrors are the only genre of Islamic political writings that would find noteworthy reception in the European West, especially in Castile,[13] and they have also served as an important conduit for the introduction and adaptation of pre-Islamic (Indian, Persian and Greek) wisdom into Islamic thought, thus functioning as a channel for intercultural exchange.[14]

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chische Herrschaft im Altertum, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Kolloquien (Berlin, Boston, 2017), 1–20, esp. 10–12.

9 For commentary on monotheistic kingship and related discussions, see János M. Bak, ed., *Monotheistic kingship: The medieval variants; [... annual interdisciplinary workshop of the Department of Medieval Studies at Central European University ... in February 2002],* Pasts incorporated v. 3 (Budapest, 2004); see also Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity,* [ACLS Humanities E-Book edition] (Princeton, N.J, 1993); Almut Höfert, *Kaisertum und Kalifat: Der imperiale Monotheismus im Früh- und Hochmittelalter,* Globalgeschichte 21 (Frankfurt am Main, 2015); Wolfram Drews, *Die Karolinger und die Abbasiden von Bagdad: Legitimationsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich,* Europa im Mittelalter 12 (Berlin, 2009).

10 Isabel Toral-Niehoff, "The 'Book of the Pearl of the Ruler' in the Unique Necklace by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih: Preliminary Remarks", in *Global medieval: Mirrors for princes reconsidered*, ed. Regula Forster and Neguin Yavari, Ilex Foundation series 15 (Cambridge, MA, 2015) 134–50.

11 More than 100 mss. of the work survive along with frequent quotations in other writings. Cf. Walter Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-farīd des Andalusiers Ibn ʿAbdrabbih: (246/860–328/949) ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte,* Islamkundliche Untersuchungen Bd. 70 (Berlin, 1983) 27–43, 71–79.

12 For the genre in pre-modern Arabic and Persian literature and the problems in definition, see L. Marlow (a), "Surveying Recent Literature on the Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes Genre", *History Compass* 7, no. 2 (2009); Louise Marlow (b), "Advice and Advice Literature", in *EI³*.

13 Adeline Rucquoi and Hugo O. Bizzarri, "Los Espejos de Príncipes en Castilla entre Oriente y Occidente," *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 79 (2005) 7–30. For a survey of studies on mirrors in a comparative perspective, see Regula Forster and Neguin Yavari, eds., *Global medieval: Mirrors for princes reconsidered,* Ilex Foundation series 15 (Cambridge, MA, 2015); see also Linda Darling, "Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability", in *East meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. A. Classen (Berlin 2013) 223–43.

14 Marlow (b, cf. fn. 12), Dimitri Gutas, "The Greek and Persian Background of Early Arabic Encyclopedism", in *Organizing knowledge: Encyclopaedic activities in the pre-eighteenth century Islamic world*,

Historical context

The *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler*[15] forms the first section of the all-encompassing multithemed encyclopaedia entitled *The Unique Necklace*, which was composed during the caliphal period in Andalusia at the beginning of the tenth century, in the first decades of the newly founded Umayyad caliphate (founded 929 CE).[16] The caliphal context is important, since it marks a time when legitimizing discourses for the new regime became particularly relevant.[17] The author, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, was a cultivated member of the ruling elite at the court. He was a litterateur and panegyric poet from a local family whose members had been clients of the ruling Umayyad dynasty since the late eighth century. The general program of the *Necklace* is to provide the reader with all wisdom, knowledge, ethics and courtly etiquette that a cultivated, well-educated urban *homo islamicus* was supposed to know, i.e., a survey of *adab*.[18] The rules of good government must have occupied an eminent place in this curriculum of the ideal courtier, since the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* heads the collection. It is followed by books dealing with related subjects like warfare and diplomacy, which together form the first thematic cluster of the *Necklace*.

Exempla

As typical *adab* encyclopaedia, the *Necklace* is not an argumentative, systematically structured text. In fact, the title is not only ornamental, but is to be understood as a metaphor alluding to the organisational principle. The *Necklace* is arranged as a "col-

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ed. Gerhard Endress and Abdou Filali-Ansary, Islamic philosophy, theology, and science v. 61 (Leiden, Boston, 2006) 91–101 and Seyed S. Haghighat, "Persian Mirrors for Princes: Pre-Islamic and Islamic Mirrors Compared", in *Global medieval: Mirrors for princes reconsidered*, ed. Regula Forster and Neguin Yavari, Ilex Foundation series 15 (Cambridge, MA, 2015) 83–93.

15 Kitāb al-Luʾluʾ fī sulṭān. Regarding the difficulties of translating sulṭān, v.i.

16 The Umayyad emir in Cordoba ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir proclaimed the caliphate in 929, thus challenging and confronting the parallel Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad and the Fatimid caliphate in Cairo. For the ideology of these "second" Umayyads, in contrast to the "first" in Syria, see Janina M. Safran, *The second Umayyad Caliphate: The articulation of caliphal legitimacy in al-Andalus,* Harvard Middle Eastern monographs 33 (Cambridge, MA, 2000). For the *Necklace* in general, see Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-farīd des Andalusiers Ibn ʿAbdrabbih*; Veglison Elías de Molins, Josefina, *El collar único, de Ibn Abd Rabbihi,* Historia de la literatura universal Obras 39 (Madrid, 2007).

17 For the importance of the caliphal context, see Isabel Toral-Niehoff, "History in Adab Context: 'The Book on Caliphal Histories' by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (246/860–328/940)", *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 2, no. 1 (2015) 61–85; Isabel Toral-Niehoff, "Writing for the caliphate – the Unique Necklace by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860–940). Some proposals." *Usur al-Wusta* (2018) 80–95.

18 J. Hämeen-Anttila, "Adab, early developments" in *EI³*, S. A. Bonebakker, "Adab and the concept of belles-lettres," in *ʿAbbasid belles-lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, *The Cambridge history of Arabic literature* (Cambridge, 2008), 16–30.

lar of pearls of wisdom" or chain of authoritative exempla and sayings, namely small narrative units, maxims, aphorisms, poems or sayings put in the mouth of diverse authorities and arranged according to thematic clusters that follow a hierarchy of importance. Excepting short introductory and programmatic paratexts, the author Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih adopts the role of a mere compiler of valuable material of the past. This interweaving of authorial perspectives is a frequent feature in mirrors of princes;[19] and as a literary strategy, it served to distance the author from the advice he was giving by transferring authorial responsibility to the speakers he compiled. Anyway, it must be stressed that polyphony is a typical feature of medieval Arabic literature.[20]

Besides several Quranic quotations and prophetical utterances and traditions (hadith), most of these exempla and wise sayings are attributed to emblematic personalities of Islamic history that are well-known from parallel works in the Islamic East (caliphs, governors, companions of the Prophet).[21] However, as it is typical for mirrors of princes, many of the reported traditions in the *Book* are attributed to non-Islamic and authorities of non-Arabic origin. The pre-Islamic Persian tradition stands out among these, which draws on the rich advice-literature of Sasanian origin that was translated into Arabic in the early Islamic centuries. These include the widely disseminated "Testament of Ardashīr" and the "Book of the Crown" by Pseudo al-Jāḥiz, as well as books with an Indian background, as the "Kalīla wa-Dimna." Therefore, we frequently find in the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* Persian personalities like Kings Ardashīr, Khosrow Anūshirwān and Khosrow Parvīz, and the "Indian kings."[22] The *Book* also includes some Hellenistic traditions stemming from the circle of *gnomologia* and Pseudo-Aristotelica, such as the apocryphal epistles from Aristotle to Alexander,[23] as well as sayings attributed to Plato, Solomon, David and the Negus

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19 Marlow (a, cf. fn. 12) 530. According to Heribert Busse, "Fürstenspiegel und Fürstenethik im Islam," *Bustan* 9 (1968), 17, it was a strategy that allowed the author to distance himself from the advice he was conveying to his royal recipient. He also observes a similar anthology-like character in European mirrors.

20 Lale Behzadi, "The concept of Polyphony and the Author's Voice," in *Concepts of authorship in pre-modern Arabic texts*, ed. Lale Behzadi and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Bamberger Orientstudien Band 7, 9–22.

21 E. g. the Rightly-Guided caliphs Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī; Umayyads like Muʿāwiya and ʿAbd al-Malik, Abbasids like al-Manṣūr and Hārūn al-Rashīd, but also famous governors like Ziyād b. Abīhi and al-Ḥajjāj. Normally, they are just mentioned by name; obviously, the reader was supposed to recognise them immediately. All of them were well known, and most of the anecdotes and sayings that circulated widely in the Arabic world of the time are to be found elsewhere, too.

22 For the Persian component, see the references in note 14. All three Sasanian rulers are familiar personalities to the medieval Arabic reader and frequent personalities in the above-mentioned Persian traditions.

23 For these Pseudo-Aristotelica in East and West, see Regula Forster, *Das Geheimnis der Geheimnisse: Die arabischen und deutschen Fassungen des pseudo-aristotelischen Sirr al-asrār, Secretum secretorum,* Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter 43 (Wiesbaden, 2006). For the political traditions of Greek origin, cf. Crone, *Medieval Islamic political thought*, 165–96; for the gnomologia, cf. Dimitri Gutas,

of Ethiopia. In sum, like the majority of the early "mirrors," the Islamic quality of the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* is scarcely manifest, to the degree that it rather resembles a work of (transcultural) universal wisdom literature.

Denominations

As is the rule in medieval Arabic literature, the *Book* does not resort to loan words when referring to monarchs but draws from a well-established Arabic terminology and conceptualisation. The most frequent terms in the books are *ṣulṭān* (for a nuanced translation of this term, see my remarks below) and *imām* ("supreme political and religious leader") and, occasionally, *malik* ("king"). *Khalīfa* ("caliph"), in contrast, is never used in this book, although it appears in the historical sections of the *Necklace*.[24]

Sulṭān is the key term and appears in the title of the book (*Kitāb al-luʾluʾ fī l-sulṭān*). However, the appropriate translation poses several problems. According to the most extended use, *sulṭān* is a denomination that began to be used in the eleventh century for provincial and even petty rulers who had assumed *de facto* power alongside the caliph. From then onwards, the title became more and more institutionalised, even appearing in coinage and official inscriptions,[25] and in this sense it became part of the theories about the sultanate, which stated that sultans had received their power from the caliph by delegation. This meaning also underlies the English "sultan." *Sulṭān* also has a much broader meaning in the context of literary texts, and this is also the case in the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler*. Here, it can be either understood as an abstract (verbal) noun derived from the root *s.l.ṭ (*to dominate, rule*)* meaning "political power, authority," or it is used in a metonymic way, designating the "holder of political power, authority; person who embodies this power." In the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler* we find both uses, which explains why it is necessary to determine the correct translation from case to case. This semantic ambiguity makes it also difficult to separate those qualities, faults, and merits attributed to the ruler as persona, and those that are generally associated with "political authority."

The second key term in the *Book* is *imām*, "supreme leader," whose meaning roughly overlaps with that of caliph (see below), but with stronger religious conno-

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Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation: A study of the Graeco-Arabic Gnomologia (New Haven, 1975) and Gutas (cf. fn. 14).

24 See Toral-Niehoff (2015, cf. fn. 17), where I analyse book 15, dedicated to caliphs.

25 For the sultanate in the context of traditional Islamic thinking, see H.J. Kramers [C. Bosworth] Art. "Sulṭān", in *EI²*. Consulted online on 25 September 2018; see also Böwering, G. "Introduction" in Gerhard Böwering, ed., *Islamic political thought: An introduction* (Princeton, NJ, 2015), 1–23 and Crone, P. "Traditional Politic Thought", in Gerhard Böwering, ed., *Islamic political thought: An introduction* (Princeton, NJ, 2015), 237–38.

tations. It appears especially in the *Book* in those sections that emphasise the moral duties of the ruler. In contrast, the term caliph (*khalīfa*) – the current denomination for the only legitimate sovereign and leader of all Muslims – is not used in the *Book*, though it appears elsewhere in the *Necklace*, particularly in Book 15 on caliphal histories.[26] Probably, *sulṭān* seemed more suitable in a section discussing political authority as concept, as is the case in the *Book*, and *imām* served also better when discussing the moral duties of the ruler than caliph.

Another denomination we find is *malik* ("king"), which is the Arabic expression used for monarchs in the pre-Islamic past. Since it has the connotation of illegitimate, barbaric rule, it was abandoned in Islamic times, but was still in use for non-Muslim monarchs,[27] and is so used in the *Book*. Other terms for political power-holders are *amīr* (mostly military commander), *wazīr* (minister), *ḥājib* (chancellor) and *walī* (governor),[28] but these always imply some state of suzerainty.

There is no close equivalent in medieval Islam to the European distinction between emperor and king, which ultimately has roots in Roman imperial history. Here, the main line goes between the universal caliph(ate)[29] and the local sultan(ate) or *de facto* ruler. It is a dichotomy that developed gradually over time, and the interrelationship between the caliph and sultan has received much attention by Muslim thinkers in the past, who conceive of it in terms of delegation.[30] The universal claim of the caliphate has some parallels with the idea of *imperium*; however, the caliphate draws legitimacy from other principles and is, at least in theory, more absolute, even though, in practice, caliphs have only possessed actual power for short periods in history.[31]

The following sections will offer a brief analysis of some of the "pearls" of wisdom found in the *Book*. This short insight into some of the wisdom compiled by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih will help us better understand how the concept of the good ruler was developed by the *Book*.

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26 Cf. Toral-Niehoff (2015, cf. fn. 17).

27 Cf. Böwering (2015, cf. fn. 4) and Scheiner (cf. fn. 3) 569 – 72.

28 Later, non-Arabic terms like *khān* (mostly for Turkish and Mongol rulers) and *shāh* (used in Iranian contexts) came into use.

29 In official allocutions, documents and coinage, caliphs (arab. *khalīfa*) often bear the title of *amīr al-muʾminīn* "Commander of the Faithful." Frequently, the caliph is also addressed as *imām* (v.s.).

30 Cf. Kadi, Wadad, Shahin, Aram A. "caliph, caliphate" in Böwering, Mirza and Crone (2013, cf. fn. 4) 81 – 86 and Crone, P. "Traditional Politic Thought", in Gerhard Böwering, ed., *Islamic political thought: An introduction* (Princeton, NJ, 2015), 237 – 38.

31 The Umayyads in Damascus (661 – 750), the Abbasids in Baghdad (750 until c. 900), the Fatimids (909 until c. 1100) and the Umayyads in Cordoba (929 – 1030).

Definition and Necessity of Authority

First, *sulṭān* is necessary for humankind, since it guarantees societal order, security and enables a civilised life. God, in His infinite mercy, has provided *sulṭān* to His servants as protection, particularly for the weak that need shelter and justice. A very frequent metaphor is that of the ruler as God's shadow:

> Ruling power (*sulṭān*) is the rein (*zimām*) of all things. It/he organizes rights, maintains punishments (*ḥudūd*), and is the hub around which religious and secular matters turn. It is God's protection of His country, and His shadow stretching over His servants. Through it, their wives are secure, their oppressors are deterred, and their frightened are safe. (Text I, 20 / Translation, 5)[32]
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> There can be no ruler without men, and there can be no men without wealth, and there can be no wealth without civilization, and there can be no civilization without justice. (Text I, 49 / Translation, 24)

Another key idea is that of the mutual dependency between the ruler and the ruled in Islam, that they are useless without each other:

> Islam, the ruler, and the people are like a tent, a pole, and pegs. The tent is Islam, the pole is the ruler, and the pegs are the people. Each is useful only with the others. (Text I, 22 / Translation, 6)

Advice – The Bond between Ruler and Ruled

This idea of the necessity, even of the duty of cooperation between the various parts of society for the appropriate maintenance of social order and harmony feeds into the significance of advice, both for the ruler (who should accept advice) and the ruled (who are expected, even obliged to give advice).

> The wise men have said: The king is useless without his ministers and helpers; and the ministers and helpers are useless without affection and advice; and affection and advice are useless without good opinion and integrity. (Text I, 48 / Translation, 23)

However, advising can be a risky undertaking for the ruled, who might provoke with unpleasant critique the anger and wrath of the ruler. Therefore, it requires wisdom, tolerance, and knowledge on the part the ruler, and courage, integrity, delicacy and supreme sensibility on the part of the advisor:

> In an Indian book, a story is told about a man who entered the presence of one of their kings. He said: "O king, advising you is a duty required of the lowly little person as well as the important great one. If it were not for my confidence in the virtue of your mind and your tolerance of what

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32 "Text" refers in the following quotations to the standard edition Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī, *Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, "Translation" to Ibn-ʿAbd-Rabbihī and Boullata, *The Unique Necklace*.

may be disagreeable to hear and accept in the interest of the common people and in consideration for the elite, it would be rash of me to say anything. But if we realise that our continued existence is related to yours, and that our lives are dependent upon you, even if you do not ask us to do it. It is said, 'He who withholds his advice from the ruler, who conceals his illness from the physicians, and who keeps secret his inner feelings from friends will hurt himself.' I know that any speech that is unpleasant to hear is not said to anyone unless the one who says it is has trust in the mind of the people addressed; for if the latter is wise, he will tolerate it, because its benefit is to the person who listens and not to the one who says it. O king, you are the one who has the virtue of intelligence and the sophistication of knowledge. This encourages me to tell you what you do not like, fully confident in the fact that you value my advice and that I prefer you to my own self." (Text I, 23 / Translation, 7)

Because of the danger of annoying the ruler with critique, it is recommended that the advisor resort to indirect, allusive communication:

> They said "he who is associated with the ruler should not withhold advice from him even if the ruler finds it annoying. However, his speech to him should be kind, not stupidly unthoughtful, so that he may inform him of his fault without saying it to his face. He should rather speak proverbially and tell him of the fault of others so that he may know his own fault." (Text I, 31 / Translation, 12)

It is not surprising that the *Book* enhances the ruler's forbearance with men of religion and virtue on their being audacious with him and mentions several anecdotes where famous rulers feature exactly this virtue (Text I, 76 / Translation, 40).

Good Administration and the Reign's Welfare

Since the ruler had been bestowed with his power by God to serve as protector of his subjects, he is supposed to fulfil several requirements and behave in an appropriate way to accomplish his task. First, he is expected to care for the welfare and satisfaction of his subjects by means of a good administration:

> Therefore, it is incumbent upon him whom God has invested with the reins (*azimma*) of His rule (*ḥukm*), whom He has made sovereign over the affairs of His creatures, whom He has specially favoured with His beneficence, and whom He has firmly appointed to wield power (*sulṭān*) – it is incumbent upon him to care seriously about his subjects' interests, and to pay attention to the welfare (*marāfiq*) of the people obedient to him, in accordance with the honour that God has conferred upon him and the conditions of happiness (*asbāb al-saʿāda*) He has bestowed upon him. (Text I, 20 / Translation, 5)

> Therefore, he must care for the welfare of his subjects, also in terms of economy, because "if a fountain is good, its streams are good too" (Text I, 43 / Translation, 20). In other words: "the well-being of the subjects depends on the well-being of their leader (*Ṣilāḥ al-raʿīya bi-ṣilāḥ al-imām*)." (Text I, 37 / Translation, 16)

Among the practical capacities and qualities of the ruler that are mentioned as important for a good administration are, on the one hand, decisiveness and determina-

tion, and on the other, the capacity of making a good choice in the election of officials and judges. Both aspects are discussed in several subchapters that contain many anecdotes and positive and negative exempla to illustrate how other rulers acted in this regard.

