BYZANTIUM
in the Iconoclast Era
c. 680–850
A HISTORY

Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon

Byzantium in the iconoclast era, *c.* 680–850

Iconoclasm, the debate about the legitimacy of religious art that began in Byzantium around 720 and continued for nearly 120 years, has long held a firm grip on the historical imagination. This is the first book in English for over fifty years to survey this most elusive and fascinating period in medieval history. It is also the first book in any language to combine the expertise of two authors who are specialists in the written, archaeological, and visual evidence from this period, a combination of particular importance to the iconoclasm debate. The authors have worked together to provide a comprehensive overview of the visual, written, and other materials that together help clarify the complex issues of iconoclasm in Byzantium. In doing so, they challenge many traditional assumptions about iconoclasm and set the period firmly in its broader political, cultural, and social-economic context.

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A note on names and placenames

Adopting an appropriate and consistent form for Byzantine Greek names of people and places is always problematic, since several possibilities exist. We have preferred to use standard anglicised forms of personal names, where they exist and are in common English usage – thus George, Constantine, Michael, Theodore etc. – but have otherwise 'hellenised' Greek names (e.g. Theodosios, Epiphanios, Germanos, Nikephoros, Niketas, Romanos, Theophilos) rather than use Latinised versions, which were not used by the Byzantines themselves, except on the fringes of the empire, in Italy. By the same token we have left titles and official posts in the Greek form – *sygkellos*, not *syncellus*, *magistros*, not *magister*, for example. Titles of Greek texts are normally cited either in English (e.g. *Book of Ceremonies*) or transcribed from the Greek (e.g. *Ekloge*) except in instances where the Latinised version has become habitual (e.g. Theophanes continuatus). Not everyone will agree with this but, like all such decisions, it reflects our own preferences as much as any scientific rationale, and has at least the virtue of consistency.

We have also continued to use the term 'iconoclasm' despite the fact that, as discussed several times in the course of this volume, the Byzantines themselves used the term 'iconomachy'. We are somewhat hesitant about following this convention, as it perpetuates a misleading assumption about the period, but the word is so firmly entrenched in modern scholarly usage that it seemed precious and pedantic to insist on scrupulous accuracy here.

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Maps are revised after J. F. Haldon, *Palgrave Atlas of Byzantine History*
(Basingstoke–New York, 2005).

Abbreviations

See also Sources

AB	*Analecta Bollandiana* (Brussels, 1882)
ACO II, 1	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* II, 1: *Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum*, ed. R. Riedinger (Berlin, 1984)
ACO II, 2.1–2	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* II, 2.1–2: *Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium*, ed. R. Riedinger (Berlin, 1990–2)
ACO III, 1	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* II, 3.1: *Concilium universale Nicaenum secundum, Concilii actiones I-III*, ed. E. Lamberz (Berlin, 2008)
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AS	*Acta Sanctorum* (Antwerp, 1643)
B	*Byzantion* (Brussels, 1924)
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BBA	*Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten* (Berlin, 1955)
BBS	*Berliner byzantinistische Studien* (Berlin, 1994)
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance Hellénique* (Paris, 1877)
BBOM	*Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman monographs*
BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen* (Amsterdam, 1966)
BGA	De Goeje, M.-J. (ed.). 1870/1938 (Blachère, R. [ed.]). *Bibliotheca Geographorum Araborum.* Leyden
BHG	F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* (Subsidia hagiographica 8a. 3rd edn. Brussels, 1957)
BHG, Auct.	F. Halkin, *Novum Auctarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae Graecae* (Subsidia hagiographica 65. Brussels, 1959)
BMGS	*Byzantine & Modern Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1975–83; Birmingham, 1984)
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BS	*Byzantinoslavica* (Prague, 1929)
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (Leipzig/Munich/Cologne, 1892)
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum*, series Latina

CCSG	*Corpus Christianorum*, series Graeca
CFHB	*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Series Washingtoniensis, Washington DC, 1967–); (Series Berolinensis, Berlin, New York, 1967–); (Series Vindobonensis, Vienna, 1975); (Series Italica, Rome, 1975–); (Series Bruxellensis, Brussels, 1975–)
CIETA	*Bulletin du Centre international d'étude des textiles anciens*
CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, ed. A. Böckh (vols. 1 and 2), I. Franz (vols. 3ff.) (Berlin, 1828)
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, eds. Th. Mommsen, O. Hirschfeld, A. von Domaszewski *et al.* (Berlin, 1863)
CMH iv	*The Cambridge Medieval History, iv: The Byzantine empire*, I (Cambridge, 1966); II (Cambridge, 1967)
CPG	M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, I-IV (Turnhout 1983, 1974, 1979, 1980); M. Geerard, F. Glorie, V (Turnhout, 1987)
CPG, Suppl.	M. Geerard, J. Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum, Supplementum* (Turnhout, 1998)
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (Paris and Louvain, 1903–)
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, 1866–)
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1828–97)
DMA	*Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 13 vols. (New York, 1982–9)
DOC I	A.R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, I: Anastasius to Maurice, 491–602* (Washington DC, 1966).
DOC II	Ph. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, II: Phocas to Theodosius III, 602–717*, 2 vols. (Washington DC, 1968)
DOC III	Ph. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection III: Leo III to Nicephorus III, 717–1081*, 2 vols. (Washington DC, 1973)
Dölger, *Reg.*	F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches 565–1453* (Corpus der griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren

	Zeit, Reihe A, Abt. I) i–iv (Munich-Berlin, 1924–65); ii, 2nd edn. ed. P. Wirth (Munich, 1977)
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers* ([Cambridge, Mass.] Washington, 1941)
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
DOT	Dumbarton Oaks Texts
Doukakis, *Megas Synaxaristes*	K. Doukakis, Μέγας Συναξαριστὴς πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, 12 vols. (Athens, 1889–96)
ΔΧΑΕ	Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας (Athens, 1892)
ΕΕΒΣ	Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν (Athens, 1924)
ΕΕΦΣΑ	Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν (Athens 1902–22; 1935)
EHR	*English Historical Review* (London, 1885)
EI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn. (Leyden/London, 1960)
EO	*Échos d'Orient*, 1–39 (Paris [Constantino-ple/Bucharest] 1897–1941/2)
Exc. de Insid.	*Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphy-rogeniti confecta* III: *Excerpta de Insidiis*, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1905)
Exc. de Leg.	*Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogen-iti confecta* I: *Excerpta de Legationibus*, 2 parts, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1903)
Exc. de Sent.	*Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogen-iti confecta* II: *Excerpta de Sententiis*, ed. U. Ph. Bois-sevain (Berlin, 1906)
FHG	*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, eds. C. and Th. Müller, 5 vols. (Paris, 1874–85)
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1897)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* (1: *Greek and Byzantine Studies*), (San Antonio) ([University/ Miss.–] Cambridge/Mass.) (Durham, 1958)
Grumel, *Regestes*	V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des actes du patriarcat de Con-stantinople*, I: *Les actes des patriarches*, i: *Les regestes de 381 à 715* (Paris, ²1972); ii: *Les regestes de 715 à 1043* (Chalcedon, 1936)
HGM	*Historici Graeci Minores*, ed. L. Dindorf, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1870–1)
IGLS	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, eds. L. Jal-abert, R. Mouterde *et al.* (Paris, 1929)

IGLS[W]	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, ed. W.H. Waddington (Paris, 1870/Rome, 1968) (= *Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Grèce et en Asie Mineure*, III, 1.2 [Paris, 1870/1876])
JE	Ph. Jaffé, ed., *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum, ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII*, I, 2nd revised edn by W. Wattenbach, S. Löwenfeld, F. Kaltenbrunner, P. Ewald (Leipzig, 1885/Graz, 1956)
JGR	*Jus Graecoromanum*, eds. I. and P. Zepos, 8 vols. (Athens, 1931/Aalen, 1962)
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies* (London, 1880)
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 18ff. (Vienna–[Cologne/Graz], 1969)
JÖBG	*Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, 1–17 (Vienna–[Cologne–Graz], 1951–68)
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies* (London, 1911)
LA	*Liber Annuus. Studi biblica francescani*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (New edn revised by H.S. Jones. Oxford, 1925–40)
Mai, *NPB*	*Nova Patrum Bibliotheca*, ed. A. Mai, vols. i–vii (Rome, 1852–4); ed. I. Cozza-Luzi, vols. viii–x (Rome, 1871–1905)
Mansi	*Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio*, ed. J.D. Mansi (Florence, 1759)
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hanover-Berlin, 1826)
MGH (AA)	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (auctores antiquissimi)* 15 vols. (Berlin, 1877–1919/1961)
MGH, Leges	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Legum)*, 5 vols. (Hanover, 1835–89)
MGH (SGUS)	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum)* (Hanover, 1871–1965); n.s. 13 vols. (Berlin-Weimar, 1920–67)
MGH (Script. Rerum Langobardicarum)	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et italicarum saec. VI–IX)* (Hanover, 1878)
MGH (Script. Rerum Merovingicarum)	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum)*, 7 vols. (Hanover, 1885–1920)
MGH(SS)	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (scriptorum)*, 32 vols. (Hanover, 1826–1934)

MGH, Epp.	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Epistolarum)*, 8 vols. (Berlin, 1887–1939)
MIB	W. Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*, III: *von Heraclius bis Leo III/Alleinregierung (610–720)* (Vienna, 1981)
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome, 1935)
ODB	A.P. Kazhdan *et al.*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford-New York, 1991)
Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analekta*	Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας I–V (St Petersburg, 1891–8)
Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Syllogê*	A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Συλλογὴ Παλαιστίνης καὶ Συριακῆς Ἁγιολογίας, I (St Petersburg, 1907)
PBE	*Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire 641–886*, ed. J.R. Martindale. CD-ROM/online version (London, 2000)
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus completus*, series Graeco-Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1857–66, 1880–1903)
Pitra, *Spicilegium*	J.B. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense complectens Sanctorum Patrum Scriptorumque Ecclesiasticorum Anecdota hactenus Opera* etc. I–IV (Paris, 1852–8)
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus completus, series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–1974)
PLRE I	*The prosopography of the later Roman empire* I, *AD 260–395*, ed. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale and J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971)
PLRE III	*Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* III, *527–641*, ed. J.R. Martindale (Cambridge, 1992)
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*, eds. R. Graffin, F. Nau (Paris, 1930–)
PmbZ	R.-J. Lilie, C. Ludwig, T. Pratsch, I. Rochow *et al.*, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. Erste Abteilung (641–867)*, 6 vols. (Berlin-New York, 1999–2002)
PmbZ, Prolegomena	R.-J. Lilie, C. Ludwig, T. Pratsch, I. Rochow, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. Erste Abteilung (641–867). Prolegomena* (Berlin-New York, 1998)
RE	*Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertums–Wissenschaft*, neue Bearbeitung, ed. G. Wissowa (vol.I/1, Stuttgart, 1893); vol.I/1 (1893) – XXIII/2 (1959; with index of additions); XXIV (1963); I/A1 (1914) – X A (1972); Suppl. I (1903) – XIV (1974)
REA	*Revue des Études Arméniennes*, n.s. (Paris, 1964)

REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines* (vols. 1–3: *Études Byzantines*). ([Bucharest] Paris, 1944)
REG	*Revue des Études Grecques* (Paris, 1888)
RESEE	*Revue des Études Sud–Est Européennes* (Bucharest, 1913)
RH	*Revue Historique* (Paris, 1876)
ROC	*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, ser. 1, vols. 1–10 (Paris, 1896–1905); ser. 2, vols. 1–10 (Paris, 1906–15/17); ser. 3, vols. 1–10 (Paris, 1918/19–35/6): vols. 1–30
RSBN	*Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, n.s. (Rome, 1964)
SBS	*Studies in Byzantine sigillography*, 1–6, ed. N. Oikonomidès (Washington DC, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999), 7, ed. W. Seibt (Washington DC, 2002), 8, ed. J.-Cl. Cheynet and C. Sode (Leipzig, 2003)
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, eds. J.J.E. Hondius, A.G. Woodhead (Leiden, 1927–)
SLAEI	*Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, eds. Av. Cameron, L. Conrad, G. King (Princeton, 1992–)
TM	*Travaux et Mémoires* (Paris, 1965)
TIB	J. Koder and F. Hild, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 1: *Hellas und Thessalia* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 125. Vienna, 1976)
	F. Hild and M. Restlé, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 2: *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos)* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 149. Vienna, 1981)
	P. Soustal, with J. Koder, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 3: *Nikopolis und Kephallenia* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 150. Vienna, 1981)
	K. Belke (with M. Restle), *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 4: *Galatien und Lykaonien* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 172. Vienna, 1984)
	F. Hild and H. Hellenkamper, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 5, 1/2: *Kilikien und Isaurien* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 215. Vienna, 1990)
	P. Soustal, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 6: *Thrakien (Thrake, Rodope und Haimimontos)* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 221. Vienna, 1991)
	K. Belke and N. Mersich, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 7: *Phrygien und Pisidien* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 211. Vienna, 1990)

H. Hellenkamper and F. Hild, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 8: *Lykien und Pamphylien* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 320. Vienna, 2004)

K. Belke, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 9: *Paphlagonien und Honorias* (Denkschr. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. 249. Vienna, 1996)

VV *Vizantiyskii Vremmenik,* vols. 1–25 (St Petersburg [Leningrad], 1894–1927); new series (Moscow, 1947)

WBS *Wiener Byzantinistische Studien* (Vienna–[Graz–Cologne], 1964)

ZRVI *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* (Belgrade, 1952)

Introduction

There has been a welcome tendency in the fields of medieval and especially of Mediterranean history in recent years to cross boundaries, to link very different areas and cultures, and to remind us of 'the big picture' – we need only mention the work of McCormick, Horden and Purcell, and Wickham, to illustrate this point.[1] Such works, combining both original research and synthesis, present the reader not simply with a vast wealth of material from both the archaeological as well as the written record about the areas concerned – in all three cases here, for example, the territories of the former Roman world clustered around their Mediterranean heartland – they offer a context for understanding, and an interpretation of that context. The evolving history of different post-Roman societies and cultures has been set in its physical context, the means and forms of communication and transport have been analysed, and the development of new forms of social and economic organisation has been outlined. The period between 400 and 900 CE has always been especially intractable because the evidence is so complex and fragmentary, permitting such a variety of interpretations from so many different perspectives that a common understanding or agreement on the basic shape of change has been almost impossible to arrive at. But by adopting a regionally comparative approach, by focusing on a series of specific themes applicable to the post-Roman world from the Atlantic across to the Syrian desert and from the North Sea to the Sahara, historians have been able to establish a framework, a solid foundation for analysis and for understanding the social and economic structures of the formations which succeeded the Roman world.

Yet many problems remain specific to the different regions and sub-regions taken in by this broader approach, and this volume is aimed at pulling back from the long-range view, to look in detail at the evolution and dynamic of medieval east Roman, or Byzantine, society in a period which presents very particular problems and questions for the historian. It is generally agreed that the period stretching from the beginning of the eighth century, and more particularly from the reign of Leo III (717–41) up to the

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[1] McCormick 2001, Horden and Purcell 2000, Wickham 2005.

end of the reign of Theophilos (829–42), was one of enormous change in the Byzantine or east Roman world, a period during which social, political, economic, and ideological forms which were still recognisably rooted in their late Roman antecedents were immutably transformed and moulded into what we would now describe, with hindsight, as medieval and 'Byzantine' structures of belief, representation, and social and political organisation. This process did not begin with Leo III, for the equally momentous transformations of the preceding century, during which the rise of Islam, the loss of the eastern provinces and the establishment of the Umayyad caliphate on the one hand, and the loss of imperial control over the Balkans, on the other, radically re-drew the political and cultural map of the east Mediterranean region. These changes set the context for, and nurtured the roots of, the events of the eighth century.[2] But it was the introduction of an imperial policy of iconoclasm in respect of religious images, or of what was later so called (the Byzantines called it iconomachy – the struggle about images – which is a more appropriate term for what actually happened), which has attracted the attention of historians of Byzantine culture, as well as theologians. It is important to remember that this interest is not necessarily a detached historical fascination with the dynamics of cultural and political upheaval, although that is certainly part of the picture. For iconoclasm itself inspired a particularly fierce response from those who later opposed it, and it was they – the eventual victors – who wrote, or perhaps re-imagined, the history of the period according to their own lights and their own political-theological programme. As we shall see in the discussion that follows, this has particular implications for the interpretation of the literary sources.

There exists a vast secondary literature on all aspects of the 'iconoclast' period (and, following conventional usage, we shall continue to use the terms iconoclasm, iconoclast, and iconophile, though the first term, as noted earlier, is anachronistic, and the second was normally used only – at least in the preserved and pro-image sources – as a pejorative label), and some of this is represented in the bibliographies and footnotes of this volume. But there exists also a problem, insofar as it is iconoclasm itself which has generally occupied centre stage in the discussion, even where issues such as the military or fiscal organisation of the empire are at stake. While this has been recognised in several recent publications, it has often meant that matters which do not reflect directly historians' interests in iconoclasm as a political, ideological or theological issue have been rather neglected. In this book, we will attempt to situate iconoclasm in a wider

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[2] For some background material, see Haldon 1997.

cultural and social/institutional context, without denying its fundamental role in determining the modes of political and social discourse as they later evolved both within the Byzantine world and in later historiography and theology. So much will be apparent from the chapter headings.

The sources for the history of this period are many and complex. In an earlier volume we introduced and surveyed the major documentary and non-documentary sources, including the evidence of material culture.[3] Since that volume appeared the situation has improved further with the appearance of more modern critical editions of certain key texts, the increase in the availability of the results of archaeological excavations, and a constant stream of books and articles on one aspect or another of the period or the sources. In the present volume we refer the reader to our survey of the sources, but note that where appropriate more recent editions or literature pertaining to them have been incorporated into the apparatus.

The period from the later seventh to the middle of the ninth century saw a series of major changes in both the internal structure as well as the external situation of the eastern Roman or Byzantine empire. It also saw fundamental shifts in social relations and the economy of the state as the emperor and ruling circles struggled with the transformed economic situation and the constant threats posed by enemies from without. No aspect of life went unchanged – the relationship of town to countryside, of provinces to Constantinople, of landlord to tenant and imperial official to emperor, all were affected in different ways, in ways which together generated what is recognisably a medieval rather than a late antique world. Values changed, modes of expression changed, ideas of how images were to be perceived and understood changed, along with the social and ideational structures which people inhabited and reproduced in the course of their day-to-day lives. Traditionally, and as we have noted above, most of these shifts and changes have been interpreted through the prism of iconoclasm, predominantly as understood by contemporary or near-contemporary writers and commentators, whether in histories or hagiographies, letters or acts of church councils. In recent years, some effort has been made to re-establish a balance, to suggest that, important though iconoclasm may have been to some, both during and after the reigns of those emperors who promoted it, it represented just one aspect of east Roman culture and society. More importantly, it has been suggested that it did not impact with such force upon so many aspects of east Roman life as many orthodox apologists

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[3] Brubaker and Haldon 2001.

later suggested. Imperial foreign policy, the military and fiscal administration of the empire, the production of food and other resources and their distribution and consumption through government agency or commercial exchange, these represent structures, practices, and ways of living which were untouched by iconoclasm in its narrower ideological sense. Of course, the perceived results of iconoclasm – on coins and seals, in church furniture and decoration, in the public use and display of various forms of imagery, in attitudes towards particular emperors and their activities or achievements – were apparent and impacted on ordinary experience; and it is difficult to disentangle causally the relationship between perception and praxis (that is to say, the structured and contextualised social activities of individuals as members of groups) in sociological terms. Nevertheless, there is still a prevailing assumption that the most important thing that happened in Byzantium in the eighth century was 'iconoclasm', and in this volume we set out, not to remove iconoclasm from the picture, but to try to place it in a broader context and to integrate it – having first tried to determine what sort of political, cultural, and ideological qualities it possesses – into a broader context in which it can be permitted to play a full role causally, yet also be seen for what it was: a fully 'social' phenomenon. In this framework, we hope to show that 'iconoclasm' in fact consisted of a series of strands which interacted with different results at different points across the eighth and ninth centuries, as well as to give iconoclasm the recognition it deserves as both symptomatic of these broader changes and at the same time as itself a stimulant to shifts in perception, developments in theology, and changes in social praxis.

At the very beginning of our period – the 660s – the east Roman empire was in crisis, fighting without pause for its continued political survival, forced to come to terms with a dramatically changed world in comparison with the previous century. Its resources were massively reduced, its population was declining, its territory was constantly threatened or actually slighted, its economy was disrupted, its army was unable to prevent hostile raiders and the enslavement of some of the emperor's subjects, and its fiscal apparatus was in disarray. By the end of our period, and while it had expanded only very slightly in territorial terms, it was, quite simply, 'safe' again: no major power threatened its existence, no neighbouring state had the resources or the ideological wherewithal to destroy it, in spite of the apparent success of the Bulgars under Krum in the early ninth century, and no outside power challenged its territorial integrity on more than a sporadic and short-lived basis. Its financial administration ran smoothly and effectively, it had evolved a logistical infrastructure

capable of supporting an effective defensive strategy, its frontiers were stable, and commerce and exchange were beginning once again to flourish. Much of this is, of course, accepted and has been understood for many years. But the processes through which these transformations occurred remain for the most part obscure, and the connections between the different elements which make up this complex picture unexamined or unclear. We have tried, therefore, to present the course of Byzantine history in terms of the total-ity of changes, but at the same time to disentangle the different threads which make up the complex pattern of the social, cultural, political, and institutional history of Byzantium in these centuries.

The iconoclast controversy, in purely ideological terms a conflict over the appropriateness or not of venerating icons or holy images, nevertheless threw up a whole series of questions about Byzantine identity and its Roman heritage which produced, in the ninth century, a reclamation of the 'classical' past in a highly inflected late ancient form, shaping the orthodox Byzantine identity thereafter and influencing the evolution of the orthodox church and Greek culture up to the present day. Iconoclasm was a complex of factors whose roots lay well before the eighth century, among them a weakening of imperial authority as a result of political and military failures in the period *c.* 630–700; the concomitant growth of a debate about the efficacy of divine intervention in human affairs and the vested power of relics, saints' cults and, derivatively, of holy images; the related question of free will as opposed to divine foresight; the dependence of the emperors on a narrow clique of military and civil officials; and the local roots – which reflected also local beliefs and fears – of the former field armies in the provinces and around Constantinople. These different elements combined to produce a variety of responses to the need to define the boundaries between orthodox and heterodox, between what would bring peace, stability, and military success to the empire, and what had been the cause of defeat and humiliation, seen, of course, as a punishment visited upon God's Chosen People for their sins.

The first 'iconoclast' response to this came from churchmen in the 720s, during the reign of Leo III, but Leo's son and successor Constantine V (741–75) – probably encouraged by what was seen as a further divine chastisement and warning (the outbreak of a severe bout of plague in Constantinople in the late 740s) – in 754 convoked a council – intended to be ecumenical – to pronounce on the issue of the role and value of images, and to distance the church and orthodoxy from the dangers of idolatry. There is no reliable evidence of mass popular opposition to these moves, nor indeed of massive persecutions (except where political repression in Constantinople, and of small groups of high-ranking persons, can be

plausibly shown to be associated with plots and attempted *coups d'état*). Indeed even the reputation of the empress Eirene, the supposedly iconophile ruler who temporarily re-introduced images in 787, has been effectively challenged. Rather than a devoted supporter of a cult of sacred images, she appears in fact to have been an opportunist, and the results of her convening the Council of 787 at Nicaea were both the reconciliation of 'iconoclast' clergy (clearly a majority) with the new imperially led policy, and the establishment, for the first time, of an official cult of images. It is thus ironic that the first phase of iconoclasm in effect inspired – or at least codified – a cult of images which had hardly existed before. In contrast to the iconoclasm of the eighth-century emperors, which represented a serious effort to come to grips with major ideological and political anxieties, the iconoclasm espoused by Leo V, following his successful usurpation in 815, was motivated by somewhat simpler motives: the reigns of Leo III (by now, whatever his original beliefs, firmly associated with the inauguration of iconoclasm) and Constantine V in particular were associated with military success and victory. Iconoclasm, it was felt, was the foundation for such success, and its re-establishment would bring to the imperial armies victory once more, after a series of major defeats at the hands of both Bulgars and Arabs. In the event, and with one or two exceptions, military defeats were more frequent than victories, and the arguments used by the iconoclast emperors could be turned against them. Official imperial iconoclasm faded away without resistance after the death of the emperor Theophilos in 842, although the threat of its revival and the supposed continued existence of iconoclasts at the heart of the empire continued to play a central role in the internal politics of court and empire until the later ninth century.

Our aim in this volume is to re-examine these themes, to interrogate the assumptions made by older as well as more recent historians in the light of what we understand from the sources – written, archaeological, representational – and to draw some conclusions about the structure, dynamic, and shape of Byzantine society across the two centuries with which we are concerned. At the same time, we hope to show how the different elements of this complex picture are articulated and to demonstrate the key causal relationships which led to change and transformation.

Historical studies come in many different forms and each has its own agenda. This is very much an effort to come to grips with diverse and often problematic source materials in order to elucidate the very specific developments within one early medieval social and cultural formation. Issues which might be relevant in a different context – theoretical problems of state formation or the economy, for example, or eighth- and

ninth-century artistic 'style' – remain untouched or implicit, except insofar as they impinge on particular issues of interpretation in the appropriate chapters. Given the scope of the volume and the disparity of both primary source material and modern literature, we cannot hope that every reader will find our interpretation persuasive. But we do hope that we have succeeded at least in establishing a baseline from which further work can proceed.

When we originally planned this book – many years ago – we envisaged a single volume which would incorporate both a discussion of the complex and problematic source material and an analysis of that material in respect of our interpretation of the period *c.* 680–843. The dates implicit in our period, generally designated as the period of iconoclasm (but which the Byzantines more appropriately called iconomachy – the struggle about, rather than the destruction of, images), coincide very approximately with the beginning of the reign of Leo III in 717 and the end of the reign of Theophilos in 842, but in fact, and in order properly to contextualise the argument, we have extended our discussion back, well into the seventh century. We felt this was appropriate because we wanted to challenge or at least modify several of the assumptions currently made about this 'background' period, the better to highlight some of the points we wished to make about the eighth and ninth centuries.

Writing a book together proved an educational experience – we did not wish to produce a volume which consisted of a series of chapters connected by a common theme but written by two different scholars. Rather, we hope to have merged our different perceptions and ideas about all aspects of the period, and thus to have produced a volume which brings together a much broader range of specialist knowledge and interests than might be the case with a standard single-author monograph. To this end it should be stated that, although readers will undoubtedly wish to associate certain themes and topics with a certain author, we have read, amended, and interpolated ideas into each other's words throughout. Our aim was to integrate our ideas for each area we have addressed, and in particular to harmonise the very different sources, as well as the subjects they inform, as seamlessly as possible in a single interpretative effort.

This volume presents the results of our research into both the sources and the issues of the period *c.* 650–850. It blends original work unpublished before now with a synthesis of the results of our own work and that of colleagues, in order to generate a general picture of the development and major characteristics of east Roman society across those centuries. Inevitably, there will be more attention paid to some aspects than to others, but we have tried nevertheless to paint a picture which will serve to demonstrate the state of

our current understanding of this fascinating and complex period as well as to generate new questions, challenge old assumptions, and encourage further work in the fields we touch upon. The extent to which we have succeeded or not in our endeavour we leave to the judgement of our readers.

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Leslie Brubaker, Birmingham
John Haldon, Princeton

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1 | Belief, ideology, and practice in a changing world

The context and background

The eighth and ninth centuries represent a formative period for east Roman civilisation and culture. They witnessed not only the political recovery of the late Roman state from the devastation of the second half of the seventh century, but the restructuring of the state's institutional basis, the final stages in the evolution of eastern orthodox Christian theology and dogma, the development of a new social and political elite, the transformation of the forms of urban life and economy as well as urban-rural relations, and the generation of a new, 'medieval' perspective and understanding of the past. It is this last feature, and the implications it holds for our understanding and appreciation of the literature of the period, which has underlain modern attempts to grapple with the nature of these phenomena, and which has also served in many ways to mislead us in our efforts to engage with and appreciate this newly medieval world.

The iconoclast controversy, as it is known in modern scholarship, is only one of a number of elements relevant to the evolution of Byzantine culture and society in the eighth and ninth centuries. Nevertheless, it has attracted an inordinate degree of attention for the simple reason that the ninth-century 'victors' in the conflict moulded the historical perception of their past in such a way as to make it the dominant issue for later generations of Byzantines, and in consequence for modern historians, who are dependent in the first instance on the impression they gather from their written documents of what was significant or important for the people who inhabited the cultural world they study. We will by default, therefore, need to devote some considerable space to the issue, if only to demonstrate why it needs to be re-evaluated and put more firmly into its context.

In many respects the question of why Leo III may have adopted the attitude he did towards holy images is less difficult to answer than that of how the initial stages of the debate over images developed. For the context of Leo III's views and actions is to be found to a great extent in the events of the previous 100 or so years, a period of major social and ideological adjustment as well as disruption; and it is the long-term trends and developments in east

Roman society, culture, and politics which provide the essential framework within which the events of Leo's reign can best be understood. But as we shall also see, Leo III was not really an 'iconoclast' in the sense which the word has come to bear both in the modern literature as well as in the iconophile propaganda of the later eighth and ninth centuries.

This is not to suggest that the answer is either simple or easily arrived at, nor that Leo's own role and personality should be ignored, for there were a great number of separate developments which contributed to the complex picture of what happened in east Roman society during this period. Attitudes to sacred images in general, and the role they played, or were thought to play, in Christian beliefs, represent one element, of course, the importance of which is clear from the name that the Byzantines gave to the conflict – iconomachy (the 'image struggle'). But, beyond this, beliefs about what constituted the holy in general, and about how the holy was hierarchically arranged, are significant components of any picture of the eighth and ninth centuries, as are responses to sacred presence as represented by relics. So, too, are attitudes towards the occupants of the imperial throne during the second half of the seventh century; and the ways in which the emperors themselves, and their court, had promoted a particular view of the imperial office during the later sixth and seventh century. Then there is the changing nature of the relationship between Constantinople and the provinces, in particular as between the capital and imperial government, on the one hand, and its armies on the other. Equally, the role of towns and urban communities, and the ways in which subjects of the emperors conceived of their society and the position occupied by towns and cities in it, played a role. East Roman conceptions of the relationship between individuals and God, and between the Roman state and God, also played a fundamental part; as did attitudes towards the alien or heterogeneous in Roman society – whether heretic, Jew or Muslim, all presented a threat to the Roman polity – which occupied an increasingly significant place in people's day-to-day beliefs and understanding. It is, we would argue, the complex interaction between all these elements that provides the ground in which the seeds of imperial iconoclasm were sown. In particular, it can be argued that the relationship between individuals and the holy was redefined at the same time as that between individuals and their ruler. As Christian hegemony in the east Mediterranean crumbled, tensions between the need to maintain order and the need to access belief meant that conduits linking men and women to God became ever more tightly circumscribed even as, paradoxically, additional channels to God were opened. People at all levels of society were evidently uneasy about the mismatch between the promises of orthodox ideology and

the realities of Muslim threats to orthodox authority, just as they began to feel uncomfortable with the mismatch between the world of imperial ideology and imperial power, and that which they experienced on a daily basis. The grandiloquent claims of Justinian's project, in respect of that emperor's policies of reconquest and re-absorption of 'lost' Roman provinces, and of the claims implicit and explicit in the Justinianic Code, were rendered increasingly irrelevant to the actualities of people's perceptions. The Roman world had changed irrevocably, and the scramble to redefine boundaries was not always comfortable.[1]

Changing attitudes to imperial authority

Imperial Christian ideology identified the interests of Christians with those of the Roman state through the notion – first fully expressed by Eusebius of Caesarea – of a unified, earthly orthodoxy which reflected the intangible heavenly order. The Roman empire was understood to be the sole legitimate empire sanctioned by divine decree.[2] In the context of an age of reconquest, dominated by a strongly interventionist legislator such as Justinian,[3] and in which the whole weight of tradition and perceived realities served to bolster imperial authority and the idea that the empire was destined by divine support to achieve victory over its foes, this imperial ideology left little room for anything other than highly localised and very fragmented displays of opposition.[4] Even at the end of the sixth century the church historian Evagrios could present a criticism of the emperor Anastasios' *chrysargyron* tax in the form of an argument for the imperial system as both divinely ordained and protected, consonant with orthodox belief and practice, and destined to be victorious in its struggle against heresy and barbarian threats.[5]

    This is not to say that opposition to or criticism of emperors was not present during, for example, Justinian's reign. But on the whole, hostility to

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[1]   For a valuable survey of the empire in all its aspects across the reign of Justinian, see the essays in Maas 2005.

[2]   See Baynes 1934; Dagron 1968; Alexander 1962; Dvornik 1966, 2, 672–723.

[3]   Cf. Rubin 1960, 127ff.; and esp. Fögen 1987, 140ff. on the interventionist-instrumental character of Justinian's legislative activity.

[4]   The ways in which imperial authority was reinforced throughout the empire's territories, particularly in the cities of the empire through the setting up of the imperial portrait, inscriptional monuments, the public display of imperial legislation, as well as the mention of the emperor's name in the church liturgies, has been emphasised in particular by Kitzinger 1954 and Dvornik 1966, 2, 652f. Note also Grabar 1936, 265.

[5]   Evagrios, *HE*, iii, 40–1 (139–44).

an emperor reflected particular and highly localised vested interests: those of German soldiers and their leaders in the case of the rebellions against Leo I and Zeno in the later fifth century, for example;[6] or of factions of the senatorial elite at Constantinople in the period up to and during the so-called Nika riot of 532.[7] Prokopios' attack on Justinian is not untypical in this sense: it reflected the views of a small, literate social group who had little effect on the population at large. In addition, Prokopios' views were never intended to be published in his lifetime.[8] Other conspiracies against Justinian or Tiberios Constantine, for example (the plot of Markellos and Ablabios in 562; the attempted coups by the *magister militum* Justinian, a great-nephew of the emperor Justinian I, against Tiberios Constantine in 578 and 580), were rooted again in highly localised issues – fiscal and monetary affairs at Constantinople, or dynastic rivalry within the imperial household.[9] Military rebellions or mutinies seem generally to have reflected the immediate concerns of underpaid or hard-pressed soldiers, rather than any particular political or ideological perspective. This is as true of the mutiny of the Balkan forces and the rebellion led by Phokas in 602 as it is of the mutinies on the eastern front in the 580s and 590s or in North Africa in the 530s.[10] There was no unified alternative power group within the army, for the interests of the officers appear on the whole to have been identified with those of the state and its policies: successful promotion and its rewards were the main career aims of a group which was made up of men from widely different social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Except in respect of their own profession they represented no distinctive power grouping or elite, and the vast majority had only limited private resources upon which

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[6] See Jones 1964, 221–9.