> A king who had been stripped of his monarchy was asked: "How did you lose your monarchy?" He said, "Postponing today's work until tomorrow, seeking one particular aim by losing many others, and rewarding every man deceived by his own intellect. The man deceived by his own intellect is one who has reached a rank he does not deserve or who has been given a reward he does not merit." (Text I, 60 / Translation, 32)

Justice (ʿadāla)

The key component for good administration is justice (ʿadāla). This does not only refer to a personal quality of the ruler – rather, it is essential that the ruler's justice is also seen and felt by the subjects to maintain authority and societal order. In other words, to function as connecting factor, the ruler's justice needs to be practiced, represented and made known. Furthermore, perceived fairness is crucial – the ruler must be overtly judged by the same criteria as his subjects, and he must know his limits like all other humans:

> The wise said: Among the duties of a ruler is to be just in his seen deeds in order to preserve the well-being of his rule, and to be just in his own conscience in order to preserve the well-being of his religion. If his administration is corrupt, his ruling power is gone. All politics revolves around justice and fairness, and no rule can last without them, be it one of believers or of unbelievers; this is in addition to organization of state affairs and placing them in their right places. He who rules should let himself be judged by his subjects, and the subjects should let themselves be judged by the ruler. A ruler's judgement on others should be akin to his judgement of himself, for rights are known only by him who knows their limits and their correct places. No person can be a ruler unless he was a subject earlier. (Text I, 38 / Translation, 16)

This broad understanding of justice is not determined by the application of law, but signifies the ruler's capacity to practice an equilibrated, moderate and fair judgment and bring balance where there is inequality, a notion which reveals a strong influence from Persian models.[33]

When rulers administer justice, they must be equanimous, graceful, moderate and calm:

> A king said: I do not joke when I promise or threaten, and when I command or forbid. I do not punish on being angered. I appoint the capable, and I reward for good service done and not for emotional reasons. In people's hearts I strike awe which is unmixed with hatred, affection which

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33 Ann K.S. Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship", *SI* 17 (1962), and Böwering (2015, cf. fn. 4) 91–119.

is unmixed with brazen audacity. I make foodstuffs available and I prevent hoarding. (Text I, 39 / Translation, 17)

Choose truth, abide by moderation, implement justice, be kind to the subjects, and know that the most just is he who gives them justice against himself, and that the most unjust is he who wrongs people for the sake of others. (Text I, 47 / Translation, 22)

The importance of the ruler's obligation to exercise proper conduct, moderation and clemency is a direct consequence of his position of power: The ruler must be aware of his powerfulness, and act according to the responsibility and dignity of his role:

Know that one from you can shed blood and another can spare it, that your wrath is an un-sheathed sword over the one with whom you are angry, that your blessing is an abundant blessing to the one with whom you are satisfied, and that your command is effective as soon as you express it. Therefore, be cautious when angry lest your words be wrong, lest your color change, and lest your body shake. For kings punish with resoluteness, and pardon with clemency. (Text I, 47 / Translation, 19)

When the ruler practices justice, he must seek to satisfy the majority and leave aside the minority opinions and interests of the unsatisfied, whose existence is unavoidable anyway.

It is unusual for the flock (*al-raʿīya*) to be satisfied with the leaders (*aʾimma*), to find no facile excuse for them, and to blame them when many a blamed person may be innocent. There is no way one can be safe from the (biting) tongues of the common people (*alsunat al-ʿāmma*), for the satisfaction of everyone (*riḍā al-jumla*) and the agreement of all (*muwāfiqat jimāʿatihā*) are among impossible and unattainable things. Everyone has his share of justice and his place in government. It is the duty of the leader (*imām*) to rule his people by deeds that satisfy the majority. (Text I, 21 / Translation, 6)

Justice thus means the preservation of social harmony, and, in consequence, the ruler is recommended not to exaggerate the exposure and persecution of misdeeds among the ruled, and should accept the (maybe only) apparent acquiescence of his subjects without further investigation, unless their dissatisfaction is overtly revealed:

And it is the right of the ruled that their leader should accept their apparent obedience (*ḥusn al-qubūl li-ẓāhir ṭāʿatih*) and turn away from disclosing their misdeeds. It is just as Ziyād said when he came to Iraq as a ruler: "O people, there were grudges and hostilities between you and me. I have put all that behind me and underfoot. He who has done good deeds, let him increase them; and he who has done bad deeds, let him desist from them. If I know that someone among you hates me to high heaven, I will not expose him unless he reveals his innermost to me." (Text I, 21 / Translation, 6)

Humility and Modesty

Humility among the powerful was generally seen as an important virtue, and as key factor to increase the awe the mighty inspire. Actually, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih dedicates a whole section to this topic under the heading "the ruler's awe is his humility" (Text I, 52 / Translation, 26), which encompasses three pages in the current edition.[34] Accordingly, the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705 CE) said that

> The most virtuous man is one who is humble when he is in a high rank, who restrains himself when he is powerful, and who is fair when he is strong." (Text I, 52 / Translation, 26)

Most quotations are poems that praise and recommend the virtue of humility among rulers:

> If you would like to find the noblest of all people,
> Look then at a king in the clothes of a poor man (Text I, 53 / Translation, 27)

The key argument in this text, composed in a courtly environment, is less religious or moral, since the numerous quotations of praising poems rather appeal to the representative function of the ruler. This might be surprising, since humility, self-restraint and modesty (*tawāḍuʾ* and *taqwāʾ*) is regarded until nowadays as an essential virtue for any pious and God-fearing Muslim[35] and as particularly meritorious among powerful people, suspects of being prone to indulge in their superior position. This text, however, does not resort to these well-known arguments but reflects a rather pragmatic perspective. One could even say that it suggests that a ruler should be modest to deserve praise and so to awe the ruled to strengthen his authority. In other words, like in the case of justice, the ruler's humility has to be known and perceived by his subjects to serve its purpose.

Qualities of the Ruled

As stated above, the main duties of the ruled were to give advice to the ruler and be obedient to the powerholders.

The latter has been discussed above as the main bond that linked the ruler with his immediate entourage. Regarding obedience, the *Book* refers to the common Quranic reference, namely Q 4:59.

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34 Text I, 52–55 / Translation 26–29.
35 Hsu, Shiu-Sian Angel, "Modesty", in: *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. Consulted online on 25 September 2018.

> O you who believe, obey God, obey God, obey the Prophet, and those in power among you (Text I, 22 / Translation, 6)

The qualities of the ruler's associate were first, as already mentioned, delicacy in the sensible formulation of advice or, in other words, manipulative finesse and sophisticated skills in allusive and indirect communication. Second, he should not be blatantly ambitious and never seek a position but wait until he is elected by the sovereign. The desirable humble and unambitious attitude of selected officials became a very frequent topos in Arabic literature. There are numerous stories about famous judges and ministers who first declined an appointment and then had to be asked several times or even searched for since they had escaped. On the one hand, rulers seem to have expected this attitude, and the book teaches the rulers to mistrust those who are manifestly ambitious:

> ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb wanted to appoint a man to a ruling position, but the man hastened to ask for it. Umar said: "By God, I intended you for it, but one who asks for such a matter is not suited to have it." (Text I, 35 / Translation, 15)

On the other, one could understand the *Book* as recommending acting with (at least apparent?) humbleness to increase career chances:

> Run away from honor and it will follow you; seek death, and life will be abundantly given to you. (Text I, 35–36 / Translation, 15)

> The Christians say: No man is elected to the position of Catholicos but one who is not interested in it and does not seek it. (Text I, 36 / Translation, 15)

Finally, besides general qualification, the main other desirable qualities of the ruler's associate are discretion and loyalty.

Conclusion

According to the *Book*, the monarchy symbolised the divine order, and it was God who had bestowed the ruler with authority, which implied the obligation to protect his subjects and to care for their welfare by good administration and wise selection of officials and advisors. The key component of the legitimate ruler's authority was justice, in the sense of the balancing of inequality, having an equilibrated and fair judgment, and pursuing the satisfaction of the needs of the majority of the ruled. Furthermore, it was desirable that the ruler was decisive, clement, good-mannered and humble, and it was important that these qualities were well-known among his subjects to increase their respect, awe and acceptance. The ruled, on the other hand, were expected to be obedient, discrete, qualified, unambitious and humble. Furthermore, rulers and ruled needed each other, and the sheltering umbrella was Islam and God.

The primary bond that connected the ruler and his subjects was advice, which could signify an informal means of political participation. Ideally, the ruled were expected to provide it, and the ruler was expected to accept it. Given the power imbalance and the lack of institutionalised rules that could force the ruler to submit to the counsel of others, it required great sensibility and human wisdom from both sides – from those in power, it needed the capacity to accept critique; from the others, emotional intelligence, courage and manipulative skills. Literature like the *Book,* i.e., mirrors of princes, probably found a readership among courtesans and young officials who wanted to learn the correct behaviour at court, with all its intricacies, and acquire adequate knowledge, diplomacy and *paideia*, but also among young princes, who used it as preparation for their future as rulers. Exempla from Islamic and pre-Islamic rulers provided them with experiences of famous forerunners and with imitable models of virtue and abhorrent cases of failure.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the *Book of the Pearl of the Ruler,* though representative for early Islamic mirror literature, can only provide a partial view into medieval Islamic ideas of the ideal ruler. Arabic mirrors were mostly produced in courtly circles, i.e., by men whose raison d'être were their positions as advisors, so it does not come as a surprise that the topic of advice and wisdom was so central. They convey a different image from the good ruler – especially a considerably more grandiose conception of political authority[36] and a much greater exaltation of the ruler's persona – than the one that we might find in Islamic legal texts, principally focused on the caliph/ruler in his capacity as executive of the Islamic Law. The latter reflect the constitutional theory of government developed by Islamic *ʿulamāʾ*, who hereby fought for their own position in the long-lasting conflict of authority between them and the political body[37] and who had much less interest to enhance the ruler's dignity and power.

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36 Louise Marlow, "Kings, Prophets and the Ulama in Medieval Islamic Advice Literature", *SI* 81 (1995), 101.

37 Böwering (2015, cf. fn. 4) 27.

Phil Booth

Images of Emperors and Emirs in Early Islamic Egypt

Introduction

At some point in the seventh century, an artist in Egypt sat down to decorate a Sahidic Coptic manuscript containing books of the Old Testament.[1] At the conclusion to the Book of Job, on the blank half page beneath, and under the bold Coptic title 'Job the Just' (written in the same hand as the preceding text), this artist decided to depict the eponymous hero alongside his three daughters – Hemera, Kasia, and Amalthaias. The subsequent sketches, all frontal and standing in a row, are striking. On the left Job himself, tall and nimbate, appears with a short, circular beard, and with curled hair protruding beneath an ornate diadem topped with a cross; he wears a *paludamentum* fastened at his shoulder with a brooch, a knee-length belted tunic beneath a cuirass, and short boots; and he bears in his right hand a staff or sceptre, and in his left a globe. To the right, the three daughters all wear full-length tunics with ornate girdles, all have earrings, and the two older, central, women have their hair in a snood; the other wears a crown.[2]

It has long been recognised that the group is presented in Roman imperial dress,[3] and indeed this is appropriate, given that the preceding Coptic text, based upon the Septuagint, includes a final chapter calling Job the king of Edom (Jb 42:17d).[4] The dating of the manuscript on palaeographical grounds, and thus also of the drawing which seems original to it, has ranged from the fifth to ninth centuries, but the imperial inspiration for the figures is suggestive of a date before, or soon after, the Arab conquest (640–642), when access to imperial portraiture of various kinds was far easier. Indeed, it seems that the artist has based his depiction of Job on a particular emperor: Heraclius (610–641).[5] Prior to his predecessor Phocas (602–610), emperors are depicted beardless, and Heraclius, on his coins up to 629,

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is the first to sport the same short beard reproduced in the portrait, where he is also depicted with similar hair and crown.[6] In the same period to 629, moreover, an *augusta* is far more prominent on several issues, in particular in bronze, than on those of his predecessors and successors.[7] On this basis, we cannot posit a firm *terminus ante quem* for the manuscript and its image, since it is obvious that coins and other portraits of Heraclius would have circulated or survived even after the Arab conquest; but an approximate date range in the period 610–c. 700 seems sound.

We need not assume that the depiction of Job constitutes a 'portrait' of Heraclius (along with Martina, Epiphania the Elder, and Eudoxia), as is still sometimes suggested;[8] nor should we assume that a Coptic text such as this must have been produced and circulated in anti-Chalcedonian circles. Nevertheless the Heraclian inspiration behind this remarkable portrait points to a religious reception of the emperor in Egypt which is more multi-faceted than is often supposed in modern literature. Such literature has often repeated, with little criticism, the account of Heraclius's reign contained within the normative narratives of the later Coptic Church, in which the emperor is memorialised, above all, as a religious persecutor.[9] Although in recent scholarship our appreciation of the themes projected in and through these normative texts – themes of oppression, exile, and martyrdom – has grown far more sophisticated, this has still not translated into a thoroughgoing deconstruction of the basic historical narrative which frames, and reinforces, those same themes.[10] In contrast, I will in this paper argue that the Heraclian persecution never happened in a meaningful sense; and, moreover, that the image of the persecuting emperor was developed in pursuit of three goals: to obfuscate the actual ambiguities created during the Roman restoration (629–642); to enable the later reintegration of fractured confessional communities; and to sanction a simultaneous transposition of the image of the good ruler from Christian to Muslim.

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6 See, e.g., P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (London, 1982) 90.

7 On the identification of the woman represented (Eudocia, Martina, or both) see the debate in C. Zuckerman, 'La petite Augusta et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocia sur les monnaies d'Héraclius', *RN* 150 (1995) 113–126; id. 'Au sujet de la petite *Augusta* sur les monnaies d'Héraclius', *RN* 152 (1997) 473–478.

8 So Kurz, 'An Alleged Portrait' *contra* R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1929) 270–274.

9 See, e.g., the still influential account of C. D. G. Müller, 'Benjamin I Patriarch von Alexandrien', *Mus* 69 (1956) 313–340.

10 See, e.g., S. Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity* (Cairo, 2005) 115–128; A. Papaconstantinou, 'Historiography, Hagiography, and the Making of the Coptic "Church of the Martyrs" in Early Islamic Egypt', *DOP* 60 (2006) 65–86.

Heraclius as Persecutor

The image of Heraclius as persecutor is embedded in the historical memory of the Coptic Church. The Church's most important narrative source is the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* [*HP*] which, in its current form, compiles several separate collections of biographies of the patriarchs of Alexandria, stretching from the first to the thirteenth centuries. The first five collections were composed in Coptic, but were then translated into Arabic when, between 1088–1094, the Alexandrian deacon Mawḥūb b. Manṣūr b. Mufarriǧ added two more biographies, in Arabic, to the existing collections; Mawḥūb's continuators also wrote in Arabic.[11] The individual collections, and most of their sources, now have no independent witnesses, but the final Arabic compilation exists in two principal recensions: the so-called 'Primitive,' which is more ancient, and the more diffuse and more famous 'Vulgate.'[12]

The compilation covering the reign of Heraclius stretches from the patriarchate of Cyril (412–444) to that of Alexander (705–730), and was compiled in c. 715 by George the Archdeacon, a disciple of the patriarch John III (681–689) and *notarios* to Simon (c. 692–701).[13] In its *Life of Benjamin*, the patriarch from 626 to 665, the *HP* describes how, following the end of the Persian occupation (619–629) – when the Chalcedonian throne of Alexandria had laid vacant – Heraclius appointed one Cyrus 'to be patriarch and governor (*batrik wa-wālī*) at the same time.'[14] At this, it continues, an angel warned the Severan patriarch Benjamin of his imminent persecution, and thus he fled from Alexandria, via Scetis, to the Thebaid. Then 'Heraclius and the Colchian' – *al-muqawqas*, a name derived from the Greek-Coptic soubriquet

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11 For this see J. den Heijer, *Mawḥūb b. Manṣūr b. Mufarriǧ et l'historiographie copto-arabe: étude sur la composition de l'Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie* (Louvain, 1989) 81–156.

12 For the 'Primitive' see C. F. Seybold, *Severus b. al Muqaffaʿ, Alexandrinische Patriarchengeschichte von S. Marcus bis Michael I (61–767) nach der ältesten 1266 geschriebenen Hamburger Handschrift* (Hamburg, 1912). For the 'Vulgate' see B. Evetts, 'History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria', PO 1 (1904) 99–214, 381–518; 5 (1910) 1–215; 10 (1915) 357–552. On the limits of this distinction see P. Pilette, 'L'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie. Une nouvelle évaluation de la configuration du texte en recensions', *Mus* 126 (2013) 419–450.

13 *Pace* den Heijer (cf. fn. 11) 142–143, but his thesis (*contra* D. W. Johnson, *Coptic Sources of the Arabic History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, unpublished PhD thesis, Catholic University of America, 1974, 114) that George did not write the first part of the *HP*'s *Life of Alexander* seems to be discounted in that *Life*'s acknowledgement – at *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 137); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 57) – of Anastasius II (713–715) as the current Roman emperor, which supports the suggestion in the editorial note of John, George's successor as compiler of patriarchal Lives, that George wrote up to the reign of Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik (715–717); see *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 151); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 91). Note that for the dates of the patriarchs I follow A. Jülicher, 'Die Liste der alexandrinischen Patriarchen im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert', in *Festgabe von Fachgenossen und Freunden Karl Müller zum siebzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht* (Tübingen, 1922) 7–23.

14 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 98); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 490).

of the patriarch, who came from Lazica[15] – ruled the land, and launched a great persecution of the orthodox. Heraclius, according to the *HP*, even seized Menas, the brother of Benjamin. The emperor's inquisitors then burnt Menas' flesh, knocked out his teeth, and then, when he would not confess the Council of Chalcedon, drowned him in a sack tossed into the sea. Heraclius 'was like the ravishing wolf consuming the (rational) flock' – and his target was 'the Theodosians' (i.e., the Severans).[16]

This image of Heraclius and his Alexandrian patriarch Cyrus is embedded in a range of Coptic literature. Our second Egyptian narrative source for the period is the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, a Severan bishop who is otherwise attested in the period c. 690–c. 700.[17] The *Chronicle* – which stretches from creation to the Arab conquest – does not survive except in an Ethiopic version of a lost Arabic paraphrase of the Coptic original, and a lamentable lacuna has expunged three crucial decades. Chapter 110 thus concludes with the accession of Heraclius (610); while chapter 111 begins with the Arabs at war within Egypt (c. 640). For his famous account of the conquests, contained in chapters 111–121 of the *Chronicle*, John has made use of two main sources. The first is a narrative of Egyptian affairs, involving a consistent cast of characters, and focused first on events in the field, and then on affairs in Alexandria, in the period c. 640–c. 642. It is almost certain that this source once embraced at least the late 630s, but that the aforementioned lacuna, deliberate or not, has decapitated it. The second source is a narrative of Constantinopolitan affairs in 641 which, as I have argued elsewhere, John himself has integrated within an earlier version of the text.[18] John does not seem to have altered these sources to a significant extent, but has instead restricted himself to some small addenda, some of which are anti-Chalcedonian glosses on events.

Three times these glosses concern the patriarch Cyrus – even though, as we shall see, this creates a distinct discordance with John's wider source material. At one point in the narrative of the conquest, we read that the Arabs were emboldened upon witnessing the opposition of the people of the Thebaid towards the emperor Heraclius, 'because of the persecution which he visited upon all the land of Egypt on account of the orthodox faith, at the instigation of the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus....'[19] In another place – following an anecdote which reports how some Gaian-

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15 See the famous discussion of A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of Roman Dominion* (Oxford, 1902) 508–526.

16 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 99); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 491–492).

17 Ed. H. Zotenberg, *Chronique de Jean, évêque de Nikiou* (Paris, 1883). For John see *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 120, 125); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 20–22, 32–34); Mena of Nikiou, *Life of the Patriarch Isaac* ed. E. Porcher, 'Vie d'Isaac, patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689, écrite par Mena, évêque de Pchati', PO 11 (1915) 299–390, at 354.

18 P. Booth, 'The Last Years of Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria (†642)', in J.-L. Fournet and A. Papaconstantinou (eds), *Mélanges Jean Gascou*, TM 19 (Paris, 2016) 509–558.

19 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 115 (Zotenberg 203).

ites (that is, anti-Severan Julianists) were punished after their failed attempt to avenge Cyrus's seizure of their properties 'in the time of persecution' – John emphasises how Cyrus, following the death of Heraclius and his own return from exile (c. 640–September 641), 'did not abandon his anger and persecution against the people of God, but began to heap evil upon evil.'[20] Then, at the conclusion to the text, when Roman forces have withdrawn and when the patriarch Benjamin has returned to Alexandria from exile (c. 644), John states: 'And all the people began to say, "This expulsion and the conquest of the Muslims were on account of the oppression of the emperor Heraclius and his tormenting of the orthodox at the hand of the patriarch Cyrus. For this reason the Romans were destroyed and the Muslims gained dominion over Egypt."'[21] Thus, while the *Chronicle* for the most part omits the period in which Heraclius's persecution is said to have occurred, that persecution nevertheless assumes a prominent position within its narrative.

Heraclius's persecution also became embedded in the hagiographic imagination of the Coptic Church. Isaac the Priest's *Life of Samuel Kalamon* – which is extant in Arabic and Ethiopic versions, as well as in the Coptic original[22] – is set around the 630s, but in its current form, at least, is the product of a period at least four generations after that of its hero.[23] Echoing the narrative of the *HP*, it records how 'Cyrus the criminal' came to Alexandria in pursuit of Benjamin, and how the latter hid himself 'in the south of Egypt.' Cyrus, 'the Colchian (*pchaukianos*),' then sat upon the throne of Alexandria and, wielding 'civil authority (*tarchē nnendumōsion*)' issued the *Tome* of Leo, and dispatched 'a cruel *magistrianus*' to Scetis to enforce it. Samuel, of course, instead anathematised it, and was then subjected to a gruesome torture before being expelled along with his disciples. He retreated to the Fayyum, but soon Cyrus came south, 'persecuting in every place,' seeking after Benjamin, and forcing each monk whom he encountered both to recognise the *Tome* and to receive communion from his hand. When he reached the Fayyum, we read, the bishop Victor 'came out to meet him with great joy and the vainglory of the world,' and Cyrus then 'published from the city of Fayyum the defiled Tome of Chalcedon by the order of Justinian [*sic*] the false king of the Romans, who ordered that the entire province of Egypt commune with the defiled Tome of Chalcedon.' Thus, the text continues, Cyrus realised that if he could convert the monasteries, so too would follow the

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20 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 115 (Zotenberg 206). On the strange placement of this episode see Booth (cf. fn. 18) 536.

21 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 221 (Zotenberg 220).

22 Sahidic: ed. A. Alcock, *Isaac the Presbyter: The Life of Samuel of Kalamon* (Warminster, 1983) (with 67–73 for fragments of a longer recension, and W. E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum* [London, 1905] 381–382 for an unedited Bohairic version); Arabic: A. Alcock, 'The Life of Anbā Samaw'īl of Qalamūn', *Mus* 109 (1996) 321–345 and 111 (1998) 377–404; Ethiopic: F. M. E. Pereira, *Vida do Abba Samuel do mosterio do Kalamon* (Geneva, 1894). For the relations of the various versions: U. Zanetti, 'Notes sur la Vie de S. Samuel de Kalamon. Versions arabe at éthiopienne – Deux citations de la "prière de la fraction"', *AB* 115 (1997) 147–158.

23 Isaac the Priest, *Life of Samuel* 1.

rest of the population. Thus '[h]e went out to all the monasteries, and the monks he found he forced to subscribe to the Tome of Chalcedon, and they took communion from his hand.'[24] Heraclius's persecution, then, according to Coptic tradition, was not limited to Alexandria, but extended across the region's monasteries.

The Union under Cyrus

The notion of an all-pervasive persecution in the later reign of Heraclius, as cultivated in the texts we have explored thus far, conceals a more complex situation at which the same texts sometimes hint. Following the Persian retreat from the Roman Near East, Heraclius and the Constantinopolitan patriarch Sergius had launched a series of diplomatic missions to restore union with those anti-Chalcedonian churches liberated from the Persians, based in part upon the doctrine of monenergism (Christ's single operation). This initiative met with some spectacular success, and for a fleeting moment brought anti-Chalcedonian Christians throughout Persia, Armenia, and the Levant into communion with Constantinople.[25] The ambition of the initiative has not often been appreciated. For, following decades in which two rival church hierarchies had existed throughout the Roman East, it aimed to re-establish a single church in which all Christians were reunited.

Perhaps the most spectacular of these Heraclian unions was realised in Alexandria in the summer of 633, under the auspices of Cyrus. Embedded in the *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council* is a Greek document bearing the title, 'Copy of the assurance (*plerophoria*) agreed between Cyrus, who was pope of Alexandria, and the party of the Theodosians.' This document records a union realised in the month of Pauni of the sixth indiction (June 633), and the nine articles of faith under which it occurred. Much contained within these articles is standard theological fare – the condemnation of Arius, Apollinarius, Nestorius, etc. – but the sixth and seventh articles are nevertheless remarkable. The former asserts that Christ is 'from two natures, that is, from both Godhead and humanity, one Christ, one Son, "one enfleshed nature of God the Word" according to the sainted Cyril, without confusion, without change, without alteration, that is, one composite hypostasis (*mia synthetos hypostasis*)....' The Christological language is here striking, for the central Chalcedonian assertion of 'in two natures' is absent. The statement 'in two natures' does occur in the next, seventh, article, but with the qualifications characteristic of Cyril of Alexandria and his Severan interpreters. This anathematises whoever — while acknowledging that Christ is 'contemplated in two natures' — nevertheless does not recognise, first, that the divine Son is a single subject '"perfect in Godhead and perfect in hu-

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24 Isaac the Priest, *Life of Samuel* 7–9 (Alcock 7–9).
25 For a full account see P. Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and dissent at the end of late antiquity* (Berkeley CA, 2014) 200–208.

manity," and in that respect and in that alone contemplated "in two natures, the same one suffering and not suffering according to one or the other," as the same sainted Cyril said, suffering humanly in the flesh as a man, but remaining impassible as God in the sufferings of his own flesh ...'; and, second, does not confess that, 'one and the same Christ and Son performed things befitting God and things human "with one theandric activity," according to the sainted Dionysius, distinguishing by contemplation alone the things from which the union came about, and mentally considering these things as remaining without change and without confusion after their natural and hypostatic union....'[26] The anathema, therefore, responds to Severan concerns that the Chalcedonian creed (and, in particular, the *Tome* of Leo) saw in the natures two subsistent subjects, and countered this with the assertion that both human and divine things were performed with the single, divine-human operation of the Word incarnate.

Subsequent doctrinal discussions would focus upon this final assertion, of one operation in Christ (i.e., monenergism). This doctrine, let us note, was not pure Severanism, for it had also been embraced within certain neo-Chalcedonian circles of the later sixth and early seventh centuries.[27] Nevertheless, what strikes the reader of the *Plerophoria* is the extent to which it responds to Severan criticisms of Chalcedon, adopts their qualifications to 'in two natures,' and suppresses explicit reference to the council itself.[28] We must of course be sensitive to the fact that the document has no independent witness, and is embedded in the acts of a council convened to condemn monenergism's proponents. But as it stands, at least, the *Plerophoria* suggests a considerable effort on the part of the unionists to realise common ground, and to distance Chalcedon from the perceived Nestorianising tendencies of the *Tome* of Leo – quite different, then, from the narrative set out in the Coptic sources described above.

One more detail from the *Plerophoria* is perhaps salient. From other documents contained in the *Acts* of the Sixth Council, we know that Heraclius first encountered Cyrus, then bishop of Phasis, during doctrinal discussions on his earlier campaigns in Transcaucasia, and at an unknown point c. 630 he must have transferred him to the see of Alexandria.[29] The text however refers to Cyrus as 'bishop by the grace of God, *locum tenens* of the apostolic throne of this Christ-loving city of the Alexandri-

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26 *CCP (681) act.*, ed. R. Riedinger, *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum tertium*, ACO Ser.2.2 (2 vols, Berlin, 1990–2) vol. 2, 598.

27 See K.-H. Uthemann, 'Der Neuchalkedonismus als Vorbereitung des Monotheletismus: Ein Beitrag zum eigentlichen Anliegen des Neuchalkendonismus', *StP* 29 (1997) 373–413; C. Lange, *Mia Energeia: Untersuchungen zur Einigungspolitik des Kaisers Heraclius und des Patriarchen Sergius von Constantinopel* (Tübingen, 2012).

28 See also H. Ohme, 'Oikonomia im monenergetisch-monotheletischen Streit', *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 12 (2008) 308–334, at 314–315, 332–333.

29 See *CCP (681) act.* (Riedinger vol. 2, 534–536, 588–592).

ans according to the divine degree of our good and serene masters.'[30] This means, therefore, that at the time of the union Cyrus was not patriarch but *topotērētēs*,[31] and that the emperor conferred the patriarchal title soon after, no doubt as a consequence of his success in effecting the union.[32]

That success is even acknowledged in the *HP*, though it is attributed, of course, to the evil machinations of Cyrus. As a result of his persecution, the text claims, a 'countless number' of the orthodox erred – some through persecution, some through bribes and honours, and some through persuasion and deceit. The lapsed even included two prominent ecclesiasts: Cyrus bishop of Nikiu and Victor bishop of the Fayyum, that is, the same turncoat denounced within the *Life of Samuel of Kalamon*.[33] The *HP* names no other bishops. But it nevertheless concludes its report of the persecution with the observation that '[Heraclius] appointed bishops in the lands of Egypt, all of it up to Anṣinā [i.e., Antinoe].'[34] The suggestion here, therefore, is that the new monenergist church stretched throughout the Delta and Arcadia, and even included the capital of the Thebaid.

The opprobrium which the *HP* directs at Cyrus of Nikiu and Victor of Arsinoe must indicate that each was the Severan incumbent of his respective see. What of their Chalcedonian equivalents? It is difficult to suppose that the new union included rival claimants to the same episcopal thrones, as had existed in the decades before.[35] Perhaps some Chalcedonian bishops refused the new union; or perhaps during the Persian occupation, when patriarchal oversight was absent and episcopal successions proscribed, the natural deaths of bishops diminished the subsequent dilemma.[36] Whatever the solution, the reference to Severan defectors points to something quite remarkable: the reintegration of the competing episcopal hierarchies which had existed since the 570s. The *Plerophoria*, then, should not be seen as the docu-

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30 *CCP (681) act.* (Riedinger vol. 2, 594).

31 So M. Jankowiak, *Essai d'histoire politique du monothélisme à partir de la correspondance entre les empereurs byzantins, les patriarches de Constantinople et les papes de Rome*, unpublished PhD thesis, Paris and Warsaw (2009) 89–90. Cf. also the lesser title give to Cyrus in 633/4 in *Anonymous Miracles of Cyrus and John* 1–3 ed. V. Déroche, 'Un recueil inédit de miracles de Cyr et Jean dans le Koutloumousiou 37', *RSBN* 49 (2012) 199–220, at 201; and the title of *topotērētēs* applied to Sergius of Joppa in Jerusalem, at *C Later. act.* ed. R. Riedinger, *Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum,* ACO Ser. 2.1 (Berlin, 1984) 46–47.

32 See the letter from Sergius of Constantinople to Honorius of Rome, sent in late 634/early 635, and calling Cyrus patriarch, in *CCP (681) act.* (Riedinger 534–6).

33 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 98); cf. *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 491).

34 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 99); cf. *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 492). Cf. the suggestion of John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 115, that the Arabs did not encounter opposition to Heraclius for his religious policies until coming to Antinoe.

35 For the establishment of the Severan episcopate see P. Booth, 'A Circle of Egyptian Bishops at the End of Roman Rule (*c.*600): Texts and Contexts', *Mus* 131 (2018) 21–72.

36 Ban on episcopal successions: see *Copto-Arabic Synaxarium* ed. R. Basset, 'Le synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte)', PO 1, 3, 11, 16, 17 (Paris, 1904–23) at PO 3, 490–491.

ment of union between two distinct hierarchies. It was rather the shared manifesto of a single, restored, Alexandrian patriarchate.

The subsequent position of dissenters from the union is difficult to perceive, and it is possible that a faction of less flexible Severan bishops, in particular in the Thebaid, flocked to the figure of Benjamin, who continued to claim the throne of Alexandria. Nevertheless, one suspects that the tradition of Benjamin's flight from persecution – which serves to situate him in the noble tradition of Athanasius and Theodosius – is a pious fiction. It is difficult to suppose that Benjamin would have absented himself from discussions while other prominent Severans negotiated an accord. Indeed in 634, in a heresiological appendix to his synodical letter, Sophronius of Jerusalem – in one of the few non-Egyptian witnesses to Benjamin's actual existence – condemns 'Benjamin of Alexandria and John and Sergius and Thomas and Severus, the Syrians, who are still living their accursed life and waging mad war against piety.'[37] The recognition of Benjamin alongside a series of Syrians is revealing, for these are four of the bishops who accompanied the Severan patriarch Athanasius the Camel-driver in his failed doctrinal discussions with the emperor Heraclius c. 630, when Athanasius aspired to fill the vacant throne of Antioch, but refused the same monenergist compromise later enshrined in the *Plerophoria*.[38] Sophronius was himself in Alexandria in June 633, and the association which he makes suggests that Benjamin too had been a leading Severan discussant on monenergism – perhaps even, like Athanasius before him, an aspirant to the vacant patriarchal throne.[39] It seems better, then, to appreciate Benjamin's 'exile' not as a flight from persecution, but rather as a retreat from a battle for legitimation which he had lost.

Set against this background, later reports of persecution serve an immediate purpose – to excuse the fracturing of the Severan communion in the 630s.[40] There is little reason to accept that the Severan bishops who entered upon the union did so under duress, and the unionist spirit belongs to a much wider pattern in the aftermath of the Persian retreat, far beyond the reach of Cyrus. The accusation of persecution which still attaches to him is therefore a gross perversion of his actual in-

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37 Sophr. H., ep. syn. in *CCP (681) act.* (Riedinger vol. 1, 482).

38 For the attempted union see esp. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.1–4 ed. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien* (5 vols, Paris, 1899–1910) vol. 4, 403–410); cf. Agapius, *Universal History* ed. 'Kitab al-'Unvan: Histoire universelle, écrite par Agapius de Menbidj', PO 5, 7, 8, 11, 4 vols (Paris, 1911–15) 467; *Chronicle of Seert* 88 ed. A. Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne: Chronique de Séert', PO 4, 5, 7, 13 (4 vols, Paris, 1908–19), at PO 13, 544–545. These sources give the lie to some later accounts (e. g., Thphn., chron. AM 6121) which suggest the realisation of the union after Athanasius's deception of the emperor. For Chalcedonian consternation at Athanasius's potential appointment: see *Doctrina Patrum* ed. F. Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum de incarnatione Verbi: Ein griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts* (Münster, 1907) 141–148); Antiochus Monachus, *Pandects* 130 (PG 89 1843BC).

39 Sophronius in Alexandria: *CCP (681) act.* (Riedinger 538); Max., opusc. 12 (PG 91, 143CD).

40 Cf. below p. 408–410.

stinct, which was not towards oppression but accommodation. We can demonstrate, moreover, that the same instinct continued throughout his career.

I have suggested above that the references to the Heraclian persecution which pepper the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu's account of the period c. 640–c. 644 are later glosses. This is because such statements are otherwise discordant with the *Chronicle*'s central source, which celebrates Cyrus and apologises for his political and doctrinal policies. Alongside his rapprochement with the Severans, Cyrus had also advocated for the appeasement of the Arabs, and negotiated a period of tribute which stretched from c. 636–c. 639. In the late reign of Heraclius (late 639 or 640), however, both policies were reversed, and Cyrus was recalled to the capital, tried, and exiled to North Africa for a brief period, before his restoration at the hands of Heraclonas, Heraclius's son, in the summer of 641.[41] Upon his arrival at Alexandria – which the *Chronicle*, or rather its source, presents as the cause of universal celebration – Cyrus had first retreated to a 'church of the Theodosians' and thence to a 'monastery of the Theodosians' where he retrieved a cross given to him before his exile. His first action, therefore, was to reaffirm his alliance with those Severans with whom he had entered into union in 633. He then processed through to celebrate the Festival of the Cross, as joyous, chanting crowds accompanied him – the image of the hated persecutor, therefore, here seems quite distant.[42]

During the patriarch's exile, it is evident that the doctrinal entente realised in the union of 633 had begun to fracture, as Heraclius had retreated from the unionist policies of the period following the Persian withdrawal. But such was the work of Cyrus's enemies. Before describing the patriarch's return in September 641, the *Chronicle* sets out a series of political rivalries, and associated violence, which were active in Alexandria in the summer of 641, in particular between the allies of one Menas and those of a Domentianus. The tensions are in part attributed to an unspecific conflict over 'the faith,' and there are indeed several indications that Domentianus was an opponent of Cyrus's doctrinal initiatives within the 630s. Above all, it is Domentianus's brother, Eudocianus, who is said to have perpetrated certain outrages against the orthodox at Easter 641 – which the *Chronicle*'s source presents as the proximate cause of Roman defeats in the field – and to have angered Menas through that same violence. It is striking, therefore, that upon his return, Cyrus elevated Menas and banished Domentianus – an emphatic reaffirmation of his commitment to the Severans, and a fundamental correction to the patriarch's later, somewhat tragic, construction as an unambiguous persecutor.[43]

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41 For all this see Booth (cf. fn. 18).

42 See John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 120 (Zotenberg 211–212). Note the unfortunate decision of Zotenberg, *Chronique* 454 and R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* (London, 1916) 192–193 to render the Ethiopic *tā'odosāwyān* as 'Tabionnesiotes' or 'monks of Tabenna.'

43 See John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 119–120, with Booth (cf. fn. 18) 539–550 for a full account.