[7] See in particular on the Nika riots and their causes the analysis of Gizewski 1988, esp. for the role of oppositional groups within the senatorial establishment and the ideological-political theories underpinning such opposition. For non-elite opposition, especially in the military, Kaegi 1981, esp. 41–119.

[8] See Tinnefeld 1971, 191–3; Cameron 1985, esp. 242ff.; Brubaker 2004; Brubaker 2005.

[9] See *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, 493ff. (Jeffreys *et al.*, 301ff.) for the plot of 562; and Kaegi 1981, 62, for 578/80.

[10] For 602, see Theoph. Sim., *Historia*, viii. 6–15; Theophanes, 283ff.; and *Chron. Pasch.*, 693f. together with the account in Kaegi 1981, 101–19; for the mutiny at Monokarton (Mesopotamia) in 588–9: Evagrios, vi, 5f.; Theoph. Sim., iii, 1f. and Kaegi 1981, 68ff. For other instances on the eastern front during the sixth century, *ibid.*, 64–8; and for North Africa, Jones, 1964, 277, 293; Kaegi 1981, 47ff. Kaegi's survey of sixth-century military unrest shows very clearly that it was very localised grievances over pay and conditions, both of Roman or barbarian officers as well as of rank-and-file soldiers, which led to mutiny and rebellion at this period: see his summaries at 49f., 61–3, 87–8.

they could depend should they fall from imperial favour.[11] And it is quite clear that, in spite of Justinian's paranoia, powerful officers such as Belisarios had no interest in challenging the political order either in their own right or as figureheads for other interests.[12] The opposition among various sectors of the populace or the army, and the divisions this implied within society as a whole, were concealed by the obvious successes of Justinian's reign which could be presented, both in imperial propaganda and through imperial legislation, as the symptoms of an ordered and God-guarded empire. In other words, the role of the victorious and orthodox emperor as the physical realisation of God's divine plan for the success of the Romans as Chosen People was central to the appearance and the actuality of political stability at this time. Indeed, opposition to the emperors, particularly military opposition, was not perceived as a viable solution to problems by contemporaries.[13] The economic and fiscal difficulties faced by the state, which underlie much of the criticism voiced by Prokopios and Agathias, for example, were not represented as commonly held perceptions, even though individual, fragmented groups may have experienced their effects at a local level: Prokopios' remarks on aspects of imperial fiscal policy and their effects on some sectors of the rural population of the state, for example, suggest as much.[14]

But in the period after Justinian's death in 565, it is possible to detect in the sources of the time the beginnings of a process of re-assessment of several important elements within the imperial ideology itself. This re-assessment was concentrated most obviously in a change in attitudes to the position of the emperor within the late Roman notion of universal sovereignty, a change which was itself composed of several strands. The most important point concerns attitudes to the relationship between the emperor *as a person* chosen by God (not to the imperial position as such) and his people, on the one hand, and to the ways through which access to divine counsel and intervention could be achieved, on the other. These had been evolving and

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[11] Important in this respect is the exclusion of members of the senatorial elite from military careers, completed by Diocletian, who had favoured those of equestrian origin. While Constantine I opened the civil administration once more to the senate, the military was thenceforth dominated by those from equestrian or other – including barbarian – backgrounds. See Jones 1964, 48–9, 207; and esp. Jones 1963; also Hopkins 1965; MacMullen 1964.

[12] See Prokopios, BG II, xxix.17f., for example, where he rejects the Goths' proposal that he bid for the throne. Many officers like Belisarios possessed substantial private bodyguards of *bucellarii* (e.g. the officer Valerian, who had more than a thousand: Prokopios, BG III, xxvii.3; Belisarios himself had at one point 7,000 such soldiers: Prokopios, BG III, 1.18–20).

[13] See Kaegi's comments on Prokopios, Corippus, and Menander Protector: 1981, 42–6.

[14] Prokopios, HA xxiii, 11–14 (Haury); Agathias iv, 22 (Keydell). See Stein 1949, 440.

changing, particularly from the middle and later sixth century, and the process as a whole took on a new relevance in the context of the enormous changes resulting from the Islamic conquests. East Roman culture entered a phase of 'ideological re-orientation', and consisted essentially in a series of shifts in emphasis in both the expression of ordinary people's feelings about their religion and in the way the imperial court felt it could best present itself as fulfilling its God-given mission. There were many facets of this process: at the level of the dominant power elite and of those most aware of the international political situation, or the empire's financial and internal political problems, the real difficulties which were generated by Justinian's attempt to restore Roman Mediterranean hegemony must have seemed to pose a series of particularly difficult problems – the impoverishment of the central government and the consequent increase in fiscal pressure on the tax-paying population,[15] the costs of warfare on either or both Balkan and eastern fronts, as well as intermittent social and religious conflict within the empire, all played a role.[16] For the peasant population of the empire, burdened by an oppressive bureaucracy and corrupt officialdom, heavy taxation and, in many areas, civil disorder (banditry) or hostile raiders, the warfare of the later sixth century can only have made things worse. For both groups, the need for spiritual and ideological support and re-affirmation must have been strong, however unconsciously it may have been reflected in day-to-day life.

Under Justin II, fiscal constraints and christological controversies weakened the state, both ideologically and practically. The imperial response seems to have been an attempt to refocus attention upon the rulers and their divinely invested authority. Thus, in contrast to Justinian's 'statist' propaganda, it has been suggested that the absolute autocratic power of the ruler came – in the different context of the later sixth century – to be more clearly associated with a host of spiritual guardians and guarantors. The effects of this change were not simply to evoke and emphasise the divine

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[15] Clearly expressed in a novel issued by Justin II in 566 rescinding tax arrears (*JGR* I [Zepos], Coll. I, Nov. i) and that of Tiberios II, issued in 575, cancelling a year's tax demands (spread over a four-year period) (*JGR* I, Coll. I, Nov. xi). The impoverishment of the agricultural producers throughout the empire is the main reason given for these imperial acts of generosity.

[16] Quite apart from conflict stimulated by religious differences, brigandage was a major problem. In the Balkans it had been prevalent throughout the sixth century, but became particularly threatening to state control in the later years: in 570/72 local brigands and outlaws, *skamares*, attacked and plundered an Avar ambassadorial retinue, for example (Menander Protector, frg. 35 (FHG iv, 237). It continued to represent a major problem in the more mountainous districts of Anatolia, as well as in Samaria. Brigandage, refusal to pay taxes and highway robbery were all connected: for a good survey, see Köpstein 1978, 32–9.

source of imperial power, but in turn to direct attention away from earthly authority to its divine source.[17]

An increasing turn away from the traditional sources of secular and spiritual authority toward alternative hierarchies of power illustrates the direction of the change. The cults of the saints and of relics, as well as living representatives of divinely vested spiritual authority – hermits, holy men, and members of the monastic community, such as those of whom we read in John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow*, for example, or in the *Narrationes* of Anastasios of Sinai – all played important roles.[18] The rising importance of these mediators between the divine and the human is not simply to be explained in terms of an increase in the degree of religious piety exhibited by subjects of the empire. Instead, it shows the adoption or generation of alternative modes of making sense of the physical and intellectual environment, relying on discourses already available within the 'thought-world' of Christian Roman culture. What gave these features, taken together, a new significance, was their intersection with the changing political and economic context of the later sixth and first half of the seventh century.[19] The cult of saints and their relics, and, from the later seventh century onward, the increasing importance of images within the context of these cults, seems to have been an important element in this process. We will consider how these cults developed and worked later in this chapter; for now, it is important simply to observe that relics mediated between God and humanity, and thus allowed ordinary people access to divine power – and it was this model of exchange that allowed the imperial establishment to claim divine sanction for its own power, authority and success.

Imperial politics and perceptions

Most significantly for later developments was the fact that, as noted already, the palatine establishment was itself bound up with these changes in attitudes and the ways in which people made sense of their world from the 560s. For in respect of the emperors' own views of their place in the world, as expressed through imperial ceremonial and attitudes to religious and foreign policy, the changes in question fostered those elements which placed especial emphasis upon the divinely sanctioned nature and sacred sources

[17] For a summary of the evidence for these trends, see Cameron 1979a, 15–21.
[18] For Moschos, see *Ioannis Moschi Pratum Spirituale*, in: *PG* 87/3, 2,352–3,112, and Mioni 1972; see Flusin 1991.
[19] See 22ff. below, and Cameron 1978; Cameron 1979a; Haldon 1997a, esp. 348ff.; Haldon 1986a.

of imperial authority, as a way of reinforcing the unity and harmony of the Roman imperial order.[20] Imperial religious policy in the period from Justin II to Herakleios and thereafter, in which an increasing intolerance of spiritual outsiders can be detected, is illustrative of another aspect of the direction and intensification of this overall shift in perception and cultural self-consciousness.[21] At the same time, there is an increasing and ever-closer identity of interests between church and state, at least at the formal level (there remained a number of tensions, of course, not least over the demarcation of spheres of authority). The church within the east Roman empire becomes the east Roman imperial church.[22] Together with the new emphasis on the divine sources of imperial earthly authority, there is also in evidence a tendency towards the re-affirmation of boundaries: between the orthodox, identified with the Chosen People, and the non-orthodox 'outside' world (whether geographically or spiritually).[23] This reflected to a degree a long-standing element in Christian thinking, in which the identity of the Christian community was determined by the notion that each individual was – through the spiritual presence of Christ – qualitatively different from non-Christians, and that it constituted thereby a distinct bounded group.[24]

Beliefs are never a mere 'reflection' of social conditions. Instead, as people attempted to match their assumptions about how the world worked with their perceptions of how it was changing, the narratives of social existence – the taken-for-granted social rules governing people's behaviour in the various social structures they inhabited – were altered and eventually

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[20] See Haldon 1986a, 147ff. and 161–5 for the evidence and earlier literature. Note also the evidence for the increasingly 'liturgical' aspects of imperial ceremonial, as in the evolution of the coronation ritual, for example: for literature and discussion, see Haldon 1997a, 284f.

[21] The forced baptism and increasing persecution of the Jews is symptomatic. See Dagron and Déroche 1991 (with a new edn and commentary to the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*); Déroche 1991; Dagron 1991a. Imperial politics vis-à-vis the monophysite communities of the eastern provinces, which had always vacillated between attempts at reconciliation and repression, led eventually to the formulation of first monenergite and then monothelete compromises, neither of which succeeded in their original intentions. See the discussion in Haldon 1997a, 297ff., and Rochow 1976.

[22] Haldon 1997a, 284.

[23] The parallel between the Romans and the Chosen People of the Old Testament became particularly marked during the seventh century: see MacCormack 1982, 295ff.; Dvornik 1966, 2, 797, 823.

[24] The most extreme form of this approach is reflected by Manichaean beliefs, according to which only the Elect, who had through the practice of an extreme asceticism attempted to purify the body of all evil, would attain salvation: see Gager 1982; Drijvers 1984, 109–10 who notes that (among Manichaean thinkers) 'the human body is often symbolized as an army camp which should be defended against the outward enemy'.

transformed. And it was the transformations in these accounts of the world which permitted shifts in the modes of behaviour appropriate to these structures. Such narratives are embedded at various levels in written texts, often of rather varied levels of intellectual and linguistic sophistication. What the written sources give us, in consequence, is twofold: descriptions of social practice and beliefs as particular observers believed they saw them, and also sets of implicit theories about the ways human and divine agencies affect the world. The analysis of these assumptions, where they can be located, is fundamental to our efforts to pinpoint the underlying causes of changes in patterns of belief and behaviour.[25]

The great victory won in 627 by the emperor Herakleios over the Persians may have lent to these changes a degree of legitimacy. Promise of a new 'golden age' of Roman rule appears in three different and unconnected texts: a revised version of the Syriac *Romance of Alexander*, the *Hexaemeron* composed by George of Pisidia in celebration of Herakleios' Persian victory, and an astrological prediction preserved in Theophylact Simokattes.[26] But within a decade the collapse of Roman power in the face of the first Islamic conquests threw this emergent set of attitudes into confusion and destroyed the new consensus that was coming into being. At the same time, a tendency towards cultural introversion, evident in literary sources with respect to 'outsiders', was evolving, and this was exacerbated by the physical effects of warfare and the Islamic conquests from the second half of the seventh century.[27]

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[25] For an approach to the question of narrative construction, concepts of reality and the ways in which texts provide symptomatic readings of the perceived realities of the writer, see Haldon 1986a, 145–54, with literature; and Schütz 1967, esp. 1–103, 262–83.

[26] See Reinink 1985; and for discussion, Whitby 1992, 73.

[27] This 'introversion' was not simply a cultural and ideological phenomenon, as suggested by attitudes to outsiders, or in the identification of the Arabs as tools of God employed to punish the Romans for their sins: see, for example, the Christmas sermon of the patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronios in 634 (Usener 1886) and also Maximos Confessor, *Ep.* 14 (*PG* 91, *c.* 540). It is also reflected in, and was perhaps reinforced by, a longer-term physical drawing-in of east Roman horizons. The archaeological evidence suggests that non-luxury commercial and trading activity was becoming more highly regionalised by the middle of the seventh century: see the discussion in Chapter 6. This applies even at Constantinople, which drew upon a more limited resource area than in the sixth century. See Hayes 1980; and Hayes 1992, 7, 53. It is also the case that limitations on movement during periods of constant warfare must have been considerable at times (note the complaint of Sophronios in the sermon mentioned above that the warfare prevents visits to Bethlehem). Yet there is a certain paradox here, for physical contacts with or awareness of the wider world among the culturally and economically more privileged do not appear obviously to have diminished. So much is clear from the evidence for continued long-distance luxury or semi-luxury trade by sea. See the surveys in Brandes 1989, 152–60 and Wickham 2005, 780–93; and, for comparison, Claude 1985.

The search for causes and the problem of causation

The written sources of the mid-seventh century suggest that two major perspectives emerged from this situation. Explanations for the failure of the Roman forces in the east had to be found, and these were based almost exclusively on a Christian eschatology in which the sins of the Chosen People, and in particular those of their leaders, occupied a central position.[28] Military failure, and the social and economic dislocation caused by constant warfare, meant that emperors were faced with the difficult task of maintaining their authority in the face of criticism (which usually took the form of attacks on their advisers) in respect of religious politics and political priorities, as well as with the problems of maintaining the fiscal and military apparatuses of the state in working order. This was not merely an 'ideological' problem – physical opposition became both more frequent and more readily justified in the radically changed political and military context of the second half of the seventh century. People were looking for answers to the question of why the Romans, the Chosen People, had been singled out for punishment. The responses of different rulers to this situation and their attempts to grapple with the problems that it presented point to the ideological focus of the issue: beginning with Constans II, the position held by imperial authority in the chain of connections between the divine authority of God, and the Roman people, clearly underlay those themes which attracted most discussion. In particular, concern for the orthodoxy of the emperors (and of the Roman populace in general) was expressed through a variety of means in literature and in political action. Underpinning all of these concerns was the fundamental issue of divine causation, the extent and effectiveness of human free will, and the role of ordinary human beings in the whole equation. Questions of predestination, of determinism, and of the nature of free will, had all been addressed by earlier generations of Christian thinkers. But such issues appear to have become especially acute during the seventh century. Emperors, soldiers, clerics, and laypersons all had a vested interest in their resolution.[29]

Issues of causation represented a crucial area for debate and disagreement in theological and hagiological literature during the seventh century. The questions associated with it are particularly evident in collections such as

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[28] See esp. Suermann 1985; Kaegi 1969.
[29] These issues became especially acute in the course of the seventh century. For background and content see Amand 1945 and Haldon 1997b.

the miracles of Artemios, Demetrios, and Therapon, or in the *Questions and Answers* attributed to Anastasios of Sinai.[30] But the debate was not limited to the theological sphere alone, for political explanation was also affected. Anastasios of Sinai explicitly related Roman defeats to the adoption of imperial monotheletism, and Roman success to its abandonment,[31] while several other texts similarly allude to the fate of Constans II as a just punishment.[32] The writer of the collection of miracles of Therapon compared the invasions and conquests of the Hagarenes to the Flood of the Old Testament, incurred through the sins of the Chosen People.[33] Such assumptions are shared by the collection of edifying tales, or *Narrationes*, ascribed to Anastasios of Sinai.[34] A close parallel was assumed between imperial orthodoxy and the fate of the empire – pope Martin referred quite specifically to this in his letter to the young Constans on the issue of monothelete doctrine;[35] and Sophronios of Jerusalem made the same connection in a letter to the patriarch Sergios at Constantinople.[36]

Explanations were couched almost entirely in terms of divine retribution.[37] Constans II's advisers sought to explain the defeats of imperial armies by accusing both Maximos Confessor and pope Martin of treachery. Martin, it was claimed, had supported the exarch Olympius' rebellion in Italy and thus contributed to the loss of western territories;[38] Maximos was said to have encouraged the general Peter to refuse to carry out imperial commands, the exarch Gregory to rebel, to have insulted the emperor and contributed to the loss of Egypt, Alexandria, the Pentapolis, Tripolis, and Africa.[39] During his initial interrogation, Martin was apparently refused

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[30] Haldon 1992a.

[31] *Sermo iii adversus Monotheletas*; see also Anastasios of Sinai, *Interrogationes et responsiones*, qu. 65, where Anastasios explicitly links God's punishment for sin to military and civil disaster.

[32] Peeters 1933, 260 (a Greek version composed in the last years of Leo III based on an earlier Latin *Vita*); *Vita Maximi Confessoris*, 105C–D. See also Devréesse 1935, 66.20f.

[33] *Mirac. Therapontis*, §II, 6. See Haldon 2007c.

[34] See, for example, story C4, partly edited, but without its proem, by Nau 1903, 87.14–15 (and Flusin 1991, 382 and n. 3).

[35] Mansi x, 789D–797B: see 793C, 796D–797A (Winkelmann 2001, no. 114 with further literature on the issue of the letter's authenticity).

[36] *ACO* II, 2, 410–94, at 490–2 (read out at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 681) (Winkelmann 2001, no. 45).

[37] For a useful survey, see Kaegi 1969.

[38] Mansi x, 850D–E, 855D–E, 856A (Winkelmann 2001, no. 138). For Martin's defence, see his *Ep. xiv ad Theodorum* (Mansi x, 849D–850E; Winkelmann 2001, no. 140); for comment on the trial and exiles of Maximos and his supporters, see Brandes 1998; Allen and Neil 2002.

[39] *PG* 90, 112A–B, 112C–D, 113C, 112A (Winkelmann 2001, no. 132).

permission to discuss issues of dogma, on the grounds that only political
and secular matters were at stake.[40] Constans II had, naturally, a vested
interest in locating an alternative reason for defeat, and there is no hint that
anything other than human faults were blamed. In contrast, his son and suc-
cessor, Constantine IV, while not admitting openly that his father's policies
were responsible, nevertheless tacitly conceded as much when he convoked
the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and when he invoked secular troubles as a
major reason for the delay in re-establishing a dialogue between the impe-
rial party and the opposition.[41] Pope Agatho clearly related the military
fortunes of the emperors to the maintenance or not of orthodoxy;[42] and
later hagiographies took up the same theme.[43] The logic of divine punish-
ment could be deployed on any side: the monothelete presbyter Constantine
of Apamaea argued at the sixth council that the doctrine of the single will –
which for him meant orthodoxy – should be defended, since it was its
abandonment which had brought about recent defeats at the hands of the
Bulgars.[44] And it is well-known that monophysite texts relate the military
disasters of the empire in the seventh century to the Chalcedonian position
of the imperial government.[45] Similar sentiments informed the decision of
Philippikos (711–13) to re-impose an official monotheletism as orthodox,
and may have been central in attracting the support of churchmen such as
Germanos, later patriarch, and Andrew of Crete.[46]

There was thus a more than usually intense preoccupation in east Mediter-
ranean society at this time with the nature of causation and its relationship
to human actions, however heavily disguised this may often have been by
'common sense' preoccupations. The reasons for this intensified interest
are not hard to detect: unless one could correctly identify the causes of
the maladies affecting both individuals and the Christian community as a
whole, it would not be possible to determine the form to be taken by the
cure.[47] Collections such as the miracles of Artemios, dated to the last forty

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[40] *Vita Martini* (ed. Peeters) 259.

[41] *ACO* II, 2, 2–10 (*sacra* to the pope; Winkelmann 2001, no. 156); II, 2, 10–12 (addressed to the
patriarch of Constantinople, George. Winkelmann 2001, no. 159).

[42] *ACO* II, 2, 123–39, at 126.11–25; (letter read out at the sixth council; Winkelmann 2001,
no. 158).

[43] *V. Gregorii Agrigentini*, 269.86ff. (written in Rome at some point between 750 and the late
820s).

[44] Mansi xi, 617A–C.   [45] See Brock 1982.

[46] See the remarks of Beck 1959, 474, 500; and cf. Winkelmann 2001, nos. 176, 177. On Andrew,
see Auzépy 1995b; also *ODB* 1, 93; Cunningham 1990, 38–42; 1998.

[47] Several of the canons of the Quinisext Council are particularly concerned with this issue, and
seek to reinforce the proper, orthodox practices and proscribe those which appeared to be
heterodox: see, for example, canons 50, 61, 62, 65, 68, 94 (proscribing a range of Hellenic – i.e.

years of the seventh century,[48] play an important role in this respect, and represent a particular stage in the evolution of new perspectives. For while they illustrate the ways in which causation informed 'ordinary' attitudes to problems of illness and healing, they also suggest that this was but one element at one level of a much broader continuum of assumptions and attitudes, in which it was believed that the correct explanation of events would automatically lead to an orthodox appreciation of the relationship between human praxis and divine will. Texts such as the miracles of Artemios were especially concerned with the implications of getting the answer wrong: in the *Miracula*, the author is often hostile to traditional Hellenistic medicine, because he sees it as blinding those who place their faith in it to the real causes of illness.[49] Other writers of the period, including Andrew of Crete to whom the collection of miracles of Therapon may be ascribed, and the author of the collection of miracles of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki were similarly concerned with this issue. These writers stressed the efficacy of their patrons' miraculous cures and interventions, which they defended with vehemence against those who voiced some doubt or ambiguity – a formula also exemplified in the *Questions and Answers* attributed to Anastasios of Sinai, compiled probably towards the end of the seventh century.[50] Thus the preoccupations of the author or compiler of the miracles of Artemios, localised though they were in the context of a Constantinopolitan saint's cult, reflected also concerns which affected the whole of east Roman society and its fate. The crucial question of the extent to which human affairs were really susceptible to human direction, and the concomitant problem of the relationship between divine and human causal powers, bore direct relevance for the political fate of the empire. A writer such as the author of the miracles of Artemios, working in the years after the reign of Constans II,[51] throughout the whole of which warfare was endemic and must have been a factor in the consciousness of the urban populace,[52] can hardly have been unaware of the implications of this debate about the extent to

pagan – practices which, it was said, prevailed in certain provincial areas), and discussion in Haldon 1997a, 334ff.

[48] Haldon 1997b, 33–4.　　[49] Haldon 1997b, 44ff.　　[50] Auzépy 1995a, esp. 36f.; Haldon 2007c.

[51] Constans' expedition through the Balkans and establishment of a temporary capital in Sicily were deeply unpopular with the population of the imperial city and the administration: Theoph. 348.4–8; 351.25–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 486, 490–1).

[52] In 679, for example, Constantine IV notes in his letter to the newly installed patriarch George that the delay in convoking the sixth council was a result primarily of his many military involvements: *ACO* II, 2., 10.21ff. In the preface to the miracles of Therapon, set also in Constantinople, the writer pleads with the saint to watch over the city and defend it from the encircling barbarians, an ample testament to the ever-present fear of attack: *Mirac. Therapontis* (ed. Deubner), 125, 10.11–16.

which humans held their own fate in their hands or not. The definition, maintenance, and unity of orthodoxy was crucial to east Roman notions of how the empire's fortunes would develop, a point emphasised in the correspondence of Maximos Confessor and of pope Martin, amongst others, but brought out equally forcefully in the canons of the Quinisext Council at Constantinople in 692.[53]

At the heart of these developments, the monothelete controversy represents one of the most significant indicators of the issues at stake. While imperial attempts to achieve uniformity of belief across the empire – and thereby to assert imperial authority – were central elements in the conflict between dyophysites and monophysites, it was imperial authority itself which became the central issue.[54] And there seems little doubt that imperial authority from the 640s faced challenges and opposition of a qualitatively and quantitatively different order from those with which it had had to contend before this time. The lengths to which the monothelete government went to brand men such as the monk Maximos Confessor as traitors responsible for the loss of the east to the Arabs is illustrative, but there are other signs, evident especially in political activities, as we will note below.[55]

The contribution of changing social and economic relationships

Intimately connected with these shifts in views, and underlying them in a number of ways, were a series of equally significant changes in the physical and institutional role of cities in the east Roman world during the sixth and seventh centuries. It is now generally agreed on the basis of both literary and archaeological evidence that the urban centres of the late ancient world

[53] Maximos: Ep. x (PG 91, 449–53) 452D; Martin: *Ep. iii ad Constantem imp.* (Mansi x, 789–97), 796D–E (Winkelmann 2001, no. 114). For the Quinisext, see Haldon 1997a, 317ff.

[54] For a more detailed discussion, see Haldon 1986a, esp. 166ff. and 1997a, 348–71, 425–35. For the monothelete controversy, see the literature and discussion at Haldon 1986a, 166f., 173–7; 1997a, 300–3, 304ff.; and for a detailed catalogue and commentary on the sources, see in particular the valuable survey of Winkelmann 2001; Brandes 1998.

[55] The *relatio motionis*, or account of the imperial interrogations of Maximos in the palace, *PG* 90. 109–29 (Winkelmann 2001, no. 132; Allen and Neil 2002, 48–74), contains a mass of interesting detail. See, for example, 112A–D. Although written by supporters of Maximos, and presented in a way which is heavily biased against the emperor and, more particularly, his advisers, it is clearly based on eyewitness reports and on the actual interrogations: the questions attributed to the imperial officials, and more especially, the political line which informs those questions, is entirely consistent with imperial policy as it is known from other sources (such as the *Typos* issued by Constans' government in 648: Winkelmann 2001, no. 106). A modern critical edition of these texts is needed before the complexities of their compilation can be fully appreciated. For the other literary sources, Haldon 1986a, 174–7; Brandes 1998; Allen and Neil 2002.

changed, sometimes dramatically, during the course of the seventh century. The reasons for this are complex, but the effects of Persian and then Arab attacks in Asia Minor, or of 'Slavs' and later Avars in the Balkans, were only one, albeit very important, phase of the process.[56] By the early years of the seventh century all the evidence suggests that cities *as corporate bodies* were simply less well-off than they had been before about the middle of the sixth century. This does not mean that urban life declined in any absolute sense, that cities no longer fulfilled their role as centres of exchange and production, or indeed that the *individuals* who lived in cities were any the less well-off. Literary and archaeological sources suggest that many cities continued to function as local *foci* of exchange and small-scale commodity production as well as for the social activity for the landowners and the wealthy of their districts, and indeed the evidence from the movement of pottery around the Mediterranean shows that commerce continued to flourish – although patterns of trade and exchange shifted and changed focus – well into the seventh century. There was probably as much wealth circulating in urban environments as before, but the point was that the city *as an institution* had only very limited access to it. Over the course of the period from the later fourth to the early sixth century, cities had had their lands and the income from those lands taken from them. By the later sixth century the local wealthy seem to have invested their wealth in private houses and in religious building or related objects, and it is important to weigh changes in patterns of investment against decline in investment. For the church was from the fourth century a competitor with the city for the consumption of resources. However much their citizens might donate, individually or collectively, donations to civic causes can hardly have compensated for the loss of civic revenues from land, since the balance of private generosity was tipping towards the church.[57] Indeed, such contributions from private persons became the main source of independent income for many cities. The archaeological data suggests a shrinkage of occupied areas of many cities, and even an increasing localisation of exchange activity; but again, this does not have to mean a change in their role as local centres of such exchange. It also shows a high degree of regional variation. In Asia Minor or the provinces of the east, change was far less obvious and dramatic than in the central and northern Balkan regions, for example, where frequent and in some districts constant warfare, economic dislocation and the presence of soldiers or raiders had forced substantial transformations, with many inland sites being reduced or abandoned in favour of hilltop settlements

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[56] For a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 7.   [57] See especially Spieser 1989, esp. 103f.

or forts constructed by the army as part of a grand plan to establish a new defensive infrastructure under Justinian.[58]

There is another facet of the role of the state in these developments. During the third, fourth, and fifth centuries successive emperors had followed a policy of 'rationalising' patterns of distribution of cities, in the administrative sense of the term. Many cities in over-densely occupied regions were deprived of their status and privileges, others which were of importance to the state in its fiscal-administrative structure were 'incorporated' and received city status for the first time. This had nothing to do with economic interests, but reflected rather the desire of the emperors to establish a network of centres adequate to the demands of the fiscal system. Considerable numbers of the 'cities' which were suppressed in this process had been little more than villages representing the autonomous or semi-autonomous communities of the pre-Roman states incorporated into the empire.[59] By endowing certain settlements with city status and, more especially, with local fiscal-administrative functions and responsibility, the state assured such cities of their continued existence and at the same time enhanced their local importance, whatever their original economic and social situation may have been. As the government began to supervise city fiscal affairs directly, employing the *curiales* merely as assessors and collectors of tax rather than guarantors, the continued existence of the cities as *foci* for fiscal administration would become less important to the state, at least in functional terms. Yet working against this, the ideological and symbolic importance of cities and urban culture in the Roman world, often expressed through imperial involvement in urban building and renewal, and their continued role as centres for consumption and exchange, prevented cities being marginalised, either culturally or politically, at this stage. In addition, cities particularly associated with Christianity – through a local saint's cult, for example – enhanced their chances of flourishing where they did not already possess a primary economic character.[60]

The role of Constantinople is also an important consideration. The establishment of a new imperial capital on the site of the ancient city of Byzantion had had far-reaching consequences for the pattern of exchange and redistribution of goods in the Aegean and east Mediterranean basin, a point

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[58] For recent discussion, see Liebeschuetz 2001a; 2001b; 2001c; and the papers in Brogiolo and Ward-Perkins 1999; Brogiolo *et al.* 2000; and Chapters 6 and 7. For the Balkans in particular, see the summary in Curta 2006, 40–69.

[59] The best survey is that of Jones 1967, 89. See also his comments in Jones 1964, 716–19.

[60] The so-called 'urban revival' of the fifth century which took place in certain parts of the empire does not alter this, since the structural position of the urban landed elites and of the urban *curiales* was barely affected. Saradi-Mendelovici 1988.

well attested once again by the distribution of ceramics. The city's markets increasingly determined the pattern of pottery production in the Aegean and beyond throughout the medieval period. In addition, the establishment of an imperial court and a senate, with all its social, economic and administrative consequences, had a similar effect upon the pattern of socio-cultural investment across the same macro-region. That is to say that, by the early seventh century, with a few exceptions, social interest for the investment of personal wealth and the accretion of prestige and status in the upper levels of society was increasingly focused on Constantinople as the best way of ensuring a niche within the imperial system. There are still at this stage many exceptions to this – Alexandria, for example, to name but the most obvious. Nevertheless, the changing pattern of imperial administration and patronage must be considered yet another factor bearing on the ways in which late Roman elites invested their wealth, and hence on the amount of social investment in provincial cities.[61] The archaeology demonstrates the exceptional position of Constantinople, and makes its pre-eminence as the key centre for the consumption and re-distribution of both luxury and non-luxury goods very clear.[62]

The provincial urban archaeological record reflects many of these developments.[63] It reveals an almost universal shift in the ways in which urban centres were occupied and the uses to which their buildings were put. Quite apart from the variety of regional differences which the archaeological evidence demonstrates, the great majority of cities now placed less emphasis on the maintenance of their public buildings, water supply and roads and, in spite of the numerous (usually quite small) churches which were constructed during the sixth and into the early seventh century, there seems to have been what is generally taken to be an impoverishment in the physical fabric that underpinned the public life of the cities.[64] On the other hand, new ways of appropriating space – through, for example, liturgical processions – meant that public areas were used and defined in new ways that were no longer entirely consistent with the ambience of 'classical' Roman urbanism.[65] Here, too, material and ideological changes intersected.

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[61] For the development of the new capital and its effects on its hinterland and the larger region about it, see Mango 1986b; for the ideological and cultural focus on Constantinople, see especially Hunger 1965; on the attraction of Constantinople and the palatine hierarchy for provincial elites, see Vittinghof 1955–56, 27f. and Spieser 1989, 106.

[62] See Hayes 1980, 375–87; Abadie-Reynal 1989, 156–8; Wickham 2005, 787–93.

[63] See Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion.

[64] See, for the Syria/Palestine region, the valuable surveys of Kennedy 1985a; 1985b; Foss 2000; Walmsley 2000; Wickham 2005, 613–26 (and for Byzantium 626–35).

[65] See Brubaker 2001, with additional bibliography.