The Church of the Persecuted

We should not suppose that the advent of Arab rule was an unambiguous triumph for the Severans, or that Severan bishops dominated from the outset. It is true that the Chalcedonian patriarchate seems to have been dissolved after the reign of Peter (642–652/3), appointed to succeed Cyrus after the latter's death in March 642.[44] But Chalcedonism remained strong, at least in Alexandria, into the 680s, and elsewhere too the various factions of the last phase of Roman rule must have remained – not least, the monenergist bishops who had entered into union in 633.[45] A dearth of evidence means we cannot gauge the relative strength of the different groups (that is, the number of their bishops, their degree of popular support, and their geographical distribution) but it is certain that monenergism cast a long shadow over the Arab period. Even the *HP* describes how the patriarch Benjamin, after his restoration, through polite encouragement and consolation 'drew to himself most of the people whom Heraclius had led astray as heretics,' that is, those who had communed with the monenergist church in the 630s. Benjamin, we are told, invited the lapsed bishops to return, and some did so with 'copious tears'; however others, through shame of their denial of the faith, refused, 'and remained in their heresy until they died.'[46]

Some of the texts credited to Benjamin himself are, as we shall see, products of later generations.[47] But two festal letters – which have numerous parallels in theme and content[48] – seem in fact to come from his pen, and to confirm the picture of the *HP*. The first, a *16th Festal Letter* (thus 642), is attributed to the patriarch in a single Ethiopic manuscript. The author claims that some more extreme opponents (perhaps the Gaianites?) have, as a consequence of his earlier refutation of theopaschism, accused him of Chalcedonism. In response, and with recourse to a rich repertoire of patristic citations (including Dioscorus and Severus), the author offers a robust defence of God's impassible suffering in the flesh, refuting both Nestorius and Apollinarius, criticising the Chalcedonian 'two natures,' and culminating in a proclamation

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44 Appointment: John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 121 (Zotenberg 219). For the suggested end of the patriarchate, see the patriarchal lists in Thphn., chron. AM 6136–6145 (= 644/5–653/4); Nicephorus, *Chronographia* (de Boor 129); and cf. *CCP (681) act.*, where we find no Alexandrian patriarch (as for Constantinople and Antioch), nor even a representative of the patriarch (as for Rome and Jerusalem), but a priest and monk Peter, called nothing more than 'representative (*topotērētēs*) of the apostolic see of the great city Alexandria' (e.g., Riedinger 20). For his predecessor Theodore in 662 see ibid. 230.
45 For Chalcedonism at Alexandria see *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 112–113); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 5–6); Anastasius of Sinai, *Hodegos* 10.1–4 ed. K.-H. Uthemann, *Anastasii Sinaitae Viae Dux* (Turnhout, 1981) 143–194, with P. Booth, 'Debating the Faith in Early Islamic Egypt', *JEH* 70 (2019) 691–707.
46 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 101); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 497).
47 See below p. 408–409.
48 For the parallels see C. Römer in *P.Köln* V 215, 84–85.

of one hypostasis, one nature, and one operation.[49] There is, then, no explicit engagement with the issue of monenergism, and theopaschism is a perennial Christological problem. But it is not impossible that the new traction of the issue resulted from the perception that the Word's suffering was the most pertinent example of his single *energeia*.

In the second letter the issue of monenergism is far more prominent. This incomplete text, extant on papyrus and dated to the seventh century on palaeographical grounds, is also concerned with theopaschism and Apollinarianism, but is here far more concerned with monenergism and its doctrinal successor monotheletism – the doctrine of Christ's single will, supported at Constantinople, in one form or another, from c. 638. Due to a large number of lacunae in the letter, the author's precise position on both doctrines is uncertain, but it has been demonstrated that he had access to a florilegium of monenergist and monothelete citations, which also circulated within the east Roman empire. The placement of Easter on April 2nd demands 663 or 674, so that the letter might belong to Benjamin's successor, Agathon, rather than Benjamin himself.[50] But it nevertheless proves that the issue of monenergism remained live in Severan circles long after the end of Roman rule, and that it seems to have become more pertinent, from the Severan perspective, *after* the conquest. It is difficult not to perceive in both letters an attempt to reconcile monenergist bishops, while also reassuring Severan critics of Chalcedon that the doctrine of the single operation resulted neither in Nestorianism nor in Apollinarianism.

It is from this context, I suggest, that the narrative of Benjamin's flight and Heraclius's persecution first took seed. We have seen that this tradition distorts the complexities of the 630s, and is a gross perversion of the efforts made towards rapprochement. But in the post-conquest period, when the dissolution of the Chalcedonian patriarchate presented new opportunities for the reintegration of the Severan communion, traditions of persecution (through blandishment, threat, or violence) provided the requisite cover not only to explain the previous fragmentation of the emergent Severan Church, but also to reintegrate monenergist bishops within it. Whether this tradition was propagated before the late seventh century is uncertain, but it soon gained a momentum of its own, in particular as different communities attempted to write themselves into the tale of Benjamin's flight. Thus one extant text ascribed to the patriarch – *On the Marriage at Cana*[51] – repeats, in its current

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49 Ed. C. D. G. Müller, *Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana und weitere Schriften des Patriarchen Benjamin I. von Alexandrien* (Heidelberg, 1968) 302–351.

50 See P. Köln V 215, with U. Hagedorn and D. Hagedorn, 'Monotheletisch interpretierte Väterzitate und eine Anleihe bei Johannes Chrysostomus in dem Kölner Osterfestbrief (P. Köln V 215)', *ZPE* 178 (2011) 143–157.

51 *On Cana:* ed. (Sahidic) Müller (cf. fn. 49) 52–285 (with ibid. 39–49 for the Bohairic and Arabic versions). The homily survives in two parts. The first part has few historical markers, but does contain a section in which the author denounces various Judases, including 'the criminal' Cyrus and a Victor (of Fayyum?) (Müller 84) – it is possible that this is authentic. The second part consists of three spi-

form at least, the narrative framework contained within the *HP,* and bear signs of being a product of the White Monastery, which is inserted into the tradition of the patriarch's flight and exile;[52] another, an incomplete letter also attributed to the patriarch, inserts the bishops of Babylon and 'Halouan' (i.e., Ḥulwān, in fact a foundation of 'Abd al-'Azīz [685–705])[53] into the same tradition, reflecting later realities;[54] and the so-called *Consecration of the Church of Saint Macarius* attributed to Agathon – which Mawhūb b. Manṣūr has added to the *HP*, but which also survives in a full version in Bohairic and Arabic – describes Benjamin's consecration of a church at Scetis, following the end of persecution, and is eager to emphasise the role of its monasteries in harbouring him.[55] Such texts have often been used in tentative reconstructions of Benjamin's corpus and career.[56] But it is better to approach them as later contributions to his legend, as Severan communities adopted and expanded a now foundational narrative.

The same process operates, I suggest, within the *Life of Samuel of Kalamon* which, as we noted above, was produced several generations after the lifetime of its hero. The attentive reader might have noted that the enforcement of Leo's *Tome* is there attributed to 'Justinian, false king of the Romans,' and not to Heraclius. This mistake is more than a scribal error, since it reveals to us the author's source. For readers of Coptic literature, the encounter between the sainted ascetic and the corrupt *magistrianus* bearing the *Tome* is a familiar scene, for it also occurs, in similar format, in the Coptic *Life of Longinus* (set under Marcian)[57] and in the Coptic and Ethiopic versions of the *Life of Daniel of Scetis* (set under Justinian).[58] Indeed the parallels between the *Life of Samuel* and the *Life of Daniel* are so close as to suggest the direct dependence of the former upon the latter – hence the accidental transmission

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ritual tales about Benjamin, which must be later addenda. One has a separate transmission, in Paris copte 129[14] 122r–123v ed. C. D. G. Müller, 'Neues über Benjamin I, 38. und Agathon, 39. Patriarchen von Alexandrien', *Mus* 72 (1959) 322–47, at 337–339.

52 (Ps.-)Benjamin, *On the Marriage at Cana* (Müller 134, 138, 146, 218, 238). See also the homily *On Shenoute* attributed to Benjamin, ed. (from Paris copte 129[14] ff. 123v–124v) Müller (cf. fn. 51) 339–341; repr. id. (cf. fn. 49) 286–294.

53 See below fn. 73.

54 Ed. E. Amélineau, 'Fragments coptes pour servir à l'histoire de la conquête de l'Égypte par les Arabes', *JA* Ser. 8 12 (1888) 361–410, at 368–378.

55 See the redactional note at *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 104) *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 503), with den Heijer, *Mawhūb b. Manṣūr b. Mufarriǧ* 144–145. For the independent versions see R.-G. Coquin, *Livre de la consécration de Benjamin* (Cairo, 1975).

56 See esp. Müller (cf. fn. 9).

57 *Life of Longinus* 29–37 ed. T. Orlandi, *Vita dei monachi Phif et Longino* (Milan, 1975) 78–88. The anti-Chalcedonian section has an independent transmission in Ethiopic, and seems to be a later addition; see S. Grébaut, 'La Prière de Langinos', *ROC* 15 (1910) 42–52.

58 Coptic: ed. I Guidi, 'Vie et récits de l'Abbé Daniel de Scété (vi siècle)', *ROC* 5 (1900) 535–552, at 548–550. Ethiopic: ed. L. Goldschmidt and F. M. Esteves Pereira, *Vida do Abba Daniel do Mosteiro de Sceté: Versão Ethiopica* (Lisbon, 1897) at 23–25.

of the name of Justinian.[59] What this suggests, therefore, is that the author is not so much describing an historical event as repurposing an accepted hagiographic scene, situating Samuel within a wider narrative of Severan resistance in which the monks of Kalamon now participate.

Images of Emperors and Emirs

If the image of the last Roman emperor propagated in Coptic literature functions to create a shared past of persecution for the Severan Church, then within that corpus of texts in which we first encounter that image, at the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries, it also functions as a foil for the new Arab governors. Thus according to the concluding section of the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, soon after the withdrawal of Roman forces from Alexandria (placed on 20th September 642), two figures entered Alexandria in rapid succession: first, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, the triumphant Arab general; and second, Benjamin, the Severan patriarch and erstwhile exile in the south (c. 643/4?).[60] The *Chronicle* then reports that supposed popular perception that 'the oppression of the emperor Heraclius and his tormenting of the orthodox at the hand of the patriarch Cyrus' were the cause of Roman defeat; but it then at once notes of ʿAmr that 'He took the amount of tribute which they determined and took nothing from the property of the church, and engaged in no plunder or pillage. He protected them for the whole length of his reign.'[61] The contrast with Heraclius is obvious.

A more fulsome account of Benjamin's return, in which ʿAmr assumes a much more prominent part, is recounted in the *HP*. Following ʿAmr's entrance into Alexandria, the *HP* reports, 'Senouthios the believing *dux*' – who is a real historical actor, appointed *dux* of the Thebaid after the conquest[62] – informed the general of Benjamin's situation, and ʿAmr sent out a letter summoning the patriarch to return from his exile and to resume control of his church. Thereupon Benjamin entered in triumph into Alexandria, and at an audience with ʿAmr, who received him with honour, he even prayed for, and predicted, the Arab conquest of Pentapolis, assuming the

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59 For the parallels see T. Vivian et al. *Witness to Holiness: Abba Daniel of Scetis* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2008) 336–341, fn. 35, 102–103.

60 See John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 120–121 (Zotenberg 219–220). Benjamin's exile is said to have been for thirteen years, but note that the rubric at ibid. (Zotenberg 26) calculates fourteen years. Soon after describing Benjamin's return, the *Chronicle* notes the coming to Alexandria of John of Damietta, 'in the second year of the lunar cycle' (Zotenberg 220). Although other such references seem to indicate the Alexandrian lunar cycle, it is probable that that this intends the indiction, thus 643/4; see P. Booth, 'The Muslim Conquest of Egypt Reconsidered', in C. Zuckerman (ed.), *Constructing the Seventh Century*, *TM* 17 (2013) 639–670, at 643 fn. 15.

61 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 121 (Zotenberg 220).

62 See BGU I 323 (14.vi.653). Note the appearance of Senouthios also in (Ps.-)Benjamin, *On the Marriage at Cana* (Müller 174–176), which perhaps here depends upon the *HP*.

role of a philosopher-cum-prophet at court.[63] In both recensions of the text, the return of Benjamin from his exile not only signifies the fulfilment of the divine fates of both general and patriarch, but also marks a new, emphatic collaboration of the Severan church and its Arab conquerors. But in the earlier recension, the so-called 'Primitive,' this scene marks the denouement of a longer narrative, in which ʿAmr invades in order to liberate the orthodox from 'Roman' oppression.[64] There is no need to accept this same tradition – which the later 'Vulgate' recension of the *HP* has chosen to expunge, but which is echoed in later Syriac and in Islamic literature[65] – as historical. But it demonstrates how an emphasis on Roman persecution (and, with it, on Arab toleration) served also to sanction the collaboration of the Severan patriarchs with the new regime.

Within George the Archdeacon's compilation of Lives within the *HP*, this co-operation of patriarch and conqueror serves also to predict and to model the political position of Benjamin's successors.[66] Thus in a series of Lives which embrace the governorship of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (685–705), and which form the conclusion to George's compilation, the text celebrates the close collaboration of governor and patriarch, and the flourishing of the church under the patronage of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and his two Severan secretaries, the Edessene Athanasius bar Gūmōyē and the Egyptian Isaac.[67] According to the *HP*'s account of the career of John III (681–689), ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, at first persecuted, but then patronised, the patriarch. It claims that John – reprising the role of Benjamin – impressed the governor at an audience, and then flourished under his and his secretaries' protection, rebuilding and endowing the Church of Saint Mark in Alexandria, and welcoming Chalcedonian communities into the Sev-

63 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 101); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 1, 495–497).

64 See *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 99), with J. Den Heijer, 'La conquête arabe vue par les historiens coptes', in C. Decobert (ed.) *Valeur et Distance: Identités et sociétés en Égypte* (Paris, 2000) 227–245, esp. 231.

65 *Chronicle to 1234* 118 ed. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (2 vols, Leuven, 1916–20) vol. 1, 251–252; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.8 (both drawing from Dionysius of Tel Maḥre); b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* ed. C. Torrey, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā* (New Haven, CT, 1922) 58.

66 So also M. Swanson, 'Reading the Church's Story: The "ʿAmr-Benjamin Paradigm" and Its Echoes in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*', in N. van Doorn-Harder (ed.), *Copts in Contexts: Negotiating Identity, Tradition, and Modernity* (Columbia, SC, 2017) 157–168.

67 On the secretaries see Mena of Nikiu, *Life of Isaac* (Porcher 358–362); *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 116, 122, 135); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 12, 48–49, 54); Eutychius, *Annals (Antiochene Recension)* ed. L. Cheiko, *Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini Annales* (2 vols, Beirut, 1906–9) 41; Ps.-Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* ed. B.T.A. Evetts, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries* (Oxford, 1895) fol. 53a; Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 11.16; *Chronicle to 1234* 149; al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-Wūlat* ed. R. Guest, *The Governors and Judges of Egypt* (Leiden, 1912) 59; perhaps also B. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Misr* (Torrey 98); *P.Lond.* IV 1412, 1447; Anastasius of Sinai, *Hodegos* 6.1.120–121, 10.1.2.36–37. On Athanasius and the Gūmōyē see M. Debié, 'Christians in the Service of the Caliph: Through the Looking Glass of Communal Identities', in A. Borrut and F. M. Donner (eds), *Christians and Others in Umayyad State* (Chicago, IL, 2016) 53–71.

eran communion.[68] The interaction of John and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz indeed became legend, since it is also memorialised in a disputational text, the so-called *Controversy of John*. Extant in several Coptic fragments and a full Arabic version, this text recounts how, at an audience with ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, John purchased a fragment of the True Cross left in the estate of an intestate Jew; defeated and converted a Chalcedonian and a Jew in a debate; and defended the real presence in the eucharist.[69] It is impossible to ascertain if the text describes a real event, which seems improbable (the Arabic version's description of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz as 'the same who built the Nilometer at Ḥulwān,' if original to the text, suggests some distance from his death in 705). But the author at least recreates two contexts which appear authentic: first, the close collaboration of John and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz; and, second, the disputational culture of the governor's court.[70]

The *HP*'s *Life of John* makes much of the fact that during his patriarchate, John had designated as his successor one Isaac, a monk at Scetis, and the spiritual son of the bishop Zacharias (of Saïs/Sā).[71] The reason for this emphasis becomes evident when the *HP* transitions to its *Life of Isaac*, which claims that upon John's death, a group of prominent bishops – which includes John of Nikiu – attempted to consecrate a deacon George, without the approval of the governor. When ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz then summoned the bishops and discovered that their candidate was not John's choice, he was angered and instead ordered the consecration of Isaac.[72] The *HP* of course presents all this as the realisation of God's will, but the whole scene seems designed to obfuscate an uncomfortable fact – that ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz could now determine the election of the Severan patriarch, to the extent of being able to refuse the collective nominee of the bishops. Indeed, the consistent leitmotif of the *HP*'s *Life of Isaac* is the orientation of ecclesiastical affairs around ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Thus in successive anecdotes the *HP* notes how Isaac built a church at Ḥulwān, the governor's new foundation to the south of Fusṭāṭ, where he attended upon the governor;[73] and how 'the secretaries' (Athanasius and Isaac?) were forced to intervene when certain 'intriguers'

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68 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 119); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 13–19). The Chalcedonian communities named are the اهل اغروة / اهل اغرو and the اهل سخيطس / اهل اسخنطس, i.e., the peoples of Agarwa and of Saḥīṭus/Asḥanṭus. Their identification is however unclear; cf. S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* (7 vols, Wiesbaden, 1984–92) 75–76, 2238–2239.

69 Ed. (Coptic) H. G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi ʾn Natrûn* (3 vols, New York, 1926–1933) vol. 1, 171–175. There the editor also describes the Arabic versions, which are unedited but contained in Paris BN Ar. 215 and 4881.

70 On this culture, in which Anastasius of Sinai participated, see also Booth (cf. fn. 45).

71 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 119); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 19).

72 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 120); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 22–24).

73 On Hulwān see Timm (cf. fn. 68) 1074–1078; W. B. Kubiak, 'ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwan and the Early Islamic Building Activity and Urbanism in Egypt', *Africana Bulletin* 42 (1994) 7–19. On its palace complexes see P. Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (Leiden, 2002) 417–419, who identifies Palace A with the Severan patriarchal palace.

denounced the patriarch to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz for his attempts to mediate a dispute between the Ethiopians and Nubians.[74]

The patriarch Isaac presents an unusual case, for besides the *HP* there also survives an extensive *Life of Isaac*, extant in a single Coptic manuscript, attributed to the bishop Mena of Nikiu,[75] a former monk of Scetis and the chronicler John's successor in his see.[76] Mena was appointed in the period c. 697–c. 700, under the patriarch Simon (c. 692–700),[77] and the *Life* cannot date much later than that time.[78] The *Life* contains several sections which intersect with the *Life of Isaac* as contained within the *HP*, and the relation of the texts does not seem to be one of simple dependence in one direction or the other. Sometimes Mena's *Life* seems to summarise the *HP*;[79] but in other places it offers divergent, more elaborate accounts of an episode which the *HP* appears to epitomise.[80] It is not impossible, therefore, that the two accounts depend upon a shared source. But much within Mena's text is unique.

At one point, the text makes pointed reference to a priest and confessor, Joseph, 'who was stood before the tribunal of the impious Cyrus, and who received a great number of blows on account on his confession of the faith.'[81] But for the most part it presents a more glorious present, in which the Severan church flourished under the patronage of the authorities at Fusṭāṭ. First amongst these were the two Severan secretaries, Isaac and Athanasius. It is claimed that while still an ascetic at Scetis, Isaac received a revelation concerning the former;[82] whereas Athanasius is said first to have opposed the patriarch but, when Isaac had healed his ailing son, to have become an active patron, funding the restoration of the Angelion, the Severans' cathedral church at Alexandria. Indeed, their fortunes at Alexandria seem now to have been reversed. The text notes that, for the first time, the so-called 'One Hundred' were able to meet at Alexandria, and while the meaning of this is not explicit, it seems to indicate that a synod of all Severan bishops was now able to convene.[83]

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74 For both see *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 121); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 24–25).

75 Ed. Porcher, 'Vie d'Isaac'.

76 See *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 125); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 34).

77 See D. N. Bell, *Mena of Nikiou: The Life of Isaac of Alexandria & The Martyrdom of Saint Macrobius* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1988) 27.

78 See, for example, *Life of Isaac* 3 (Porcher 312) which calls Zacharias – the future bishop of 'Saï' (= Saïs/Sā) who died under John III (*Life of Isaac* 10) – 'of good memory,' and which, at ibid. 9 (Porcher 341) describes a living bishop of the same see, Orion, who is in all likelihood Zacharias' immediate successor.

79 See esp. *Life of Isaac* 11 (Porcher 346–348).

80 See esp. *Life of Isaac* 11 (Porcher 348–353), on Isaac's contested election; and *Life of Isaac* 11 (Porcher 377–384), on affairs with the Nubians. Cf. *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 120–121); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 22–25).

81 *Life of Isaac* 3 (Porcher 345).

82 *Life of Isaac* 8 (Porcher 334–335). Cf. *Life of Isaac* 11 (Porcher 347, 351).

83 *Life of Isaac* 12 (Porcher 358–363).

The reasons for Athanasius's initial opposition are not given – but it is possible that the text is modelling the appropriate attitude of Christian officials to the patriarch, mirroring and anticipating that of the church's most important patron, the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, whom the *Life* calls 'the king (*pouro*),' the former designation of the Roman emperor. In contrast to the *HP*, the *Life* reduces the role of the governor in Isaac's appointment, instead presenting him as the preferred candidate of most bishops.[84] But it nevertheless proceeds to a series of anecdotes which celebrate the close relations of patriarch and governor. Some of these serve to confirm the former's holiness before the latter: a miraculous light surrounds Isaac at the altar; an entourage of angels surrounds him in his chamber; and he heals the sick son of the governor's relative. The result, according to Mena, was that 'the king' included Isaac in his permanent entourage; began to call Isaac 'prophet' and 'patriarch' (in the Biblical sense); and built churches and monasteries in 'Alban/Halban' (i.e., Hulwān) – 'for he loved the Christians.'[85]

In two other episodes, Isaac faces some serious trial before ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. In the first, some Arabs accuse the patriarch of hating them and their faith, so that the governor commanded his secretaries summon Isaac to dinner, but forbid him from making the sign of the cross over his food, on pain of death. Isaac then attends a feast at which the governor presides, but through a ruse nevertheless makes the sign without being detected, leading ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to proclaim his great wisdom, and to reaffirm his status as prophet and patriarch. Isaac is compared to 'the prophet Daniel before the kings of the Chaldeans and the Persians,' and the whole episode – in which certain detractors denounce a sainted prophet before a foreign king, and in which the former survives his subsequent trial – is modelled on the Book of Daniel.[86] It serves both to establish an irreducible divide between ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and the patriarch, while also hanging their evident closeness on the governor's humble recognition of the patriarch's holiness.

In the second episode (also recorded, in passing, in the *HP*)[87] the governor again threatens Isaac with execution when the latter intervenes in the politics of the Nubian kingdoms, attempting to make peace between the Christians of Maurotania (at peace with the Saracens) and those of Makouria (not at peace). ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz then summoned the patriarch to the *praetorium* at Babylon, but is dissuaded from executing him when Isaac enters with two celestial companions, later revealed as saints Peter and Mark. 'For this reason o king,' the patriarch proclaims, 'take care over the Church, and do not afflict it. For in truth, he who afflicts the Church has afflicted God.' The scene, therefore, serves once again to underline both the patriarch's holi-

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84 See *Life of Isaac* 11 (Porcher 348–353).
85 See *Life of Isaac* 13 (Porcher 363–372, quotation at 368).
86 See *Life of Isaac* 13 (Porcher 372–377, quotation at 376).
87 See above fn. 74.

ness and the benefits of co-operation. It concludes with ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz commanding the patriarch to build a church at Hulwān.[88]

We possess no equivalent *Life* of Isaac's successor Simon, and must depend again upon the *HP*, and the last of the biographies within George the Archdeacon's compilation. In its transition between its *Life of Isaac* and *Life of Simon,* the *HP* describes another complex succession, in which ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz passes over the eventual choice of the Alexandrians, the archimandrite of the Ennaton, and instead commands the appointment of his spiritual son Simon, a Syrian – perhaps because he desired to build bridges with the Severans of Antioch, as then described within the text.[89] Simon, it seems, was an unpopular patriarch who nevertheless had the active patronage of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.[90] Perhaps the most striking example of that patronage is a strange episode (placed in 695, soon after the Roman coup against Justinian II) in which the governor gathered to Hulwān sixty-four Severan bishops, as well as an unspecified number of heretical bishops – including the Chalcedonian Theophylact, the Gaianite Theodore, and the Barsanuphian George –, and upbraided them for their division. The *HP* gives a vague account of the affair, in which the other bishops proclaim Simon closest to their own position, and Simon himself denounces all the others.[91] But it seems that this gathering lasted for no less than three years (c. 697–c. 700).[92] At the end of that time, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz then released the bishops to their sees, but not before he commanded them to build two churches at Hulwān.[93] The suggestion seems to be, therefore, that the Severan bishops emerged unscathed from their long presence in Hulwān, and with an expanded presence in ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's capital.

The compilation of George the Archdeacon therefore aligns with other Severan texts produced within the same circle – in particular, the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu and Mena's *Life of Isaac.* On the one hand, each embeds an image of the emperor Heraclius, and his patriarch Cyrus, as a violent persecutor; but each also cre-

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88 See *Life of Isaac* 13 (Porcher 377–385, quotation at 384). For the patriarch's building at Hulwān cf. Ps.-Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, fol. 53a.

89 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 122–124); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 25–30).

90 See the report of popular hatred towards Simon, the attempt of certain clerics to poison him, and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's public burning of some of the perpetrators – *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 124–125); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 30–32).

91 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 126–127); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 34–36). It seems to be placed at Hulwān at *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 127); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 37).

92 The episode fulfils a reported curse of John of Nikiu, upon his penance for violence against a monk, that 'the Lord God, whose name I know, shall make all of you, o bishops, strangers from your sees until the end of the period to which you have condemned me'; see *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 127); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 33–34). At *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 129); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 42), following an episode in which ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz accuses the patriarch (like Isaac before him) of improper interactions with 'the Indians' (the Ethiopians?), the text states: 'After three years he [ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz] released the bishops to their sees....' On the internal indications of the *HP*, John of Nikiu's deposition must have occurred c. 697.

93 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 129); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 42). Cf. Ps.-Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* fol. 53a.

ates an implicit contrast with the subsequent toleration of an Arab governor, whether ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ or ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān. We have seen that the presentation of the last phase of Roman rule as a period of persecution is a distortion, designed to disguise the actual complexities of the 630s, and to provide the conceptual space in which to integrate and enlarge the Severan communion. But that presentation also served to legitimise a tentative transference of the model of the good ruler from Christian to Muslim – from a Roman who had fallen from, to an Arab who had fulfilled, the requisite ideals of recognising, patronising, and protecting the orthodox. The two images are therefore inseparable, and one should not be discussed in isolation from the other.

Conclusion

Three artefacts. The first is a glass dīnār weight once in the private collection of A. H. Morton. It is inscribed with the legend, 'Of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the Amīr. Weight, full-weight,' and weighs 4.29 grams.[94] The second is a bronze coin which seems to have been minted at Fusṭāṭ. It carries the image of a bearded man, and on the reverse bears, in the exergue, the Greek legend ABAZ.[95] The third is a Greek-Arabic protocol preserved in the Bodleian, Oxford. Almost all of the Arabic is lost, but the Greek retains the title *Abd[elaziz huios] Marou[an symboulos]*.[96]

These artefacts each speak to a changing world. The dīnār weight can be dated with some precision, for it serves the reformed gold coinage of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's brother, the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik, which abandoned Roman and Sasanian motifs, and instead instituted, from 696, a radical, aniconic coin weighing 4.25 grams, and including the *šahada* and an anti-Christian quotation from the Qurʾān (Q 112:1–4).[97] The bronze coin is not part of that same caliphal programme, but nevertheless points to the same reformist spirit, for the figure, though based upon the facing bust of a Roman emperor (Constans II), is denuded of Christian signs and appears to depict

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94 A. H. Morton, 'A Glass Dīnār Weight in the Name of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān', *BSOAS* 49 (1986) 177–182.

95 See, e.g., L. Domaszewicz and M. L. Bates, 'Copper Coinage of Egypt in the Seventh Century', in J. L. Bacharach (ed.), *Fustat Finds: Beads, Coins, Medical Instruments, Textiles, and Other Artifacts from the Awad Collection* (Cairo, 2002) 88–111, at 97, 110 no. 29; with the critical comments of M. A. Metlich and N. C. Schindel, 'Egyptian Copper Coinage in the 7th Century: Some Critical Remarks', *Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter* 179 (2004) 11–14, esp. 13–14.

96 *P.GrohmannPapyrusprotokoll* 3 = A. Grohmann, 'Zum Papyrusprotokoll in früharabischer Zeit', *JÖBG* 9 (1960) 1–19, at 13–14.

97 See, e.g., L. Treadwell, 'ʿAbd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms: The Role of the Damascus Mint', *RN* 165 (2009) 357–381; S. Heidemann, 'The Evolving Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery', in A. Neuwirth et al. (eds), *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Quranic Milieu* (Leiden, 2010) 149–195, at 184–186.

an Arab – equivalent to the 'standing caliph' coinage of ʿAbd al-Malik,[98] or the 'orans drachm' of Bišr b. Marwān.[99] Indeed, it perhaps portrays another of their siblings, for the reverse legend ABAZ is best explained as an abbreviation not of an obscure or corrupted mint, but rather of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.[100] The final item, the Greek-Arabic protocol, is one of several extant from the reign of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and is representative of the first intrusion of Arabic into official protocols and entagia.[101] Our three artefacts, then, are indicative of important reforms which occurred under ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. But numismatic change and the heightened intrusion of Arabic into public culture are part of a still wider transformation: under ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, for example, people bearing Arabic names appear, for the first time, as *duces* and pagarchs;[102] *agri deserti* are reassigned in an attempt to maintain fiscal revenues in the face of evident fugitivism;[103] and the first Arab estate is documented outside of Fusṭāṭ.[104] Such changes, of course, drew from existing trends;[105] and important questions remain around the extent to which ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz should be seen as a willing participant in the comparable, centralising programme of his brother.[106] But for our purposes, we can note that the world outside of Severan texts – with their laser focus on a limited number of affairs at the highest levels – was transforming.

It seems indisputable that the fortunes of the Severan church improved under ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, as the Chalcedonians fell into confusion and schism – following the Sixth Ecumenical Council's dramatic abandonment of monenergism and monotheletism in 680/1 – and as the Severans leveraged the support of the governor's two

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98 Treadwell (cf. fn. 97) 13–16; Heidemann (cf. fn. 97) 170–184.

99 See L. Treadwell, 'The "Orans" Drachms of Bishr b. Marwān and the Figural Coinage of the Early Marwanid Period', *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* 9 (2001) 223–269. One known example bears the name Bišr b. Marwān, governor of Iraq and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's brother.

100 See Metlich and Schindel (cf. fn. 95) 13–14; C. Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins: An Introduction, with a Catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* (Washington, D.C., 2008) 102–104.

101 For protocols see, e.g., *P.Gascou* 27a (694/5) 27b; SB III 7240 (= *P.BellTwoLetters* 1; 697); Corpus Papyrorum Raineri III 1–11 (685–705); *P.CLT* 1 (698). For these texts and for *P.Ness.* 60a = *P.GrohmannPapyrusprotokoll* 2a (674), which Grohmann supposed to have a bilingual protocol, see Delattre and Vanthieghem in *P.Gascou* 27 116. On the five known bilingual entagia of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz see A. Delattre at al., 'Un *entagion* bilingue du gouverneur ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān trouvé à Antinoé', *CE* 88 (2013) 363–371.

102 See below fn. 115.

103 F. Morelli, 'Agri deserti (mawât), fuggitivi, fisco: Una κλήρωσις in più in SPP VIII 1183,' *ZPE* 129 (2000) 167–178 (citing also CPR 76–78, from the Atias archive).

104 See CPR VIII 82 (699/700), referring to an estate of the *protosymboulos*, i.e., the caliph, in the Arsinoite.

105 For changes under Muʿāwiya see R. G. Hoyland, 'New Documentary Evidence and the Early Islamic State', *BSOAS* 69 (2006) 395–416; C. Foss, 'Egypt under Muʿawiya. Part 1: Flavius Papas and Upper Egypt', *BSOAS* 72 (2009) 1–24; id., 'Egypt under Muʿawiya. Part 2: Middle Egypt, Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria', *BSOAS* 72 (2009) 259–78.

106 See now J. Mabra, *Princely Authority in the Early Marwānid State: The Life of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān* (Piscataway, NJ, 2017).

chartoularioi, Isaac and Athanasius.[107] But there is good reason to hesitate over the picture presented in Severan texts.[108] First of all, both the *Life of Isaac* and the *HP* hint at periods of broader conflict, besides those episodes in which ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz threatens the patriarch for some misdemeanour. We have seen above that the *HP* describes how the governor detained Christian bishops at Hulwān for all of the period c. 697–c. 700;[109] but it also then passes over a striking but obscure patriarchal interregnum between the death of the patriarch Simon (placed on 18.vii.700) and the consecration of Alexander (placed 25.iv.704).[110] Both the *HP* and the *Life*, moreover, refer to an episode in which ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz had ordered the smashing of crosses. The *Life of Isaac* places this at the beginning of his rule, and seems to associate it with his initial opposition to the patriarch John (as also reported in the *HP*);[111] but the *HP* places it much later, before the death of Isaac (692), and adds the arresting detail that, 'He wrote a number of inscriptions and he placed them on the doors of the churches in Misr and the Delta, saying in them, "Muhammad is the great messenger of God, and Jesus also is the apostle of God. But God does not beget and is not begotten."'[112] The reported inscription is reminiscent of those which adorned both the reformed coinage and ʿAbd al-Malik's Dome of the Rock, and points to a new confidence in critiquing Christian dogma, and in proclaiming Islam as the religion of the new Arab empire.[113]

In contemporaneous documents, we also encounter several signs of tension between Christians and the regime of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Perhaps most significant is a text from the archive of Fl. Atias (Ar. Aṭiyya) – pagarch of Arsinoe (c. 694–c. 697), and then dux of Arcadia and of the Thebaid (c. 697–c. 703).[114] This Greek document, SB III 7240 (= *P.BellTwoLetters* 1), bears a bilingual protocol which recognises ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and is dated to 20th Phaōphi of an 11th indiction, which must be 7.x.697.

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107 See above fn. 67 and Booth (cf. fn. 45) for the effects of the Sixth Council.

108 *Pace*, e.g., M. Mikhail, *From Byzantine to Islamic Egypt: Religion, Identity, and Politics after the Arab Conquest* (London, 2014), e.g., 41; Mabra (cf. fn. 106) esp. 119–159.

109 Above fn. 92.

110 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 132–133); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 46–50)

111 *Life of Isaac* 11 (Porcher 347): 'Indeed when he had first come to Egypt, he attempted to do evil against the churches – he broke crosses and did much evil to the archbishop.'

112 *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 122); *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 25). Cf. also the various anti-Christian crimes attributed to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's son al-Aṣbag, who was his father's subordinate; see *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 50–51); *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 133–134), and fn. 117 below.

113 For the Dome of the Rock inscriptions see, e.g., M. Milwright, *The Dome of the Rock and Its Umayyad Mosaic Inscriptions* (Edinburgh, 2016) (with 224–225 on the reported inscriptions in the *HP*). Cf. the Fusṭāṭ inscription of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz cited from Maqrīzī in E. Combe et al., *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo, 1931) 7–8 no. 8, dated 688/9 and devoid of distinctive religious language.

114 On the Atias archive see 189–197 in CPR VIII 72–84; to whose list add CPR XIX 17, SB XXIV 16219, SBKopt IV 1783, 1785, *P.Gascou* 28 and perhaps CPR IV 6. For the last text, which would extend Atias' dates from 699/700 to 703, see J. Cromwell, 'Coptic Texts in the Archive of Flavius Atias', *ZPE* 184 (2013) 280–288.

It is one of the earliest witnesses to the entrance of persons bearing Arabic names into the upper civil administration; but it also serves to correct our perspective on the fiscal situation of the monasteries under ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Therein Fl. Atias address-es 'the inhabitants of "the Cup" on the mountain of Memnonia [Jeme],' and pro-claims that he is writing to them, as to the other monasteries, concerning their poll-tax (*diagraphon*), which the monks had not paid 'at the time of the insurrection (*en kairōi tēs antarsias*).' Atias reissues a guarantee which the monks had obtained – no doubt following the insurrection – from 'Ouoeith, [Ghuwayth?] former administra-tor of the Upper Country (i.e., dux of the Thebaid [and Arcadia?]),' and which al-lowed them to remain in return for the poll-tax.[115] The date of the previous insurrec-tion is uncertain, although it is possible that it should be placed in the rule of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and be seen as a direct response to the application of the poll-tax to indi-vidual ascetics.[116] Whatever the case, it is often supposed – following the *HP* – that the poll-tax was imposed on monasteries in c. 705.[117] Our document demon-strates that it was applied to some monasteries, in Western Thebes if nowhere else, in the 690s.

We do not know when Mena's *Life of Isaac* was completed, except that it was within the author's lifetime and after his appointment c. 697–c. 700;[118] nor do we know the extent to which the relevant Lives within George's contribution to the *HP* (from John III to Alexander) are products of, and commentaries upon, the period of their compilation (c. 715).[119] We must therefore be sensitive to the fact that the image of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz as the good ruler might be, at least in part, a construction from the perspective of his successors' rule, when the transformations witnessed in other sources for his governorship – the greater prominence of Islam and of Arabic in public culture; the apparent displacement of Christians within the higher and

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115 For an edition and a discussion see H. I. Bell, 'Two Official Letters of the Arab Period', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 12 (1926) 265–281, at 265–275.

116 Note that Ouoeith appears under the title ἀμῖρ (καὶ) σακελλάριος in a document, *P.Apoll.* 1, dated to a 2nd indiction. J. Gascou and K. Worp, 'Problèmes de documentation apollinopolite', *ZPE* 49 (1982) 83–95, at 85–86, read the title as indicating that Ouoeith was dux, placing the document in 688/9 (earlier dates being excluded). Ouoeith also appears bearing the title *sakellarios* in a small fragment, SB 24 16316, dated 26.ii ind. 14 (686?).

117 *HP (Vulgate)* (Evetts PO 5, 50–51); *HP (Primitive)* (Seybold 133–134) attributes the extension of the poll-tax over monks to al-Aṣbag b. ʿAbd b. al-ʿAzīz, and suggests this occurred after the election of Alexander in 705. But al-Aṣbag died before his father, and one suspects that George is here attempting to deflect blame from ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.