The civic pride formerly attached to cities continued a sort of twilight exis-
tence, and local notables – private, military or ecclesiastical – now directed
their energies and resources into church building or liturgical furniture and
plate, for example. By the middle of the sixth century the state was the
only institution which could afford to invest in civic buildings on a large
scale – usually defensive or administrative structures reflecting the state's
own priorities, as with Justinian's extensive programme in the Balkans. The
church might also intervene, especially in respect of the construction or
maintenance of philanthropic institutions such as orphanages and so forth.
But the result of these changes and of the shift in the role of the local elite in
the fiscal administration of the city was that by the end of the sixth century
cities had effectively lost much of their autonomy.[66] It was the capital which
increasingly attracted the attention of the provincial elites.[67]

The evolving role of the armies

In the late seventh-century context with which we are concerned here,
however, the effects of this process had particularly important consequences.
The decline in the importance of provincial towns or urban centres meant
that they no longer fulfilled the role of cultural *foci* and administrative
and ideological intermediaries between province and centre. The result for
provincial society was that only the army remained as the locus for large
numbers of people regularly to come together, where views and fears and
anxieties could be expressed or formed in a public context. (In different
ways, the church provided a parallel platform, and we will return to this
issue later.) In consequence the army, in effect, replaces the urban populace
of the empire as the site of opposition or discontent. It is not without
significance that the decline in the independent political activities of Blue
and Green factions in the cities of the east (as far as their activities outside
Constantinople are known), a purely urban phenomenon and hitherto
the most obvious location of popular views and discontent or approbation
(whatever their structural or formal properties), more or less coincides with
the decline in the functional importance of cities in east Roman culture and
government, and the increasingly vocal appearance of soldiers in politics.[68]

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[66] Kirsten 1958, 20; Jones 1964, 758ff.; Aubin 1948; more recent discussion with literature:
     Brandes and Haldon 2000.
[67] See in particular the analysis of Hunger 1965; Angold 1985.
[68] For the role of soldiers and the armies in this context, see Haldon 1986a, 172, 187ff. On the
     factions, see Cameron 1979a, 6–15; Cameron 1976. For a succinct analysis of earlier views, see

Yet we must be careful to define what is meant by 'armies'. In the first place, there was a great variety of types of soldier in imperial service, ranging from part-time urban militias, via more recently settled immigrant populations acting to defend imperial interests in return for the right to stay where they had settled, or foreign mercenaries, to the more-or-less regular field armies of mixed indigenous Roman provincials and 'non-Romans', many from outside the empire. In the second place, not all bore the same relationship to the central government or to the area in which they were based. To take but one example, the archaeological and textual evidence from Istria for the later seventh through to the early ninth century suggests the presence of small garrisons at key locations, along with their families, drawn from local or immigrant populations, whose grave goods represent various forms of the mixed cultural traditions of the regions where they were based and settled as well as the areas from inside as well as outside the empire from which they may originally have come.[69] Indeed, it is likely that many of the military commanders or *archontes* in the western provinces of the empire referred to in the sigillographic record or in texts were local people under a very loose imperial authority, who were autonomous except when the occasional arrival of imperial warships reinforced the connection. This was almost certainly the case with most of the imperial officials who represented the military commands of Dyrrhachion, for example, or of Dalmatia, in the later eighth and ninth centuries.[70] And such forces were certainly very different in their cultural and ideological composition from those of the Asia Minor armies, for example.

Nevertheless, that soldiers of both the central and more distant provinces showed a very clear interest in imperial affairs during the period from *c.* 650 to the time of Leo III is evident in the rebellions and coups which took place between the years 695 and 726 in particular.[71] But there are many other examples of their new position in people's awareness. In 654 soldiers approached the exiled Maximos Confessor in Thrace to question him on slanders he was reported to have uttered against the Virgin.[72] In 681 the

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Winkelmann 1976, who stresses the continued importance of the Blue and Green factions in Constantinople during the seventh century; also Beck 1965a, 35–41. Even in Constantinople, as Alan Cameron shows, the continued 'political' activity of these organisations is constrained by an increasingly circumscribing imperial ceremonial function.

[69] See, for example, Curta 2006, 98f., for the defences along the northern border of the region. For the military organisation of the region in the seventh–ninth centuries, see Guillou 1985 and Chapter 11.

[70] See Chapter 11.

[71] See Winkelmann 1978, 205ff. and Kaegi 1981, 186ff., for the events in question.

[72] *Maximi confessoris Gesta in primo eius exsilio*, 168C–169B (Winkelmann 2001, no. 145).

soldiers of the *Anatolikon* army assembled at Chrysopolis demanded that Constantine IV should rule jointly with his two brothers, on the grounds that, since they believed in the Holy Trinity, so this should be reflected in a triumvirate of co-emperors.[73] This is surely illustrative of the awareness of provincial soldiers of matters which they thought relevant to their own situation and to that of the empire as a whole, and of their desire to make their views known. Such views cannot have been too different from the provincial population from which they were drawn, for the evolution of increasingly localised patterns of recruitment meant that soldiers became ever more closely integrated into rural provincial society and culture. The views of the ordinary populations will no doubt have been diluted and refracted through the institutional roles imposed upon soldiers in their military context. But it is significant that officers and soldiers occupy the centre stage in the political life of the empire from this time until the later tenth and early eleventh century, the latter a period when the revival of provincial city economies, rural and urban industries, and both internal and international commerce, brought urban elites and provincial aristocracies back into the limelight.[74]

The importance of the armies as a possible alternative power base seems anyway to have been recognised at the highest level – Constantine IV acknowledged their role in his opening statement to the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 680.[75] Justinian II clearly recognised their position in the scheme of things when he listed them in his *iussio* of 687 as being present at his ratification of the sixth council. Possibly this represented an awareness of the soldiers' response to imperial policies in the preceding years. But what is particularly interesting and informative about this list is the fact that the representatives of the armies are the *only* representatives of the provinces that Justinian II cited – the remaining persons listed are either officers of the imperial central administration, the parade-ground regiments of imperial guardsmen, or Constantinopolitan groups such as the *collegia* of the city (which included Blues and Greens).[76] This is a striking indication of the importance soldiers were seen to possess in the structure of power relations within the state.

It is unlikely that the soldiers remained unaware of this. Not only were they distinguished by their juridical and economic status from the mass of the rural population. They represented the front line of the orthodox

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[73] See Brooks 1915; Brock 1973, 64–7; Winkelmann 1978, 217; also Stratos 1978, 135–40; Turner 2003.

[74] See Harvey 1989.   [75] *ACO* II, 2, 10.21ff.   [76] *ACO* II, 2, 886.

world and, although there is only the faintest reflection of this in the written sources, they may have occupied a central position in the popular mind as well: an interesting indication survives in a prayer on a papyrus fragment from Egypt, and dating from the 630s or 640s, which mentions them as the defenders of the people against their enemies.[77] The importance of soldiers seems to intersect with two major changes in east Roman society: the demise of cities other than Constantinople as focal points of state and social life; and the withdrawal into Asia Minor, and consequent dispersal and provincialisation, of the field armies.[78]

Reconstruction and re-affirmation

Intimately associated with the search for explanations for Roman defeats and divine punishment was a questioning of traditional sources of authority and its earthly representatives, emperor and church. From one point of view, the emperors as individuals had failed in their duty to protect the Roman people; and the very fact of divine retribution falling upon the Romans in the form of the Hagarenes – that is to say, the 'sons of Hagar', the Arabs – was enough to suggest that this had to do with the failure of emperors to ensure the orthodoxy of the Chosen People or of their own rule and policies, and to prevent heresy or heterodoxy. This element is clear enough from the texts referred to already, and was an important element in the readiness of soldiers to intervene in political affairs. The condemnation of wandering hermits and monks incorporated into the canons of the Quinisext Council, as well as of a range of practices connected with fortune-telling and prophecy, the use of sympathetic magic, amulets and charms, seems to support the idea that the church viewed such behaviour and practices as a challenge to its established spiritual authority – for they offered an alternative means of access to divine guidance and succour.[79] Similar concerns are expressed in both hagiographies and miracle collections of the period as well as in, for example, the *Questions and Answers* attributed to Anastasios of Sinai.[80]

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[77] Photiades 1963.

[78] For detailed discussion, see Haldon 1997a, 371–4 and 1986a, 177–89, 215ff.; and 1993a. For Constantinople as a probable exception to this development, see Magdalino 1996.

[79] See for a survey Magoulias 1967, although the interpretation offered is often credulous and naïve. More usefully, see Trombley 1985a, esp. 341ff.; Abrahamse 1982; 'Magic', *ODB* 2, 1,265–6; and more generally Maguire 1995.

[80] Quinisext: Rhalles-Potles, II, 406; 442–3; 448; 456–7 (= Mansi xi, 964A–D; 970E–972A); and see Haldon 1997a, 334ff., for a range of practices condemned for similar reasons; Anastasios:

Yet if these anxieties are to be taken seriously, they must have reflected a lessening in the authority of the church and its clergy as far as the real worries and questions of many ordinary people were concerned. Indeed, the canons of the Quinisext are in many respects dominated by issues connected with the question of ecclesiastical authority, although the flight of many of the clergy from areas threatened by Arab raids can hardly have helped their argument;[81] while the condemnation of the many semi-magical traditions referred to, and current in the provinces of the empire in the later seventh century, reflects a view among representatives of the established church that such practices occupied too prominent a position within a supposedly homogeneously Christian way of life.[82] Interestingly, many of the miraculous skills associated with holy men and monks were similarly condemned, clearly to little effect: the later monks Ioannikios and Anthony the Younger, for example, are both associated with semi-magical tricks, designed to convince cynical or doubting congregations of their divinely vested power and authority, which are explicitly condemned in canons 61 and 68 of the Quinisext.[83]

The Quinisext canons suggest that the late seventh-century Byzantine church was concerned about channels of access to divinity, and had redirected its anxiety about divine causation into legislating how that access worked and who controlled it. In itself, this is perhaps nothing unusual, since people have always needed local and more tangible forms of spiritual guidance than those offered by the relatively distant institutions of formal religious or secular authorities and authorities have always worried about this.[84] But once more, the peculiar context of the later seventh century lends to both the well established practices or beliefs and those which were in process of evolving a very different force and effect from that which they had possessed at any other time. Taken together with the evidence for similar challenges to the imperial authority, as vested in individual rulers, in respect of its practical implementation and defence of orthodox policy, this material

qu. 9 (144); qu. 62 (112–13); qu. 26 (52–3); qu. 57 (108–9). Anastasios notes that it is not just 'true' holy men who can work miracles; sorcerers and magicians are also at work, and represent as great a danger to the ordinary believer as the miracles worked by relics and saints were believed to do good. See qu. 62 (112–13) for the argument that the ability to work miracles is no guarantee of sanctity.

[81] Rhalles-Potles, II, 344 (Mansi xi, 952B–C) (canon 18); see Haldon 1997a, 128–9.

[82] Haldon 1997a, 327–37, esp. 333ff.

[83] See the discussion, with sources and literature, in Haldon 1997a, 334–5.

[84] Peter Brown's classic work on the holy men of the Syrian rural and urban world in the fifth and sixth centuries is ample testimony to this. See Brown 1971b; Drijvers 1981 (who expands Brown's discussion to the rest of the eastern Roman world); and most recently Rapp 1999.

suggests that serious tensions and contradictions within the ideological and symbolic structure of east Roman society were building up.

The problems are well illustrated in the apocalyptic literature of the time. It hardly needs to be pointed out that such literature flourishes best in periods of political and social upheaval and change, local or national.[85] But the texts of the later seventh and early eighth century reflect a particularly nuanced stance which reflects exactly the sorts of concerns outlined here, both in respect of the attitude to contemporary rulers and to hopes for the future absolution of the sins of the Christians. The writer of the so-called *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodios*, who compiled his work in Syriac in a north Mesopotamian monophysite context probably shortly after 692, looks forward to a recovery led by a great emperor who will destroy the power of the Arabs. It has been argued from the date of compilation and internal textual evidence that this emperor was actually supposed to be Justinian II.[86] Whether this is likely or not, the point is that the author, writing outside Byzantine territory, pinned his hopes on a strong, orthodox ruler who would wield effectively the authority and power with which God had endowed him – and in contrast to earlier rulers such as Constans II. Similar sentiments are expressed in the so-called *Exegesis of Pseudo-Daniel*, a much shorter apocalyptic text written probably in the context of the siege of Constantinople in 717–18.[87] Given the internal political situation, such a hope must have been very widespread, for a while at least.[88] For only a short time thereafter, the author of the Syriac *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, an apocalyptic text composed in Edessa during the last years of the seventh or first years of the eighth century, had abandoned this notion, and had clearly accepted the permanence of Muslim rule for the foreseeable future;

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[85] Thus the Persian attacks and the first Arab conquests had generated texts such as the apocalypse of Ps.-Ephraim and the Syrian Christian legend of Alexander: see Reinink 1985; Suermann 1985. For local responses, see Baun 2007.

[86] The text has a complex history. Greek and Latin translations were made shortly after its composition, and it later became one of the best-known medieval apocalypses, being translated into Armenian, Old Church Slavonic and Arabic. See Ps.-Methodios (Syr.) (Reinink 1993), XII–XXIX; Brandes 1990, 311ff., and 1999, 50–1 and notes; and Ps.-Methodios (Gr./Lat.) (Aerts and Kortekaas 1998), I, 11–17; 30. For the fullest analysis of the date of compilation and ideological function of the text, see Reinink 1992, 180ff., 185–6.

[87] See Mango 1982a, 310–13. Note also that an interpolation into the Ps.-Methodios text was made at the same time: Brandes 2007.

[88] When viewed from this perspective, of course, the marked authoritarianism of emperors in respect of threats or challenges, real or imagined, to their rule is quite understandable, and should perhaps warn against the tendency to condemn Byzantine emperors' policies in terms of personality problems alone. This is particularly true of emperors from Constans II through to Leo III. See Haldon 1986a, 188–9.

while the monk Theophanios, writing in Constantinople in the early years of the eighth century, thought that the world would end in the year 880.[89]

The difficulties of the situation, and the responses they had engendered, are best summarised in the words of the deacon Agathon, recorded in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, but who lived through the events of the reigns of Philippikos Bardanes and his immediate predeccessors and successors:

> For the frightful troubles which had come to pass one after another in the previous years as a result of our sins caused a weakening and a very great degree of destruction not only in the body of the God-guarded polity. They reached as far as the very head of the empire itself, so that at last, as a result of the frequent changes of ruler in the state brought about by tyrannous insurrections, its affairs were treated with contempt and valued at nought.[90]

The cult of saints, the cult of relics, and the cult of images

The structure of iconoclasm depends on belief in two inter-related concepts: hierarchy and intercession. The summit of the orthodox hierarchy was the Trinity, often represented by Christ, who, because of his incarnation, was its most accessible member. Below the Trinity was Christ's mother, the Virgin Mary – in our period usually called Theotokos, 'bearer of God', or, by the end of the iconoclast era, *meter theou*, 'mother of God' – and then followed the saints and martyrs. Further down the hierarchical chain sat holy men or women, and various spiritual advisers, followed by the rest of humanity. Routes of intercession were moulded by the hierarchy of sanctity, but followed a slightly less articulated path: humans asked an intermediary (usually a saint or the Virgin, but sometimes a living person believed to be sufficiently holy to have special access to the divine) to arbitrate or intervene on their behalf with Christ.[91] It was belief in intercession that gave momentum to the cult of saints and martyrs.

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[89] See Drijvers 1992, 211ff.; von Dobschütz 1903; and Chapter 12 below.

[90] *ACO* II, 2, 898.30–5 (see Winkelmann 2001, no. 180c). According to Agathon's report, even the patriarch John condemned Philippikos' seizure of power as tyrannical in his letter to pope Constantine: *ACO* II, 2, 901.15–907.28. The degree of confusion and dissension within the east Roman world at this time must have been distressing to those within the empire who were able to observe what was happening, and obvious to outside observers.

[91] On saints as patrons, and thus valued more as intercessors than as models, see the seminal work of Brown 1981, and for this point especially 65.

The cult of relics fused faith in intercession with belief in the importance of physical presence.[92] While saints or the Virgin were the favoured mediators between earth and heaven, the most auspicious *loci* of transmission were physical – the bodies of the saints or objects that had touched them (contact relics),[93] or, sometimes, oil sanctified by the saint's sepulchral presence.[94] Burial *ad sanctos*, that is, burial in close proximity to a saint's tomb in order to ensure saintly intervention on one's behalf at the doors of heaven,[95] built on this belief in the importance of physical presence; and so, too, did the cult of relics, which began in the mid-fourth century and was well developed by the fifth. By the sixth century, the development of the cult of martyrs filled the church calendar with its almost daily commemorations, and, together with the great liturgical occasions celebrating aspects of the life and passion of Christ, ultimately overwhelmed and, to a degree, absorbed the traditional non-Christian calendar.[96]

One of Peter Brown's most significant contributions to the study of the cult of saints was that the recognition of the martyr/saint as a 'friend of God' – and therefore as a potential intercessor – represented a major difference from the pre-Christian cult of heroes;[97] another was that the resulting cult of martyrs made belief in the afterlife palpable, and Brown was the first to realise that the combination predisposed late antique Christians to burial *ad sanctos*.[98]

The latter has raised questions for social historians, for it has long been noted that both the cult of saints and the cult of relics violated earlier Roman conventions segregating the living and the dead.[99] Recent archaeology, however, suggests that this distinction was not always rigidly applied. Focusing on the late antique west, it has been established that urban burial was more common than formerly believed. A 'certain elasticity in the concepts of space for the dead and space for the living' has been noted already for the

[92] On the significance of *praesentia* see Brown 1981, 88. In arguments that presage those about images 350 years later, Augustine warned of the dangers of venerating martyrs in the same way as Christ was venerated, insisting that offerings made at the tombs of martyrs were made to God, not the martyrs themselves: *De civitate Dei*, xxii, 10 and Sermon 273.7 (CC 41).

[93] On contact relics see, in general, Boesch Gajano 1999, 261–3; MacMullen 1997, 131; on the Virgin's garments, see further below.

[94] On oil as ritual care, see James 5: 14–15 and Paxton 1990, 27–32.

[95] On debates about *depositio ad sanctos*, resolved in its favour by the mid-fifth century, see Brown 1981, 27. See also Kötting 1965, 24–8; Paxton 1990, 25–6; and MacMullen 1997, 119–27, who suggests that people turned to martyrs because it was not appropriate to seek God's help for minor problems.

[96] See Delehaye 1933 and Rordorf 1975. For a good summary, see Markus 1990, 97ff.

[97] Brown 1981, 6.   [98] Brown 1981, 71.

[99] The evidence is succinctly summarised in Mango 1990, 51–2.

first and second centuries, and that by the later third century suburban burial grounds were shifting locations, suggesting that 'some sort of break with traditional social bonds' had occurred by then.[100]

There is insufficient archaeology of the early Christian east to determine the extent to which Cantino Wataghin's model applies there, but certainly sites sanctified by the presence of a martyr's or saint's tomb, and the relics that they generated, are attested at the same time in both the eastern and the western halves of the Roman empire.[101]

In the fourth-century east, Gregory of Nyssa wrote on the relics of St Theodore: 'Those who behold them embrace them as though the very body were living and flowering, and they bring all the senses – eyes, mouth, ears – into play; then they shed tears for his piety and suffering and they address to the martyr their prayers of intercession as though he were present and whole'.[102] More overt statements about the cult of relics in the fourth century came from the west. Around 397, Victricius of Rouen welcomed relics sent from Milan by Ambrose with a theological explanation of their healing and intercessory powers.[103] Meanwhile, his contemporary, Vigilantius of Cala-garris, demonstrated how this welcome was expressed by reacting against it: he opposed kissing, lighting candles to, and carrying relics in expensive containers; he also rejected the idea of miraculous intercession.[104] This combination of justification and rejection of relics recurs sporadically throughout the period with which this book is concerned, in both the east and the west. It must also be noted that *how* saintly intercession worked through relics was not universally agreed: in the late seventh century, for example, Anastasios of Sinai explained that when people had visions of saints at their tombs they were not seeing the 'real' saint, but angelic impersonators, taking on the form of the saints.[105]

The movement of saintly bones or tombs from one site to another – the translation of relics – may have occurred as early as 336, one of the two dates given by early sources for the arrival of relics of Sts Andrew and Luke in Constantinople.[106] This event is, however, usually agreed to have occurred

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[100] Cantino Wataghin 1999, quotations at 152 and 156.

[101] The classic study remains Grabar 1943–46.

[102] *PG* 46: 740B; Brown 1981, 11; MacMullen 1997, 127–8, 130–1; Miller 1998, 132.

[103] 'Why, then, do we call them relics? Because words are images and signs of things. Before our eyes are blood and clay. We impress on them the name of relics, because we cannot do otherwise, with (so to speak) the seal of living language': Clark 1999, quotation 391. See also Boesch Gajano 1999, 260–3.

[104] Hunter 1999, 424–5.   [105] See Dagron 1992, esp. 61–3; Kaplan 1999, 22–3.

[106] See Mango 1990, 434. Elsner's suggestion of an earlier translation, in 327/8, is not supported by the textual evidence from the *Chronicon Paschale* that he cites: Elsner 2000, 158 n. 20; Whitby and Whitby 1989, 15 (ed. Bonn, 527).

later – in 357 or perhaps 360 – leaving the earliest attested example in the middle of the fourth century, with the removal of Babylas from Antioch to its wealthy suburb Daphne sometime between 351 and 354.[107] Not long after this, in 356, relics of St Timothy were brought into Constantinople, and these were apparently joined soon thereafter by those of Andrew and Luke. From this point on, attachment to and translation of relics becomes unremarkable, and in the fifth century – with Hypatios in 446 and Daniel in 493 – we hear of funeral processions disrupted by crowds robbing saintly corpses of their clothing in order to possess contact relics of those saints.[108]

Relics demonstrate the importance of physical contact in the process of intercession, and so too do the practices associated with healing. When saints healed, they did so through material contact: the ill pressed themselves against tombs, slept near them, or focused on relics (including contact relics such as the pilgrim tokens pressed from the earth of the Holy Mountain under St Symeon).[109] But the saint did not heal *ad hoc*. He or, rarely, she healed through Christ and, as Sansterre has noted, in this, Christian incubation and visions differ from pagan ones.[110]

The earliest images to acquire cult status were those that most closely approximated relics, the *acheiropoieta* or images 'not made by human hand'.[111] Three of these are attested during the second half of the sixth century. The so-called mandylion of Edessa, an imprint of Christ's face on a piece of linen,[112] was a contact relic, the sanctity of which was multiplied by the miraculous portrait that immediately appeared on it. It is first attested *c.* 590 by Evagrios,[113] and at about the same time we hear of two more *acheiropoieta* of Christ: one, in Memphis (Egypt), is mentioned by the so-called Piacenza pilgrim *c.* 570;[114] the other, in Kamoulianai (Syria), is described in a Syriac epitome of a chronicle by Zachariah of Mitylene written by an anonymous monk in 569.[115] Like relics, *acheiropoieta* had intercessory and salvatory power: they superseded the role of Roman urban palladia – statues that housed the soul of the city[116] – and channelled divine

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[107] Delehaye 1933, 54–7; Kötting 1965, 15, 17–22; Mango 1990, 52; for 360, Woods 1991.

[108] See Kaplan 1999, 19–20; Kaplan 2002, 319–22.

[109] Vikan 1989 – though it is the mud sanctified by contact with the saint, not the image, that is important here.

[110] Sansterre 1991, 75. For other examples, see Brubaker 2000a, 1,236–7.

[111] On the term and its use, see Kessler 1998, 135–6, 139.

[112] See esp. Cameron 1983; Cameron 1998.

[113] Evagrios *HE* IV, 27: ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 174–5; trans. Whitby 2000, 226–7. The suggestion that the passage is an interpolation (Chrysostomides 1997, xxiv–xxx; Drijvers 1998) is discussed and rejected in *ibid.*, 323–6.

[114] Paragraph 44: ed. Geyer 1965, 127–54; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 79–89.

[115] Hamilton and Brooks 1899, 320–1. On all three, see further Brubaker 1998, 1,222–31.

[116] See Gordon 1979.

force to the Christian community. Evagrios credited the Edessa portrait with the salvation of that city, and, in 626, an *acheiropoieton* image of Christ (perhaps the Kamoulianai portrait) famously saved Constantinople from the Avars.[117]

Other portraits of Christ, the Virgin, and saints certainly existed from at least the fourth century, but until the last quarter of the seventh century only images that were also relics had miraculous or intercessory powers.[118] Prior to this, simple commemorative and *ex voto* images abound: both are amply documented in texts and in the mosaics at St Demetrios in Thessaloniki.[119] The icon of St Peter now at the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai (Figure 1) is almost certainly another example of a sixth- or seventh-century *ex voto* image. Though Weitzmann argued that the triple medallions above Peter represent John the evangelist and the Virgin flanking Christ,[120] the woman's garments are not those ever worn by Mary and her location on Christ's left runs counter to celestial hierarchy. Far more likely is that the pair on either side of Christ portray a mother and her child, and that the icon was an expression of thanks to Peter for his intervention with Christ on behalf of the child.[121] Such *ex voto* images were expressions of thanksgiving; they recorded a transaction but did not participate in it directly themselves. The notion that Christian sacred portraits continued an older, pre-Christian practice, has recently been revived, and it has been argued that portraits of Roman gods and Christian saints follow similar precepts. It has long been recognised that early images of Christ conform with established images of Zeus/Jupiter (and Alexander the Great and Augustus, too), just as representations of the Virgin and Isis nursing their respective children are compositionally similar, and although we would not want to posit too direct a relationship between imperial portraits and icons, neither would we deny such a connection. More importantly, we would not wish to argue that post-Constantinian Christian veneration of sacred images followed seamlessly from pre-Christian practice.[122]

Irenaeus's *Against heresies* (second century) and the third-century (?) Acts of John both supply vignettes in which holy portraits are celebrated.[123] In the first, a woman hangs wreaths on a portrait of Christ; in the second, a man hangs garlands on and lights candles before an image of John the evangelist. The significance of these accounts is that in both cases the venerators are condemned as acting like heathens. For Irenaeus, the practice is proof that

[117] Van Dieten 1972, 174–8.   [118] Brubaker 1998.   [119] See 69 below.
[120] Weitzmann 1976, 23–6.   [121] Brubaker 1998, 1,236–7.
[122] As has been argued by Mathews 1999, 177–90.
[123] Discussed in Mathews 1999, 177–8. For the Acts, see also Thümmel 1992, 43–4.

Fig. 1. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.5:
St Peter

the woman in question is a heretic, while John says to his admirer 'Why,
I see you are still living as a pagan!'[124] – and it has been pointed out that
in the early third century Clement of Alexandria berates his non-Christian

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[124] Hennecke and Schneemelcher 2, 1965, 220. This is also true of the passage from Eusebius, the
problematic response to Constantia that Mathews cites (1999), on which see further Gero
1981.

neighbours for exactly this practice.[125] With one notable exception,[126] there is then silence about Christian veneration of images for 400 years.

To us, this does not suggest that Christian responses to holy portraits quietly absorbed and continued the practices of Roman cults. The texts indicate that during the centuries that Christianity was marginal, some of its adherents flirted with practices associated with other and more dominant cults, but they also demonstrate that when the veneration of Christian images occurred it was condemned. As Christianity extended its reach in the fourth century, it was not images that were honoured and venerated, but a new type of cult object, relics. Religious images did not disappear – but nor were they favoured with candles and wreaths. Until the last quarter of the seventh century, that privilege was reserved for relics.

Relics and iconoclasm

In the years leading up to iconoclasm, Constantinople was known for its relics, not its icons, and it has been estimated that by the early eighth century more relics were collected there than in any other city.[127] From at least the seventh century, the capital's supernatural protection was entrusted to relics: around 620 the Virgin's robe was 'not only the cure for every illness' but also 'fortified' the walls,[128] and, as we have seen, in 626 an *acheiropoieton* of Christ saved Constantinople from the Avars.[129] The most ubiquitous role of relics in Constantinople remained, however, the traditional one also ascribed to the robe of the Virgin: their healing power. The healing shrine best-known today centred on St Artemios, who was buried in the church of John the Baptist: the miracles of the saint, written toward the end of the seventh century, describe how the ill pressed themselves against his tomb or slept in its precinct, hoping for a dream vision of the saint who could heal them through Christ.[130]

The importance of relics continued throughout iconoclasm. As Marie-France Auzépy has already observed, the Acts of the 787 Council – one of the strongest surviving statements in favour of religious images – attribute far more miracles to saints and their relics than to icons.[131] John of Damascus

[125] Mathews 1999, 180.
[126] Agathias (*c.* 531–*c.* 580) on an image of the archangel Michael: see further 54, 775–6 below.
[127] Wortley 1982, 253–4. On the greater importance of relics, see also Kaplan 1999, 36.
[128] Cameron 1979b, citations at 54, 55.   [129] See note 117 above.
[130] Crisafulli and Nesbitt 1997; discussion in Haldon 1997b; Brubaker 1998, 1,231–7.
[131] Auzépy 1995a, 38.

devoted a section of *On the divine images* to a discussion of relative worship, and gave first place to the Theotokos and the saints, noting the healing power of 'even handkerchiefs and aprons touched to them' – that is, contact relics.[132] Saints' lives and miracle collections from the years of iconoclasm attribute healings and miracles to the physical charisma of the saint at the tomb, in dreams or visions, or through the medium of holy oil sanctified by divine presence at the saint's shrine.[133] Even in the most pro-image of texts, healing is usually affected by the saint working through relics rather than through icons. For example, the panegyric on Theophanes the Confessor, written by Theodore of Stoudion around 822, which includes a lengthy profession of the iconophile position, does not mention images in connection with healings, but attributes them to oil from a sanctified lamp and to contact with the saint's tomb.[134]

A number of sources maintain that the iconoclasts were opposed to the cult of relics. Theophanes, for example, claims of Leo III that: 'Not only was the impious man in error concerning the relative worship of the holy icons, but also concerning the intercession of the all-pure Theotokos and all the saints, and he abominated their relics like his mentors, the Arabs'.[135] At best, this is an overstatement: the benefits of intercession were in fact affirmed by the iconoclast Council of 754, and, in its many recitals of the wrongs of the anti-image faction, the iconophile council of 787 never accused them of relic destruction.[136] Further, we know that Leo V, who reinstated iconoclasm in 815, sent relics to Venice; as, earlier, those in Zadar were said to have been sent by Nikephoros I (802–11).[137] There is, in short, no contemporary evidence that the iconoclast emperors were opposed to intercession, or that they destroyed relics.

The 787 Council also, however, castigated the iconoclasts for consecrating churches without relics and, for the first time, made the earlier but unregulated tradition of placing relics in altars canonical.[138] The issue was current: writing at about the same time, the author of the Barberini *euchologion* presented the oldest known instructions for the use of relics in the dedication

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[132] III, 33: ed. Kotter 1975, 137–9, citation at 138; trans. Anderson 1980, 84–5.

[133] Interestingly, the first version of the *Life* of Peter of Atroa (d. 837) does not mention relics, but the second, written as a cult developed, does (Kaplan 1999, 23); this same source tells us that Prokopia, wife of Michael I, asked for a relic of James of Athos (Auzépy 2001b, 347).

[134] Paragraph 17: ed. Efthymiadis 1993, 282–3.

[135] Theoph., 406 (Mango and Scott 1997, 561). For additional examples, see Gero 1973a, 97–102 and Gero 1977, 153–4.

[136] Discussion and citations in Gero 1977, 152; Wortley 1982, 256, 263–4, 267.

[137] Osborne 1999, 377–8.

[138] Discussion and citations in Gero 1977, 153–4; Kaplan 1999, 24 n. 21; Auzépy 2001a, 15–18.

ceremonies of a new church.[139] In the last quarter of the eighth century, it had become important to codify the role of relics in church settings. The evidence is complicated, but Auzépy's recent attempt to disentangle it is compelling. She argues that the iconoclasts, in their quest for religious purity – which is, after all, one of the guiding tenets of the whole iconoclast debate – disapproved of relics *in altars* because the presence of saints polluted the sanctity of the Trinity to whom the altar was dedicated.[140] Inevitably, the iconophiles reacted against this, and, following a familiar pattern,[141] recast the iconoclasts' attempt to purify the consecrated space of the altar in negative terms by portraying them as opposed to relics and the intercession of saints.[142]

The cult of images

When they were considered at all, religious images occupied an ambiguous space in the terrain of early Christian thought and practice. Numerous passages from the Old Testament affirmed that images were not part of the biblical tradition from which Christian worship evolved, and theologians such as Tertullian and Theodoret of Kyrrhos emphasised the relevance of such prohibitions, explaining that sculptors and artists were creations of the devil, intent on corrupting the ignorant.[143] The ever-present danger of a reversion to idolatry was something which demanded constant vigilance.[144] But discussion about idols and images was not confined to Christians, and a number of philosophers had also taken the issue up.[145] The Christian debate on images thus evolved in a ready-made context: the rhetorical structure of arguments for and against the use of images was already set.

The word for image used in these discussions was the Greek word *eikon*, which had a broader meaning than the modern derivative *icon*. For both Christian and non-Christian writers, *eikon* could refer to a sacred image in any medium, visual or rhetorical. An *eikon* could be a picture, but it

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[139] Discussion in Auzépy 2001a, 15–17.

[140] Auzépy 2001a, 19–20; on iconoclasm as purification, see further 779–87 below.

[141] See, e.g., Auzépy 1990.

[142] Auzépy 2001a. The rediscovery of the relics of St Euphemia during the reign of Eirene fed into the iconophile rhetoric: see *ibid.*, 18, Gero 1977, 155–63; and Wortley 1982, 274–8. For a different interpretation, see Dagron 1992, 65.

[143] See Exodus 20:4–5, Deuteronomy 4:14ff, Leviticus 26:1, Isaiah 40:18. The literature is vast, but see, e.g., Beck 1975; Dagron 1991b; Sansterre 1994.

[144] See, e.g., Baynes 1955; Campenhausen 1960; Klauser 1974; Thümmel 1992, 29–42.

[145] See Goodspeed 1914; Geffcken 1920; Clerc 1915; Thümmel 1992, 23–8.

could also represent the divine in the medium of figural and metaphorical language.[146]

The fundamental paradox facing early Christian writers was that, while images refer the onlooker to the divine, rather than possessing any divine qualities themselves, images were inevitably material, and thus unsuitable to act as referents to the divine. Christianity did not face this dilemma alone: the emperor Julian, in his *Contra Christianos*, expressed the same proposition when he compared the reverence granted the image of the emperor and the function of the emperor's portrait, as both the object of supplication and of respect, with that devoted to images of divine beings.[147] According to Julian (who himself apparently followed the position mapped by the third-century neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyrius), material images were created as expressions of divine essences which were otherwise imperceptible to humankind except through this particular form. Cult statues were images by means of which the celestial divinities could be grasped by the human intellect.[148] Christianised, and transferred from statues to paintings, this argument lived well into the ninth century – as we shall see, it is a major theme of the iconophile defence of sacred portraits.

The iconoclast position also had early Christian precursors. In the late second century, Clement of Alexandria argued that images could be neither divine nor sacred, on account of their materiality and of the transcendental nature of the Trinity. He reasoned that the only true image was the virtuous and pious Christian, in whose soul God and the Holy Spirit resided.[149] A similar position was argued by Origen and a number of later theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries: the soul of the righteous and virtuous believer is the true image of God, and material images are neither necessary nor conducive to the attainment of piety.[150] This thesis was canonised by the Council of Elvira (AD 306), which pronounced a general prohibition on portraying that which was worshipped.[151] Eusebios, in his letter to Constantia, the emperor Constantine's sister, emphasised the same thought: the true image of God is embodied in scripture, and only those images which present the word of God to the beholder should be permitted.[152]

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[146] See, e.g., Ladner 1953; see also Thümmel 2005, 1–26.
[147] See Julian, *Works*, ii, 309, for example.
[148] See Bidez 1913; and the discussion of Alexander 1958a, 26ff.
[149] See *PG* 9, 436–40 (Stromates 7. 5).
[150] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 8.17–19. See Thümmel 1992, 29–42.
[151] See Vivier 1963, 8; with the discussions in Elliger 1930, 37; Klauser 1974, 331; Thümmel 1992, 45–6.
[152] The letter is edited in Pitra 1852, 383–6; for discussion see Gero 1981.

Although the surviving theological literature written before the fifth century is generally opposed to religious imagery, the quantity of preserved artefacts amply demonstrates the continued production of Christian works in all media, including sculpture in the round.[153] The churchmen's worries about religious images were evidently not universally shared, perhaps because the main theological concerns were not, in reality, about visual representation, but about the epistemology of the divine: how could one know, and, therefore, in what ways could one describe, God? The question was addressed by both neo-Platonic philosophy and by early Christian thinkers, and the most developed response evolved from the work of the Cappadocian Fathers. While stressing that God was, by definition, unknowable – and all concepts of God formed by the human mind were thus inadequate – Christian authors argued that the revelations granted through scripture were an acceptable way to approach God. Prayer, contemplation, and revelation thus became central channels of access. This denial of the knowability of God through the visible world has been described as 'apophatic' (or negative) theology. But it was complemented by a 'cataphatic' (or positive) theology, which set out definite, affirmative statements about God through the vocabularies of symbolic and abstract concepts.

The two complementary systems were summed up in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite,[154] whose work represents in many ways an uneasy compromise between negative and positive theology. Pseudo-Dionysios presented a hierarchy of forms of spiritual existence, at the pinnacle of which sat the godhead, an absolutely transcendent divinity; the godhead was followed by a series of progressively less spiritual and more material instances, from the heavenly choir through to the hierarchy of the church and down to the ordinary mortal. According to Pseudo-Dionysios, through God's revelations and divine providence, the human mind could evolve figures, images and symbols which in turn represented what was neither observable nor knowable. This inductive method is described usually as 'anagogic', because it 'led up' through successive layers of interpretative

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[153] For a good overview of surviving works, see Weitzmann 1979a; for the generally critical and disapproving views of the Cappadocian Fathers, see Thümmel 1992, 53–9. In his efforts to invalidate the arguments of the iconoclasts, the patriarch Nikephoros in the early ninth century drew upon a wide range of patristic authors, many of whom had been employed also by the iconoclasts, and shows if nothing else the extent to which such texts could be taken to be critical of the practice of painting or using images: summary in Alexander 1958a, 256ff.; discussion in Thümmel 1992, 59–86.

[154] Fl. *c.* AD 500. The writings have been transmitted under the name of Dionysios the Areopagite, but are in fact by an anonymous fifth- or sixth-century author: see *ODB* 1, 629–30.

reasoning to an appreciation of the unknowable nature of the godhead. The purpose of mystical contemplation was to ascend through the successive levels of revelatory experience and mastery of imperfections until one ultimately attained union with God. Pseudo-Dionysios argued that God was equally close to all beings at all levels of the hierarchy because of the transcendency of the godhead; by contemplation alone it was thus possible, through a process of *ekstasis*, a hyper-rational leap outside itself and created matter into the divine, to attain union with God.[155] Although the extreme hierarchisation present in this schema was never fully adopted in Byzantine theology, the concept provided the model for the hierarchical structure of intercession that we have already discussed, and its importance lingered in the work of later interpreters.[156]

The debate about the knowability of God directly affected attitudes to the divine liturgy and eucharist and, inevitably, discussions about the degree to which visual depictions of anything which participated in the divine were actually possible. As we shall see, it was an issue which came to dominate both 'iconoclast' and 'iconophile' positions. The emphasis on contemplation, in which the divine could be approached anagogically, by individuals working through a hierarchy of images and levels of practice, had important implications for the functional aspect of the theory of pictorial depictions. In the first half of the eighth century, John of Damascus was thus able to argue that, because the hierarchy of 'visible images' (those revealed by scripture or present at the creation) made an inductive approach to the divine a possibility, so pictorial representations were valuable because they contributed to the same end.[157]

Symbols, whether linguistic or pictorial, generally require interpretation and guidance on the interpretative possibilities, and scriptural exegesis provided a corpus of such material for the written word at an early stage. Visual representations, however, were widely (if naively) believed to be self-explanatory, and so it is perhaps not surprising that early Christian apologists paid little attention to Christian imagery, in contrast to the constant polemics they directed against pagan cult statues and depictions. Ambrose of Milan, for example, directed frequent attacks on pagan cult statues, but

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[155] See Lossky 1957; and esp. Rorem 1984.

[156] See, for example, John Scholastikos and Maximos Confessor: Riou 1973; Sherwood 1955, 28–99; Beck 1959, 376–7.

[157] John makes this point frequently, often citing the authority of Dionysios the Areopagite. See, e.g., Sermon I, 30–1: Kotter, 144–5; trans. Anderson 1980, 34–5. On this issue, see also Barber 2002.

devoted relatively little writing to Christian representation, except to affirm that Christians do not make likenesses of God.[158] But the writings of several churchmen from the end of the fourth century reveal an understanding that the figurative vocabulary of analogy and metaphor could be transformed into potent symbols and depictions – a development which heightened the tension within the church over the relationship between material representations and the divine. Augustine is representative: images were unhistorical, he argued, juxtaposing elements which did not belong together and thus misleading the onlooker;[159] he also accused artists of over-literalism and anthropomorphism.[160] Yet in the *City of God* Augustine praised beauty and the work of artisans as creations of God;[161] and – anticipating a common western response – he considered pictures to have an important illustrative value for the uneducated.[162]

Texts about images before the seventh century

For the period before the seventh century, few texts deal specifically with the role of religious images. In the late fourth century, Epiphanios of Cyprus, bishop of Salamis, argued that images of Christ were idolatrous, figments of the painters' imaginations, and blasphemous. God was uncircumscribable and incomprehensible, so visual representations of him were impossible, and the emperor is requested to destroy such images and replace them with crosses.[163] Similar hostility to images and their use was expressed by a certain Julian of Adramyttion in the province of Asia in the 520s or 530s, to whom the bishop Hypatios of Ephesos replied that, while not himself a proponent of the use of images, they nevertheless had a certain educational value.[164] In the West, Gregory the Great's views on the didactic

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[158] Ambrosius, *Ep.* 18.8; 18.31 (PL 16); *Sermo contra Auxentium*, 32 (*CSEL* 82, 104).

[159] Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum* I, 10.16 (*CSEL* 43, 15f.).

[160] *De fide et symbolo* vii, 14 (*CSEL* 41, 16. 18/21).   [161] *De civitate Dei*, xxii, 24 (*CCSL* 48, 849).

[162] *De trinitate* ix, 2.2 (*CCSL* 50, 294, 60f.). On this trope, see further Kessler 1985 and Brubaker 1999b, 46–7.

[163] See Holl 1928b; the main elements of the texts are reproduced in Hennephof 1969, 44–7 (letter to the emperor); 51 (letter to John of Jerusalem); and 47–50 (other 'iconoclastic' fragments). See also Ostrogorsky 1929, 67–75 and Alexander 1953, 63–6. See for a new edition of the fragments Thümmel 1986; and Thümmel 1992, 65–73.

[164] See Diekamp 1938, 127–9; with Eng. trans. and commentary in Alexander 1952. The most recent edition and discussion: Thümmel 1983 (text: 167–8, Germ. trans. 169–70) (= Thümmel 1992, 103–6, 320f.). Discussion on the structure and meaning of the argument and its interpretation: Lange 1969, 44–60; Gouillard 1961b; Gero 1975b; and Speck 1987a.

and educational importance of images parallel these ideas.[165] Ostrogorsky noted the fragments of a certain John, archbishop of Thessaloniki in the first half of the seventh century, which were cited in the proceedings of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, and in which the symbolic-anagogic theory of images is presented in a light acceptable to Christians;[166] while the Bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus, Leontios, who wrote the *Life* of John the Almsgiver, patriarch of Alexandria (610–19), also compiled a series of *logoi* against the Jews, in which the same set of arguments, albeit on a more elaborate and extensive scale, were produced. These, too, were partly reproduced in the Acts of the seventh council.[167] The defence of the cross as an object of Christian devotion, as well as of images, is a key motif in anti-Jewish polemic of the period, designed to refute Jewish accusations of Christian idolatry, and it has been plausibly argued that most, if not all, of the references in such texts to devotion to images were either emended or interpolated by later iconophile copyists or editors. The real focus of the debate was the cross.[168]

Those passages of the texts of Epiphanios of Salamis, Hypatios of Ephesos, and Leontios of Neapolis which deal with images, therefore, have all been questioned as original writings. This affects both our understanding of the ways in which an iconophile theology originated and the extent to which the issue of images and icons was actually taken up in pre-iconoclastic times. More importantly, it also affects our ideas of the uses to which icons and

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[165] See *Reg.* ix, 209 and xi, 10 to Serenus of Marseilles, in which a similar argument is made to that of Hypatios (CCL 140A, 768; 873–6). See Chazelle 1990.

[166] Text: Mansi xiii, 164C–165C. See Ostrogorsky 1929, 79, with the discussion of Alexander 1958a, 31–2; and Thümmel 1992, 112–14.

[167] On Leontios see Mango 1985a, 33; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 252–3; and 149–50 below. For the *logoi* in the Acts of the seventh council, see Mansi xiii, 44A–53C; and the discussion with texts at Thümmel 1992, 127–36.

[168] See Thümmel 1992, 118–27, 136–49. The texts include certain questions in the Pseudo-Athanasian *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem* (PG 28, 556–709; for the relationship between this text and the *Quaestiones et responsiones* of Anastasios of Sinai, see Haldon 1992a, 107–47, at 120–5); the *Dialexis* against the Jews of Anastasios of Sinai (which survives only in a later and reworked version); the *Tropaia* of Damascus against the Jews; and the anti-Jewish treatises of Stephen of Bostra and Hieronymus of Jerusalem. Thümmel argues for a seventh-century date for the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* and the *Dialexis* against the Jews of Anastasios of Sinai, Thümmel 1992, 146–68. For the compilation of Stephen of Bostra, see Alexakis 1993; and on this literature see the review in Cameron 1996a. Note also the anonymous Syriac *Disputation of Sergios the stylite against a Jew*, dated to the early eighth century, which raises the same issues and appears to be part of the same polemical context: Hayman 1973; and the (possibly earlier) *Dialogue* of the monk Moschos: Alexakis 1998.

images were put at this time, and the extent of any so-called 'cult of icons'. It will be worth examining the issue in greater depth.[169]

Some of the fragments dealing with the issue of images survive only in late eighth- and early ninth-century texts. The patriarch Nikephoros quotes from them in two works, the *Antirrhetikos*[170] and the *Elegchos* (*Refutatio*),[171] and he expresses considerable doubt as to their authenticity there and in his *Apologetikos minor* (attributing them, through a corrupt transmission of the author's name, to a certain Epiphanides, on the strength of an eyewitness account of the archbishop of Side, who claimed to have seen a manuscript at Nakoleia in Phrygia in which the author's name had been given thus).[172] Doubts as to the authenticity of the fragments are also expressed in the so-called *Nouthesia*, parts of which may date to the period before 754;[173] as well as by John of Damascus: in his first sermon on the icons (to be dated to the late 740s or early 750s[174]), he expresses some reservations about the genuineness of (unspecified) texts cited in an iconoclastic *florilegium* and attributed to Epiphanios of Salamis. Apart from the fact that these two references suggest that already by the middle of the eighth century the iconoclasts were beginning to assemble collections of texts with which to argue and illustrate their position, they also suggest that Epiphanios of Salamis was already clearly associated with the texts in question.[175] They were certainly used by Constantine V and at the Council of 754, as the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council – where their authenticity was

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[169] A further text which has been traditionally held to provide evidence of pre-iconoclastic attitudes to images, but which has now been shown to be a later iconophile forgery, is the letter purportedly of Neilus of Ancyra recommending the decoration of a church with paintings of scenes from the Old and New Testaments: see Thümmel 1978.

[170] See Pitra 1852, 371–503; 1858, 292–380 (with discussion in Alexander 1958a, 173–8, who dubs the whole work *Contra Eusebium et Epiphanidem*); Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 257.

[171] For the *Refutatio et eversio* (as Alexander dubs the *Elegchos kai anatrope*), see Alexander 1958a, 180–2, and a summary of the contents at 242–62; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 256f.; and the introduction to the edition by Featherstone, xiii–xxv.

[172] In his *Antirrhetikos*, ed. Pitra, 299f., and in the *Elegchos*, §157.16ff. (see Alexander 1958a, 261–2). For the *Apologetikos minor*, see *PG* 100, 837B–C. Note that the so-called *Epistola ad Theophilum imp.* refers to a certain Epiphanides of Cyprus, a docetist exiled by Theodosius I (ed. Munitiz *et al.*, §9a; ed. Duchesne, 354f.); and that in his *Elegchos* Nikephoros states that the so-called letter of Epiphanios to John of Aelia is actually the work of a docetist: see Nikephoros, *Elegchos*; Alexander 1958a, 262; and Maas 1930. The reference in the *Epistola*, which was a compilation of the later ninth century (Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 279 with literature) may well be derivative, but it is clear that the existence of an Epiphanides of Cyprus may lie behind these attributions.

[173] Ed. Melioranskij, xxvii.

[174] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 248–9; with Speck 1981, 179–243; also Speck 1989.

[175] Kotter, iii, 116f. (I, 25.1–9).

similarly challenged – in 787 make clear.[176] Theodore the Stoudite had similar doubts.[177]

Ostrogorsky was the first to note certain problems in the arguments, and he has been followed by Speck.[178] In essence, both pointed to serious anachronisms in the argumentation. Reference to the 'Fathers' of the church in a fourth-century text, for example, seem anomalous; 'Epiphanios' argues against the notion that Christ can be portrayed because of the incarnation, a position which was first developed in response to 'iconoclastic' criticism during the eighth century; he also claims that the Fathers employed only the cross to symbolise Christ, again invoking an aspect of iconoclastic arguments developed only from the time of Leo III; and he similarly argues against the idea that the Fathers of the church confirm the existence of sacred images and thus must also have bestowed honour upon them (by *proskynesis*).[179] Again, as we shall see, the discussion about the devotion to be accorded sacred images was a crucial element of early iconoclast discussion. As has been pointed out, there is no reason to doubt that the fourth-century Epiphanios of Salamis was an opponent of religious imagery, precisely because of the perceived danger of contamination by example from pagan tradition, with which the church was still grappling.[180] But in spite of the prevailing view that the fragments are correctly attributed to the fourth-century theologian, the evidence accumulated by Ostrogorsky and Speck with regard to these particular fragments and the question of the devotional practices to be observed before sacred images is sufficient to cast serious doubt on their genuineness; and that the testimony of contemporaries of the debate on images such as John of Damascus, the anonymous author of the *Nouthesia*, and Nikephoros, is to be preferred.[181]

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[176]　Mansi xiii, 292E–296E.

[177]　Theodore: *PG* 99, 388A–B. On this issue, see further Brubaker 1998, 1,220–1.

[178]　Ostrogorsky 1929, 89f., 103; and Speck 1987a.

[179]　For detailed discussion, Ostrogorsky 1929, 100ff. Speck notes in addition that reference to the text of Romans I, 25, alluded to in the fragments of Epiphanios (ed. Thümmel, 182.66f.) concerning the error of worshipping that which is created rather than the Creator, also alluded to by Germanos in his letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis (Mansi xiii, 120, D7), by John of Damascus in his first sermon on the icons (I, 4.54f.) and in the *Horos* of the Council of 754 (Mansi xiii, 214A), should also be construed as a sign of an eighth-century date for the fragment in question: it reflects the discussion as inaugurated by the letters of Germanos, and is unlikely to have appeared with no background or developmental context in the fourth century: see Speck 1987a, 314, and 1981, 186.

[180]　See Kitzinger 1954, 91–2 and nn. 27–30; Thümmel 1992, 65ff.

[181]　Speck also suggests that the association with the emperor Theodosius came about because that emperor had been attributed by the early ninth century with strongly iconophile sympathies: 1987a, 318.

Similar doubts have been expressed with regard to another purported participant in the debate, namely Hypatios, bishop of Ephesos in the early sixth century, quoted in an extremely corrupt version in an early ninth-century collection of texts dealing with icons, and appearing also in a letter of Theodore the Stoudite.[182] These doubts seem to us to be well-grounded, most importantly in the fact that the arguments adduced by Hypatios in the letter to a certain Julian of Adramyttion are remarkably close to those of the patriarch Germanos. Importantly, for example, Hypatios takes up Julian's condemnation of images qualified by their location – in other words, images as such are not condemned, it is the use to which they were put that is the reason for his opposition. Further, Hypatios cites a number of scriptural texts to illustrate his position, texts which appear for the most part also in the letters of Germanos or the sermons on icons of John of Damascus, and which occur in a very similar rhetorical context.[183] The fragments assume the existence of a context in which arguments about the nature of the possibility of perceiving the divinity are current, something which evolves explicitly only after the opening phases of the iconoclast conflict itself.[184] There is other internal evidence to suggest a later date, such as epithets for images which are current by the eighth century, but which seem somewhat anomalous in the sixth century.[185] It is perhaps also significant that not only do Hypatios' arguments parallel those of Germanos in his letters to Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Klaudioupolis in their relatively neutral position vis-à-vis icons – justifying their use and grounding this theologically, evoking the argument that pictorial representation is an aid to the uneducated, but presenting a fairly mild refutation of the attempt to condemn the practice of honouring them by *proskynesis* – but they are then roundly attacked by Theodore the Stoudite for this (by the early ninth century) somewhat ambiguous defence.[186] In view of these

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[182] For editions, see n. 164 above. The collection, not yet edited and published, is found in Paris. gr. 1115, a twelfth-century copy by a certain Kinnamos of an earlier manuscript. It has been demonstrated that the date claimed by a scribal notice in the manuscript for the original compilation – 758/9 in Rome – can clearly not have applied to the majority of the texts incorporated into the collection (some are of the thirteenth century, see Uthemann 1981): see Munitiz 1982; and Riedinger 1984.

[183] See Speck 1984a, esp. 219.

[184] Speck 1984a, 235–6 on the *noera orasis*, a key element of iconoclastic argument at the 754 council, taken up already by Germanos and by John of Damascus.

[185] Including a possible reference to silk stuffs bearing Christian motifs (l. 58 Thümmel) which, as Speck 1984a, 235, notes, is anachronistic for the first half of the sixth century in the late Roman context.

[186] Speck argues that Theodore attacked Hypatios' position because (a) the text had only recently become available (Hypatios is not mentioned in the Acts of 787, for example, and appears

arguments, we would seriously doubt the genuineness of the fragments as a testimony to the state of sixth-century attitudes to images. Last, but not least, Speck has noted that there was an eighth-century Hypatios, Bishop of Ephesos, supposedly executed under Leo III (according to the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople),[187] and the fragments in question, especially in view of the relatively 'early' date (as adduced from the nature of the arguments) in terms of the development of the iconoclastic controversy, may well originate with him. Julian of Adramyttion may thus have been one of those bishops who – like Thomas of Klaudioupolis in the 730s and 740s – was generally in favour of the removal of icons from certain positions within church buildings.[188]

A third figure whose name has frequently been invoked in the discussion about attitudes to images before iconoclasm is Leontios of Neapolis. Already in the 1930s Martin had serious doubts about the authenticity of the fragments: they paralleled eighth-century arguments so closely that he thought it most unlikely that they could have been conceived in the early seventh century, the time when Leontios was active.[189] More recently, Speck has taken up the same argument and reinforced Martin's doubts.[190] In spite of counter-arguments in favour of their genuineness, put forward by

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nowhere in the eighth-century material) and (b) because the defence of the use of sacred images adopted in the fragments was not very far from that represented by the leaders of second iconoclasm. See Speck 1984a, 228–31. We will return to this issue later. Thümmel 1983 is aware of these anomalies, but explains them in terms of an original text of the sixth-century Hypatios interpolated and emended by a ninth-century redactor: *ibid.*, 166.

[187]   *Synax. CP*, 62.10–64.5.

[188]   Speck 1984a, 219–21. The fact that no Julianos is referred to in the account of the 754 council in the 787 Acts may suggest that he played an insignificant role, or had died before 754: Speck, *ibid.*, 221 n. 39. See also Sansterre 1994, 204f., who is similarly suspicious of the Hypatios texts.

[189]   Martin 1930, 141–2.

[190]   Speck 1984a, 242–9; also 1987f.; 1993a; 1994b, 295ff.; 1997c. Speck's main argument, apart from illustrating the parallels between known eighth-century arguments and the appropriate passages in Leontios, is to stress (a) that the fact that John of Damascus knew of the dialogue means only that it must have been written in the period between approximately 726 and 750; (b) the fact that the argument is relatively unrefined is not a sign of its seventh-century date (since Déroche argues that it is not sophisticated enough to belong to the iconoclastic period proper), but rather of the evolving nature of both iconoclast and iconophile arguments over the eighth century: texts written in the opening phases of the controversy cannot be expected to be as sophisticated in their arguments as those composed at a later stage; (c) the fact that it is very consciously a dialogue directed against Jews is not, as Déroche suggests, evidence for its genuineness; rather, it illustrates the effort – consistently evident in later iconophile writing – to base the argument for icons firmly in an Old Testament context, thus historically embedding the devotion to icons in biblical times and at the same time stressing the context through which the second commandment should be interpreted. Finally, Speck emphasises that the text was not the result of any conspiracy to falsify: it most likely lost its original author's name in the process of transmission, to be associated with Leontios of Neapolis at some point during the first half of the eighth century (and at the Council of 787) on the grounds of the association of Leontios with similar, genuine, dialogues. It may well be to such

Déroche, we believe that the weight of evidence falls against Leontios' dialogue belonging in the seventh century, the more so in view of the fact that the issue of *proskynesis* and kissing of icons – the former, as we will see, the key issue in the early iconoclast debates – plays a significant role.[191] These three sets of texts have been the basis for a number of assumptions about the nature of the 'cult of icons' before iconoclasm. Without their testimony, the evidence for a debate with regard to such a cult in the sense in which it later evolved – by the ninth century – becomes less compelling. Thus although several theologians dealt with the issue of pagan idols and graven images in the period up to the middle of the seventh century, it was only from the later seventh century, and especially after the Quinisext Council of 692, that icons appear to have been propelled into the limelight, stimulating some concern about their role as a conspicuous element of the day-to-day life of all Christians. Even if the fragments of Epiphanios and Hypatios, for example, or those of John of Thessaloniki and Leontios of Neapolis, are taken as either genuine and/or uninterpolated or not misattributed, it is important to emphasise that they remain remarkably isolated in their concern. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the discussion appears to be a relatively late phenomenon, and at its most lively in the seventh-century anti-Jewish tracts.

Icons before iconoclasm[192]

Portraits of holy people survive or are attested throughout the late antique and early medieval Christian world. A handful of preserved examples survives and there is written documentation for many other holy portraits that no longer exist.[193] But holy portraits did not carry the same range of meanings in late antiquity as they did in the Byzantine Middle Ages, and their significance changed profoundly over the course of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries. By the year 800, the 'icon' could serve as an intermediary

writings that the patriarch Germanos refers in his letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis (written, as we will see, not in the late 720s but rather in the 740s, from his place of exile), although he mentions no names: see Mansi xiii, 109B–C and Stein 1980, 45.

[191] See Déroche 1986; 1991, 278 n. 4; and 1994. Sansterre 1994, 205 and n. 30 agrees with Déroche. Against this see the references in the previous note, Brubaker 1998, 1249 n. 110; and Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 252–3.

[192] Portions of the following discussion appeared in Brubaker 1998; see also Thümmel 2005, 23–6.

[193] For the West, see Markus 1978; for the East, Weitzmann 1976; Weitzmann 1978; Kitzinger 1955; Kitzinger 1958; Belting 1994; Maguire 1996.

between the viewer and the holy person represented;[194] this was not the case around the year 400, nor even around the year 600. The stages in the development of the concept of the sacred portrait have been obscured by an assumption that the evolution was seamless and organic. In fact, however, it was only in the seventh century that all of the features we now associate with holy portraits fell into place, and only in the eighth and ninth that they were codified.

Because so few early examples survive – and none survives in its original context – we must rely on texts to understand the roles of the holy portrait in the early Middle Ages. Most of the relevant documents were collected at the end of the nineteenth century by von Dobschütz, then revisited and arranged a half-century later by Ernst Kitzinger.[195] Assessments of the pre-iconoclast sacred image are still usually based on the corpus of material as Kitzinger organised it, and the way that he interpreted the texts continues to affect scholarly discourse. Simply put, the Kitzinger paradigm is that what he called the 'cult of [Christian] images' increased and intensified from the middle of the sixth century until the imposition of iconoclasm in 730. Like André Grabar before him, Kitzinger saw iconoclasm as a response to a strong and steady rise in the importance of sacred images from about 550 onwards.[196]

Kitzinger's arguments have been widely accepted. But there are serious problems with the texts upon which they are based.[197] Even in 1954, Kitzinger was well aware that some of the written material showed evidence of later reworking,[198] and, in recent years, the authenticity of virtually every

[194] Basil of Caesarea provided the foundations for this belief in his fourth-century sermon *On the Holy Spirit* (*PG* 32, 149C) where, speaking of imperial portraits, he wrote that 'the honour given to the image is transferred to its prototype'; the idea of the holy portrait as a conduit to the divine prototype, however, is only developed later, e.g. by John of Damascus in the second quarter of the eighth century, the ecumenical council held at Nicaea in 787, and the patriarchs Nikephoros (806–15) and Photios (858–67, 877–86): see the texts collected in Brubaker 1989a, 36–8, 65–6.

[195] von Dobschütz 1899; Kitzinger 1954.

[196] Kitzinger 1954, 128–9; Grabar 1936, esp. 169–70; Grabar 1957, esp. 77–91.

[197] Perhaps inevitably, this model neglects the voiceless surviving material evidence, some of which is considered below.

[198] He was particularly uncertain about the authenticity of accounts of miraculous icons in John Moschos's *Spiritual Meadow* (the *Pratum Spirituale*), the core of which was written some time before 634, and in the miracles of Kosmas and Damian, a text compiled in the seventh century but, like the *Spiritual Meadow*, the object of numerous later reworkings, notably by Andrew of Crete (around the year 700) and Peter of Argos (around the year 900): Kitzinger 1954, 97, 147–8. The Kosmas and Damian miracles were in circulation by 787, when they were cited at the Seventh Ecumenical Council: Mansi xiii, 65, 68. Kitzinger's worries about Moschos were shared by Photios, who already in the ninth century noted the 'insertion of chapters': *Bibliotheke*, codex 199: Henry III, 96–7; trans. Wilson 1994, 182.

pre-iconoclast text that he cited as evidence for the veneration of images has been questioned. Though in some cases the jury is still out, most of the basic accounts upon which the Kitzinger model rests are now accepted as later interpolations into earlier texts.[199]

Interpolations (actual or suspected) were a familiar problem in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. Participants in the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 680–1) collated copies of various texts to expose interpolations and to determine correct readings.[200] The Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 787) followed suit. Its Acts are full of condemnations of faked and plagiarised texts: the accusation that the iconoclasts were 'fortified by forged and intrusive writings' is one of the milder insults recorded.[201] Questions about the authenticity of texts were not confined to public *fora*: individual readers also expressed suspicions. Around 740, John of Damascus wondered about the accuracy of texts attributed to Epiphanios of Salamis and, over the next sixty years, so did Theodore of Stoudion and the patriarch Nikephoros.[202] The councils, John, and Nikephoros were presumably responding to something they saw as a genuine possibility: texts could be added to and altered. On one level, modern scholarship simply confirms their suspicions and in some cases – exemplified by the fragmentary texts attributed to Epiphanios[203] – continues their arguments.

Despite the reactions of John of Damascus and Nikephoros, many interpolations were more or less innocent attempts to edit an old text so that it made sense in the world that the editor addressed.[204] Interpolations of this sort inevitably promoted a particular point of view, but were not necessarily (or even normally) attempts deliberately to distort the meaning of the earlier text. Rather, many interpolations simply elaborated an account in order to make it relevant and comprehensible to a new audience. We should

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[199] See further Brubaker 1998, with full bibliography. Latin texts about images (e.g. by Augustine, Gregory of Tours, and various pilgrims) are less corrupt, having escaped reworkings inspired by the iconoclast debate, which had relatively little impact in the West.

[200] See van den Ven 1955/7, 328–30; Bardy 1936, 290–1.

[201] Mansi xiii, 292E. Further examples in Brubaker 1989a, 52–5.

[202] John of Damascus, *Against those who attack divine images* I, 25 and II, 18: ed. Kotter 1975, 116–17; trans. Anderson 1980, 32, 64. For Theodore, see *PG* 99:388. For Nikephoros, see *PG* 100:837 and Alexander 1958, 176–7, 261–2 for Epiphanios, 257–61 for other interpolations suspected by the patriarch. The 787 council also questioned the Epiphanios text: Mansi xiii, 292–6; trans. Sahas 1986, 116–21. For later examples, see Brubaker 1989a, 52–3.

[203] For the fragments attributed to Epiphanios, bishop of Salamis (367–403), see Thümmel 1986, 169–88; partial trans. Mango 1972, 41–3. For a summary of earlier discussion, see Kitzinger 1954, 92–3; and for recent arguments for and against the authenticity of the fragments, Sahas 1986, 116 n. 1; Speck 1987a, 312–15; Thümmel 1992, 65ff.

[204] This point was often made by Paul Speck, e.g. in Speck 1991, 246–7.

not, in other words, rush to condemn the interpolators, who were (usually) only trying to make sense of the past or, in the case of hagiographic texts and miracle collections, who simply wanted the virtues of 'their' saint to remain important for an audience that had new requirements for expressing sanctity.[205]

What, then, do the texts tell us?

Before *c.* 700, references to sacred portraits are not very common, and when they appear they are usually incidental to the main narrative. Evidence is 'scattered and spotty' before the mid-sixth century;[206] we shall therefore only briefly rehearse the evidence for that period.

Texts written before the mid-sixth century mention images, and sometimes even sacred portraits,[207] that are no longer preserved, and, if Gregory of Nyssa's mid-fourth-century claim that a narrative image drove him to tears may be extended to portraits, suggest that people could respond to them with emotion.[208] No miracles, however, are ascribed to sacred portraits in any texts of this period: the passage from Gregory of Nazianzos that has sometimes been said to describe an icon precipitating the repentance of a whore depends not on Gregory but on an iconophile reworking of his words.[209] The only uncontested passage that mentions 'adoring' images – Augustine's early fifth-century remark '*sepulcrorum et picturarum adoratores*'[210] – is unspecific about both the form of worship and the type of image; interestingly, however, it links images with tombs and may thus intimate a connection between the sacred portrait and the cult of relics, at least in the west. Holy portraits were certainly honoured, and may even have been venerated in isolated instances, but this does not seem to have been a characteristic of the period. Around the year 300, for example, Eusebios observed that the statue of Christ and the woman with the issue of blood at Paneas was erected 'to honour them';[211] and Philostorgios, writing in the first half of the fifth century adds no more: the statue is respected, but

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[205] Accounts of the image of Christ from Edessa provide an excellent example of this process: see Cameron 1983 and Brubaker 1998.

[206] Quotation Kitzinger 1954, 95.   [207] See e.g. the collection of texts in Mango 1972, 4–119.

[208] Gregory wrote that he could not walk by an image of the sacrifice of Isaac 'without shedding tears, so clearly did art present the story to one's eyes': *PG* 46:572; trans. Mango 1972, 34.

[209] Demoen 1997; Demoen 1998.   [210] *PL* 32:1342; see also Kitzinger 1954, 92.

[211] *History of the Church* VII, 18: ed. Loeb II (London, 1932), 174–7. Rufinus, in his translation (with supplements) of Eusebios of *c.* 400, adds that the healing plant growing at the base of the statue derived its curative powers from contact with the image: see Kitzinger 1954, 94. This does not appear to have entered the Greek tradition: both Eusebios and the account included in the Acts of the 787 council note the power of the plant to heal but do not ascribe this to contact with the statue: Mansi xiii, 268; trans. Sahas 1986, 97.

not the object of any special veneration.[212] There is little evidence for the growth of a cult, and the idea of a 'transparent' religious image remains foreign. The famous statement that underpins this concept – 'the honour shown to the image is transmitted to its prototype' – dates from this period: it was written by Basil of Caesarea in the mid-fourth century.[213] But Basil was writing about imperial images, not portraits of holy men and women; it is the later iconophiles – John of Damascus in the mid-eighth century,[214] quickly followed by the authors of the Acts of the 787 council[215] – who, on rediscovering the concept, make it central to the orthodox understanding of the holy portrait. Only in the third quarter of the sixth century, and then in isolation, is anything approaching the idea that a sacred portrait might be a conduit to the person represented found in a preserved Greek source: this is in an epigram on an image of the archangel Michael attributed to Agathias (*c.* 531–*c.* 580) which has its own particular problems, to which we will return in the final chapter.[216]

The apotropaic use of holy portraits may also have been anticipated in the fifth century, if Theodoret's *Religious History* preserves its original format (which is uncertain), at least in Rome. We will consider this issue, too, in the concluding chapter.[217] For now, suffice it to note that even if Theodoret's account is reliable it stands in isolation; the bulk of our evidence for the use of a holy portrait as an apotropaic image or as a palladium comes from the second half of the sixth century.