118 See above fn. 78.

119 For this approach to George's contribution to the *HP* see C. Palombo, 'Constantinople and Alex-andria between the Seventh and Eighth Centuries: The Representation of Byzantium in Christian Sources from Conquered Egypt', in N. S. Matheou et al. (eds), *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities* (Leiden, 2016) 243–259.

lower levels of the provincial administration; and the extension of fiscal liabilities over monks – intensified and became more pervasive.[120]

The image of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz as the good Muslim ruler, like that of Heraclius as the bad Christian ruler, must therefore be appreciated against, and complicated through, wider evidence for his rule. But it is as crucial that both images be recognised as being in dialogue with the other. For Severan authors writing at the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries, the construction of Heraclius as persecutor – an inversion of his actual doctrinal instincts – served several purposes: to disguise the situation in the 630s, in which large numbers of Severans had entered into willing communion with Constantinople; to sanction the ongoing re-integration of 'lapsed' Severan communities, and of Chalcedonian monenergists; and to create a powerful shared narrative for the emergent Coptic Church. At the same time, their simultaneous image of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz served to minimise the actual tensions of his rule, when the processes of Islamisation and Arabisation were accelerating; to excuse the evident co-operation of the Severan leadership with the Arab-Muslim authorities; and to provide an idealised model for the future relationships of patriarch and governor. Each image progressed in tandem and in conversation, reinforcing the other and together witnessing a pivotal transition, in which Christian notions of good rulership were being transposed from the emperor at Constantinople to the emir at Fusṭāt.

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120 For these changes see P. Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State: The World of a Mid-eighth Century Muslim Official* (Oxford, 2013) esp. 91–216.

Maria Conterno

Shaping the Good Christian King under Muslim Rule: Constantine and the Torah in the Melkite Arabic Chronicle of Agapius of Mabbug (Tenth Century)

Introduction

The word 'Melkite' comes from the Semitic root *m-l-k*, which gives the word for 'king' in Syriac (*malkō*) and Arabic (*malik*). The expression 'Melkite Christians,' therefore, means literally 'the Christians of the King.' It was coined in the late eighth–early ninth century to indicate those Christians living under Muslim rule – mostly in Egypt, Palestine and Syria – who shared the Chalcedonian, dyothelete faith of the Byzantine emperor. First attested in East Syrian (Nestorian) and Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) sources,[1] the term 'Melkites' was clearly born with a disparaging connotation, pointing at a supposed political loyalty to the emperor of Constantinople as well as at the acceptance of a creed that had been not only sanctioned, but forged by polit-

1 Syrian Orthodox Christians who adopted Severus of Antioch's miaphysite doctrine are also called 'monophysites' or 'Jacobites' after Jacob Baradeus (c. 500–578), the figure who most significantly contributed to the establishment and organisation of the Syrian Orthodox Church as an independent institution after the split caused by the Council of Chalcedon (451). East Syrian Christians, who adopted the dyophysite doctrine preached by Theodore of Mopsuestia, are also labelled 'Nestorians' after Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople whose contested theological positions led to the Council of Ephesus in 431. The terms 'monophysites' and 'Nestorians,' although often still used in scholarship, have been pointed out as problematic and incorrect, see D. Winkler, "Miaphysitism: a New Term for Use in the History of Dogma and in Ecumenical Theology", *The Harp* 10 (1997), 33–40 and S.P. Brock, "The "Nestorian" Church: a lamentable misnomer", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78.3 (1996), 1–14.

ical rulers.[2] The monothelete controversy, which troubled the Byzantine Church for most of the seventh century, had eventually brought about a split in the eastern Chalcedonian communities with the birth of a separate church – the Maronite one – that rejected the dyothelete creed imposed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council of 680/1.[3] Thereafter, the dyothelete Chalcedonians were left with the stigma of being 'the friends of the emperor'; for this reason, they came to be called, and then started to call themselves, 'Melkites.' It comes as no surprise then, that for the Melkites the figure of the Christian king was rich in symbolic import as much as in thorny implications, and it inevitably played a role in the process of self-definition and identity-building of their communities. This is evident, for instance, in the way in which Christian kings of ages past are treated in historiographical works.[4] More precisely, the way in which Melkite historians remoulded the late antique historiographical and hagiographical material to portray certain Christian kings, and to thus shape their ideal Christian ruler, can be very telling about the present issues with which they were confronted and about the 'hottest topics' in their apologetic agenda.

A remarkable example of this is provided by a rather singular narrative concerning Constantine the Great contained in one of the earliest Melkite Arabic chronicles, the so-called Kitāb al-ʿunwān of Agapius of Mabbug.[5] Agapius was the Melkite bishop of the city of Mabbug, ancient Hierapolis and modern-day Manbij in northern Syria.[6] In the 940s[7] he wrote a universal chronicle in Arabic divided into two parts: from the Creation to Christ and from Christ to his own time (the latter preserved only up to the year 780). Agapius lived at the crossroads between Byzantium and the Islamic world, geographically as well as culturally. In the manuscripts he is referred to either as 'Agabius' or 'Mahbub (the Arabic equivalent) ibn Qustantin al-

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2 On the origin, first attestations and spread of the term see S.H. Griffith, "'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the christological controversies in Arabic in third/ninth century Syria", in D. Thomas (ed.), *Syrian Christians under Islam. The first thousand years*, Leiden – Boston – Cologne 2001, 9 – 55 (esp. 11 – 18).
3 A creed regarded as an unorthodox innovation and labelled by both Maronite and miaphysite sources as 'Maximianist heresy' (after Maximus the Confessor).
4 For a general overview of Melkite historiography before modern times, see J. Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle*, Louvain – Paris 1979 – 1989, vol. II. t. 2, 49 – 55; vol. III. t. 1, 167 – 175; vol. III t. 2, 95 – 101.
5 The title *Kitāb al-ʿunwān* (literally 'Book of the title') is due to the misreading of a corrupted line in the preface by one of the editors, Alexander Vasiliev. In the manuscripts, the work is presented as *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh*, 'Book of history,' or just *Taʾrīkh*, 'History.' It is accessible in two editions, both published at the beginning of the last century: L. Cheikho, *Agapius episcopus Mabbugensis: Historia universalis / Kitāb al-ʿunwān* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 65 – Scriptores Arabici 10), Paris 1912; A.A. Vasiliev, *Kitab al-ʿunvan. Histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj* (PO 5.4, 7.4, 8.3, 11.1), Paris 1910 – 1915.
6 This piece of information is provided in the header of the only manuscript preserving the second part of the chronicle, the codex Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 323.
7 The *terminus post quem* of 941/2 CE can be gathered from one of the chronological summaries contained in the chronicle, where Agapius says that 330 years have passed since the beginning of Islamic rule.

Rumi,' namely 'Agapius/Mahbub son of Constantine the Greek,' and his work provides many indications that he must have had a relatively good knowledge of Greek, if not even a Greek education. The tenth century witnessed the triumphal, albeit ephemeral, reconquest of Northern Syria by the Byzantine Empire. In the 920s, under the guidance of the Domestikos of the Scholai John Kourkouas, the Byzantine army had become – with changing fortunes – more resolutely aggressive against Muslim frontier strongholds and raided bases, including Theodosioupolis, Melitene, Samosata and Tarsus. The definitive capitulation of Melitene in 934 inaugurated a phase of successful and durable expansion, which gradually broke the resistance of the Hamdanid emir of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla, and brought within a few decades the reconquest of Crete (961), Cilicia and Cyprus (963–965), Mopsuestia and Tarsus (965), Antarados and Gabala (968), and eventually Antioch in 969. Aleppo was stormed, taken repeatedly, and turned into a semi-independent buffer state whose Muslim emir had to pay a tribute to the emperor and provide military support against the Fatimids. The Eastern frontier kept evolving until well into the eleventh century before it began eroding after confrontations with the Seljuk Turks and the annexations of Larissa/Shaizar (999), Edessa (1030) and Hierapolis/Manbij (1069). Although in Agapius' lifetime Manbij was still under Muslim control, Byzantium was literally around the corner and the whole region was beginning to gravitate again around Constantinople. This had of course implications for the Christians living there, particularly the Melkite Christians.

Although in communion with the Byzantine Church, the Melkites had soon developed a distinct cultural identity which set them apart both from the other Eastern Christians (Jacobites, Maronites, East Syrians) and from the Byzantine dyothelete Chalcedonians (Greek Orthodox). The main distinguishing feature was their use of the Greek patristic corpus while at the same time adopting Arabic for not only daily but also literary and religious uses.[8] This gave birth to an Arabic-speaking but 'Greek-minded' hierarchy organised around the three patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. In the tenth century, when the Byzantine 'reconquista' of Northern Syria began, the process was already advanced enough to prevent the complete assimilation of Syrian Melkites to the Byzantine Church. Nonetheless, the reconquest of Antioch in 969 led to a certain degree of 're-Byzantinisation' of the patriarchate, especially visible in the liturgy,[9] and to a revival of the Greek language. This inaugurated a long season of coexistence and competition between Greek and Arabic within the Melkite communities, with the former remaining the of-

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8 See Griffith (cf. fn. 2).

9 See H. Kennedy, "The Melkite Church from the Islamic Conquest to the Crusades: Continuity and Adaptation in the Byzantine Legacy", in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress: Major Papers*, New Rochelle – New York 1986, 325–343 (repr. in H. Kennedy, *The Byzantine and the Early Islamic Near East*, Burlington 2006, XII); K.-P. Todt, "Region und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinische Zeit (969–1084)", Byzantinische Zeitschrift 94 (2001), 239–267. For the parallel process in Jerusalem, see D. Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem*, Oxford 2017.

ficial religious language even after the definitive withdrawal of the Byzantine Empire from the region, but the latter taking the lion's share in everyday life and literary production.[10] Agapius, therefore, lived also at a turning point in the history of Syrian Melkites communities, when their process of self-definition was still a work in progress but a durable change was already looming large. The long passage on Constantine the Great presented and discussed in this paper bears clear signs of these specific historical, cultural, and social circumstances.

The 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine' Excursus

The episode in question is not to be found in the part of the chronicle dealing with the reign of Constantine but is nested within a multi-layered flash-forward narrative about the translation of the Septuagint set by Agapius at the time of Abraham. When reporting the genealogy of the biblical patriarchs and its chronology, Agapius is very keen to stress the fact that the correct numbers of the patriarchal chronology are to be found only in the Greek translation of the Torah, whereas those contained in the Hebrew Torah and in the Syriac translation are wrong, having been altered by the Jewish High Priests at the time of Jesus. There are indeed various discrepancies between the biblical chronology attested in the Masoretic text of the Torah and in the Septuagint, which are well known and much studied, and remain a philological conundrum to date.[11] Agapius introduces the story of the tampering at the very beginning, when he gives a first overview of Adam's descendants:

> The following calculation appears in the translation of the Seventy wise men: it is written that Adam lived 230 years, then Seth was born to him, and from the day of Seth's birth to when Enosh was born to him 205 years [passed], and this makes 435 years. From Enosh's birth to when Cainan was born to Enosh 190 years [passed], which makes 625 years. From the day of Cainan's birth to when Malahalel was born to Cainan, 170 years [passed], and this makes 795 years. After Malahalel's birth Adam reached 930 years, which was the length of his life.
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> But according to what is in the Torah which is in the hands of the Jews – since they have tampered with and subtracted from it the years taken into account in the calculation of the chronology of the world, namely the years they subtracted from the patriarchs' lives before their sons were born (and the Torah of the Syrians comes from the Torah, because the Syriac Torah was translated from the Hebrew one after Christianity [came] and after the corruption [of the

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10 This 'linguistic split' eventually led the Melkites to separate from the Greek Orthodox Church and to seek in 1729 the union with the Catholic Church of Rome, which allowed them to abandon Greek and have their own liturgy in Arabic.

11 For recent, comprehensive discussions of the question see G. Larsson, "The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the MT and LXX," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983), 401–409; J. Hughes, *Secrets of the times: myth and history in biblical chronology*, Oxford 1990; D.V. Etz, "The Numbers of Genesis V 3–31: A Suggested Conversion and its Implications," *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993), 171–189; M. Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung: Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta*, Berlin (1994), 129–144.

text]) – it is written in it that Adam lived until the ninth generation of the sons of his sons, that is until the year 56 from the birth of Lamek son of Enoch, because they subtracted from the years of Adam and of other patriarchs 100 years before the birth of their sons and they added them to the years of their lives after the birth of their sons. The Jewish priests Annas and Caiaphas wanted to deny the advent of the Messiah and [they said] that the time when he would come had not arrived yet. According to the timespan in the Hebrew Torah, then, in what they recorded and wrote [we read] that Adam lived 130 years and gave birth to Seth; from Seth's birth to Enosh's, 105 years; from Enosh's birth to Cainan's, 90 years; from Cainan's birth to Malahalel, 70 years; from Malahalel's birth to Jared, 65 years [...].[12]

He continues to narrate the biblical history more in detail, providing for each of the patriarchs the total years of life and the age of begetting[13] according to both the Septuagint and to what he calls the 'manipulated,' 'altered,' or 'false Torah of the Jews' – which, he regularly adds, was translated and adopted by Syriac Christians.[14] When he reaches the time of Abraham, he explains once more the reasons of such discrepancies between the Greek and the Hebrew/Syriac text of the Bible, inserting in his narrative a long, multi-layered flash-forward, which can be summarised as follows.[15]

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the Jewish High Priests Annas and Caiaphas tampered with the biblical chronology in order to prove, according to the Sacred Scriptures, that the time of the Messiah was yet to come and therefore, that Jesus of Nazareth could not be the Christ. They shrank the chronology of the biblical patriarchs from Adam to Abraham, counting on the fact that no one had a good enough knowledge of such a remote past to discover the ruse. They altered the original Hebrew text of the Torah, but in the Temple of Jerusalem a copy was also kept of the Greek translation of the Scriptures made in Alexandria almost 300 years before by Ptolemy II's request. This triggers, within the flash-forward, a flash-back to the story of the translation of the Septuagint, which Agapius reports by largely following the traditional version of the *Letter of Aristeas*. At the end of it, we see King Ptolemy sending out copies of the Greek translation to the major cities of the Mediterranean (Rome, Ephesus, Byzantium), with one brought back to Jerusalem by the Seventy-two translators in person:

> The wise translators asked him for one of those copies, in order to boast about it with their fellows. He granted it to them, and this was a providential disposition of God's, because he foresaw

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12 A.A. Vasiliev, *Kitab al-ʿunvan. Histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj*, (PO 5.4), Paris 1910, 561–562.

13 Namely the age at which his first son, or the son who continued the genealogical line, was born. The age of the world was calculated by summing up the age of begetting of all the biblical patriarchs from Adam down to Jesus.

14 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 12) 573, 580–582, 586–589, 595, 598, 599, 629–631, 634–635.

15 The excursus takes up more than 20 pages in Vasiliev's edition: Vasiliev (cf. fn. 12) 636–660. It includes also a résumé of Alexander the Great's feats, which led to the establishment of the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt.

and knew in advance, in his knowledge, the iniquitous deeds of their priests and governors, Annas and Caiaphas, and their fellows, against the Messiah at the moment of his appearance.[16]

After that, Agapius repeats in even more detail the story of the tampering and concludes:

> Today it [i.e., the altered Torah] is in the hands of those Christians who use the Syriac idiom, and the true Torah translated by the Seventy was not shown to them until Constantine reigned, son of Helena the believer, whose reign was 305 years after the advent of the Messiah.[17]

These words trigger one more jump forward in time, starting the narrative about Constantine. According to Agapius, Constantine went in person to Jerusalem in search of the relics of Christ and of the books of the Prophets. Some of the Jews, afraid that the truth about the tampering would be discovered, decided to get ahead of the game by leaking the story of the tampering to the emperor. The emperor then summoned the High Priests and asked for an explanation, but they denied everything stubbornly, so he jailed them and had the copies of the Greek translation fetched from Alexandria, Rome and the other cities. Once they became aware of this, the High Priests decided to confess in order to have their life spared and they gave their copy of the Septuagint to the Emperor. Constantine compared all the Greek copies with the Hebrew one and he found out that the Hebrew text had actually been tampered with, and that only the Septuagint preserved the original text of the Torah. Since the Jews kept putting forward lame excuses, he convoked some Christian bishops and ordered them to counter the Jews' arguments in a dispute. The bishops smashed the Jews' versions by revealing the whole truth that had been hidden for centuries, providing further proof in a chronological exegesis of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks (Dn 9:24–27), from which the exact date of the Messiah's arrival can be calculated. The long digression ends as follows:

> As the altered Torah and all the books of the Prophets that are in possession of the Christians in Syriac copies are spread in all the parts of the earth from East to West, the Christians are not able [to explain] the cause of this shortcoming in its translation and the reasons of the issue, but [as for] all the scholars and wise men and whoever tried to translate the books of the Prophets by interpreting and rendering them from one language to another, or to explain their meaning and interpret their content, they did not change anything in it, or their translation is based on the Syriac Scriptures, which are at odds with what is in the translation of the Seventy, in what the Jews altered and changed after the resurrection of the Messiah.[18]

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16 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 12) 644–645.
17 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 12) 647.
18 Vasiliev (cf. fn.12) 659–660.

The Apparent Targets: Syriac Christians and Jews

In just one sentence, Agapius dismisses centuries of exegesis and biblical studies in Syriac, because they were based on an altered biblical text, namely the Syriac translation made on the Hebrew original and known as the *Peshitta*. Such an inherent vice implicitly calls into question the whole theological thought of Syrian Orthodox and East Syrian Christians, who are clearly one of the targets of this digression. Syriac, though, was not exclusively the language of Jacobites and Nestorians: in pre- and early Islamic time it was in fact spoken and used in the liturgy by eastern Chalcedonians as well,[19] and was still being used as liturgical language by some Melkites even at the time of Agapius and later. This is suggested by a number of Melkite lectionaries produced in the monasteries of the Black Mountain, near Antioch, during the second Byzantine domination of Northern Syria. These are Syriac translations of Byzantine liturgical books in which everything is remarkably translated from Greek except for the Biblical pericopes, whose text matches the *Peshitta*.[20] These lectionaries attest on the one hand to the process of 'Byzantinisation' of Melkite liturgy inaugurated by the reconquest of Antioch and on the other hand to a certain resilience of Syriac as a religious language among the Melkites. Between the lines of Agapius' text, therefore, we can also read an appeal to those Melkite Christians who were still using the Syriac translation of the Bible, thus sharing such an important identity marker as language with heretics rather than with the orthodox Chalcedonians. John Lamoreux, who has recently translated and commented on the 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine' excursus in a source-book for the history of Melkite Christianity,[21] argues that Agapius must have found the whole narrative block in a Syriac source and just translated and incorporated it in his chronicle. The narrative would have been originally part of a treatise addressing both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Syriac Christians with the aim of convincing them to abandon the Syriac translation of the Scriptures

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19 On the Greek-Syriac bilingualism of eastern Christians see S.P. Brock, "Greek and Syriac in Late Antique Syria", in A.K. Bowman and G. Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, Cambridge – New York 1994, 149–160. More specifically on Greek and Syriac among eastern Chalcedonians/Melkites: S.H. Griffith, "From Aramaic to Arabic: the Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods", DOP 51 (1997), 11–31; S.P. Brock, "Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The Translation of St. Isaac the Syrian," in J. Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present,* Louvain 2001, 201–208; A.M. Butts, *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in Its Greco-Roman Context* (Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 11), Winona Lake, IN 2016.
20 See S.P. Brock, "Syriac Manuscripts copied on the Black Mountain, near Antioch", in R. Schulz and M. Görg (eds.), *Lingua Restituta Orientalis: Festgabe für Julius Assfalg*, Wiesbaden 1990, 59–67.
21 J.C. Lamoreux, "Agapius of Manbij", in S. Noble – A. Treiger (eds.), *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World 700–1700*, DeKalb IL 2014, 136–159.

based on the Hebrew text in favour of one based on the Septuagint.[22] This hypothesis raises the important question of the competition among the different translations of the Bible in late antique eastern Christian communities, a question that goes beyond the scope of the present paper.[23] Regardless of its origin, however, Agapius' re-use of this narrative in his Arabic chronicle responds to his own agenda and results in a sweeping vilification of the Syriac language and of Syriac Christianity altogether.