For that period, in addition to the epigram attributed to Agathias, written information about holy portraits comes largely from a Syrian report of the Kamoulianai image written in 569, an account written by the so-called Piacenza pilgrim around 570, and Evagrios's *Ecclesiastical History* (*c.* 590).[218]

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212 Kitzinger 1954, 92; Bidez 1913, 78. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (V, 21), the fifth-century historian Sozomen also mentions the statue (and plant) but no veneration or even honour is observed.

213 *PG* 32:149; trans. Mango 1972, 47.

214 *Against those who attack the divine images* I, 21, 51 (= II, 47) and esp. I, 35–6 (= II, 31–2) where Basil's passage is quoted and then directly applied to images of Christ and of saints: ed. Kotter 1975, 108, 147–9, 154; trans. Anderson 1980, 29, 36–7, 40. Stephen of Bostra, writing around the year 700, may indicate familiarity with the concept: see below.

215 Mansi xiii, 325; trans. Sahas 1986, 145.   216 See 775–6 below.   217 See 775 below.

218 As it seems more relevant to Gaul than to Byzantium – see Van Dam 1988, 9–10 – we have not here included Gregory of Tours' *Glory of the Martyrs* (*c.* 585–90) despite its inclusion of two accounts concerning icons. In the first account, a stabbed image of Christ bleeds; in the second, an image of Christ in a loincloth asks to be clothed: *Liber in gloria martyrum* XXI–XXII; *MGH, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* I.ii, 500–1 (repr. 50–1); trans. van Dam 1988, 40–1. The extract from the *Life* of John the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople (582–97), recorded in the Acts of the 787 council (Mansi xiii, 80–5), is otherwise unattested;

All three describe portraits of Christ that were not made by human hands (*acheiropoieta*): in other words, all were miraculous contact relics.

The Kamoulianai portrait of Christ was first recorded in a Syrian epitome of a chronicle by Zachariah of Mitylene written by an anonymous monk in 569, according to which the portrait was found in a fountain by a woman who had refused to believe in Christ, saying 'How can I worship him when he is not visible and I do not know him?'.[219] She accepted the image she found, painted on a linen cloth, as a real representation of Christ, and miraculous: when removed from the water the cloth was found to be dry and when hidden in the woman's head-dress it left a second imprint there. According to the epitome, the image was carried through Anatolia between 555 and 561 to solicit money to repair a village and its church; according to George Kedrenos it was taken to Constantinople in 574;[220] and, according to the *History* of Theophylact Simokattes (probably written in the 620s), as the enemy approached the general Philippikos in 586, an *acheiropoieton* – which is nearly universally believed to be the Kamoulianai image – was 'stripped . . . of its sacred coverings and paraded through the ranks, thereby inspiring the army with a greater and irresistible courage'.[221] Kedrenos is of course a twelfth-century source and, since Simocattes wrote about forty years after Philippikos's battle at Solachon, it is entirely possible that he was influenced by the contemporary use of icons on Herakleios's military campaigns (as described by George of Pisidia)[222] – but it is still clear that the Kamoulianai *acheiropoieton* was credited with military intervention by the 620s. Thirty years earlier, Evagrios claimed that another *acheiropoieton* – the so-called mandylion of Edessa, by then believed to be a direct imprint of Christ's face – had saved that city from Persian attack.[223] Like Kitzinger before us, we may reasonably conclude that the last third of the sixth century witnessed the arrival and acceptance of – and apparently the need for – *acheiropoieta*. Whether or not the Theodoret passage about Symeon's images in Rome

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the date we should accept for its account of a healing portrait of the virgin – on which see Kitzinger 1954, 108–9 – is therefore unclear. On the *Life* of Symeon Stylites the Younger (ostensibly written shortly after his death in 592), see below.

[219] On this much discussed image see Kitzinger 1954, 99–100, 111, 124–5, 143–4; Belting 1994, 53–7; and for the text *Syr. Chron*, 320–1. A later version of the same account, attributed to Pseudo-Gregory and dated sometime between 600 and 750, strengthens Christ's role: he appears to an elite woman and leaves his image on a face towel.

[220] Kedrenos I, 685.

[221] Theoph. Sim, *Historia*, II, 3.4–6 (73–4); Whitby and Whitby 1989, 46 (and on the date of the text, *ibid.*, xvi).

[222] *Expeditio Persica* I, lines 139–53; *Herakleias* II, lines 12–18: Pertusi, 91, 252; trans. and discussion in Belting 1994, 498–9.

[223] See Cameron 1983 and Whitby 2000, esp. 323–6.

recorded mid-fifth-century reality, the Edessa and Kamoulianai accounts suggest that the idea of (Christian) holy portraits as intercessors on behalf of a city was becoming acceptable by the end of the sixth century.[224]

The third *acheiropoieton* is mentioned by the Piacenza pilgrim (*c.* 570) in the course of a description of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The pilgrim notes in one context that he prayed (*orare*) before an image of Christ believed to have been painted during Christ's life; then, in Memphis, he writes of adoring (*et nos eam adoravimus*; 'and we adored it') another, an *acheiropoieton* on linen.[225] These were evidently important portraits, again with physical connections with Christ that recall relics, and it is perhaps not surprising to find 'adoration', the by-then normal response to relics, applied to them.[226] Still, the only earlier author to use a word that approximates to the meaning of *adoratio* in connection with a sacred image was in fact another Latin writer, Augustine, in the passage cited earlier that associated images and relics: we might wonder whether, since the pilgrim's attitude toward and vocabulary about images was formed in the West, it necessarily records local practice in the East.[227]

The evidence does not suggest a 'great upsurge of icon worship in the late sixth century'.[228] If not unknown, the veneration of holy portraits was rarely recorded. Nonetheless, the final third of the sixth century saw relic-images, the *acheiropoieta*, rise in importance, and sometimes take on the role of palladia – the old Roman images of urban protection (and, to a certain extent, of urban identity).

Throughout most of the seventh century, attitudes toward holy portraits change little. This is well exemplified in the miracles of St Artemios, the core of which was written between 658 and 668.[229] Here, through visions, visitations and relics, Artemios proves himself a powerful saint; but the miracles provide no evidence for Artemios's personalised intervention through the medium of a miraculous image. Taken together, the *acheiropoieta* and the miracles suggest that different levels of meaning accrued to the holy portrait at different times. Some time in the last third of the sixth century, certain

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[224] Pagan urban populations had of course recognised palladia long since: see Gordon 1979, 5–34.

[225] Geyer, *Itineraria*, 127–54; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 79–89 (paragraphs 23 and 44). The only other holy portrait noted by the pilgrim is of the Virgin (paragraph 20). See Kitzinger 1954, 96–7, 113.

[226] Grabar 1943–6 remains the classic study.

[227] From the evidence provided by Augustine, Gregory of Tours, and the Piacenza pilgrim (all noted above), one has the impression that religious images were either more important to the early medieval Latin than to the early Byzantine world view or that it was more acceptable to speak of images in terms that were normally used for relics in the west than it was in the east.

[228] Kitzinger 1954, 134.   [229] Discussion and bibliography in Brubaker 1998, 1,231–4.

portraits of Christ took on the attributes of palladia but, as the Artemios miracles reveal, they were not gradually and organically invested with additional meanings thereafter. Even a century later, when other holy figures – notably St Demetrios in Thessaloniki[230] – had become urban protectors, holy portraits were still not expected to intercede for individuals; into the 660s, holy portraits were not yet transparent conduits to the divine that could be accessed by ordinary people.

The few seventh-century portraits of saints that have been preserved confirm this assessment.[231] The mosaic portraits from the first half of the century of St Demetrios in his church at Thessaloniki, for example, are all *ex voto* images, often with inscriptions thanking St Demetrios for his direct intervention and in one case alluding to his role as urban protector: 'Blessed martyr of Christ, friend of the city, take care of citizens and strangers'.[232] As we have already seen, the panel painting of St Peter from Mount Sinai (B.5, fig. 1) is also apparently an *ex voto* image. Above Peter, a medallion portrait of Christ is flanked by images of a woman and her son – a particularly common pairing in the miracles of St Artemios[233] – who commissioned the work as an expression of gratitude to the saint for healing one or both of them through Christ, an arrangement also verbalised in the miracles where Artemios invariably credits Christ with his ability to heal.[234]

The icon of St Peter and the mosaics at Hagios Demetrios are not intermediaries through which the saint is expected to act further. They conclude the healing (or whatever successful outcome was desired), they do not participate in it. Apparently, as in the miracles of St Artemios – and indeed in the miracles of St Demetrios, where the only icons of the saint mentioned are those used to confirm the identity of the figure who had appeared as Demetrios[235] – visions of the saint himself effected the miracle to which the icon and mosaics respond. That the image itself was not yet a primary site

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[230] See Cormack 1985, 50–94.   [231] See e.g. Weitzmann 1976, 12–28, 35–6, 41–2, 51, 61.

[232] See Cormack 1985, esp. 91; Cormack 1969, 17–52; and more generally Belting 1994, 82–8 and Maguire 1996, 101–2; all with earlier bibliography.

[233] See miracles 10–12, 28, 31, 36, 42, 43, 45: Crisafulli and Nesbitt 1997, 94–101, 154–7, 162–5, 188–93, 216–19, 222–5.

[234] See the introduction, and miracles 3, 6, 12, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 39 and 43 where God or Christ heals 'through the holy martyr': Crisafulli and Nesbitt 1997, 78–9, 82–3, 90–1, 100–1, 154–7, 164–5, 168–71, 188–91, 194–5, 204–5, 218–19. At a later date, it might not have been acceptable for the mother and son to be roughly horizontally aligned with Christ, but the mosaics at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki – where donors share space and may be on scale with the saint and Christ – suggest that such scruples did not yet apply, or at least not in this context: see Cormack 1969, 29–32; Maguire 1996, 118–32; Brubaker 1998, 1,236–7. For a different interpretation, Weitzmann 1976, 23–6.

[235] In miracles 8, 10, and 15: *Miracula S Demetrii*, 102, 115, 162 (trans. 100, 111, 160).

of intercession is also suggested by the sixth- and seventh-century pilgrim tokens of St Symeon the Younger, which worked not through the image of the saint impressed upon them but through the material on which the image was stamped, the dirt from the Holy Mountain on which Symeon's column sat.[236] So, too, in the miracles of St Artemios. In miracle 16, Artemios appears to a certain Sergios in a vision and gives to him a 'wax seal bearing an image of the saint'. Sergios melts the seal and applies it to his hernia 'and as soon as the softened wax of the seal touched him, instantly he became healthy and glorified God and the holy martyr'.[237] In both cases, material (earth or wax) sanctified by contact with the saint is the healing agent, not the images of Symeon or Artemios – in the latter case, in fact, the healing process required the destruction of Artemios's portrait.

The relatively restricted role of holy portraits up to at least the 660s is confirmed by the other major sixth- and seventh-century texts relevant to the issue of sacred images, notably the *Life* of St Symeon the Younger, various works attributed to Anastasios of Sinai, and the two heavily interpolated texts mentioned earlier, the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos and the miracles of Kosmas and Damian. In all of these collections, holy portraits are mentioned, but rarely – for example, icons appear in only four of the 243 accounts incorporated in the *Spiritual Meadow*, and in only two of the 259 miracles found in the *Life* of St Symeon the Younger – and except in sections believed to have been added later they play no active role.[238]

Even including the interpolated passages, seventh-century texts pay little attention to holy portraits. Eighth-century authors, by contrast, bestow a great deal of attention on them: John of Damascus (*c.* 730) and the Acts of the 787 council consider many things besides icons, but they give considerably more time to them than do any texts written before *c.* 700. In fact, John and the 787 churchmen basically established the core theory or theology of images still central to the orthodox church.[239] By *c.* 730, a fundamental transformation in the ways holy portraits were understood had taken place. A confluence of sources suggests that this change took place toward the end of the seventh century.

On the holy places was written some time before 688 by Adamnan, abbot of Iona, in collaboration with Arculf, who had supposedly visited the Holy

[236] See Vikan 1989.   [237] Crisafulli and Nesbitt 1997, 106–9.

[238] Full discussion, with bibliography, in Speck 1991, 236–46; Speck 1993b (with corrections and additions, Speck 1994a); and Brubaker 1998, 1,239–48.

[239] Brubaker 1989a, with bibliography. For the important refinements of the early ninth century, notably in the writings of Nikephoros and Theodore of Stoudion, see also Alexander 1958a; Parry 1989; Parry 1996; Barber 2002.

Land around the years 683/4.[240] As with Augustine and the Piacenza pilgrim, it is unclear to what extent we can rely on Adamnan's Latin account, written from a perspective quite different from the east Christian customs he describes, for precise details about Byzantine attitudes toward images or local terminology. One 'thoroughly reliable account' of a 'portrait of the holy confessor George', which Adamnan claims that Arculf 'learned from some expert story tellers in Constantinople', contains a passage that may, however, be pertinent here. On the eve of battle, a soldier approached 'the portrait of the holy confessor George, and began to speak to the portrait as if it were George present in person'; he asked for safe-keeping, and when he returned unharmed from the campaign he came back to the church 'and spoke to St George as though he were present in person' again.[241] Adamnan appears to find the soldier's approach to the portrait unusual and worth remarking twice, and it is likely that his account accurately reflects a tale circulating in Constantinople in the early 680s.[242] If so, the identification of image and prototype was complete by this time.

Proskynesis before images also apparently becomes an issue during the last decades of the seventh century.[243] Stephen of Bostra's *Against the Jews*,

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[240] *Itineraria*, 175–234; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 93–116, 192–7. See *ODB* 1, 20–1; Woods 2002.

[241] *Itineraria*, 231–2; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 114–15. The only other icon mentioned is a miraculous portrait of the Virgin that exudes oil; Adamnan says that Arculf had seen the image but does not note his response to it: *Itineraria*, 233; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 115. But see now Woods 2002 for some problems with the dating and sources of these passages.

[242] For more on this account, see 781 below.

[243] In eastern texts there are only two references to the act of *proskynesis* before icons in the theological literature that may date before the seventh century, both preserved only in fragmentary and problematic texts cited at the 787 council: Epiphanios of Salamis and Hypatios of Ephesos (see 44 above). John of Thessaloniki and Leontios of Neapolis are also excerpted in the Acts of 787; and it has been argued that, where such references do not represent later emendations or 'interpretations' of the originals, then they are misattributions (deliberate or accidental). On this issue, see in particular the remarks of Speck 1991. Without the testimony of these fragments, therefore, we must rely on the casual mention of icons and the behaviour and paraphernalia associated with them for the evolution. From the early seventh century, such references increase, and are connected in particular with Christian efforts to justify and explain the devotion shown the cross. It is only from the end of the seventh century that the issue of *proskynesis* in connection with images receives any serious attention. Even in the *Dialexis* and in the *Questions and Answers* attributed to Anastasios of Sinai, and in the *Logos* against the Jews of Stephen of Bostra, however, the issue of *proskynesis* before icons is less important than the issue of devotion to the cross.

   Proskynesis before images may have occurred earlier in the west – in a letter to Secundinus, Gregory the Great observes that *proskynesis* is to the archetype, not the image: *Reg.* ix, 148 (*CCSL* 140A, 698–704); in letters to the bishop of Marseille, Serenus, who had reportedly destroyed images, he notes that images played an educative role even if they were not to be adored in their own right: *ibid.*, ix, 209; xi, 10 (*CCSL* 140A, 768, 873–6); Chazelle 1990. References to the veneration of images in the early medieval world are in fact more common

probably written around 700,[244] is one of the earliest anti-Jewish texts to mention images.[245] The core of his argument is that God ordered the tabernacle to be decorated with cherubim 'fashioned by human hands'; Stephen then asks his hypothetical Jewish audience: 'Will you call them idols? What will you say to Moses and to Israel, who venerated (προσκυνήσαντι) them? Veneration is the outward sign by which honour is given' (Καὶ ἡ μεν προσκύνησις τιμὴ ἐστι σύμβολον).[246] And at about this same time, in his revised and annotated *Hodegos*, Anastasios of Sinai appears to have used an image of the crucifixion to solidify his argument against the monophysites, and to have argued that images were more reliable witnesses than texts to the past and conveyed the reality of the past better.[247]

It would appear that the holy portrait became a channel through which one could reach the saint depicted in the last quarter of the seventh century and especially in the last two decades of that century. At this time, too, veneration through *proskynesis* became sufficiently accepted practice to be noted by Stephen of Bostra; while Anastasios of Sinai's remarks suggest that the dogmatic and didactic importance of imagery was also becoming increasingly significant. The great collections of miracle stories concerning images follow, in the eighth century, in the works of John of Damascus, the Acts of the 787 council, and the iconophile *florilegia*.[248]

Even then, we may note, images do not replace visions, visitations and relics: they simply become another means of accessing the holy. The 787 council spent a great deal of energy discussing icons, and we tend to remember it as predominantly about images; but, as Marie-France Auzépy has

in western than in eastern sources: see Gregory of Tours on miraculous icons and Augustine on sepulchral images, notes 218 and 92 above. However, if the fragmentary *Speech against the Jews* as recorded in the apparently interrelated citations by John of Damascus, the 787 Acts and the eighth-century iconophile *florilegia* is accepted as genuine, Leontios of Neapolis may refer to honouring sacred portraits through *proskynesis* and kissing as early as the second quarter of the seventh century. We are sceptical: Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 252–3; Brubaker 1998, 1,249 n. 110; and 37 above.

[244] On the date, Déroche 1986, 663 n. 45. The text is known only through later citation in John of Damascus and the iconophile *florilegia*; its authenticity does not, however, seem to have been questioned, and it presents a less developed argument than the probably later passages attributed to Leontios of Neapolis: see Déroche 1994, 50 n. 32, 99–100.

[245] The date of the anti-Jewish texts is problematic. See Cameron 1996a; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 264–7.

[246] As quoted by John of Damascus, *Against those who attack the divine images* III, 73: ed. Kotter 1975, 174; trans. (with modifications) Anderson 1980, 96.

[247] See Kartsonis 1986, 40–67; on the date and context see Haldon 1992a, esp. 113; on the role of icons in Anastasios's treatise against demons (*Diegemata steriktika*), see Brubaker 1998, 1,250 n. 114.

[248] On the *florilegia*, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 264–7; Thümmel 2005, 198–213.

already observed, in the Acts of that council there are actually far more references to miracles performed by saints themselves or by their relics than there are to miraculous images.[249] Holy portraits do not *replace* relics and visions: what seems actually to have happened is that, toward the end of the seventh century, holy portraits become an important component of the existing cult of saints; there is no 'cult of images' independent of the cult of saints.

It is in the last decades of the seventh century, at precisely the same time as the holy portrait emerges as an important social phenomenon, that a theory or theology of images begins to be expressed. Kitzinger noted long ago – and his point was reinforced by Sansterre – that the argument that Christ's incarnation justified, and indeed required, holy portraits first appeared in the Acts of the Quinisext Council, held in Constantinople in 692.[250] Here, in the first official church statement about religious representation known, the argument that will become critical to iconophile polemic is implicit. 'Therefore, in order that what is perfect, even in paintings, may be portrayed before the eyes of all, we decree that henceforth the figure of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Christ our God, should be set forth in images in human form, instead of the ancient lamb . . . '. The old is rejected; the new, perfect image portrays Christ in human form, for, the canon concludes: ' . . . in this way we apprehend the depth of the humility of the Word of God, and are led to the remembrance of his life in the flesh, his passion and his saving death, and of the redemption which thereby came to the world'. In other words, Christ in human form – the incarnate Christ – must be depicted, because Christ's redemption of humanity depended on his real human death.[251] That this emphasis coincides with a new understanding of the holy portrait is unlikely to be coincidental. Although the Quinisext seems to have followed rather than precipitated the changing role of the sacred image, the theological justification for the sacred portrait that would ultimately form the backbone of the iconophile position was introduced as church policy in 691/2. While this is only one canon out of a much greater number, it nevertheless suggests that the council's concern in respect of images, their interpretation and the contexts which were appropriate for their use, was an official recognition on the part of the church that holy images had come to play an important role in people's understanding of their relationship to the sacred; and the 'official' nature of such recognition

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[249] Auzépy 1995a, 38.   [250] Kitzinger 1954, 121; Sansterre 1994, 208–9.
[251] Canon 82: Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 162–4. Further discussion in Vogt 1988; Ohme 1999; Thümmel 2005, 27f.; Brubaker 2006a.

seems to be expressed also in the radical changes in the coinage design of Justinian II in the early 690s which, while no doubt also playing a role in the propaganda war against Islam, coincides with the decisions of the Quinisext.[252] With this, we have entered the thought-world of John of Damascus.

There is thus little support for a 'cult of sacred images' in pre-iconoclast Byzantium. The textual and the material evidence agree that sacred portraits existed, but there is no indication that these images received special veneration in any consistent fashion before the late seventh century. In texts that assuredly date before *c.* 680, sacred images are identified and described; they are present but passive when saints perform miracles; and they allow people to identify saints whom they have seen in dreams or visions. By the second half of the sixth century they can be miraculously produced *acheiropoieta* (like the Edessa image); and by the end of the century they have assumed the old role of Roman palladia, protecting a city from assault. Little then seems to have changed for a century: even were all the apparently interpolated texts that refer to images actual seventh-century creations, there would be very few references to sacred portraits at all, and the sacred portrait would remain far less important than relics or visions as a means of accessing holy presence. The general picture is reinforced by the sigillographical evidence – although the ratio of seals with religious imagery (the saints, the Virgin) increases across the sixth and into the seventh century, they remain still only a very small fraction of the total number of lead seals used, from some 15–16 per cent in the sixth, up to over 28 per cent in the earlier seventh, but then declining to a mere 12 per cent in the middle of the seventh and into the eighth century, hardly suggestive of a great dependence on such imagery among state officials, for example, and presumably reflecting also attitudes among the mass of ordinary people.[253]

It is during the last decades of the seventh century that holy portraits seem to have been absorbed into the cult of saints, and to have become widely recognised as mediators between humanity and divinity. But while the balance of the evidence suggests that the holy portrait assumed this responsibility by the end of the seventh century, the theology and codification of its roles surfaced only during the debates between iconoclasts and

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[252] For the coinage, which also reflects Justinian's efforts to assert and to re-affirm the source of his own authority, see Grierson, *DOC* II, 568ff. and Grabar 1957, 16f. with figs. 12–19. The reform is usually connected with canon 82 of the Quinisext; but Grierson notes that both reflect contemporary views, and the change of design on the coins may precede the decision of the council.

[253] Cotsonis 2005, 400–2.

iconophiles during the eighth century. What we might legitimately call a cult of images did not *lead* to iconoclasm; it was generated by the discourse of the debate about iconoclasm itself.[254] In this context, the iconoclasts of 754 were right when they condemned image veneration as an innovation that ran counter to the venerable traditions of the church: holy portraits were not new, but their magnified role was an ongoing contemporary development and their veneration was a recent phenomenon.

As we have already seen, hostility to images was in itself not new in Christian thought, and the discussion on the nature of images had played an important part in anti-pagan Christian apologetic. But with the exception of the isolated discussions in the texts of dubious date and attribution, it had not led to the elaboration of any formal theory of images, nor to any discussion of the correct Christian behaviour before holy images. Indeed, the key question of whether icons should be seen as representations through which, rather than to which, prayer was directed had not been dealt with: the fact that the issue was raised in the fragments of Epiphanios, Hypatios, and Leontios, and yet clearly had to be evolved *ab origine* by the patriarch Germanos[255] and later iconophile writers is, in itself, sufficient grounds for doubting the authenticity and date ascribed to the said fragments. And even if it is not, the fact that no debate was kindled by their remarks suggests the relative insignificance of the debate – and, therefore, of images themelves – to the majority of their readers.

To understand why images appear to have become qualitatively and quantitatively more significant in the period from about 680 on, we must return to a point made already: namely, that images began to be associated much more closely with the charisma and power attributed to the archetype they represented. The stimulus to this at an official level can clearly be seen in the debates about the nature of representations of Christ at the sixth council and the need to avoid the pitfalls of monotheletism and monophysitism which 'symbolic' depictions involved, and the injunction about the depiction of Christ in his human form of 692. At the end of the seventh century, images were clearly becoming as important as relics and other objects associated directly with a particular saint or holy site. By the end of the eighth century, and as represented in the *Horos* of the Council of 787, this development had been pursued to its logical conclusion, so that images were hardly

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[254] So too Auzépy 1987, 157–65.
[255] Germanos himself refers in his letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis to unnamed predecessors who had refuted Jewish and Saracen accusations of idolatry, as noted above (cf. Mansi xiii, 109B–E). On Epiphanios, Hypatios, and Leontios see 44–5 above.

separable from the sacred power they represent and reflect.[256] Compilers
and writers of miracle collections defended such associations; others – such
as Anastasios of Sinai – were clearly more sceptical, and were in consequence
the objects of fiercely polemical denunciations of their lack of faith, even
being accused of paganism.[257] Through the decisions taken at the council
of 680 and embodied also in the canons of the Quinisext Council of 692,
the imperial state and the church seemed to be giving the seal of approval
to the direction the cult of saints, relics and images was taking. Around 720,
the backlash began.

But it is also apparent that the issue of maintaining control over the
forms of depiction and, concomitantly, the limits of interpretation attached
to particular holy images, was intimately connected with the broader
issue of the church's authority and its ideological-political interests within
the Christian-Roman world. This was particularly the case in respect of the
broader spiritual-moral hegemony which the church had evolved over the
fourth and fifth centuries, culminating in the sixth, with the establishment
of what has been referred to as an 'imperial church', intimately bound
up with the fate of the Christian Roman state and its social-ideological
order.[258] It was equally closely bound up with the central role which the
church establishment had come to play in the day-to-day operations of the
state, in respect of both judicial as well as fiscal and related administrative
concerns – the increasingly central role of the bishop in city administration,
as mouthpiece of the central government, representative of local rural and
urban population, as well as landlord, provides a clear example, as does the
increasing use by the state of ecclesiastical buildings for the display of impe-
rial edicts.[259] The increasing integration of the church and its ceremonial
into that of the state, and *vice versa*, marks the progress of this development.
From the fifth century, the patriarch was involved in coronation ceremo-
nial, blessing the imperial insignia; the coronations of Phokas in 602 and
Herakleios in 610 were the first to take place in a church (the palatine chapel
of St Stephen); from 641 they took place in the great church of the Holy
Wisdom.[260] Liturgical processions accompanied imperial military triumphs
in the 590s; Herakleios' military bulletins and the final announcement of
his victory over the Persians were proclaimed from the pulpit of the Hagia

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[256] See Auzépy 1987; 2001.

[257] See *Mirac. Therapontis*, §26 (133), and the comments of Auzépy 1995a, 37.

[258] See Haldon 1997a, 281ff.

[259] The role of bishops in urban administration, for example, is especially important: see Haldon
1997a, 97–9, 284, 289–90. For the display of imperial edicts: Scott 1981, 16f., 19.

[260] Haldon 1997a, 284 and n. 5; *ODB*, 533f.

Sophia.[261] The growing 'liturgical' aspect lent to major occasions of state or particular events – such as the return of Herakleios to Constantinople from the Persian campaign, when he was met by both his eldest son and the patriarch Sergios,[262] or the triumphal return of the fragments of the True Cross to Jerusalem in 628 – further underscore this development.[263] Similarly, changes in the liturgy of the church of the Holy Wisdom, introduced in 615 and 624, emphasised the dependency of the empire and the Romans, God's Chosen People, on divine providence and support.[264] Concern over this relationship in particular was repeated with increasing emphasis and frequency as the seventh century progressed.[265]

The role of the patriarch Sergios in the siege of 626 and in the running of the state and Constantinople during the absence of Herakleios on his Persian campaigns between 622 and 627,[266] and of his successor Pyrrhos (however unpopular he may have been judged by some contemporaries) during the power struggles between Martina and her sons and the senatorial opposition in the early 640s,[267] gave added prominence to the public role of the church and its leaders in matters of state and government. The importance attached to the outcome of the discussions between Maximos the Confessor and Pyrrhos in 645 in Carthage, and to that between Maximos and representatives of the imperial government in the 650s;[268] and the admission by the imperial representatives of Maximos' role as spiritual leader for many in the empire[269] illustrate the attention which such matters attracted at this time. It is hardly an accident of history that the central issues in the middle of the seventh century and after focused on various

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[261] On all these incidents, see McCormick 1986, 69–71; 194f.; 193.

[262] For sources and discussion, see Speck 1988, 156–7.

[263] See Theoph., 328.23–8; and Speck 1988, 328–41 for the legendary nature of the majority of accounts; 357–66, 373ff. Speck notes that the poem on the restoration of the cross by George of Pisidia was unfinished, but reflects the popular interest and feeling attached to the issue at the time. The most reliable evidence for the return of the cross is the anacreontic hymn on the same subject (Speck 1988, 364–6).

[264] See the discussion in Whitby and Whitby 1989, 158 and n. 440, 168 and n. 455 on these changes.

[265] See Haldon 1986a, 176f.; 1997a, 348ff.

[266] See Barisic 1954; Stratos 1968, 126ff.; Van Dieten 1972, 12–21.

[267] Van Dieten 1972, 63–75; Haldon 1997a, 51ff. with sources and further literature; and Speck 1988, 425–61 on the account of these events in Nikephoros' *Breviarium*.

[268] Haldon 1997a, 306–11; 1986a, 173–5.

[269] *PG* 90. 161D–163A; Eng. trans. in Allen and Neil 2002, 48–74. The reports of Maximos' interrogations were compiled by Anastasios, one of his followers, and must in consequence be suspected to a degree; on the other hand, the public significance of the debate and interrogations is corroborated by the other narrative sources, and there can be little doubt as to the imperial government's response to the threat to its authority posed by Maximos, nor to the course of action it followed.

aspects of the relationship between secular and spiritual authority. This was at the heart of the conflict over imperial monotheletism; issues of authority and its sources were at the heart of many of the questions raised in the so-called *Questions and Answers* attributed to Anastasios of Sinai, dating to the second half of the seventh century; they were reflected equally in much of the hagiographical and miracle literature of the period, especially in the tension between Hellenistic and Judaeo-Christian traditions in medicine and healing which becomes particularly evident at this time; they were explicit in the attempt of the church to control the celebration of baptisms and the divine liturgy in private homes,[270] and to control the itinerant preachers and holy men of the provinces;[271] and they became implicit, at a different level of social/cultural discourse, in the discussions around holy images and the questions of representation which they involved. In itself, the issue of the extent of imperial authority in spiritual matters was not new, since it had arisen also during Justinian's reign in the form of the conflict over the Three Chapters and Justinian's confrontation with pope Vigilius.[272]

But that it should have had such resonance in the later seventh and early eighth centuries is certainly indicative. And as we have noted, these issues were closely bound up with a general concern about causal relationships: between human action on the one hand, and the nature and forms of divine intervention and retribution on the other; between correct belief and the ways in which it informed practice, and the results of straying from the rightly guided path.[273] It is clear that, in such a context, the question of the limits of interpretation to be placed upon both textual and visual symbols and signs, including both images and relics, and the sources and validity of the authority which determined those limits, could become a focal point of debate and discussion. We will return to the questions of why *icono*clasm, and why *now*, in our final chapter.

Opposition to religious images before iconoclasm

The only – rather dubious – evidence for any organised opposition to the use of holy images comes, rather indirectly, through Armenian sources.

270 See Rhalles-Potles, II, 371 (Mansi xi, 956E) and 438–9 (Mansi xi, 969C) (canons 31 and 59 of the Quinisext). See the discussion in Déroche 2000.

271 See 30 above.

272 Haldon 1997a, 56ff., 304ff. For the Three Chapters issue: Stein 1949, 632ff.; Constantelos 1962; and the essays in Chazelle 1990. The juridical implications of the struggle over authority which the trials of Maximos the Confessor indicate in the middle of the seventh century have been clearly set out and analysed by Brandes 1998.

273 For these issues, see Haldon 1992a; and 1997b.

But the tradition on which this material is founded is suspect, and is in any case unconnected with developments within the east Roman state and the orthodox church. There is some evidence for the existence of Christian communities or groups in Asia Minor during the seventh century who professed iconoclastic views. But these views are derived straightforwardly from those of some of the theologians of the early church.[274] There are two sources for the sect. One, a treatise ascribed to the early seventh-century monk Vrt'anes K'ert'ogh, refers to a monastic community of some influence which rejected images and the depiction of holy figures, which worshipped the cross, and whose members 'gave themselves the name of saint'. In fact, the tract was probably not by Vrt'anes, and dates to the last third of the seventh century.[275] The second is the summary of a letter from an Armenian theologian, John Mayragometsi, in response to an enquiry from a bishop, and incorporated into the tenth-century Armenian *History of the Albanians*, written by Moses of Kaghankatuik (Moses Dasxuranc'i).[276] The letter describes the location and brief history of a small group of ascetics who had separated themselves from the main Armenian church in the early years of the seventh century and established themselves eventually in Caucasian Albania. One feature of their beliefs was their rejection of the sacred character of holy images: the holy was to be found in the soul of the true believer, not in material objects (an older argument, as we have seen, but also one on which the iconoclast *Horos* or definition of the Council of 754 would place considerable emphasis). But their main concern was the ascetic life; and although there seem initially to have been no fundamental differences over Christology between them and the Armenian monophysite church, their beliefs as described in the *History* bear remarkable similarities to those of the later Paulicians (who first make their appearance in the middle of the sixth and again in the early seventh century)[277] and with whom the Armenian sources connect them also. They were one of a number of sectarian groups in the Armenian regions,[278] and their views with regard to images seem to reflect simple applications of Old Testament prohibitions on graven images and the ideas on the nature of the true Christian as the image of God argued in the writing of thinkers such as Origen and

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[274] See esp. Der Nersessian 1973; Alexander 1955; and the summaries in Kitzinger 1954, 129ff.; Baynes 1951, 122ff.

[275] The text of the treatise is summarised in Alexander 1955, 151–2; there is a full translation in Der Nersessian 1973, 58–69. For discussion see Thümmel 1992, 150–4; and esp. Schmidt 1997, with the latest literature and editions of the text; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 267–8.

[276] See Der Nersessian 1973, 389–90, and Alexander 1955, 153–4 for the relevant extract; repr. in Thümmel 1992, 328–9 (and see 115f.); and Dowsett, trans., *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses dasxuranc'i*, 171–3.