The anti-Jewish aim of the story is plain, too, and here Agapius is not proposing anything new. Not only was the mutual accusation of tampering with the Scriptures a long-standing topos in Christian-Jewish polemics,[24] but Muslims would soon appropriate this topos and use it against both Jews and Christians. The accusation of *taḥrīf* (falsification) addressed to the 'People of the Book' is in fact already present in the Quran,[25] and the Iranian polymath Al-Biruni (973–1048), who wrote some fifty years after Agapius, seems to sketch the very scenario in which Agapius's excursus originated. In his *Chronology of Ancient Nations,* he discusses the differences between the Jewish and Christian computations of the world era and their mutual accusations of inaccuracy, finding faults with both:

> The Jews and Christians differ widely on this subject; for, according to the doctrine of the Jews, the time between Adam and Alexander is 3,448 years, whilst, according to the Christian doctrine, it is 5,180 years. The Christians reproach the Jews with having diminished the number of years with the view of making the appearance of Jesus fall into the fourth millennium in the middle of the seven millennia, which are, according to their view, the time of the duration

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22 Namely the so-called *Syro-Hexapla*, a translation based on the Septuagint column of Origen's *Hexapla* produced by Paul of Tella in 617; see A.G. Salvesen, "Syro-Hexapla", in S.P. Brock – G. Kiraz, A.M. Butts – L. Van Rompay, *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, 394–395.
23 I discuss this issue, as well as various hypotheses on the origin of the excursus, in M. Conterno, "Found in translation: Agapius, the Septuagint, and the 'falsified' Torah of the Jews", in M. Conterno – M. Mazzola (ed.), *Intercultural Exchange in Late Antique Historiography*, Leuven 2020, 143–167. See also R.B. ter Haar Romeny, "The Peshitta and its Rivals. On the Assessment of the Peshitta and Other Versions of the Old Testament in Syriac Exegetical Literature", *The Harp* 11–12 (1998–1999), 21–31.
24 See S. Benoit, "L'inspiration des Septante d'après les Pères de l'église", in *L'homme devant Dieu. Mélanges H. Lubac*, 3 vols., Paris 1963, vol. I, 169–187; W., Adler, "The Jews as falsifiers: charges of tendentious emendation in anti-Jewish Christian polemic", in D. Goldenberg (ed.), *Translation of Scriptures: Proceedings of a Conference at the Annenberg Research Institute, May 15, 1989*, Philadelphia 1990, 1–27; Y. Moss, "Versions and Perversions of Genesis: Jacob of Edessa, Saadia Gaon and the Falsification of Biblical History", in A.M. Butts – S. Gross (eds.), *Syriac Christianity and Judaism. Intersections across the First Millennium*, Tübingen 2020, 207–231; Conterno (cf. fn. 23) 151–158.
25 See J.-M. Gaudeul – R. Caspar, "Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le *taḥrīf* (falsification) des Écritures", Islamochristiana 6 (1980), 61–104; G.S. Reynolds, "On the Qur'anic accusation of Scriptural Falsification (*taḥrīf*) and Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic", Journal of the American Oriental Society 130.2 (2010), 189–202; D. Thomas, "The Bible in Early Muslim Anti-Christian Polemic", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 1 (1996), 29–38; C. Adang, "Medieval Muslim Polemic against the Jewish Scriptures", in J. Waardenburg (ed.), *Muslim Receptions of Other Religions. A Historical Survey*, Oxford – New York 1999, 143–168.

of the world, so as not to coincide with that time at which, as the prophets after Moses had prophesied, the birth of Jesus from a pure virgin at the end of time was to take place.[26]

He rejects the Christian numerological interpretations of Daniel's prophecy based on the Syriac language because the original language of the prophetical revelation was Hebrew, but he also replies to the claims of superiority of the Septuagint:

> Now this [i.e., the Greek translation ordered by Ptolemy] is the copy of the Christians, and people think that in it no alteration or transposition has taken place. The Jews, however, give quite a different account, viz. that they made the translation under compulsion and that they yielded to the king's demand only from fear of violence and maltreatment, and not before having agreed upon inverting and confounding the texts of the book.[27]

Al-Biruni eventually argues that, historically, the only uncorrupted text of the Torah should be the Samaritan one. If read against the backdrop of Muslim accusations of *taḥrīf*, Agapius' blame game seems therefore meant to turn the tables on the Jews in order to clear the Christians of such accusations. And since the attack to the Jews implied an attack to Syriac Christians as well, the Melkites are implicitly the only ones who come out clean from the whole *taḥrīf* affair.

The possible targets of this digression, and the context that urged Agapius to deal in such an extensive way with the inconsistencies of biblical chronology, seem therefore clear. Besides putting forth the above apologetic function, Agapius' concern for chronological accuracy also responds to the nature of the work he was writing and reflects his approach to history. The attention paid to absolute and relative chronology and to chronological questions – such as the date of the Creation, the world's age, the date of the Incarnation, the date of the end of times – has been long recognised as a specific feature of Christian universal histories, and Agapius is no exception to that.[28] What is more, at the end of the first part of his work Agapius claims that he will carry on his narrative "until the moment of the end of the world and the termination of the years of the world, based on what the Prophets

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26 C.E. Sachau, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations: an English version of the Arabic text of the Athâr-ul-Bâkiya of Albîrûnî*, London 1879, 18.

27 Sachau (cf. fn. 26) 24. Al-Biruni is referring here to one of the Rabbinic versions of the Septuagint story, according to which the Seventy intentionally inserted changes in their translation because they did not want the true word of God to fall into the hands of the pagans. See E. Tov, "The Rabbinic tradition concerning the 'alterations' inserted into the Greek Pentateuch and their relation to the original text of the LXX", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 15 (1984), 65–89.

28 W. Adler, *Time Immemorial: archaic history and its sources in Christian chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*, Washington, D.C. 1989; B. Croke, "The origins of the Christian World Chronicle", in B. Croke – A.M. Emmett (eds.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity*, Sydney 1983, 116–131 ; repr. in B. Croke, *Christian Chronicles of Byzantine history, 5th–6th centuries*, Aldershot 1992, VI; A. Marsham, "Universal Histories in Christendom and the Islamic World, c. 700–1400", in S. Foot – C.F. Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Writing. Volume 2: 400–1400*, Oxford 2012, 431–456.

and God's revealed books say on this regard, according to what reason and logic dictate."[29] Unfortunately the final part of the chronicle is missing, but in view of this passage one should assume that it was not just limited to the author's time: it even contained an eschatological section, thus possibly representing the only example of a 'full' universal history covering the entirety of the world's lifespan. Chronological accuracy understandably assumes an exceptional importance in his chronicle, which clarifies even better Agapius' insistence on the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks and on the (according to him) correct and incorrect numbers of Genesis' genealogy. Still, the role of Constantine in all this remains somewhat baffling.

A Story of Interwoven Echoes

The narrative concerning Constantine is a medley of themes taken from the hagiographical tradition on Constantine and Helena, most of which are very easy to recognise. No visit of Constantine's to Jerusalem is historically attested, and no hagiographical tradition contains one either, but the emperor's trip to the Holy City in search of Christ's relics clearly parallels the story of the *Inventio Crucis*, Helena's mission to recover the True Cross narrated in the Greek ecclesiastical histories.[30] The *Inventio Crucis* generated in the East a variant called the *Judas Ciriacus Legend*, preserved only in Syriac, and a 'twin legend' (reported, too, by Agapius in the second part of the chronicle[31]) according to which the relic of the Cross was first discovered by Protonike, the converted wife of the Emperor Claudius. The Jews' leaking the tampering story and the High Priests' stubbornly denying it mirror antithetically the *Judas Ciriacus Legend* in which the Jews deny knowing where the Cross is hidden but eventually one of them, Judas, reveals the secret to Helena and becomes Christian with the name of Ciriacus.[32] Constantine's order to fetch the copies of the Septuagint from various cities across the Mediterranean echoes an episode with a stronger historical background, namely Constantine's request to produce fifty copies of the Scriptures for the churches of Constantinople, attested by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine.*[33] Finally, the dispute between the bishops and the High Priests recalls

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29 A.A. Vasiliev, *Kitab al-ʿunvan. Histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj* (PO 11.1), Paris 1915, 144.

30 Socr., hist. eccl. 2.17; Sozom. 2.1; Theod., hist. eccl. 17.

31 A.A. Vasiliev, *Kitab al-ʿunvan. Histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj* (PO 7.4), Paris 1911, 487–488. On the *Judas Ciriacus* and the *Protonike Legend* see J.W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden 1992.

32 J.W. Drijvers, *The Finding of the True Cross: The Judas Kyriakos Legend in Syriac. Introduction, Text and Translation* (CSCO 565), Leuven 1997.

33 Euseb., vita Const. 34–37. On the parallel between the two narratives see A. Wasserstein – D. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint from Classical Antiquity to Today*, Cambridge 2006, 150–151.

the *Actus Sylvestri*, the legend of Constantine's healing, conversion and baptism by Pope Sylvester in Rome. Constantine has Sylvester confront twelve rabbis in a public debate after the Jews try to convince Constantine that their God and not Christ has performed the miracle that healed him; the debate is won triumphantly by the Pope. Interestingly, in an eastern variant of the legend, preserved by Agapius himself and by the *Chronicle of Seert* (a tenth-century East Syrian ecclesiastical history in Arabic), Constantine summons twelve Christian bishops, instead of Sylvester alone, to debate against the rabbis.[34] Other disputes present in the Constantinian tradition are also called to mind, such as the one already mentioned between Helena and the Jews in the *Judas Ciriacus Legend*, or the dispute between Constantine himself and the pagan priests following Constantine's vision of the Cross in the sky, preserved in a Syriac liturgical poem on the finding of the Cross.[35] Agapius' narrative seems indeed a composition of already existing materials skilfully tailored to a new context – very much like the Arch of Constantine in Rome.

Besides recalling various elements of the Constantinian saga, the story of Constantine's recovery of the Septuagint also parallels other accounts centred on the re-discovery of lost or hidden wisdom by a virtuous king, the most conspicuous precedent being the biblical king Josiah.[36] According to the second book of Kings and the second book of Chronicles,[37] during the restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem ordered by Josiah the workers found the Book of the Law (namely the Torah, or possibly just Deuteronomy), which had been disregarded and totally forgotten by the Jews. The 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine excursus' in Agapius presents some significant points of contact with the story of Josiah. When the book found in the Temple is brought to him, Josiah immediately consults the most reliable religious authority, the prophetess Hulda, who tells him that after Moses's death the people of Israel had been led astray and ignored God's commandments; likewise Constantine, once he has received the copies of the Septuagint and compared them with the Hebrew Torah, summons the Christian bishops who reveal to him how the authentic word of God had remained hidden since Jesus' time by explaining the discrepancies and instructing him on the meaning of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks. After receiving the prophetess' response, Josiah renews the long-forgotten Covenant between Israel and the Lord and has the people pledge themselves to it. Similarly,

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34 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 29) 543; A. Scher, *Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Seert)*, Part I.1 (PO 4.3), Paris 1908, 262. On the various versions of the Actus Sylvestri see T. Canella, *Gli 'Actus Sylvestri'. Genesi di una leggenda su Costantino Imperatore*, Spoleto 2006.

35 See S.P. Brock, "Two Syriac Poems on the Invention of the Cross," in N. el-Khoury – H. Crouzel – R. Reinhardt (eds.), *Lebendige Überlieferung: Prozesse der Annäherung und Auslegung. Festschrift für Hermann-Josef Vogt zum 60. Geburtstag*, Beirut – Ostfildern 1992, 55–82; repr. in S.P. Brock, *From Ephrem to Romanos. Interactions between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity* (Variorum Collected Studies Series CS664), Aldershot – Brooksfield, VT 1999, XI.

36 Another example is the discovery of the works of Dictys of Crete by the Emperor Claudius, narrated in Ioh. Mal.10.28.

37 2 Kgs 22:8–23:3 and 2 Chr 34:14–28.

the Jews' plot is exposed and the 'true Torah' is handed out to the world again after Constantine's intervention. An implicit anticipation of Josiah's story can be found in Deuteronomy, where we read that after having written the Book of the Law, Moses foresees the Jew's future disobedience and fall into sin and orders the Book of the Law be preserved beside the Arc of the Covenant so that it would be found again and remind the Jews of their misconduct.[38] Similarly, Agapius says that it was thanks to the Lord's Providence that one of the copies of the Septuagint was brought to Jerusalem and preserved in the Temple because God already knew that the Jews were going to crucify Christ and then tamper with the Holy Scriptures to hide the truth. In Agapius' narrative, therefore, Constantine reduplicates the biblical model of the pious king predestined to bring back to light the word of God after it has been obliterated by the sinful Jews. Oddly enough, Josiah is presented only very briefly in his chronicle and his re-discovery of the Book of the Law is not mentioned at all,[39] leaving no intra-textual parallel between the two figures. We can assume that Agapius relied on his readers' knowledge of biblical history and thought that the association between Constantine and his biblical precedent would be clear even if he did not tell Josiah's story in the chronicle. Or, on the contrary, he intentionally avoided the doublet, as it were, and simply transferred Josiah's role to Constantine, in order to make the latter the only providential 're-discoverer of God's word' in world history. But again: why Constantine?

Constantine's (Difficult) Legacy

The star of Constantine the Great had never gone down in the Christian world, but in tenth-century Byzantium the figure of the first Christian emperor was experiencing a particularly significant revival. Constantine was a key figure in the propaganda of the Macedonian dynasty, especially under his namesake, the learned emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (945–959).[40] The dynasty's founder, Basil I (867–886), had already been associated with Constantine the Great in eulogies and iconography

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38 Dt 31:26–29 (New International Version): "Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the Lord while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die! Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and all your officials, so that I can speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to testify against them. For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord and arouse his anger by what your hands have made."

39 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 29) 203.

40 See A. Markopoulos, "Constantine the Great in Macedonian historiography: models and approaches", in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th centuries*, Aldershot 1994, 159–170.

during his lifetime[41] but once the dynastic line was well established, Basil's humble origins and the irregular way in which he had taken the throne (that is, by murdering his predecessor Michael III) became among the main stumbling blocks for imperial ideology. Constantine VII went so far as to ascribe to Basil's mother a blood-link with none the less than Constantine the Great, claiming thus for his grandfather (and for himself) not just noble ancestry but the highest imperial legitimacy.[42] In his dynastic propaganda – which influenced, directly or indirectly, the whole contemporary literary production – Porphyrogennetos presented himself not just as a descendant of Constantine I, but as the Constantine the Great of his own time. The impact of the Macedonian propaganda was not limited to Constantinople or to the borders of the Byzantine Empire: the 'rumour' of Constantine VII's family relation to Constantine the Great reached the West thanks to Liutprand of Cremona's *Antapodosis*[43] and the imperial Constantinian ideology also boosted the ongoing reconquest of Northern Syria. The transfer of the Holy Mandilion from Edessa to Constantinople after the siege of the city in 944, for instance, was presented as a parallel to the retrieval of the relics of the cross by Helena.[44] Agapius was writing precisely in that region in those very years,[45] and the Melkites on both sides of the advancing border were likely to be the most immediate recipients of Byzantine propaganda. This should be definitely taken into account when trying to understand the origin of the 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine' narrative and Agapius' reasons for including it in his chronicle. But in order to produce an entirely compelling explanation to the involvement of Constantine in the 'Septuagint-Tampering' story, we need to look at the Islamic and the Syriac traditions as well.

Constantine the Great was considered by Muslim historians as the first Byzantine emperor, and he was often placed side by side with Ardashir, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, as one of the most important kings of pre-Islamic times.[46] Yet he is not presented in a completely positive light by the Islamic tradition. Muhammad was the

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41 Markopoulos (cf. fn. 40) 160 – 162.

42 *Vita Basilii*, in *Theophanes Continuatus* 215.

43 Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 1.7.

44 See A. Cameron, "The History of the Image of Edessa: the Telling of a Story", in C. Mango – O. Pritsak – U.M. Pasicznyk (eds.), *Okeanos: Essays presented to Ihor Sevcenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, Cambridge, MA, 1984, 80 – 94; Markopoulos (cf. fn. 40) 165.

45 The *terminus post quem* of 941/2 CE is given by one of the chronological summaries provided by Agapius in the chronicle, whereas al-Masʿudi's citation of the chronicle in his *Book of Admonition and Revision*, written around 956, provides the *terminus ante quem*.

46 On Constantine the Great in the Islamic tradition, see N.M. El-Cheikh, "The conversion of Constantine the Great: a reading of Arabic-Muslim sources", in *Journal of Turkish Studies* 36 (2011), 69 – 83 and M. Di Branco, *Storie Arabe di Greci e di Romani. La Grecia e Roma nella storiografia arabo-islamica medievale*, Pisa 2009, 136 – 142. For a more detailed study of the representation of Constantine in Arabic (both Islamic and Christian) historiography see J. Stutz, *Constantinus Arabicus. Die arabische Geschichtsschreibung und das christliche Rom*, Piscataway NJ 2017, who also comments briefly upon Agapius' excursus (83 – 90, with partial German translation).

'Seal of the Prophets' and his revelation stands in continuity both with the Jewish and the Christian ones but also with the intention to correct them since both have been perverted in the course of time. Christians and Constantine, in particular as convener of the council of Nicaea, were open to criticism because church councils regularly introduced major deviations from Jesus' doctrine and the contents of the Scriptures. Particularly relevant for our understanding of Agapius' digression is the anti-Christian treatise written by the Muslim theologian ʿAbd al-Jabbar ibn Ahmad, entitled *The Establishment of Proofs for the Prophethood of Our Master Mohammad*.[47] One of ʿAbd al-Jabbar's main polemical points against the Christians is that they perverted Christ's original doctrine, moulding their religion to make it more palatable to the Romans out of pure political opportunism. He accuses the Christians of abandoning the Hebrew language and adopting Greek in order to cover their manipulations of the Scriptures and the Gospels and he claims that the full 'Romanisation' of the Christian doctrine was achieved precisely under Constantine, with the council of Nicaea. About the council he says:[48]

> For this reason 318 men were assembled in Nicaea in the land of the Romans, and they established the doxology of the creed which I have already quoted. They submitted the creed to Constantine, who accepted it and imposed it upon his subjects, killing those who refused to accept it. The recusants were forced to make a show of accepting the creed, out of fear of the sword, and all the other formulas were abolished. Those who followed the [true] religion of Christ were persecuted, forced to venerate the cross, eat pork, and follow the religious practices of the Romans.