[277] Yuzbashian 1972.   [278] See Der Nersessian 1973, 85ff., and Dagron 1993, 484–5.

Clement of Alexandria.[279] It has also been argued that the sect was restricted entirely to Caucasian Albania, and that the beliefs outlined in the letter of John Mayragometsi reflect a hard-line anti-Chalcedonian and especially anti-Roman perspective, which produced ultimately a rejection of images simply because they were part of Roman – Chalcedonian – practice. Given that both texts are derived in their extant form from later sources, there must remain the possibility that they are in fact also 'interpreted' in such a way as to deprive them of any validity for the period from which they purport to come. There is no evidence which would connect them with the mainstream of Chalcedonian theology either in the seventh or early eighth centuries.

[279] See above, 41. But see also Déroche 1986, 663f.; Lange 1969, 78ff., and Thümmel 1992, 149ff., with 368–73 (repr. of the original French translation by Der Nersessian).

2 | Leo III: iconoclast or opportunist?

Our understanding of Leo III's rule is based almost entirely on textual evidence, with little material culture aside from coins and seals to augment the written sources. Though Germanos ascribed a sculptural (?) group of prophets, the apostles and the cross in the palace precinct to Leo's initiative, and a later text credits him with a statue at the harbour, the only material remains from the second quarter of the eighth century in Constantinople are sections of the land walls, where inscriptions document imperial repairs after the earthquake of 740.[1] Away from the capital, and in former Byzantine territories outside the empire, the situation is little better. Though Germanos implies the existence of wall paintings and icons, he is not specific about locale or subject matter: he simply leaves a nebulous impression of widespread religious imagery.[2] A more concrete indication of the eighth-century environment may be provided by a badly abraded sequence of scenes from the life of St Menas in Jême (western Thebes, Upper Egypt) that has been dated to the first half of the eighth century. The cycle concludes with a portrait of an adult female and a child, both presented as orant figures with their hands raised in prayer, identified by inscription as 'Elisabeth and her daughter'.[3] If this Elisabeth is the woman documented extensively in legal texts from the town, dated 719, 723, 724, and shortly after her death in 738, she was Leo's contemporary (and her daughter's name was Kyra).[4] Whether or not this is the case, however, the images continue practices familiar in the Byzantine Christian world: *ex voto* imagery occurs across the sixth and seventh centuries.[5] In particular, the juxtaposition of family portraiture with imagery of an important local saint recalls the sixth-century *ex voto* mosaics, now largely destroyed and known primarily through watercolours, from Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki.[6] The Jême paintings suggest that, despite the absence of evidence from the Byzantine heartland, hagiographical sequences, donor portraits and *ex voto*

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[1] See 161 below, and Chapter 3, n. 29.   [2] See 152 below.

[3] Wilfong 2002, 95–8; Wilber 1940; on the site, see further Wilfong 1989.

[4] Wilfong 2002, 47–68.   [5] See 36 above.

[6] On this aspect of the Hagios Demetrios images, see most recently Brubaker 2004c.

imagery continued into the reign of Leo III. Cracks in the cultural con-
tinuity begin to appear in the second quarter of the eighth century, and
were not confined to Constantinople. But they were not abrupt responses
to some sort of seismic shockwave emanating from Leo III – indeed, as we
shall see, Leo's purported iconoclast sympathies are extremely hard to pin
down.

The background to the reign of Leo III

In the year 711 the deaths of Justinian II and his son Tiberios marked
the extinction of the dynasty of Herakleios which had, with a few short
intermissions in the last years of the seventh century, ruled the east Roman
world from 610. Between 711 and 717 the empire was ruled by no fewer than
three emperors, Philippikos Bardanes (711–13), Anastasios II (713–15), and
Theodosios III (715–17).[7] In an effort to revive past imperial glories and
to achieve some degree of political-ideological legitimacy and credibility,
Philippikos issued shortly after his accession an edict condemning the Acts of
the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680), which had rejected monotheletism, and
re-imposing the doctrine of the single will.[8] The representation of the sixth
council in the imperial palace was taken down; portraits of the patriarch
Sergios (the first protagonist of an official doctrine of the single energy of
the Trinity, emended after debate and opposition from both dyophysite and
monophysite churchmen to a doctrine of the single will) and pope Honorius,
both anathematised during the sixth council, were erected;[9] and Philippikos
had his own portrait together with that of Sergios inserted into the image
of the first five ecumenical councils on the Milion arch.[10] The move was
not without church support, since Germanos, later patriarch, as well as
the theologian Andrew of Crete appear to have supported it (although the
extent of imperial compulsion remains unknown). But in Rome, hostility
to Phillipikos was immediate, reflecting theological objections, but also

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[7] For brief surveys of the origins and reigns of each of these rulers, together with literature up to
   1999–2001, see *PmbZ*, nos. 3556/*PBE* I, Ioustinianos 1 (Justinian II); *PmbZ*, no. 8490/*PBE* I,
   Tiberios 4 (Tiberios); *PmbZ*, no. 6150/*PBE* I, Philippikos 1 (Philippikos Bardanes); *PmbZ*,
   no. 236/*PBE* I, Anastasios 6 (Anastasios/Artemios); *PmbZ*, no. 7793/*PBE* I, Theodosios 2
   (Theodosios).

[8] See Haldon 1997a, 67–8, 313–17; Herrin 1987, 277–80.

[9] The report of the deacon Agathon, who was personally involved, provides an eye-witness
   account of the events of these years: see *ACO* II, 2, 898.6–901.12. For the patriarch Sergios see
   ODB 3, 1878; Winkelmann 2001, 258–60.

[10] *ACO* II, 2, 900.29ff.

the agreement reached only a short while before his deposition and death between Justinian II and the pope, Constantine.[11]

The political situation of the east Roman state at this time was difficult. In the Balkans a measure of peace had been established since 705, when with the Bulgar ruler Tervel's aid Justinian II had commenced his second reign. In central Greece and the Peloponnese imperial control was limited to coastal regions and plains controlled by the strongpoints which could still be held or garrisoned, either by locally raised soldiers or by troops despatched from other parts of the empire such as the army of Hellas. In the central and north-western Balkans, archaeological and historical evidence suggests a patchwork of cultural and settlement types inland, with 'Slav' (Serb and Croat in particular) and 'Avar' (a category which in fact embraced both sedentary and nomadic communities, and of varying ethic and linguistic identities) groups neighbouring one another, sometimes subject to the powers to the north – the Avars still at this time, but with the dukes of Bavaria occasionally intervening, the Bulgars to the north-east and east. And along the Dalmatian and Istrian coasts nominal imperial authority was exercised chiefly through local *archontes*, whose authority was occasionally given support by the arrival of imperial troops by sea.[12] The remaining Anatolian regions of the empire were constantly harassed by Arab raiding parties, turning the provinces around the Taurus –Anti-Taurus range in southern central and eastern Asia Minor into near wastelands, disrupting communications, and bringing instability to the rural economies of the affected areas. Arab raids took place on several fronts each year. The important fortress town of Tyana in Cappadocia had been taken in 707/8 and, symptomatic of the situation in the 'frontier' districts, the citizens of Sision abandoned their city in 711. Cilicia was rapidly slipping out of Byzantine control.[13] And after the deposition of Justinian II in 711, the Bulgars again took the offensive, ostensibly in reaction against the deposition of Justinian.[14] Bulgar troops ravaged Thrace almost down to Constantinople with no recorded

[11] See Beck 1959, 474, 500; Vailhé 1902; Ševčenko 1977, 127; Grumel 1972, nos. 320–1. For the papal response, *LP* I, 391: as well as returning Philippikos' portrait, sent to Rome in the usual way, the emperor's name was excluded from the church prayers and from the dating formulae of papal documents; in addition, images of all six ecumenical councils were put up in St Peter's. Ostrogorsky, *History*, 152 and Grabar 1957, 47ff. both note the significance of images in this ideological confrontation, a point to which we will return below.

[12] Curta 2006, 75–85, 90ff., 98–110. For imperial defensive and military strategy and arrangements, see Chapter 11.

[13] For the best survey of the warfare along the frontier and the effects of Arab raiding, see Lilie 1976, 116–21, 137ff. For Tyana see Brandes 1989, 63.

[14] For the Bulgars in the later seventh and first half of the eighth century, and their relations with Byzantium, see Curta 2006, 81–4.

opposition; but in preparing to set out to oppose them, Philippikos had to contend with a revolt among the troops of the *Opsikion* forces, whom he had shipped over from Asia Minor. The soldiers won the confrontation, and on June 3 of the year 713 Philippikos was deposed and blinded, to be succeeded by a palatine official, the *protasekretis* Artemios, who took the imperial title and name of Anastasios II. In spite of his background, Anastasios proved himself to be a dynamic and able organiser. One of his first decisions was the abandonment of Philippikos' monotheletism, the restoration of orthodoxy, and the replacement of the portraits of Philippikos and Sergios with that of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.[15] He responded to reports of an imminent and major Arab attack on the capital by quickly setting its defences in order; while a fleet of warships was also put into commission, with the aim of harassing the Arab transports and ports and thereby pre-empting any siege.

But while at Rhodes in preparation for this expedition, the *Opsikion* forces once again mutinied. They slew the *logothete* of the *genikon* John, who had been given command of the expedition, and sailed back to Adramyttion, opposite Lesbos, where they were joined by the remaining *Opsikion* divisions and the *Gotthograikoi*.[16] Here, they acclaimed an unknown fiscal official named Theodosios as emperor. After Constantinople itself had fallen to the rebels, almost certainly let in by soldiers of their own division,[17] they entered the city and did considerable damage to life and property.[18] The background and reasons behind this rebellion are not at all clear. It seems unlikely, for example, (as has been suggested) that the candidate chosen by the *Opsikion* troops and *Gotthograikoi*, Theodosios III, was a son of the deposed emperor Tiberios II Apsimar (698–705). Had this been so, Theodosios would have been the same person as the later Theodosios, metropolitan bishop of Ephesos, who certainly was the son of Tiberios II. But the evidence for the life of Theodosios the bishop tends to exclude this possibility.[19] Anastasios fled to Nicaea, where he abdicated once the city had fallen, towards the end of 715, retiring as a monk to Thessaloniki.

[15] *ACO* II, 2, 899.8–24; 900.29–32.

[16] Theoph., 385.18–29 (Mango and Scott 1997, 535–6); Nikeph., 118 does not mention the *Gotthograikoi* by name. For the *logothetes* John, see *PmbZ*, no. 2961/*PBE* I, Ioannes 10.

[17] Haldon 1984, 200.   [18] Nikeph. 118; Theoph. 386.4–7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 536).

[19] See Sumner 1976, 291ff.; Stratos 1980, 84–126. For Tiberios see *PmbZ*, no. 8483/*PBE* I, Tiberios 2, and for his son Theodosios, *PmbZ*, no. 7845/*PBE* I, Theodosios 3. The exact dating of the events surrounding the deposition of Philippikos, the reign of Artemios-Anastasios and the rebellion which put Theodosios III on the throne has been the subject of a detailed review and a careful examination of the sources used by Theophanes and Nikephoros for these events by Speck 2002–3, esp. 62–102 and 415–41. See also Herrin 2001a. An association of Tiberios Apsimar with a Gothic origin, and hence with the *Optimatoi* in the *Opsikion* region, has been assumed by many, but is probably to be rejected: the name Apsimar is probably of Turkic

The most notable achievement of the new emperor appears to have been the treaty he negotiated with the Bulgar ruler to establish a recognised frontier between the two powers, running through northern Thrace from the Gulf of Burgas to the Maritsa, between Philippoupolis and Adrianople, and illustrative of the extent of the power of the recently formed Bulgar state. Instrumental in this was the activity of the senior official Sisinnios Rhendakios, a member of the court elite of Slav origin.[20] Within a few months of Theodosios' accession the *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* army, Leo, together with Artabasdos, *strategos* of the *Armeniakon* forces, had decided upon action against him. Artabasdos married Leo's daughter, strengthening their alliance. The sources are clear that neither Leo nor Artabasdos had formally accepted the rule of Theodosios, continuing to maintain an allegiance to the deposed emperor Anastasios, although nothing can be said about the exact form their opposition took. From this point of view, therefore, they did not rebel against Theodosios, since they had been in opposition since his accession. But the conflict was short-lived: in his rapid march towards the capital, Leo caught Theodosios' son and his following at Nikomedeia and, having been promised safety for himself and his family, the emperor abdicated and took up the monastic life at Ephesos.[21] On 25 March 717 Leo – now abandoning his original allegiance to Anastasios – was crowned by the patriarch Germanos in the church of the Holy Wisdom. Within a few weeks Leo was forced to deal with the first major crisis of his reign, the approaching armies and fleet of the general Maslama.[22]

Leo had already confronted the Arab forces in the opening phases of this great onslaught, intended to achieve the effective eradication of the east Roman state by taking the capital city and forcing the collapse of Byzantine defences in Asia Minor. Indeed, he may have owed his throne largely to the fact that he could present himself effectively as an able general capable of dealing with the Arab threat, for the invasion had already begun when he entered Constantinople. Leo had begun his career as a young soldier

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origin. See Moravscik 1958, 2, 82–3 for Turkic names beginning with 'Apsi-.'; and Maricq 1949, 68f. and n. 3 (we are grateful to Wolfram Brandes for this reference).

[20] See Chapter 7, and Ferluga 1988, 163f.; Ferluga 1993, 458–60; Oikonomidès 1988a, 29–31; Philippou 1993; Curta 2006, 83f. See also Obolensky 1971, 65–6; Speck 2002–3, 418–38 on the role of Sisinnios Rhendakios in the negotiations at this time. On Rhendakios himself, see Ditten 1983, 104–9, with sources, literature and an etymology of the name; and Cheynet 1996, 273; and Chapter 6. See *PmbZ*, no. 6752/*PBE* I, Sisinnios 2 (Sisinnios Rhendakios) for further literature.

[21] See Kaegi 1981, 192–4. For Leo and Artabasdos, see *PmbZ*, nos. 4242 and 632/*PBE* I, Leo 3 and Artabasdos 1 respectively.

[22] See Speck 2002–3, 415–41.

in the retinue of Justinian II, who commissioned him as a *spatharios*.[23] Under Anastasios II he was made *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* army, in whose support his rebellion was launched, and it was in the initial stages of this undertaking that he is supposed to have confronted and outwitted Suleyman, who commanded an expeditionary force which had set out from from Cilicia for Amorion. According to the story, which appears to be strongly tinged with legend, Leo was able to convince the Arab commander that the fortress would be handed over to the invaders, but succeeded instead in infiltrating a reinforcement into the garrison, upon which the attack was withdrawn. While an Arab fleet ravaged the coastal districts of western Asia Minor, the Arab commander-in-chief, Maslama, brother of the caliph (also Suleyman), waited until he had heard the results of Suleyman's drive against Amorion, a major strategic target, before launching his own column against the Roman defences. But on learning of Leo's deception, he marched against the western Anatolian objectives, taking Sardis and Pergamon, where he is supposed to have spent the winter of 716/17.[24]

In the new year Maslama brought the Arab fleet up from Cilicia, where it had sheltered during the winter months, while he and his main force marched up to Abydus, crossed the straits, and pushed into Thrace, where they loosely invested the city and began to devastate the surrounding suburban regions. In the Arab, Armenian, and Syriac historical tradition offers to negotiate a surrender or to agree terms continued to be made throughout the first months of the siege. Although his fleet blockaded the city from the sea, the measures taken by Anastasios II proved their worth, and the Roman forces, well supplied and prepared for a long siege, were able to fend off attacks by both land and sea. The effect of their terror weapon, 'liquid fire',

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[23] For Leo's early career, see Theoph., 386–97 (Mango and Scott 1997, 536–46); with Canard 1972. A later legend has it that Leo's original name was Conon (see Theoph., 407.15ff. [Mango and Scott 1997, 564]); his family's place of origin varies from the province of Isauria to northern Syria (Germanikeia); while he is variously identified as of monophysite or Manichaean faith. For discussion, see Gero 1973a, 13ff. and Rochow 1991, 122–3; Speck 1990a, 144–54, who suggests that the name Conon was originally applied to Constantine V and only later transferred to Leo (see also Speck 2002–3, 502). We leave this issue open. The sources for Leo's early career have been discussed in detail by Speck 2002–3 and Afinogenov 2005 and 2006. Speck concludes that, while there is an element of truth to the reports on his activities in the Caucasus, much of the information transmitted by Theophanes is of a legendary rather than factual character, derived from later accounts of Leo's early life which drew on both hostile and favourable traditions. Afinogenov, in contrast, argues that the account derives from an original report, possibly written by Leo himself, and that the account is in its essentials trustworthy. The subject will no doubt continue to attract discussion. On the corps of *spatharioi*, see Haldon 1984, 182ff.

[24] Lilie 1976, 125–8.

introduced during the blockades of the years 664–8, was considerable;[25] and with the help of Bulgar attacks in the rear of the Arab forces in Thrace and a well thought-through strategy of raids against the Arab troops, culminating in a major Byzantine victory in Bithynia, Maslama's siege proved ineffective. The outbreak of disease in the Arab camp and the onset of winter did not help the Arab cause; and in August 718 the caliph 'Umar II – Suleyman having died in 717 – ordered Maslama to withdraw and abandon the siege. The army in Thrace was embarked, but storms and bad weather meant further losses, so that Arab sources estimate some 150,000 Muslim casualties in all. This is certainly highly inflated, but expresses the enormity of the loss to contemporary and later Muslim observers and commentators. The expeditions, siege and blockade of 716–18 were the last such attempts on the Byzantine capital, and the last attempt to knock the Roman empire out with a single, mammoth blow. Thereafter, a gradual shift in Arab strategy has been observed, a shift involving a concentration upon the frontier zones and upon certain key strategic and economic sites, rather than attempting to crush the empire on a permanent basis.[26]

The Byzantine victory was by no means the end of the threat from Arab attacks. Yearly raids, large and small, continued to disrupt communications, make local commerce extremely difficult, render agricultural production in the provinces behind the frontier zone insecure, and demand constant watchfulness on the part of the empire's military forces. In 719 the usual summer raid took place, and in 720 two columns pushed into Byzantine territory, one as far as Antioch in Pisidia which, although the fortress was not taken, nevertheless captured much booty and carried off many prisoners; another into Armenia IV, similarly devastating the districts through which it passed and seizing many captives. Occasional Byzantine successes, such as the recapture of Laodikeia in 718/19, hardly affected this picture (the town was soon recaptured by Muslim troops), although this instance gave rise to an agreement that the Arabs could buy the freedom of the prisoners who had fallen into Byzantine hands. In 721 the city of Dalisandos in Isauria fell,

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[25] For a useful short survey of diplomatic relations between Constantinople and the caliphate at this time, see Rochow 2001, 306–8, although it is difficult to show that the legendary element does not preponderate. See also Kaplony 1996, 203–41. For a discussion of the composition and mode of projection of 'Greek fire', see Haldon and Byrne 1977; Haldon *et al.* 2006; other literature: *ODB* 2, p. 873; and for an alternative explanation of its origins, Olster 1995.

[26] See in particular the detailed account of Brooks 1899; the discussion in Lilie 1976, 125–33; Guilland 1959; and Mishin 1996. For Byzantine accounts of the siege, see Theoph., 395–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 545–6); Nikephoros, 53–4 (ed. Mango, 120–4); and for an analysis of these and their chronology, see Speck 2002–3, 233–374.

and regular raids into eastern and central Asia Minor continued. Kamachon and Ikonion, major fortresses and administrative centres, were taken in 723/4, and a number of frontier fortresses were taken in 725. Caesarea in Cappadocia was captured and Nicaea besieged, albeit unsuccessfully, in 727; while Cyprus was raided in the same year. In the following year a major raid advanced via Gangra, which it took, and threatened Nicaea again; and in 728 the Armenian frontier district around Semaluos was attacked. In 729 and in 730 further expeditions raided deep into western Asia Minor, while in the east Charsianon and other key fortresses fell, albeit temporarily. Byzantine counter-raids also took place, but these had little strategic effect, being reprisal raids rather than seriously damaging Islamic military or economic installations. Only at the very end of Leo's reign, in 740, were Byzantine forces able to isolate one column of a major invading force and destroy it at Akroinon. Two other columns were nevertheless able to penetrate into Byzantine territory, and it was only in 744, when the civil war (which was eventually to lead to the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty) interrupted the regularity of the attacks and transferred the centre of caliphal interest away from the Byzantine-Syrian front, that the empire was able to enjoy a short break in the raiding. Yet in spite of the constant state of warfare on the eastern front which existed throughout Leo's reign, there is some evidence of continuing diplomatic contacts and occasional efforts to establish a truce or longer-lasting peace treaty.[27]

The empire had enjoyed friendly relations with the rulers of the Khazar empire since the reign of Herakleios, who had invoked their help during his Persian campaigns. Byzantine-Khazar relations had been further strengthened when the emperor Justinian II had fled to the Khazar khagan after his deposition in 695, where he had married the sister of the khagan.[28] Leo III consolidated this relationship by marrying his son Constantine to the daughter of another Khazar khagan in 733;[29] while the peace with the Bulgars arranged under Theodosios III in 716 held in the Balkans, with the

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[27] For Laodikeia and the buying free of prisoners, see Rochow 2001, 310–11 with sources; Kaplony 1996, 239–41. For Akroinon, see Theoph., 411 (Mango and Scott 1997, 571) with Lilie 1976, 152–3; and for raids up to 744, 144–55 and discussion at 155–62; and the summary in Brooks 1898. For diplomatic relations, see Rochow 2001, 311–12; Beihammer 2000, nos. 328, 329. See also Kennedy 1992, 136. Kaplony 1996, 207–37 has an extensive discussion of the letters supposedly written by the caliph Umar to Leo III; as does Hoyland 1997, 480–501.

[28] A sign of the importance of the relationship for the leaders of the Khazars lies in the fact that, in spite of Justinian's marriage to his sister (who converted to Christianity and took the baptismal name Theodora), the Khazar khagan was willing to hand the deposed emperor over to the emissaries of Tiberios Apsimar: see Ostrogorsky, *History*, 142.

[29] See Vasiliev 1936, 87.

minor exception of the support apparently given briefly by Tervel in 717 to the rebels led by Niketas Xylinites in the plot to restore Anastasios II. But even here, Tervel may have been playing a double game: he changed sides at the last minute and handed the plotters over to Leo.[30]

Like his predecessors, however, Leo was a usurper and, in spite of his initial successes on the military and diplomatic fronts, he had to deal in his first year with some internal political military opposition and hostility. In 717, shortly after Leo's accession, the former emperor Anastasios, now abandoned by his erstwhile supporters Leo and Artabasdos, was involved in a plot to regain his throne, noted already. Anastasios and Niketas Xylinites, along with their fellow conspirators, were executed.[31] In 717 Sergios, the *strategos* of Sicily, set up one of his subordinates, a certain Basil Onomagoulos, as new emperor, with the name of Tiberios, apparently on the assumption that the siege of the city by the forces of the caliphate had been successful and that Leo's rule was already ended. In this enterprise he appears to have had the support of his troops; but once news of Leo's victory, together with his formal letters of accession, reached the island, the soldiers simply handed the rebel leaders – the 'emperor' and his general – over to the *chartoularios* Paul, Leo's envoy, and his military escort. Sergios had already fled, however, and was later pardoned. This last event is in itself somewhat at odds with the usual treatment meted out to rebels, and it has been argued as an alternative, and perhaps more likely, version that Sergios had indeed 'rebelled', but that it was in response to the deposition of Anastasios and represented a measure intended to maintain the integrity of imperial power in Sicily and Italy. Once news of Leo's accession reached the island, in the form of the formal announcement of his position delivered by the *chartoularios* Paul, the 'rebellion', which was thus no longer necessary, petered out. The newly acclaimed emperor Basil, of course, who retained the title of emperor at this point, had to be dealt with officially as a usurper, whereas Sergios, whose motives may well have been understood by the imperial emissary and by the emperor himself, was treated more leniently.[32]

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[30] Theoph., 400 (Mango and Scott 1997, 552); Nikephoros, 126. See the summary in Curta 2006, 82–4.

[31] Ahrweiler 1966, 729; Speck 2002–3 for detailed discussion. For Tervel: *PmbZ*, no. 7250/ *PBE* I, Tervel 1; and for Niketas Xylinites, *PmbZ*, no. 5372/ *PBE* I, Niketas 3.

[32] Theoph., 398–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 549–50); Caruso 1996; Kislinger and Seibt 1998, 10–13 with the sigillographic evidence for Sergios. This section of Theophanes has again been analysed in detail by Speck 2002–3, 377–401, whose proposed alternative explanation seems to us to fit the facts of the report and the other sources as well as the traditional interpretation. For Sergios, Basil and Paul, see respectively *PmbZ*, nos. 6594, 849, 5815/ *PBE* I, Sergios 3, Tiberios 3, Paulus 48. An alternative interpretation has been proposed by Kislinger 2000a, who

Anastasios' rebellion was the only serious threat to Leo's initial seizure of the imperial position. In the following years he was able to consolidate his authority, both by introducing a number of changes within the state's military and fiscal machinery, and by relying upon a small group of close supporters, among them the *Curopalates* Artabasdos, his son-in-law. But the political insecurity and ideological frailty of the usurper's position was not easily pushed into the background and, as with his predecessors, Leo's political and ideological/religious policies and manoeuvres should be seen as much as a response to the generic situation of political and ideological uncertainty as to the emperor's personal views. We shall return to this theme frequently below.

Apart from his administrative reforms and his supposed iconoclasm, which will be discussed below, Leo and his son Constantine are perhaps best-remembered for the promulgation of the *Ekloge* in 741,[33] a revised and much abridged version of the Justinianic codification of the mid-sixth century, with a somewhat different moral-ethical stress. The commission assembled by the emperor to carry out the task placed especial emphasis upon family law, property and inheritance, as well as penal law. Substantial changes were introduced to the traditional legislation, in particular with regard to marriage and the family, and the system and nature of punishment. For whereas the Justinianic code is characterised by capital punishment and fines, the hallmark of the *Ekloge* is its emphasis on corporal mutilation, following an Old Testament pattern. Such punishments had become increasingly common in the Byzantine world during the seventh century, but were alien to Roman legal tradition. In all these respects, the influence of canon law and the parallels frequently drawn during the seventh century between the fate of the Romans, as the Chosen People of God, and that of the Jews of the Old Testament, is apparent.[34] And while provincial interpretations of Justinianic law may have varied from the metropolitan norms in ways which we can no longer determine, the pre-eminence of the influence of the church upon the law of civil society and the state is very clear.

Leo's programme is clearly enunciated in the prologue or *prooimion*, in which he admits the need to recognise the changes which have taken

argues rather that the imperial government turned a blind eye to Sergios for a while because of his substantial local power-base, which the government at Constantinople was anxious not to alienate. The sigillographic evidence for Elpidios may offer some support for this.

[33] Traditionally dated to 726, the date of 741 is now generally admitted: see Grumel 1963; Simon 1976; and Pieler 1978, 438, for the older date; and *Ekloge*, 10–12 for 741, with most recent literature.

[34] See Chapter 1. Wessel 2003 notes that the emphasis on the Decalogue and the Old Testament enabled later iconophiles to accuse Leo and Constantine of Jewish beliefs and thus of heresy.

place in the Roman world, and in which he sets out his ideas about the relationship between society and its needs – especially in respect of the family, its property and its internal governance – and the law as a system which contains both ethical and regulatory norms. The prologue stresses the need to preserve the law as the foundation of God's will and the emperor's divinely sanctioned authority, as well as the necessity of making it more accessible and readily understood. Corruption, bribery and venality were to be combated, to achieve which the representatives of justice were henceforth to be properly salaried. Implicit in all this is also the idea that the old order could in some way be restored by the emperor taking the appropriate action, a message which is perhaps paralleled by Leo's emphasis on the cross as the symbol and safeguard of both imperial orthodoxy and ultimate victory.[35] While later formally rejected by the authors of the legal codifications of Basil I and Leo VI, the influence of the *Ekloge* on the format, priorities and structure of these later collections is very clear.[36]

The problem of an 'imperial iconoclasm'

Leo's notoriety in the later Byzantine, and much of the modern, historiography is largely grounded on the accusation that he introduced imperial iconoclasm, in particular by the promulgation of an edict in the year 726 or 730. In the following, we will examine the evidence for these assumptions, beginning with a brief summary of the overall context for the introduction of such a policy by the emperor.

Whatever the immediate stimulus, it is generally assumed that Leo took the first steps towards a critique of some aspects of the public display of images in or immediately after 726, spurred on by the great volcanic eruption which took place in that year on the Aegean islands of Thera and Therasia, which was interpreted as a sign of divine wrath as a result of the idolatrous practices of the Christians. By the 730s, many of the clergy appear to have supported this view, so that the church was split. The patriarch Germanos himself, while opposed to some aspects of the policy, seems to have tried to work behind the scenes, chiefly in order to avoid a public debate and schism in the Constantinopolitan church.[37] Leo's next public move came only in 730, when during a *silention*, or especially convoked meeting of chief imperial and ecclesiastical officials, Germanos was placed in a position

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[35] See below, 140ff.　[36] See *Ekloge*, 4–7; Gregory 1975; *ODB* 1, 672f.
[37] For a useful brief survey of Germanos' period as patriarch, see Stein 1999.

where he had, according to the later iconophile tradition, either to sign a declaration of faith critical of the role and function of religious imagery, or resign. But there is no contemporary record of what actually took place, and the later story may well not reflect the real focus of the meeting. That Leo demanded that Germanos formally subscribe to the new policy is entirely possible; if so, it is likely also that all the bishops of the church were likewise asked to subscribe, and this may explain why Andrew of Crete, who seems not to have accepted the change, was recalled, probably after 730, and replaced. Whatever actually happened, it seems clear that Germanos did abdicate his position, and was replaced as patriarch by his former *sygkellos* Anastasios.[38]

The political repercussions of Leo's purported support for iconoclasm remain at issue. There is no evidence of an official edict issued by the emperor prohibiting the use of icons (although the written undertaking to which the church establishment may have had to subscribe may have been taken as such in the later iconophile tradition). The new patriarch seems to have issued a declaration of faith in which he presented the cross as the true symbol of Christ's passion and the salvation of humanity.[39] A rebellion of the soldiers of the Helladic army which occurred (probably) in 726/7, although defeated at sea near Constantinople in April 727, was presented by the late eighth-century *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros as a direct response to Leo's policies (although the *Chronographia* of Theophanes is less categorical), as was the refusal of the pope, Gregory II, to deliver the revenues from the provinces of Italy and Sicily to Constantinople (reported by Theophanes for the year 724/5).[40] A rebellion of the troops in the Pentapolis, their refusal to follow the exarch's commands, and the attempt to set up another emperor, which in the *Liber Pontificalis* is reported for the same years, has likewise been associated by modern writers with opposition to

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[38] Theoph., 407–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 564–5); Nikeph. 131, and below, 123–5. For Germanos, see Stein 1999; *PmbZ*, no. 2298/*PBE* I, Germanos 8; for Anastasios, see Rochow 1999a; *PmbZ*, no. 285/*PBE* I, Anastasios 2. While the words put into the mouth of Germanos by the later tradition are most probably a fiction, as we will see, the requirement to sign an undertaking to accept imperial policy is quite plausible. For Andrew, see Auzépy 1995b, 4 and 11, based on Andrew's *Vita* (written probably during the reign of Constantine V: see Auzépy 1995b, 2).

[39] See Stein 1980, 198ff.

[40] See Theoph., 405 (Mango and Scott 1997, 560); Nikeph., 128f. (Hellas); Theoph., 404.3–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 558) (refusal to pay taxes). Discussion in Brandes 2002, 368ff. The Helladic rebellion is in fact difficult to date, since Theophanes' chronological framework is very confused at this point (see Speck 2002–3, 551). We would accept 726, however, in the absence of any other clear indication, and in light of the fact that the rebellion was associated with Leo's fiscal policy.

iconoclasm; but there is in fact no warrant for this, least of all in the texts themselves.[41]

In fact, the Helladic rebels do not seem to have been inspired by iconophile sentiment, contrary to the views of many modern commentators, and the connection is one that was made only in later iconophile accounts of the period;[42] while the conflict of interest in fiscal matters between the papacy and the empire seems likewise to have had little to do with any imperial iconoclast views. The refusal of pope Gregory to pay certain taxes, or tax-increases, is almost certainly to be associated with the imposition of a poll- or head-tax on the population of the papal patrimonial estates, effected following a recently revised census for the regions concerned. Gregory's action thus had more to do with the protection of papal and ecclesiastical financial interests than theology and political ideology (although we should not dismiss the exacerbating effect of imperial religious policy at this time), and took place anyway in 723/4 or the following year, certainly before 726.[43] Theophanes reports (for the year 731/2, but very probably misplaced from the years immediately preceding the papal refusal to co-operate) that Leo imposed a capitation tax on one third of the population of Sicily and Calabria, which is to say, upon the hitherto exempt papal patrimonial lands.[44] As we shall see, it is indeed very probable that ecclesiastical lands in other regions of the empire were affected, and in addition that the Helladic regions, and other districts less damaged by the wars in the Asia Minor provinces, were being taxed at a higher rate than previously in order to make good the loss of revenues caused by the warfare in the east. This may lie behind both the Helladic rebellion and the rebellion of the troops in the exarchate, usually connected with the two failed assassination attempts on Gregory plotted by imperial *spatharioi* sent out to enforce imperial authority

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[41] *LP* I, 404f. with the discussion of Schreiner 1988, 371f.

[42] E.g. Ostrogorsky 1968, 162–3; Alexander 1958a, 10. It should be remembered that there is no evidence whatsoever that, at the time of the rebellion, Leo had made any formal pronouncement on the issue of icons; while the rebellion fits in well with the series of provincial military revolts and attempted coups which typified the period from the 690s. For a critique of the traditional view – which followed the iconophile position – see Beck 1966a, 34; Schreiner 1988, 362–3 for a review of other points of view; and the political background: Winkelmann 1987a, 42f. We would argue that the rebellion was specifically associated with imperial fiscal policy – see 86 below.

[43] Theoph., 404.3–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 558); *LP* I, 403.22–5 and Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 301. See Guillou 1969, 281ff.; Brandes 2002, 368–71, who also notes that the exact date must remain uncertain.

[44] Theoph. 410. 9–11 (Mango and Scott 1997, 568 with literature). It is generally agreed that the events are certainly mis-dated and refer to the mid-720s. For a clear analysis of Theophanes' text, see Zuckerman 2005, 85–6.

in the Duchy of Rome in or around the year 724/5, in collusion with the exarch Paul.[45] While local troops would rally around a pope when threatened by Constantinople, it seems highly unikely that the emperor would attempt to have the pope killed, unless, as has been suggested, the pope actually instigated armed rebellion, a dangerous and inflammatory step.[46] Whatever the truth of this complex situation, the most likely explanation for provincial rebellion in Italy and Greece, papal non-co-operation, and the various imperial responses, is the increased fiscal demand from Constantinople in respect of ecclesiastical lands in these areas.[47]

According to the *Liber Pontificalis* (Life of Gregory II), it was at this time that the emperor Leo III wrote to the pope, ordering the removal of all icons.[48] It has been suggested that this part of the text may be either a later interpolation designed to illustrate Gregory's opposition to imperial iconoclasm, or was wrongly inserted at this point by a later redactor. This is impossible to prove, of course, and it seems simpler to accept that the *iussiones* reportedly sent by the emperor to Rome did contain some instruction of this sort. But *iussiones* is a term describing specific orders to a specific party, certainly not an edict or general, empire-wide ordinance – the *Liber Pontificalis* text thus says nothing about a general edict or indeed about the nature of the orders enclosed. Again, the more likely interpretation is that, assuming Leo had demanded that Germanos subscribe to a written policy regarding images and the way in which they were to be approached, the emperor requested the same assurance from the pope, whose residence and territory were officially within imperial territory.[49]

Although the exarch Paul was killed, imperial authority was restored within a short period. A new exarch, Eutychios, arrived in 727/8, allied himself with the Lombards, but then achieved a reconciliation with Gregory, apparently through the mediation of the Lombard king Liutprand. Ravenna was firmly in imperial hands again by January 731.[50] Gregory

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[45] Speck 2002–3, 543ff.; 551ff. (although we would not accept Speck's argument that the 'one third' referred to represents a garbled version of an original statement that the new fiscal measures affected one third of the population of the empire).

[46] See Zuckerman 2005, 85–7. For a supposed tax increase on western regions and the association of the Helladic revolt with fiscal pressure rather than a supposed imperial iconoclasm, see also Speck 2002–3, 533–4; and for the imposition of taxes on hitherto exempted ecclesiastical lands, see below, and *LP* I, 403.

[47] For sensible appreciation of the evidence and its probable significance, see Brandes 2002, 369–72.

[48] See *LP* I, 403.20ff., 404. 1ff., 9–17; *PmbZ*, no. 2522/*PBE* I, Gregorios 72.

[49] Schreiner 1988, 370f. See below. Against this view see Thümmel 2004, 46, n. 170; 2005, 46–7.

[50] As evidenced by a donation from the archbishop John mentioning the authority of the exarch Eutychios: Bertolini 1967, 24; Zuckerman 2005, 87.

supported Eutychios thereafter against the rebel Tiberius Petasius in Etruria.[51] There is no evidence other than that of much later iconophile writers that iconoclasm played any role in this situation. Only in the emperor's repeated order to Gregory to comply with the imperial fiscal policy does the *Liber Pontificalis* report also the order to the pope, mentioned above, to remove icons lest he be associated with idolatrous practices. Gregory is supposed to have continued to resist both requests, and purportedly wrote attempting to dissuade Leo from his iconoclasm.[52] But this correspondence has not survived, and the chronology of the letters as well as the imperial orders is unclear. The report in Theophanes of an unsuccessful imperial naval expedition, under the command of a certain Manes, described as *strategos* of the *Kibyrrhaiotai,* in connection with Gregory's refusal to implement imperial commands, has been shown in fact to be highly problematic. If it took place at all, then again it was most likely in the mid-720s, immediately after the revolt of the Ravennate army and the death of Paul.[53]

[51] For a summary of the arguments and the sources for, as well as the date of, all these events, see Guillou 1969, 218ff.; Brown 1984, 69, 156, 180. For Gregory's opposition to Petasius and his support for the legitimate emperor: *LP* I, 408. For Eutychios: *PmbZ*, no. 1870/*PBE* I, Eutychios 4; Tiberius Petasius: *PmbZ*, no. 8492/*PBE* I, Tiberios 10. Theophanes places the naval expedition in 732 and presents it as a response to Gregory III's opposition to Leo and the newly appointed patriarch Anastasios: Theoph., 410 (Mango and Scott 1997, 568). Eutychios remained exarch, and survived Lombard aggression with papal support, until 751: see Hallenbeck 1981, with the critical remarks of Herrin 1987, 351 n. 26.

[52] *LP* I, 404f. The letters ascribed to Gregory II addressed to the emperor Leo III (*PL* 89, 495–530/Mansi xii, 959–74, 975–82; new edn see Gouillard 1968, 277–97, 299–305) are, according to Gouillard, an early ninth-century compilation. Speck 1990a, 637–95, argues in contrast that there is good internal evidence for thinking that at the heart of the two letters were originally polemical writings directed against Constantine V, probably composed in a non-Greek language, possibly Syriac, and from a similar theological context as John of Damascus. At some point after their translation into Greek they were subject to the work of copyists and redactors, one of whom assumed them to be letters of Gregory II to Leo (since Gregory certainly wrote to Leo in connection with the issue of the Italian taxes, and Gregory III wrote in connection with Germanos' abdication in 730). Speck argues that this redactional stage was probably much later than *c.* 800, the period proposed by Gouillard for their composition. In either case they are of no relevance to the actual history of the period dealt with here.

[53] Miller 1975, 105ff.; Bertolini 1967; and Schreiner 1988, 373–4. For Gregory, see *PBE* I, Gregorios 7; *PmbZ*, no. 1870. For Manes, see Cosentino 1996/2000, 311; *PmbZ* 4690; *PBE* Manes 1. Brandes 2004 has argued that the name is probably a later eighth-century invention designed to implicate iconoclasts with Manichaeism, a common slander by the time of the Seventh Ecumenical Council; and furthermore that the expedition is probably fictional and based on a later expedition associated with different events. Zuckerman 2005, 87, following the report in the *Liber Pontificalis* of Ravenna (Agnellus), 153, argues that there was indeed an unsuccessful seaborne expedition some time in 726 shortly after the revolt, and before Eutychios arrived to restore the situation.

In contrast to the effects of the internal and apparently mostly private and discreet discussions about the role of sacred images that had been going on in Constantinople and within the church since the mid-720s, the events of the year 730, the abdication of Germanos, and Anastasios' 'iconoclast' declaration of faith in his *synodika* (synodical letters sent to the other patriarchal sees upon the accession of a new patriarch) are reported to have had immediate political consequences, because they were all connected. Thus, according to Theophanes, Gregory II rejected the *synodika*, denounced the 'false patriarch' and is reported to have sent a letter expressing his opposition to the new teaching to the emperor Leo, as mentioned above.[54] Gregory III (who succeeded Gregory II in March 731) then summoned a synod in Rome which met in November of 731, writing to invite bishop Antoninus of Grado among others. He is likewise reported to have written to Leo denouncing the deposition of Germanos and the order to remove icons from Roman churches, although these letters have not survived either (see below). But his emissaries to Constantinople were arrested and prevented from travelling beyond Sicily.[55] At this synod (and the only record of its Acts dates to 769[56]) the innovatory practice was reportedly condemned and its supporters anathematised, and the use of icons in churches was confirmed as both theologically acceptable and sanctioned by custom.

There are some difficulties with these accounts, largely drawn from the *Liber Pontificalis*. To begin with, the arguments reported to have been made at Gregory's synod in 731 are more typical of a much later stage in the debate. The reference to this meeting in the Lateran synod of 769 seems in fact to reflect later eighth-century notions and perspectives rather than those of the 730s, although later used by pope Hadrian I in his own letters regarding the Council of 787 and the issue of papal policy with regard to images.[57] The precise details in the account of the 731 synod in the *Liber Pontificalis* must therefore also be suspect, perhaps altered at some later date, possibly in the

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[54] See Theoph., 408.21ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 564f.); *LP* I, 409f.; *PmbZ*, no. 285/*PBE* I, Anastasios 2; Rochow 1999a, 24–5. The letters are referred to in these texts but – assuming they were ever written – have not themselves survived. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 277.

[55] *LP* I, 415–16; for Gregory's letter to Antoninus of Grado see *MGH Epp.* III (*Epp. Langobardicae* 13) 703 (*JE* 2232) (the earliest surviving ms. is of the sixteenth century, which renders the textual tradition particularly problematic). For the arrest of the papal envoys: *LP* I, 416. 13; 21ff.

[56] See *LP* I, 476f.

[57] It would certainly be odd for the Acts of a synod held in Italy in the early 730s to pre-empt arguments not elaborated in the eastern sources until the 740s or even later. See below, and Mansi xii, 713–22 for the synod of 731 (key excerpts presented at the Council of 769; quotations from the latter are incorporated also into the treatise of pope Hadrian, see Mansi xiii, 759–810). See in particular Hampe 1896, 102ff. for the various citations from these Acts made by Hadrian I.

750s (after 754). Just as significantly, the letter to Antoninus of Grado, which appears to make a clear reference to contemporary imperial policy against images, is problematic. In the title the pope names himself as *Gregorius tertius pontifex*, rather than by the standard formula, as *Gregorius papa* or *Gregorius episcopus*. This may indicate a later redaction of the letter with consequent emendations. In the second place, the 'newly arisen Godlessness' in Constantinople is described as entailing the casting out of images of the saints and of the saviour, and the conversion of churches into habitations for men and beasts. While this can in no way already have been occurring in Constantinople at this time, much more significantly these are accusations made later about the activities of Constantine V.

Gregory III probably did write to Antoninus of Grado and, while there is no reason to doubt that a synod was held in Rome in late 731, the evidence for its originally having a strongly anti-imperial content is thus problematic. Another synod was held in Rome in 732, for example, to deal with local church matters, but there is no reason to think it had an anti-iconoclast theme – this alone must cause some doubts as to the reported purpose of the meeting in 731.[58] As we shall see, there is absolutely no evidence for a breach in the relations between Rome and Constantinople over religious issues until 754 at the very earliest, even if relations were strained. The most that can be said is that the papacy refused formally to subscribe to the new imperial policy, just as had Germanos (and possibly as did some other bishops, such as, as may be judged from his writings, Andrew of Crete).[59]

While the synod of 731 as reported in the later tradition is thus highly suspect, and while that part of Gregory III's letter to Antoninus of Grado which refers in such lurid terms to iconoclast activity in Constantinople probably reflects papal exaggeration or misunderstanding about the situation there, this does not mean there is no evidence at all for some imperial activity in respect of images. The impression from the *Liber Pontificalis* report about the imperial *iussiones*, the probability that the synod of 731, and the letter to Antoninus of Grado, did indeed make reference to imperial policy on images, would suggest as much – at least, such activity at the imperial

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[58] See Mordek 1988, with Speck 2002–3, 583–5. The letter to Antoninus makes no mention of the emperor, nor does it refer to 'Greci', which would be typical of later (post 754) Roman attitudes. We are grateful to Clemens Gantner for his insights regarding the ms. tradition and structure of both the *Liber Pontificalis* and papal correspondence of the period.

[59] Mordek 1988, 128, notes that the inscribed Acts of the local synod of 732 omit the emperors in the dating formula, suggesting an estrangement (although not necessarily an open sedition); Zuckerman 2005, 89 also notes the omission of the emperors' names from papal letters between 732 and 739: see JE pp. 252–61. Andrew of Crete wrote in defence of *proskynesis* before images in two homilies: cf. *CPG* III, 8175 (*PG* 97, 913–32) and 8192 (*PG* 97, 1268–301).

capital can by no means be ruled out. In 731 the Venerable Bede included in his tract on the temple of Solomon a short apology for images. This has been connected with information supposedly obtained from Bede's friend Nothelm, recently returned from Rome. But while it is true that Nothelm would have had the latest gossip from Rome, we should also recall, first, that Bede had his own motives for emphasising the paedagogical role of images – recall the letters of Gregory the Great regarding the role of images and the apparently iconoclast actions of the bishop of Marseille[60] – and second, that he makes no allusion to any actual attack or critique of them. Nevertheless, while we will never know what exactly was known in Rome about what was happening in Constantinople, it seems clear that something to do with images, which was construed in some way as a threat, had attracted comment, in Rome at least.[61]

As noted already, the naval expedition referred to by Theophanes in this context for the year 732, and supposedly despatched to Italy in an unsuccessful attempt to coerce papal acceptance, was associated with this issue only later, and for the purposes of iconophile propaganda. But it probably was at this time that the administration and revenues of the papal patrimonial lands were taken over by imperial officials as a response to a serious shortage of revenues to the imperial fisc. In turn, this was probably the event that sparked the papal estrangement from the empire, evident in the omission from papal letters of the emperors' names in the dating formulae, until the late 730s,[62] although the evidence of lead seals of the imperial officials in charge of the fiscal administration of these districts dates only to the 750s and afterwards.[63] But in any case, rather than connecting Germanos' abdication with his response to nascent iconoclasm, it is just as likely to have been connected also with the sort of fiscal administrative changes outlined above. Indeed, the raising of taxes on hitherto exempted populations on ecclesiastical lands at this time seems to have been general,

[60] See Chapter 1.

[61] *Beda venerabilis, De Templo*, 212f. (esp. ll. 809–46); McCormick 1994a, 111–12; esp. Stein 1980, 213–14.

[62] As argued by Zuckerman 2005, 85–6, 94–101, although we are dubious about the hypothesis that this also reflects the imposition of an Islamic-inspired poll-tax on the populations of these regions. For the letters and dating formula, see note 59 above.

[63] Theoph., 410.9ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 568). A census was carried out; and imperial fiscal officials replaced papally appointed *rectores*. See Herrin 1987, 349–50; Guillou 1980, 74ff.; Rochow 1991, 132. The measures appear to have involved the withdrawal of privileges granted by Justinian II: see Haldon 1997a, 319; Dölger, *Reg.* 255, 256. Theophanes' account is confused, and it remains unclear as to which measures were carried out in the 720s and which during this second, later, stage: see Chapters 3 and 10, below.

affecting not just the papal patrimonial properties in Italy and Sicily. As a churchman, Germanos must have had objections.[64]

Later papal documents, in particular a letter of pope Hadrian to Charlemagne of the 780s, claim that ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the dioceses of Sicily and Calabria along with east Illyricum was transferred from Rome to Constantinople at the same time as the imposition of the taxes and the beginnings of iconoclasm, and it has been assumed by the great majority of modern commentators that the transfer of these dioceses took place as a result of Leo's annoyance at papal intransigence at this time.[65] The absence of this event from any contemporary source raises suspicions, however. It is just as possible – in spite of Hadrian's claim – that it represented either a reaction to the papal–Frankish agreement of the 760s, or to the loss of Ravenna in 751 (both of which, in respect of the iconoclast policies of Constantine V, might also be seen as the 'beginnings' of iconoclasm). Indeed, this latter possibility is made explicit in a Byzantine episcopal *notitia* of the 860s, which notes that sees were transferred 'because the pope was in the hands of the heathen' (i.e. the Franks or Lombards), although it is also true that this terse statement might equally reflect a Byzantine view of the situation between the 730s and 739/40, when papacy and empire were temporarily estranged.[66] Yet there did take place a similar move – and one obviously entirely unconnected with western politics – in the middle of the eighth century, by which the dioceses of Cilicia I and II and Isauria were removed from the authority of the patriarchate of Antioch and placed under Constantinopolitan jurisdiction.[67]

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[64] Note that the *Liber Pontificalis* does indeed report that Gregory opposed the imperial measures, *which had been imposed already elsewhere: LP* I, 403.

[65] For the letter: *MGH, Epp.* V, 57. See, e.g. Brown, in McKitterick 1995, 325f.; Speck 1990a, 103; 2000a, 32; Rochow 1994, 90, 112–13; Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 83; Zuckerman 2005, 95–6.

[66] As cogently argued by Zuckerman 2005, 89–92.

[67] See Chapter 3. The only references to the transfer out of papal jurisdiction of Calabria, Sicily and eastern Illyricum are in letters of Hadrian I (772–95) and Nicholas I (858–67). The first reference, in a letter of 785 to Constantine VI and Eirene (JE 2448), offers no specific chronology for the transfer (see *MGH Epp.* V. *Epist. Karol. Aevi* iii, 57.17–23; Mansi xii, 1073 = *ACO* III, 1, 165), and Hartmann 1903, 112–14; Anastos 1957; and now Lamberz 1997, 39–43. But for a different interpretation, see Miller 1975 (with the background discussion in Miller 1975). For the papacy being 'in the hands of the heathen', see *Notitiae episcopatuum*, 249. While this point of view reflected contemporary political concerns in respect of Byzantine-Frankish relations (see Schreiner 1988, 376 n. 291), the fact that no contemporary Byzantine or western source refers to what would have been a major event for the 730s is significant. See Grumel 1951–2 (who places the event in the years 752–7); Schreiner 1988, 375f. Brandes 2002, 372f. notes that the process had already begun in the 690s: according to canon 38 of the Quinisext Council of 692 the bishops of eastern Illyricum were already listed under the bishoprics of the patriarchate of Constantinople, apparently without raising any difficulties (Brandes 2002, 373, n. 765; Ohme 1990, 222ff.).

Theophanes implies the increasing ecclesiastical-political isolation of Constantinople by noting the opposition of the patriarchate of Jerusalem to the declaration of faith issued by Anastasios. But this seems to reflect both the bias of the compiler and the confusion in the way he understood his sources. That the eastern church did take a stand against imperial policy, however, is not unlikely, if we are correct to suggest that Leo demanded that senior churchmen – the patriarch in Constantinople and the pope – subscribe to his new policy. The eastern patriarchs would, we assume, similarly have been asked to subscribe.[68] There was certainly a rift which lasted from the early 730s up to 739/40, as we have seen already. Leo's policies with regard to the West can be seen from one angle as strengthening the emperor's overall control, from the point of view of both imperial ideology and the control and management of resources and revenues, and there is no real evidence at this time that the politics of iconoclasm resulted in

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[68] Theoph., 408.29–31 (Mango and Scott 1997, 565) reports that John of Damascus, together with the eastern bishops, pronounced an anathema on the emperor. But Stein points out that this is extremely unlikely: John of Damascus himself refrains from such a drastic step in his sermons against the iconoclasts, for example (Stein 1980, 211ff.); and it was entirely usual for critics of imperial policies, religious or otherwise, to cast the blame on their advisers and associates rather than the emperors themselves. Only after their deaths was criticism uttered, and even then it was unusual for writers within the empire directly to attack an emperor. The example of the treatment of Constans II and his monothelete policies is a case in point – criticism of a named emperor occurs in the writings of Anastasios of Sinai towards the end of the seventh century, but nowhere in, for example, either the official correspondence preceding the sixth council held in 680 or in the Acts of the council itself. It is the erring patriarchs and other advisers who are the targets for blame and anathematisation: see *ACO* II, 2, 702.18–704.2; 798.17–22. Most probably, Theophanes' account (which anyway confuses the patriarch of Jerusalem John [705–35] with John of Damascus, whom he had just mentioned [408.18ff., Mango and Scott 1997, 565]), is based on a notice concerning a synod held in Jerusalem to discuss issues which may have been construed by later writers as having possessed an anti-iconoclast motive (just as the purported synod convoked by Gregory III in Rome after the news of Germanos' abdication and the accession of Anastasios was received). In addition, the passage in question is a hagiographical account inserted into the text before the description of Leo's *silention*, hence certainly of dubious value. See Auzépy 1990, 457–9. No formal condemnation of any iconoclast or of imperial iconoclasm is recorded before the joint decision of the patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria at Pentecost in 764, however, long after John of Damascus' death. This took place by agreement in the three cities and concerned the condemnation of Kosmas, bishop of Epiphaneia, who had publicly asserted his adherence to imperial policy. This position was then incorporated into a *synodikon* sent by the patriarch of Jerusalem, Theodore, with the agreement of the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, to pope Paul I (*Cod. Carol.* 652f.), a version of which was later cited at the Council of 787 (Mansi xii, 1135–46 = *ACO* III, 1, 254–68). See Theoph. 433–4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 600), and Chapter 4, 267 and n. 79 below. The only slight evidence for eastern church opposition to imperial policy under Leo III may be embodied in the shorter (original) version of the text known as the *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, although this remains debated. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 250–1.

a degree of international political isolation which was to have any serious consequences in the following years. Indeed, apart from the references to Leo's orders to Gregory II concerning images which, as noted earlier and discussed in detail below, reflect most likely a demand that the pope, along with other leading churchmen, subscribe to the new policy, there are no references to any schism between the two churches. The *Vita* of pope Zacharias (741–52) makes no reference to iconoclasm at all, treating the emperor Constantine as entirely orthodox and the usurper Artabasdos as a rebel, although Zacharias did recognise the legitimacy of Artabasdos' rule for a short period.[69] The restoration of good relations between papacy and empire in 739 reflects the political needs of the papacy in respect of the threat from the Lombards and the end of a breach which was the result of imperial fiscal, not religious, policy.[70]

This brief resumé has established a political-historical context for a discussion of Leo's iconoclast policies and the contemporary debate on the issue. What evidence is there, therefore, for his iconoclasm, and for the origins of the discussion about icons?

The dearth of evidence for early imperial iconoclasm

There are only four documents contemporary with the first years of iconoclasm and, of these, one is problematic in both its authorship and its dating. All the remaining evidence is derived either from later Byzantine sources, in particular the *Chronographia* of Theophanes and the *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros, the former compiled *c.* 810–14, the latter somewhat earlier in *c.* 780, perhaps a little later, and hagiographical works such as the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, written in the ninth century and later

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[69] The *Vita* of Zacharias was written after the re-establishment of Constantine V's position, and was probably designed to avoid a souring of relations between Rome and Constantinople and to avoid any imperial counter-strike against the papacy: see Bertolini 1968, 468ff., 474ff.; Speck 1981, 114–22; Speck 1985. See *PmbZ*, no. 8614/*PBE* I, Zacharias 16. The *Life* mentions Zacharias' devotion to images in Chapters 18, 19, and 25, which Zuckerman (2005, 92f.) takes to mean a diplomatic way of avoiding confrontation in the face of his political need for a good relationship with Constantinople. But we should also bear in mind that, as we will see, there is no evidence at this point that Constantine was in any way especially forcefully committed to an iconoclast policy. The evidence of certain papal letters shows that the pope did recognise Artabasdos, albeit briefly, even though, as Speck has argued, some of the letters were later re-dated or otherwise altered to avoid the embarassment of the papacy having recognised a usurper: see Bertolini 1968, 468ff., and Speck 1981, 122–8 (in the context of a discussion of the dates of the reign of Artabasdos); 1985.

[70] Zuckerman 2005, 89–94, who, however, associates the original rift with imperial iconoclasm.

interpolated and emended, or the fictional accounts of the first martyrs of iconoclasm in 726, similarly of much later date. In addition, some works attributed to Germanos also survive, but they are problematic in respect of both date and content; and more reliably, the homilies of Andrew of Crete, already mentioned.[71] Apart from these, western sources such as the *Liber Pontificalis* provide biographical material about the popes and their relations with the eastern emperors, and the information from the *Lives* of Gregory II and his successor Gregory III is important in this respect. But key documents such as letters supposedly written by these popes to Leo have not survived, being referred to only very briefly in later documents (quoted, for example, at Roman synods in the later part of the eighth century), so that it is difficult to know how much faith to place in their testimony. In the following, we shall attempt to survey as concisely as possible the conclusions which may be drawn from this material.

The four documents in question are letters, one ascribed to the pope, Gregory II, the others to the patriarch Germanos. All four are preserved in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in 787, and all four were employed chiefly to illustrate the fact that the bishops Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Klaudioupolis were the originators of the heresy of iconoclasm, and that the patriarch Germanos was a defender of images. All of the letters appear to have been in a relatively poor state of preservation in 787, and there is clear evidence that their text was reconstructed, interpolated or supplemented in various ways for the benefit of a late eighth-century ecclesiastical audience.

The first document in question is a letter purportedly from Gregory II to the patriarch. Its date is debated. As we have just observed, it survives only in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787,[72] where it is described as the 'letter of Gregory, the most holy pope of Rome, to Germanos, the most holy patriarch of Constantinople'.[73] In it, the pope congratulates the

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[71] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 247; see in particular a *logos* on images, probably written towards the end of his life and after his abdication: Stein, *Bilderstreit*, 272–3, with trans. at 274–5 and discussion at 276–82. A *discourse* on images is also ascribed to Germanos. It survives only in a Georgian version; the earliest ms. is eleventh-century: see van Esbroeck 1999. The editor has argued that it belongs in the reign of Leo and, furthermore, confirms that Leo issued some formal edict or exacted an oath regarding images. In fact, the nature of the argument, the style of the discourse (in spite of its being a translation into Georgian) and some of the historical references in the text clearly point to a date in the reign of Constantine V, and probably in the 750s or later. See Chapter 3.

[72] Mansi xiii, 92C1–100A4. Although we do not always follow his conclusions, the following survey of the letters is based on Stein's careful investigation, the best modern analysis of these documents.

[73] Although the translation mark, which accompanies other papal letters translated for the council into Greek, is absent: cf. the comment of Stein 1980, 90 and nn. 5 and 6.

recipient on his recently communicated victory over an enemy of the church. Nothing had so pleased the writer as the joyful news recently received, both independently and through a recent letter of the addressee. He had been thereby spiritually revived and had sent prayers of thanks to God, who will always support the addressee. The writer calls the addressee his brother and champion of the church. He goes on to refer to the enemy of the church and forerunner of Godlessness who has been defeated, a foe whose ruination followed from his arrogance and from the firm resistance offered to him, an apostate who fought against God, in contrast with the addressee, who fights with God in the manner God has shown. He notes that the cross was held to be the chief symbol of Christ's victory, as it had been in the time of Constantine I; likewise the Mother of God played a similar role.[74] For, as Basil said, the honour shown to the image is transferred to the prototype.

There then follows a long justification and defence of the honouring of images. The 82nd canon of the Council in Trullo is mentioned, and the argument is made that the incarnation made Christ's representation as a man a possibility, as indeed did all the events and holy characters connected with his life and passion. The letter writer goes on to contrast the honouring of images with pagan idol-worship; and to defend Christians against Jewish accusations of idolatry. He concludes this defence of the use of images by remarking that he will return to his main argument and the deeds of his addressee's champion, the Mother of God.[75] The Mother of God is then attributed with the victory granted the addressee; she proved an equal of the foe who had so long raged against her, and now was cast down by her. Those who had been defeated were now crowned with victory. And through her intercession and that of all the saints may God continue to protect the addressee, insofar as the latter may continue to guide the Christian community, and to persuade those who were, for a short time, imprudent, to respect the tradition of the Fathers.[76]

Until the late 1960s it was generally accepted as correctly ascribed to Gregory II,[77] but Gouillard suggested that it was in fact originally a Greek composition, written probably by the patriarch Germanos either to the pope or to an eastern bishop, chiefly on the grounds of the similarities in style and content between the letter and that written by Germanos to Thomas

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[74] Mansi xiii, 92 C1–93 C2. See the important discussion in Pentcheva 2002, 16–19 who shows that the mention of the image of the Theotokos refers to her as a person, not as an actual physical icon or image.

[75] Mansi xiii, 93 C2–97 D8.   [76] Mansi xiii, 97 D8–100 A4.

[77] See Schwarzlose 1890, 54 n. 2; Martin 1930, 48; Ostrogorsky 1930, 243; and esp. Caspar 1933, 29ff.

of Klaudioupolis.[78] More recently, Stein challenged Gouillard's hypothesis, and argued that the letter was indeed a papal document, written, however, not by Gregory II but by Zacharias (741–52) to the patriarch Anastasios on the occasion of the defeat of Constantine V by his brother-in-law Artabasdos during the civil war of 742–4.[79] Stein's argument rests on (a) the reference to a defeat of the 'enemy of the church', who is (b) described as heretical, and (c) suffered his defeat at the hands of the addressee. Since (d) the middle section of the letter consists of a defence of holy images, he concludes that the 'heretic' in question must be an iconoclast; and since Leo III can at no time during this period be regarded as having been defeated by the church or anyone else, the heresiarch can only be Constantine V.[80]

If one accepts that the letter as it stands is all of a piece, then the internal evidence, in particular the discussion on icons, makes it difficult to challenge this argument, since one wonders what victory of the church over which heretical enemy could be meant for the reign of Leo III himself.

But a number of points stand out in reading through this letter. In the first place, it has very plausibly been argued that the middle section, which presents an apology for icons is, in fact, a later interpolation: in particular, it is in this section that certain similarities of style and argument with Germanos' letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis are to be found, similarities which led Gouillard to argue that the letter had been written by Germanos himself during the 730s, after his letter to Thomas.[81] That this section is probably interpolated is apparent from the fact that, without it, the text runs otherwise smoothly straight from the first mention of the Virgin (93 C2–3) to the account of the wonders worked by the Mother of God (97 D3); the intervening apology is superfluous and incidental to the line of argument and the whole point of the letter itself.[82]

In the second place, it becomes apparent that, once this is recognised, the interpretation of the context of the letter is more open to question.

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[78] Caspar 1933, 244ff.   [79] Stein 1980, 89–136.   [80] Stein 1980, 97–9, 128ff.

[81] Gouillard 1968, 275ff. Stein 1980, 103f. unintentionally provides some support for this hypothesis when he notes certain anomalies in this section, such as the use of a citation from John Chrysostom which is found also, together with other texts used by the author of the letter, in John of Damascus and in the Acts of 787. But as part of his argument for the authorship of pope Zacharias, he suggests that, whereas these quotations would hardly have been employed in Germanos' time, by the 740s iconophile *florilegia* would have been in existence from which they might have been drawn.

[82] Speck 1981, 166f., argues that the interpolation was a ninth-century addition, and that the letter read out at the Council of 787 was probably the original, uninterpolated. But the ms. tradition shows that the passage was present in 787: see Lamberz, in *ACO* III, 1, XLII ff. Also *ibid.*, LV, e.g., for the invented correspondence between Tarasios and eastern patriarchs, likewise present in the original Acts.

Without the apology for icons, an iconoclast context for the patriarch's victory over an enemy of the church is no longer compelling; indeed, given the generally accepted papal origin of the letter,[83] a congratulatory missive after the victorious repulse of the siege of 717–18 provides the most likely context.[84]

In the third place, the addressee is praised not for his opposition to those who reject icons, for example, but who threaten the very existence of the church. Indeed, with the exception of the central interpolated section, the role and function of icons as a problem remain undiscussed and are irrelevant to the writer's argument, which is to praise the addressee and to describe the acts of the Virgin. Furthermore, the reference to the victory which had thus been gained, alluded to in terms of that won by Moses over Pharaoh, occurs also in connection with the siege of 626, and should be taken literally as a military victory.[85] In addition, the adjectives used of the enemy of the church in question – 'enemy of Christ', 'apostate', 'heretic' were as valid in Byzantine texts of the period for Muslims or other 'heretics' as they were for the iconoclasts to whom they are generally assumed to have applied in the context of this letter. But only the armies of the caliphate and their leaders presented such a real, physical threat – in terms of the invasion and siege of 717/18 – to the continued existence of the church at this time. The reference to the role of the cross and the image of the Mother of God as metaphorical standards of the Christians fits into the context. But the text does not actually say that there was a procession of the cross and the image of the Virgin, merely that these symbols of the faith were active in defending the city. References to such an event in the *synaxarion* of the Akathistos hymn and the (possibly ninth-century) *diegesis ophelimos* usually attributed to Germanos appear to be based on a further interpretation of this passage.[86]

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[83]　Stein 1980, 93; note Mansi xiii, 92 D11, where the address 'brother' clearly signifies that writer and recipient are of equivalent rank – pope and patriarch.

[84]　Speck 1981, 177.

[85]　See Speck 1980, index, and 1981, 159. Note also that, against Stein's hypothesis, no definitive victory could be ascribed to Artabasdos over Constantine V.

[86]　See *PG* 92, 1352 D; 1365 B–C. For Germanos' sermon recounting the deeds of the Virgin, see Grumel 1958; but also Speck 1986, who argues that the text, while based on earlier material, is in fact a later composition. The second *prooimion* to the Akathistos is usually ascribed to the patriarch Sergios or a near contemporary, and in connection with the siege of 626, on the basis of the information in the Greek *synaxaria*; but ascribed in the Latin *synaxarion* to Germanos. Speck has more recently argued that the second *prooimion* can be plausibly connected with Germanos: see 1980, 139 and n. 326, arguing that no evidence for a clear attribution can be detected; and 1981, 169–71, arguing that there is such evidence in the letter of Gregory II to Germanos, where the Virgin is expressly referred to as '*your* protectress'. See also Cameron and Herrin 1984, 17–71; and Gero 1973a, 36ff., 135f.; and now Pentcheva 2002; Kazhdan 1999, 70–3.

It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the letter of Gregory II to Germanos is, with the exception of the central interpolated sections, essentially genuine. In particular, it demonstrates the good relationship and regular communications – the references to a previous correspondence are quite explicit[87] – between Gregory II and Germanos. And while it serves as useful evidence for views of the role of both the cross and the Virgin at the beginning of Leo III's reign, it provides no evidence for any conflict between an iconoclast and an iconophile. Taken together, these points prohibit the notion that the letter was written by pope Zacharias to the patriarch Anastasios in the early 740s, as argued by Stein, and there seems no reason to doubt Speck's view that the letter does indeed represent, in an interpolated form, a letter written to Germanos after the news of the defeat of the Arab armies outside Constantinople in 718.[88]

Germanos and Constantine of Nakoleia

Although important to the iconophile interest in 787 (whether interpolated by then or not), Gregory's letter to Germanos thus provides no help in clarifying the opening stages of iconoclasm. Much more important are the three letters of the patriarch Germanos himself. Although they can be dated only approximately, and although there is some disagreement about the date of the letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis in particular, they are clearly concerned with the issue of incipient iconoclasm and the problems it brings with it. The generally accepted date for all three letters is shortly before 726, the arguments for which were clearly set out by Ostrogorsky.[89] We will deal very briefly with each of them in turn.