And again, simulating a dispute with the Christians:

> If they say 'We accept what they say because they have performed miracles,' we can point to the preceding account in which we have shown that the whole business began with Constantine the son of Helena, that Christ had taught them to observe the law of Moses and follow the practices which himself had shown them during his lifetime [...]. The story of their abandonment of these doctrines can be found in their book called the Acts of the Apostles and in their Synod.

ʿAbd al-Jabbar is the first Muslim author to put forward such polemical arguments against the Christians, at least to our knowledge. He was born in 935, therefore he was active at least one or two generations after Agapius. It is admittedly difficult to tell what in his work is innovative and what instead comes from already circulating polemical topoi. Yet, very similar allegations on the part of the Muslims can be inferred from earlier Christian Arabic apologetics. Sydney Griffith, for instance, has argued that Theodore Abu Qurrah's very specific arguments in his treatise *On Or-*

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47 ʿAbd al-Jabbar, *Tathbit dalaʾil-Nubuwwat Sayyidina Muhammad*, ed. ʿA. ʿUthman, 2 vols., Beirut 1966. On ʿAbd al-Jabbar and his work see G.S. Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu: Abd al-Jabbar and the Critique of Christian Origins*, Leiden 2004.
48 An English translation and discussion of the relevant passages can be found in S.M. Stern, "ʿAbd al-Jabbār's account of how Christ's religion was falsified by the adoption of Roman customs", *JThS* 19 (1968), 128–185, esp. 145, 151.

thodoxy (late eighth/early ninth century) allow us to deduce that he was countering, among many attacks, an attempt to demean Melkite doctrines by alleging that they were derived from the authority of the Byzantine emperor rather than from the Bible; he also pointed precisely to the church councils as the fateful tool of distortion of the true religion.[49] Theodore writes for instance:

> It is necessary for the church to praise Christ, since he made the kings subject to her, that they might serve her fathers and her teachers, because every king in whose time one of these councils convened, was one of the most pious of all, since he supported it by hosting it and restrained the divisions in it so that the fathers might be able to investigate into the religion with protection and composure and to carry out its decision. As far as the king himself is concerned, it did not belong to him to investigate into the religious matter or to confirm the decision about anything. He was merely a servant to the fathers, listening to them obediently and accepting whatever they decided in the religious matter without participating with them in any of the investigations.[50]

Likewise, the Arab Jacobite Habib ibn Khidma Abu Ra'ita al-Takriti (c. 770–c. 835) devoted a large section of his brief treatise entitled *The Refutation of the Melkites concerning the Union [of the Divinity and Humanity in Christ]* to defend the emperors who convened the first three ecumenical councils, especially Constantine, presenting him as the one who made it possible for the council Fathers to define the true faith thus protecting the Church and the Christian doctrine from the lies of the heretics.[51] Abu Ra'ita's treatise was written as a letter addressed to the Armenian ruler Ashot ibn Sambat Msaker with the aim of countering precisely Theodore Abu Qurrah's attempt at converting the miaphysite Armenians to Chalcedonian Christianity. Sandra Toenies Keating's thorough analysis of the text, though, has demonstrated that Abu Ra'ita expected his letter to be read or heard by Muslims as well[52] and that some of his arguments (including the fervent apology of Constantine) can only be explained as responses to the attacks of Muslim controversialists against the Christians. Besides corroborating what can be inferred from Theodore Abu Qurrah's treaty *On Orthodoxy*, Abu Ra'ita's letter shows that not only the Melkites, but also non-Chalcedonian Christians, felt that in the light of the fifth-century developments the image of Constantine as the first convener of a church council was somehow problematic and needed to be claimed and justified. The Syriac tradition shows that this was already the case before Constantine and the church councils became the target of Muslim criticism.

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49 S.H. Griffith, "Muslims and Church Councils: the Apology of Theodore Abū Qurrah", *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), 270–299.
50 Translation by Griffith (cf. fn. 49) 289.
51 S. Toenies Keating, "Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā'iṭa al-Takrītī's 'The Refutation of the Melkites concerning the Union [of the Divinity and Humanity in Christ]' (III)", in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule: church life and scholarship in ʿAbbasid Iraq*, Leiden – Boston 2003, 39–53.
52 Toenies Keating (cf. fn. 51) 45–48 (see esp. fn. 53).

The so-called *Canons of Marutha of Maipherqat* – the Syriac canons allegedly issued from the synod held in Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410 – are transmitted together with a small corpus of narratives on Constantine and Helena. These include an account of the council of Nicaea that presents us with a highly symbolic scene in which Constantine gives his ring, his sceptre, and his sword to the 318 bishops saying: "Behold, today power is given to you on the whole Church, the clergy, and the Empire, and to all the ranks that are subjected to the clergy and the empire. God will deem you responsible for the salvation or perdition of all the Church's sons."[53] This very passage, in which Constantine literally gives *carte blanche* to the bishops on both religious and political matters, clearly aims at freeing him from the blame of having interfered with doctrinal matters while implicitly setting a benchmark for his successors and implicitly condemning those who did not follow his example.[54] Although these materials are preserved exclusively in the East Syrian tradition, it has been argued that the sections pertaining to Helena and to the council of Nicaea originated in the miaphysite circles around Rabbula of Edessa in the years 430–440.[55] This apologetic picture of Constantine, therefore, circulated across the various Syriac traditions and in addition to defending the reputation of the first Christian king, it also worked – very conveniently – as an implicit legitimation of the existence of Christian Churches that did not respond to a Christian king. In contrast is the unapologetic judgement of John of Phenek, who does not even take the trouble of clearing Constantine's name. On the contrary, the seventh-century East Syrian author explicitly points his finger at the council of Nicaea as the door through which dispute and corruption entered the Church, and he depicts all Christian kings in a very negative light:

> There had been many gatherings of bishops prior to that at Nicaea, but they had not been ecumenical, and their aim was not to make a new creed, [...]. But once there was respite, and believing kings held sway over the Romans, it was then that corruption and intrigues entered the churches, and there were a great many creeds and assemblies of bishops, seeing that each year they made a new creed. Peace and quiet thus brought considerable loss upon them, for lovers of

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53 A. Vööbus (ed. and transl.), *The Canons ascribed to Mārūtā of Maipherqaṭ and related sources* (CSCO 439–440, Scriptores Syri 191–192), 2 vols., Leuven 1982, 107 (transl.), 135 (Syriac text). The same account of the Council of Nicaea is contained also in Barhadbeshabba ʿArbaia's ecclesiastical history, see F. Nau (ed. and transl.), *Première partie de l'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba Arbaya* (PO 23.2), Paris 1932, 207.

54 For a broader analysis see M. Conterno, "Culto e memoria di Costantino nelle chiese sire. Agiografia costantiniana nella liturgia e nella storiografia siriaca", in A. Melloni – P. Brown et al. (eds.), *Flavius Valerius Constantinus Maximus Augustus. Una enciclopedia internazionale sulla figura, il mito, la critica e la funzione dell'imperatore dell' "editto" di Milano*, 6 vols., Bologna – Rome 2013, vol.2, 425–439.

55 See J.W. Drijvers, "Marutha of Maïpherqat on Helena Augusta, Jerusalem and the Council of Nicaea", *Studia Patristica* 34 (2001), 51–64.

fame did not fail to stir up trouble, furtively using gold to win the imperial ear, so that they could play about with the kings as if they were children.[56]

Even before the Muslims started accusing Constantine of having ushered in the practice of imperial interference on faith matters, Christians of all confessions felt the need to accommodate the figure of the convener of the council of Nicaea, especially in light of what the fifth-century councils had brought about. Church councils and Church-State relations were therefore sensitive issues for all Eastern Christians, but much more so for the Melkites, whose very denomination encapsulated this contentious point. It is indeed telling that, before the diffusion of the term 'Melkites,' the Chalcedonians were labelled the 'synodites' in Syrian Orthodox sources, with an implicit reference to their endorsement of the council of Chalcedon. Just as it happened with the accusation of corruption of the Scriptures, this polemical weapon was soon taken up by the Muslims, who, in their attack against the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book) left no internal disagreement unexploited, be it between Jews and Christians or among the different Christian confessions. And Constantine was inevitably caught in the middle. But Islamic sources reveal that Christians and Muslims were not the only ones who fashioned portraits of Constantine based on their own agenda.

The above-mentioned Muslim theologian ʿAbd al-Jabbar offers his readers a four-page account of Constantine's life and deeds that contains rather peculiar information. Samuel Stern has proposed a detailed analysis of this material and has convincingly argued that it comes from an anti-hagiographical tradition on Constantine originated in the pagan, Sabian, milieu of Harran.[57] The city of Harran plays a prominent role indeed in ʿAbd al-Jabbar's narrative: according to it, Helena came from Harran and Constantine carried out there a most fierce persecution of the pagans, which is described at length. Furthermore, two specific customs of the Harranian Sabians appear in the story – namely their strong aversion to leprosy and their prohibition of eating beans – and they are singled out as a specific target of Constantine's persecution. Stern has spotted traces of this very same pagan tradition in three more Muslim texts:[58]

– Al-Masʿudi's historical compendium *The Book of Admonition and Revision* (c. 956)
– Al-Iskaf's treatise *On the Prudent Conduct of Government* (late tenth–early eleventh century)
– Miskawayh's history entitled *Experiences of the Nations* (late tenth–early eleventh century)

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56 Translation by S.P. Brock, see S.P. Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John bar Penkāyē's Rīš Mellē", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987), 51–75, esp. 59; repr. in S.P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, Hampshire – Brookfield VT 1992, II.
57 Stern (cf. fn. 48) 159–164.
58 Stern (cf. fn. 48) 164–176.

Al-Masʿudi explicitly states that according to pagan (namely Sabian) versions of the story, Constantine had adopted the Christian religion not because of any miraculous healing but because leprosy was a disease that the pagans, contrary to the Christians, would not tolerate in a king. Most remarkably, Al-Iskaf and Miskawayh both report a variant version that includes a trip of Constantine's to Jerusalem and a dispute between Jews and Christians. The Romans wanted to depose Constantine because of his leprosy, but

> Constantine said to the Romans: 'Give me a delay so that I can visit Jerusalem; when I come back, I shall resign my rule over you.' They agreed and he went to Jerusalem. He asked the Jews and the Christians to hold a disputation; choosing Christianity he and his followers adopted that religion. He then returned to the land of the Romans, bringing with him monks, priests, and bishops, and invited the Romans to become Christians. The greater part accepted his call, and with their help they fought those who refused. He overcame them, burnt and destroyed their books and their philosophy, built churches and converted the people to Christianity by the sword.[59]

ʿAbd al-Jabbar, Al-Iskaf and Miskawayh wrote approximately half a century after Agapius, but Al-Masʿudi was Agapius' contemporary and his *Book of Admonition and Revision* was completed shortly after the latter's chronicle. Stern has provided compelling evidence that all the negative narratives on Constantine reported by these four authors come from a manifold, possibly oral, tradition that was already circulating at, or even before, Agapius' time. By preserving these fragments of pagan anti-Constantinian propaganda, the Muslim sources provide the last piece of the puzzle, enabling us to sketch the context and the issues that urged Agapius (or his source) to fabricate this brand-new episode of the Constantinian saga.

Reshaping Constantine between Byzantium and Islam

Constantine was the Christian ruler *par excellence*, the prototype of the Christian king crystallised in the Eusebian paradigm. In the tenth century the symbolic capital provided by his figure was being intensively exploited by the legitimising propaganda of the Macedonian dynasty, a dynasty that was gradually bringing northern Syria under Byzantine control again. But in the East, Constantine was also a controversial figure for being the first convener of a church council. Church councils were seen by Muslims as the means by which Roman emperors had perverted the true Christian faith, and they were a thorn in the flesh for non-Chalcedonian Christians as well. On top of that, ancient pagan accounts that presented a very hostile picture of Con-

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59 Stern (cf. fn. 48) 170–171. Al-Iskaf's and Miskawayh's texts are very close. Stern translates Al-Iskafs' text and indicates additions found in Miskawayh's in the footnotes.

stantine were still circulating and they were being taken up and retold by the Muslims. Agapius' narrative is a perfect example of the impact on historiography of what John Wansbrough has called the 'Sectarian Milieu.'[60] In a context in which all other Christian communities had given up on the idea that a Christian empire was needed at all and even pointed out the potential dangers of having a Christian king, Melkites had to defend the figure of Constantine, and therefore of the Christian king tout-court, from the crossfire of non-Chalcedonians, Muslims, and even pagans like the Sabians of Harran, in order to legitimise the fact that they shared the same faith as the Byzantine emperors. As Agapius tells us, it was not only that Constantine did not pervert the faith but, just like the pious biblical king Josiah, he should be credited with the recovery of the true Word of God, which had been forsaken by the Jews and consequently misinterpreted by the Syriac-speaking Christians. And the original Word of God is now preserved only in Greek, the language of the only legitimate Christian kingdom.

Although Constantine's trip to Jerusalem and his rediscovery of the Septuagint are not recalled in the account of Constantine's reign contained in the second half of the chronicle, the two parts are consistent with each other and they work together to conjure up the apologetic image of Constantine set out above.[61] In narrating his reign Agapius follows loosely the Greek ecclesiastical histories (notably Socrates of Constantinople and Theodoret of Cyrrus). He begins by immediately presenting Constantine as the first Roman king converted and baptised, then he mentions the foundation of Constantinople and the war against Maxentius, with the episode of the *Visio Crucis* and the related dream that granted him victory. What leads to his conversion, though, is the healing baptism performed by the bishop of Rome (whom, remarkably, Agapius calls Eusebius instead of Sylvester[62]), which is then followed by the dispute between the bishops and the Jews. After his conversion, Agapius reports his intense activity of church building and restoration, his laws in favour of the Christians and his engagement in the forced conversion of pagans and Jews. Helen's pilgrimage to Jerusalem is dealt with very briefly, and with just a swift mention of her recovery of the relics of the Cross. Agapius probably sacrificed Helena's legend because some fundamental items of its plot already appear in the 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine' excursus as well as in the Syriac story of Protonike's discovery of the Cross, for which Agapius makes room under the reign of Claudius. Her endeavour, though, is recalled later in association with Shahrbaraz's restitution of the relic to Heraclius.[63] The account of the Council of Nicaea starts with the text of the letter

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60 J.E. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, Oxford 1979.

61 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 29) 539–564.

62 This detail betrays Agapius' familiarity with the *Judas-Ciriacus Legend* and with the Syriac Julian Romance, see Conterno (cf. fn. 54) 436 and Canella (cf. fn. 34) 81–83.

63 A.A. Vasiliev, *Kitab al-ʿunvan. Histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj* (PO 8.3), Paris 1912, 467–468.

with which Constantine convened the synod. The image of the emperor is that of an organiser who took care of the practical aspects and looked after the council fathers, attended the council without intervening on any of the doctrinal matters, and used his authority only to enforce the decisions taken by the bishops. Socrates' episode of the bishops' mutual accusations that Constantine refused to heed[64] is also present, but in Agapius' version, instead of encouraging them to forgive each other Constantine says: "If I were to find one of the priests under suspicion or put to the test I would cover him with my robe," a line that signifies a willingness to be the protector of the clergy while not meddling and remaining totally impartial.[65] Even in the further episodes involving Arius and his partisans and their attempt at being reinstated in the Church, the emperor acts just as a mediator whose unique aim appears to be the reconciliation of the parties. It seems, therefore, as though Agapius wanted the two narratives about Constantine to echo and support one other but avoided blatant overlaps.

Significantly, towards the end of Constantine's reign we find one of the numerous chronological recaps with which the chronicle is interspersed, this time in the form of a list of all the kings that ruled from Adam up to Constantine, reported in two different versions according to the authorities of Africanus and John Chrysostom.[66] This clearly indicates that Constantine's reign is perceived by Agapius as a watershed moment in the succession of kingship on earth. By inserting the flash-forward narrative on his rediscovery of the 'True Torah' at the time of Abraham, Agapius creates a circle that connects the first Christian king and his time to other positive kingly figures of the past and the relative pivotal historical moments: the biblical patriarchs, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy II, Josiah. Likewise, through the mention of Helena's recovery of the Cross, Constantine is later evoked as an implicit positive parallel to Heraclius, the last Christian king whose regnal years Agapius uses as chronological reference before adopting the Islamic (Hijra) reckoning and caliphal regnal years.

Whether Agapius composed the 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine' excursus himself, copied and pasted it from one of his sources, or extracted it and remoulded it at will cannot yet be ascertained, but the reasons why he either fabricated or decided to include this narrative in his chronicle become apparent if we read it against the backdrop of the problematic reception of the figure of Constantine in the Christian and Islamic Near East. The piece happens to fit perfectly the agenda of the tenth-century Melkite community of Northern Syria, and it gives Agapius the chance to uphold the principle of Christian kingship over and against both non-Melkite Christians

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64 Socr., hist. eccl. 1.8.

65 A similar line is ascribed to Constantine also in Michael the Syrian, who probably depends on the same source, see J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)*, 4 vols., Paris 1899–1924, I, 245; Conterno (cf. fn. 54) 430–431.

66 Vasiliev (cf. fn. 29) 553–562.

and Muslims[67] and to reaffirm the importance of Constantine the Great as one of the linchpins of the chronological architecture of human history designed by God's Providence.

As a last question, it is worth asking ourselves why whoever composed the 'Septuagint-Tampering-Constantine' story did not just rework the existing hagiographical material on Constantine for his own purposes but invented a totally new chapter of the Constantinian saga. Of course, any answer to this question will remain speculative, but one can assume that the author wanted, or needed, to provide new, fresh arguments, based on 'historically grounded evidence,' precisely to counter more effectively the attacks of the Muslims, who were browsing both Christian and non-Christian traditions to build their own polemical arguments. And he brilliantly found a way to kill two birds with one stone, turning the tables on the Jews and the Syriac-speaking Christians through the accusation of *taḥrīf*, while at the same time clearing Constantine of any blame. Constantine's trip to Jerusalem was most likely introduced to rectify the Harranian defamatory accounts, which, as we have seen, represent the only tradition where a trip of Constantine's to Jerusalem is to be found, and which in turn had probably borrowed the detail from the Helena legends. The new story, however, should not have sounded totally unfamiliar either. An entirely new story would not have been credible, whereas something that sounded familiar could easily be bought as an authentic piece of truth. The new composition, therefore, had to be skilfully placed within the already existing historiographical and hagiographical tradition, in order to receive authentication and authority from it – very much like the Arch of Constantine in Rome.

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67 On the Muslim readership of Agapius' chronicle see Conterno (cf. fn. 23) 165–166.

Index of Persons and Places

Prefatory Note on Spelling:
The essays in this volume come from several fields of study that have diverse standards for spelling proper nouns. We have sought consistency within each individual contribution rather than imposing uniform standards on the volume as a whole. When different spellings of proper nouns appear within the volume, we have created main entries for individuals or places based on the forms found in standard reference works. Divergent forms of proper nouns are listed separately and refer back to the main entry. When a proper noun only occurs in one form in the volume, we have generally only included this form in the index. All dates are from the common era except when otherwise noted.

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