The letter to John of Synnada[90] sets out briefly the course of a debate between Germanos and the bishop Constantine of Nakoleia, and instructs John to resolve the issue in a quiet and unobtrusive manner, rather than

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[87] Mansi xiii, 92 D9–10.

[88] Speck 1981, 166–7, notes that there is no trace, at any point in the letter, of any reference to the emperor which, given the context of the imperial victory and the gratulatory theme, is puzzling. He suggests that such a mention may in fact have been replaced by the long interpolation on images, which thus served a double purpose, both to obliterate the memory of the emperor, and to establish the argument in favour of the veneration of images.

[89] Ostrogorsky 1930, 238; followed by Gero 1973a, 85–6; Lange 1969, 85; and Mango 1977a, 1. Stein 1980, 5, notes that Lamza accepted this date for the first two letters, but believed that that to Thomas of Klaudioupolis was post-726: see Lamza 1975, 137–140. As we will see below, this argument has also been taken up and extended by Speck.

[90] In the province of Phrygia, within the district of the *Anatolikon*, lying to the south of Akroinon. Nakoleia was considerably farther north, and to the south-west of Dorylaion.

convoke a synod.[91] In order to explain the situation to John, Germanos begins by summarising the discussion between himself and Constantine which had taken place, both through the letter he had received from John himself through the offices of the *patrikios* Tarasios, and in a discussion (in Constantinople, it is assumed) with the bishop of Nakoleia in person.

Germanos had already heard something of Constantine's views from other sources. Constantine had affirmed that he was obeying scripture in respect of his injunction not to show honour (to perform *proskynesis*) to images or objects made by human hand. Germanos concurs that, according to scripture God alone should be honoured in this way; he differentiates, however, between the *proskynesis* shown to earthly rulers and that shown to the Trinity. The production of pictures with wax and colours is not intended to place a limit to the honouring of the divine, for no images of the invisible Godhead – which is not even perceptible to the highest rank of heavenly angels – are made. The only-begotten son became man in order to redeem God's creation, and save for sin he is like man in every respect. Thus his humanity may be represented in pictures, but not his divinity, and this promotes correct belief, since he did not unite his nature with that of man, but became man. Christ is represented in his fleshly form, and this recalls his divinity and the indescribable process of his incarnation.[92]

Similarly, the Mother of God is represented in flesh, thus showing that she is a woman and of no other substance who, beyond all understanding, received and bore the invisible God as man. We honour her as the mother of God and place her above all other visible and invisible creatures. The saints, apostles, prophets, and other holy men and women are represented in pictorial form to remind us of their virtuous acts and their piety. No divine nature is ascribed to them, nor is the *proskynesis* shown to them the same as that shown to God. Their depiction acts as a reinforcement for belief learned by listening, and images are made not in order that the honour which is shown to God should be transferred to pictures made by human hand or to God's created beings, but rather so that we may prove our love for the saints; so that inasmuch as we honour them, so do we honour God who was honoured and acknowledged by them. In this way, the production of images in the church must be maintained. Present and future salvation derive from God alone. And if we honour the portraits of our Lord and Saviour, of his mother, and his saints with the *aspasmos*, then we are merely

[91] Mansi xiii, 100 A11–105 A3. Detailed analysis in Stein 1980, 5–23; and see *PmbZ*, nos. 3779, 2977 and *PBE* I, Ioannes 138, Konstantinos 73.

[92] Mansi xiii, 100 B2–101 C5.

demonstrating our belief in them. We honour the saints because they are of the same nature as us, but have been blessed and shown God's mercy.[93]

In his concluding lines, Germanos asserts that the bishop of Nakoleia accepted these arguments and swore to uphold the tradition, to say or do nothing which might instigate a scandal or cause confusion among the lay populace. The bishop of Synnada should in consequence assemble no synod, but rather invite the bishop of Nakoleia to come to him, read him this letter and ensure his agreement, and then pray for long life and victory for 'our most mighty rulers the emperors', as well as for the peace of God, which passes all understanding, for the Christian people.[94]

It has recently been argued, and very plausibly, that the middle section of this letter, which deals with the saints, the Virgin and the theology of images, is itself also a later addition, made before the Council of 787 at which the letter was submitted as part of the evidence against iconoclasm.[95] Apart from stylistic considerations, the section represents a much more sophisticated account of a theory of images than seems to have been current at the very beginning of the debate over images. Whether or not this is the case, however, even without these putative additions, Germanos' letter to John suggests that Constantine had publicly placed emphasis on the Old Testament prohibition of graven images, and thereby caused some concern or opposition among his own clergy or congregation. That he agreed with Germanos that *proskynesis* was to be directed to God alone is clear; but whether Constantine also condemned the use of *proskynesis* to honour images made by human hand is less certain. In either case, a disturbance had been caused, and it was this matter which John of Synnada was asked to resolve.

The desire on Germanos' part to minimise the whole affair is very clear – John of Synnada had clearly suggested calling a local synod to debate the issue, which in turn suggests that it was seen, at least locally, as having some effect on the local population. A copy of an earlier letter (which has not been preserved) of Germanos, detailing Constantine's concurrence with what he and Germanos had agreed, had been given to Constantine himself to deliver to John, but the former had so far failed to fulfil this obligation. Germanos notes this in the letter we have just reviewed. It is also clear from the second surviving letter of Germanos, to Constantine himself, that the latter had himself received a copy of Germanos' first letter to John. In view of the mention of the emperors, the date of this letter to John must be after easter 720 (when Constantine V was crowned co-emperor); it is certainly to

be dated before January 730, when Germanos abdicated, since Germanos is acting with patriarchal authority.

The letter to Constantine of Nakoleia is short and to the point.[96] In it Germanos regrets that the bishop of Nakoleia had refused to pass on to the metropolitan bishop John the letter he (Germanos) had sent him (Constantine), and further that Constantine had displayed a lack of piety and the love and honour to be shown among Christians. Germanos orders him to hand over the letter to John immediately, to show him the respect due him, and to accept the discipline of the church. Since Constantine had accepted Germanos' arguments, he should stand by that position and not be self-willed. Constantine knew well enough that he had himself requested permission to resign his episcopacy, on the grounds that unknown persons had laid charges against him for reasons of which he was ignorant. He had undertaken to say or do nothing insulting about God or his saints on account of the images,[97] but to adhere strictly to scripture, which says that nothing created receives the honour due to God. The bishop of Nakoleia had assented and had received a duplicate. In concluding, Germanos warns Constantine not to cause offence among the naive laity; he is henceforth prohibited from the continuation of his episcopal duties, until such time as he hands over the letter from Germanos to the metropolitan of Synnada. For Germanos must proceed in a stricter manner in order that he himself should not be condemned by God.[98]

Germanos' irritation with the bishop of Nakoleia is clear, the measures he institutes for this breach of church discipline understandable. Constantine had refused to obey his superior's injunctions, and had clearly changed his mind once more with regard to the theological position to which he had originally subscribed, hence the refusal to hand over his own version of the letter from Germanos to the bishop of Synnada. The accusations against him appear to have followed from things Constantine himself said and,

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[96] Stein 1980, 23f. notes that the name of the bishop of Nakoleia is mentioned only in the heading placed before this letter in the Acts of 787 – it does not occur in the letter itself. But he concludes that there are no good grounds for doubting the addressee's identity, given the contents of this letter and that to John of Synnada.

[97] This part of the text poses a problem, as Speck 1995a, notes. The text actually reads 'on account of *their* (i.e. of God and His saints) image', which is a strange formulation. Speck suggests that the reference to the 'saints' is a later 'clarification' added for the excerpted version of the letter read out at the Council of 787, and that the original probably read 'His image' (i.e. God's), which might in consequence be a reference to the icon of Christ on the Chalke gate. This is unlikely (see below), and it seems to us just as difficult to rule the original text out of order simply because it appears not to match what a modern scholar might think it ought to have said. The question must remain unresolved.

[98] Mansi xiii, 105 B7–E11.

although it is nowhere explicit, were probably connected with his views on the use of images.

Germanos and Thomas of Klaudioupolis

The third letter written by Germanos is directed to the bishop Thomas of Klaudioupolis.[99] It is the longest of the three ascribed to the patriarch,[100] and is written not from the official position of a patriarch, but rather as a personal appeal. In brief, it covers the following themes.

In the first section, Germanos notes that he has heard about Thomas' monstrous behaviour, and goes through the possible reasons (which he appears to know quite well) for this. He recalls that Thomas had stayed with Germanos for some time, and had discussed with him a wide range of scriptural and patristic texts without making any reference to images of Christ, the Theotokos or the saints or asking Germanos for his views on these issues. Once back in his own see, he had had images removed as though this was commonly recognised and accepted official policy. Germanos could hardly believe this. Germanos then sets out his own views. Novelties are to be avoided, so that the Christian populace should not become angered and confused and unbelievers should not be given the opportunity to slander the church; he lists the ignorance of both Jews and Muslims in this respect, and asserts there can be no community of interest between Christians and such idol worshippers. He introduces the question of images of the saints. These are no more than expressions of their virtues and a stimulus to worship God after their example. They serve to inspire emulation of the deeds of the saints, just like words, as saint Basil states. Those who already know the saints are reminded of them, while those who know them not are encouraged to learn. Germanos justifies the creation of such images with the commandments of Moses.[101]

He then goes on to deal with the image of Christ. The representation of Christ in his incarnate form serves to refute heretics, since the latter maintain that he only appears as a man, but was not actually such. It also serves as an

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[99] Probably the city in the province of Honorias, which was subject to the patriarchate of Constantinople. Klaudioupolis in Isauria is a possibility, but this identity, preferred by Lamza (1975, 149) on the basis of traditional views about the Isaurian origins of Leo III and the 'eastern' character of iconoclasm, is unlikely. See Stein 1980, 34, for brief discussion and further lit.; *PmbZ*, no. 8431/*PBE* I, Thomas 14.

[100] See Mansi xiii, 108 A7–128 A12. For its genuineness see Stein 1980, 30f.

[101] Mansi xiii, 108 A10–116 A2.

aid to those who cannot appreciate a spiritual understanding, but require rather a material demonstration to support what they have heard. Salvation is revealed not by hearing alone but is imposed upon the minds of those who see it through the incarnation, which enabled God to become visible. In this way God's presence in the flesh among men impresses itself on humankind, and honour is clearly shown to his goodness and glory and *proskynesis* is observed, not to painted wood, but to the invisible God. He receives this in spirit and in truth, and leads us to the Father through himself. Even Jacob honoured the tip of Joseph's rod, but in so doing honoured not the wood itelf, but rather him who held it. And thus it is also with the image of the Theotokos. All this is part of the oldest traditions of the church, and no objections were ever made: after the persecutions ended, many synods were held, and none of them raised this issue as a problem, which proves that the tradition of holy images could not have been understood as contrary to scriptural tradition and the commandments on idolatry. Germanos goes on to note that the use of images is found throughout Christendom, and can be justified by the old tradition of portraying biblical tales in pictures, as Gregory of Nyssa records of the Sacrifice of Abraham. There then follows a lengthy apology for icons and the act of *proskynesis* based on scriptural quotation and exegesis, demonstrating that Christians direct their acts of worship to the archetypes portrayed in images; they do not worship images of their forefathers, and thus cannot be accused of idolatry in this respect, either.[102] If we were to consider God in material categories and abandon the honour which was owed to him, then it would be sensible to remove those things which distract us from honouring him properly. But in fact, the opposite is the case: for when someone appreciates an image of a saint, that person knows that the honour is due to God, and adds the saint's name. In the same way when we utter the name of Christ in prayer we are not honouring just one, but all three elements of the Trinity. We do not maintain that images offer a complete assurance of faith, nor do we ignore the congregating in church in the evening and morning. Salvation comes only from belief in the one God in the Trinity, to whom *proskynesis* is shown. No-one should object to the lighting of candles and burning of incense before icons – this is done as a symbol of the honour due to those who sit with Christ.[103]

The concluding sections of the letter express Germanos' desire to explain his position in respect of the counter-arguments offered by those who disagree with him, and to explain the scriptural contradictions which they

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[102] Mansi xiii, 116 A2–121 D8.   [103] Mansi xiii, 124 B–C.

have pointed out. He demands that Thomas avoid arousing anger and confusion in the Christian community. For whole cities and the great mass of the populace now find themselves in great confusion on account of this matter. Germanos is keen to stress the dangers of suggesting that Christian practice in this respect is at fault: for then the enemies of the cross can point to their errors and the falseness of their ways.[104] He then refers to the fact that the Christ-loving and most pious emperors have themselves erected a pillar of their own true love of God in front of the palace, an image in which are portrayed the figures of the apostles and prophets, accompanied by their sayings about the Lord as well as, by way of a demonstration of their (the emperors') faith, the salvation-bringing cross. There follows a proof of the wonder-working potential of images by reference to the healing oil that flowed from an icon of the Theotokos at Sozopolis, for which there are many witnesses. The fact that such miracles have not occurred in his own time can no more be used to invalidate this tradition, than can the fact that, because the miracles of the Holy Ghost described in the Acts of the Apostles occur no longer, doubt could be cast on their having occurred. It is through these means that God chooses to show his mercy, although only through particular images, not all – thus avoiding the belief that such wonders occur mechanically, but reinforcing rather the truth that they take place through God's grace. Eusebios' account of the wonder-working statue at Paneas is then quoted as further proof. This is not to suggest that we should study bronze images, but rather that God shows his goodness even through pagan creations, and that it is not pious to slander the pious tradition of images. The letter concludes with a wish that they be found worthy of God's heavenly kingdom.[105]

What conclusions can be derived from these three letters? It is clear from the first two that the bishop of Nakoleia had uttered public criticisms of the custom of showing honour to images of the saints and the Theotokos, and in particular of Christ; although as we have seen, it is possible that references to the saints and martyrs may also have been supplied by the clerks preparing copies of the letters for the Council of 787. The fact that the letters to John of Synnada and to Constantine of Nakoleia appear no longer to represent their original form, and may not have been complete in 787, must reinforce doubts about the content of Germanos' argument in favour of images.[106] Still, Germanos had come to hear of Constantine's anti-image views, and had eventually invited or ordered the bishop of Nakoleia to Constantinople to question him. The patriarch justifies the

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[104] Mansi xiii, 121 D8–124 E6.   [105] Mansi xiii, 124 E6–128 A12.   [106] See Speck 1995a.

customary practices by stressing that the honour is shown to the prototype, and that Christ can only be represented because of his incarnation. Indeed, he is careful to avoid the use of the word *proskynesis* in connection with icons as such, limiting it to the honour shown to Christ (along with the Theotokos and the saints, if these references were integral to the original text). One of the key points in Constantine's position, or so it would appear – reading back from Germanos' account of his discussion with the bishop of Nakoleia – was that the use of images distracted Christians from the prototype they were meant to represent, so that the icons themselves, artefacts created by artisans, were being worshipped by default – this is especially clear in the sections dealing with the cult of saints, for Constantine has no objections to Christians honouring saints as such, merely to the distraction created by their images. Constantine is not arguing an 'iconoclast' position here: he believes simply that icons are unnecessary as mediators, since this role is adequately filled by the saints and by scripture; and, as we have said, that they are a distraction which may mislead the ignorant or naive. Germanos' detailed response as outlined in the first letter was designed to take on board each of the main points of these criticisms from a theological and scriptural perspective and refute them once and for all.

If the central section of the letter from pope Gregory II to Germanos, presenting a more detailed theological defence of the use of holy images, is indeed a later interpolation, then it also becomes clear that the 'debate' was at this point in its very earliest stages and operated at a relatively straightforward level. Rather than relying on a vast panoply of quotations from scripture, both sides appear to be drawing on the same set of relatively well-known texts, the difference lying in their different emphases and interpretations.

The patriarch's desire to avoid an open schism within the ranks of the clergy over the issue is emphasised by the explicit expression of this concern in the letter to Constantine. Whether this should be taken to mean that the popular opposition to Constantine's ideas in his diocese (which seems to underlie the accusations mentioned) was matched by a popular interest or approval of them remains unknown, although the fact that, in the letter to John of Synnada, Germanos makes it clear that he had come to hear of the views of this somewhat isolated provincial bishop at all suggests that they were already being talked of on a fairly widespread basis. What is certain is that the disagreement between Germanos and John of Synnada, and the bishop of Nakoleia, was at this stage a relatively local and contained affair, restricted to the realm of ecclesiastical discipline and order. There is no reference to any imperial involvement, awareness, or interest in the issue at

all. Neither is there the slightest evidence in the letters that the latter met the emperor or had discussions with him while present in Constantinople to be examined by Germanos.[107]

The third letter is particularly interesting. In the first instance, and in sharp contrast to the first two letters, Germanos is writing in a clearly unofficial capacity: there is no hint of orders to a disobedient subordinate, rather a somewhat sad or disappointed reproach to Thomas for misleading Germanos and remaining silent about his own views. The letter is written in a personal vein. Whether Thomas and Germanos had previously discussed icons is unclear, but it is apparent from the letter that, on the basis of what Thomas himself had said to him, this was not an issue Germanos had thought needed discussion. To his annoyance, however, Thomas had returned to his see and immediately begun to implement a policy of removing icons. The way in which Germanos describes this suggests that this was not a novelty: there is a strong implication that others – but not Thomas – were already carrying out such a policy. Germanos had no idea that Thomas was thinking along such lines, and his disappointment and sense of betrayal are very apparent. The arguments Thomas had used to justify his actions were evidently similar to those of Constantine of Nakoleia, since the counter-arguments put by Germanos are virtually identical: the keystone of his position remains the incarnation, coupled with the appeal to ancient tradition legitimated through appeal to the writings of the Fathers of the church, to scripture itself, and to incidents in which God had worked miracles through images, generally accepted and widely recognised.

By the time he wrote to Thomas, the policy of icon removal seems to have been more widespread than it had been at the time of Germanos' first two letters. Whole cities (by which we must understand the territories of the *poleis* in question as well) and congregations were embroiled; confusion and uncertainty reigned.[108] The implication is that the phenomenon is now empire-wide. But whereas in the letter to Constantine Germanos concentrates on the disciplinary aspect of the affair, and is still of the opinion that the matter can be contained, he seems to have abandoned this hope in the letter to Thomas: things have clearly gone too far for that, and iconoclast attitudes have taken firm root.

It is also significant that the emperors Leo III and Constantine V are explicitly described as 'most pious and Christ-loving' and, to confound Thomas and those who share his views, are cited by Germanos as having shown their love of God by erecting an image of the apostles and the prophets

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[107] As supposed by Ostrogorsky 1930, 237f., for example.   [108] Mansi xiii, 121 D8ff.

and the cross.[109] To make any sense of this in the context of Germanos'
argument, and bearing in mind that he was no longer writing from the
position of patriarch, it is necessary to assume that Thomas (or others of
like mind) had invoked the names of the emperors in his own support.
Had the emperors also shown sympathy, or carried out acts, which could
be construed by Thomas and others like him as support for the policies
they themselves were implementing? We do not know. Yet from Germanos'
point of view the position adopted by Leo and Constantine clearly had
nothing to do with the ideas promoted by Constantine of Nakoleia and,
later, Thomas of Klaudioupolis. Was this actually the case? Or was it rather
presented by Germanos in this way to cut the ground from under the feet of
any proto-iconoclast claims for imperial support or sympathy, and to avoid
accusing reigning emperors of impiety and thus to steer clear of accusations
of treason, in order to safeguard his own – perhaps precarious – position
at the time of writing? But this then raises a host of problems both for
the initial position of Leo III and the question of his 'edict' ordering the
removal of icons, as well as for the dating of the letter itself. It is well-
known, for example, that Leo's seals depicted the Virgin in the early years
of his reign, following the established imperial tradition, which suggests
at least neutrality in this respect.[110] The image with the cross, apostles,
and prophets put up by Leo and Constantine before the palace, which we
will deal with more fully below, also argues against any dogmatic imperial
iconoclasm early in Leo's reign.

Taken together, Germanos' three letters tell us a great deal, as much
by what they do not refer to as by what they do. There is, for example,
no support for the notion that Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of
Klaudioupolis had met or that they represented a coherent group or faction
within the Anatolian clergy.[111] The letters suggest that the early debate about
images was not about whether holy images could be made *as such*, but
about their effects when displayed to the ordinary Christian, and perhaps
about removing them from public gaze (and only in certain contexts?). For

[109] Exactly when this had taken place cannot be known. Thümmel 2005, 28–9, takes it that it
could not have occurred after 726. This may be true; but neither does it mean that, once
erected, it would necessarily have to have been taken down after the emperor adopted a more
critical view of images, especially if this particular image was distant from the popular gaze,
and was focused on the cross.

[110] See *ZV* nos. 23, 25, 27–33.

[111] An assumption which has regularly appeared in histories of the period since Ostrogorsky: cf.
Ostrogorsky 1930, 226–7; and Mango 1977a (but with reservations), 1. While repeating the
assumption, Gero 1973a, 85 and n. 3, also argues that the role of the Anatolian bishops has
been over-emphasised (*ibid.*, 90–3).

while the emperors may have contributed to words against sacred images (we will discuss the question of Leo's supposed edict against icons in a moment) they remained willing to erect a monumental image of some sort in a public place, before their own palace, depicting the saints and prophets alongside the cross.

The date and context of the letters have received a great deal of attention. Usually, all three are assigned to the period immediately before the year 726 when, according to the majority source tradition, Leo made his first move against icons.[112] But the marked difference between the first two, in which Germanos writes very clearly and with authority as patriarch to his subordinates, and the third, in which the issue of patriarchal authority is never raised, is significant. Stein remarked on the quotation from Proverbs at the very beginning of the letter, in which Germanos alludes to brotherly solidarity in the face of adversity,[113] noting at the same time that he is one of those who needs help rather than one who is able to give it. In addition, some considerable time appears to have elapsed between the writing of the first two letters and the third: in the first two, the issues at stake are those of church discipline, the bishop of Nakoleia's actions remain, still, a local concern (although Germanos points out the potential for damage to the church should such views become more widely heard), and no images seem yet to have been removed or damaged. The first two letters can clearly be situated right at the very beginning of the debate, and a date during Germanos's tenure as patriarch – perhaps even in or just before 726 – seems quite reasonable.

But we can draw three inferences from the third letter. First, the preaching of the removal of icons, as well as their actual removal, has by now caused dissension and concern throughout the cities and communities of the empire, which suggests that some time has now passed for this development to have reached this advanced stage. Second, Germanos feels that he is no longer in a position to influence affairs, but must – as his letter clearly implies – rely on the brotherly support of his fellow clergy to maintain his own argument. Indeed, he states that part of his reason for writing the letter, with its pro-icon arguments at such length, was to clear himself of any association with this state of affairs – he had been unable to influence what was going on.[114] As we have already intimated, the tone of the letter suggests that he wrote it as a private person; and other details argue that

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[112] Stein 1980, 82ff. reviews all previous discussions with literature and detailed discussion of the evidence; see more recently Auzépy 1999, 289–91 who, however, does not take Stein's discussion into account; and Thümmel 2005, 28ff., 44.

[113] 1980, 39–40; see Mansi, xiii, 108 A11–B2.   [114] Mansi xiii, 124 D6–9.

he wrote it while in exile. At one point, for example, he notes that he does not have the necessary anti-Jewish tracts, to which he has made reference, to hand,[115] strongly suggesting that the patriarchal library was not at his disposal and that he may even have been outside Constantinople.[116] Third, he had assumed Thomas was on his side because the latter had not raised the issue of images. This could suggest that images were a recognised topic for discussion and disagreement within the church, and thus that the debate was well advanced, and that Thomas had not raised the issue even though Germanos had demonstrated that it was of some concern to him. It also suggests that Germanos had around him a group of like-minded bishops and other churchmen, among whom Thomas had been counted.

These points would strongly suggest that the third letter may, in fact, have been written after the debate about images, or at least about how they should be honoured, had become a major issue in the Byzantine world, and after Germanos had abdicated.[117] We will return to the date of this letter in the following chapter.

'External' influences? Islam, Judaism, and the evidence from Christian communities under Umayyad rule

The evidence for Leo III's role in the opening stages of iconoclasm can be better understood in the light of these considerations, but it will be helpful to deal first of all with the issue of external influences: Islamic and Jewish traditions or politics have at different times and by different writers been cited as contributory elements which led to Leo's adoption of an iconoclast policy, and which may also have been important in the development of

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[115] Mansi xiii, 109 C2–7. [116] See 124 below.

[117] This position is argued strongly by Speck 1981, 267–81. Stein 1980, 86f., suggests 729 as a possibility (chiefly on the grounds that Leo III was clearly not the fanatical iconoclast he supposedly became at a later date), but assumes that Germanos is still in office. As a *terminus post quem* the mention of emperors must give a date after 720, in which Constantine V was crowned as co-emperor; most scholars have assumed, however, that the *terminus ante quem* is 729, i.e. before Germanos' abdication (e.g. most recently Auzépy 1990, 446–7, n. 6, with discussion of previous literature), on the grounds that, after his resignation, Germanos would no longer need to refer to the emperors as *eusebestatoi* and *philochristoi* (Mansi xiii, 124 E7). This is not correct: writing within the empire of a reigning emperor would still require the use of the appropriate epithets, the more so if the purpose of mentioning them in the first place was – as very clearly here – to assert their piety and orthodoxy. Stein 1999, 13–14, continues to prefer the earlier dating, however, although we believe the results of Speck's analysis to be preferable both in terms of the content and the style of the letter. Thümmel 2005, 28–30, 44, sticks to the original dating in the period *c.* 720–6 for all three letters.

iconoclast ideas in the minds of the various Byzantine churchmen involved
in its initial stages. On the whole, it is now generally admitted that while
there is no real evidence that Jewish influence had any formal impact,[118]
there is no reason either to doubt that Christians who were aware of Islam
understood also that changes in Christian observance might be exploited by
non-believers. The patriarch Germanos was particularly anxious to avoid
such 'scandals' within the Christian community, as he notes in the letter to
Thomas of Klaudioupolis. But it is worth noting that during the second half
of the seventh century and the first half of the eighth there is good evi-
dence that inter-communal relations in the conquered lands involved an
awareness on all sides, at least among the theologically educated and
literate – Muslim, the various Christian confessions, and Judaism – of
one another's textual traditions and major theological themes. An ongoing
exchange of ideas and motifs was certainly a part of this picture, and it is
impossible to say for certain to what extent some of the notions implicit
in both Byzantine mainstream as well as later Islamic ideas about imagery
were not in some way influenced by such debates and by the attitudes and
beliefs of some of the smaller groups who existed in the interstices between
and within the three major belief systems.[119] Influences which might in one
sense be seen as 'external' were, in consequence, part of a continuum which
did not respect political boundaries.

The nature and dynamic of early Islamic art have been examined in this
context and, although there is indeed a coincidence of official Byzantine
iconoclasm, Christian iconoclasm in Islamic territories, and Muslim atti-
tudes toward figural representation, we would argue that 'state iconoclasm'
in Byzantium stands apart from the various manifestations of 'iconoclasm'
in Islamic Palestine.[120] In the churches used by Christians living under
Islamic rule, figural decoration apparently died out before Byzantine icon-
oclasm began: the latest dated floors with figural mosaics seem to be those
in St Stephen's church at Umm al-Rasas (718), the church on the Acropolis
in Ma'in (719/20) and the church of St George at Deir al-'Adas in southern
Syria (722).[121] Though an unpublished church in Gaza, with a figural mosaic
floor, may date to 732,[122] the church at Nabha in Lebanon (732/3?) reveals

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[118] But see, for refutations of the theory of Islamic influences and surveys of the literature, Gero
       1973a, 59ff., and Grabar 1977.
[119] Crone 1980; Griffith 1992.
[120] Discussion and bibliography in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 30–6.
[121] Piccirillo and Alliata 1994; Schick 1995, 398–9, 472–3; Balty 1977, 148–50; discussion in
       Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 32–3.
[122] Fowden 2004, 291–2, n. 41.

only floral and geometric ornament, as do all subsequent eighth-century churches in the region.[123] In the second quarter of the century, people and animals were replaced, or partially replaced, by non-representational motifs in a number of churches.[124] If this is indeed 'iconoclasm', it seems to be a phenomenon of the second quarter of the eighth century, and is thus fully coincident with Byzantine state iconoclasm. It is not unlikely that some of the ideas which informed this shift in representational focus filtered into the ecclesiastical and lay consciousness of Byzantium, even if it seems qualitatively different when compared with what we know of mainstream iconoclast ideas and their rationale. But, as in Byzantium, Palestinian 'iconoclasm' was not consistently applied; and, in Palestine, it seems to have been a localised response rather than the realisation of some anti-image edict by the ruling caliph.

Let us examine the monuments built and decorated by Christians under the jurisdiction of the Umayyads in Damascus, in somewhat more detail. During the period of Leo III's rule in the Byzantine empire, five churches, several of them elaborately decorated, attest to an active construction trade and to the skilled artisanal workforce employed by the Christian communities of the region. These monuments have two features of particular importance here. Firstly, the mosaic pavements are dated by inscriptions; and secondly, the figural decoration of many of them has been deliberately and carefully defaced.[125]

The inscription at what appears to have been a monastic complex at al-Quwaysmah, about 3 km south of Amman (ancient Philadelphia), records the installation of the mosaic floor and the restoration of the church, perhaps in response to the earthquake of 717/18 recorded by Theophanes.[126] Whether or not the building sustained earthquake damage, however, the refurbishment entailed an enlargement of the building, which attests to the relative wealth of the Christian communities in Palestine at a time when those within the empire were, on the whole, less economically prosperous.

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[123] There is some debate about the date of the Nabha mosaic: Rey-Coquais's original reading of the dates as 732/3 and 746 was accepted by Gatier 1992, 148, 152, but re-read as 632/3 and 646 by Donceel-Voûte 1988b, 395–406, esp. 397 nn. 6–8. Further, as Fowden 2004, 292–3 has pointed out, the Nabha pavement in question is in the bema, where figural decoration rarely appeared. For a survey of the later eighth-century churches, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 34–5.

[124] See Ognibene 1998.

[125] For overviews of the monuments, see Piccirillo 1984; Gatier 1992; Piccirillo 1992; Schick 1995; Schick 1998, esp. 86–8.

[126] Schick and Suleiman 1991; Piccirillo 1992, 35f, 46, 258, 266–7; Schick 1995, 433–4; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 31–2.
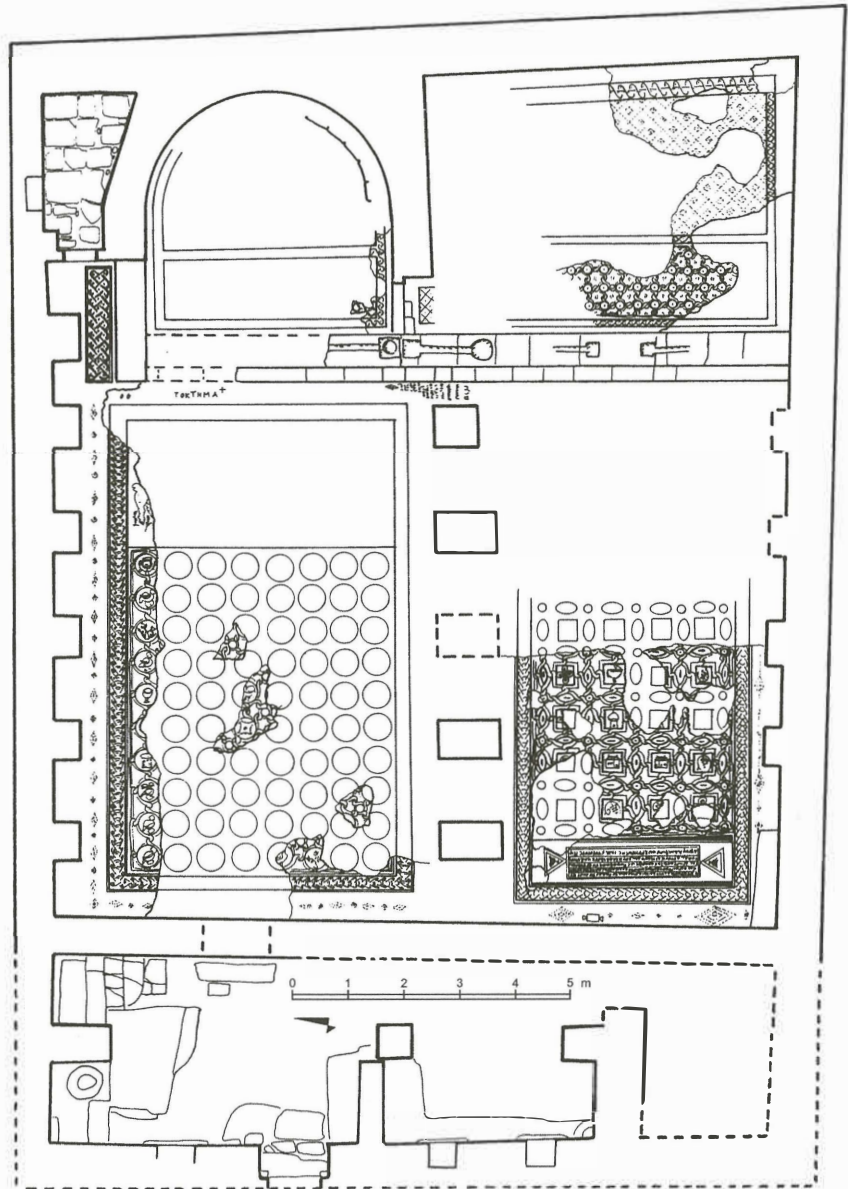
Fig. 2. al-Quwaysmah, lower church: floor mosaic

The church is an apsed hall, with a large southern aisle, a room to its east, and three smaller rooms to the west (Figure 2). The main spaces were all given new mosaic floors. Most of the nave floor was decorated with connected medallions filled with birds, floral motifs, baskets and chalices; the area directly in front of the eastern apse, which was unfortunately badly

damaged prior to the church's excavation, contained a large panel depicting animals and plants. The south aisle mosaic consists of a pattern of connected oblongs and squares – enclosing geometric motifs interspersed with images of grapes, containers, and four buildings – geometric motifs, and includes the inscription, in Greek, that dates the church. An Aramaic inscription, along the eastern edge of the floor between the two rooms, asks Christ to bless the site. The room to the east of the south aisle was set with geometric ornament, displayed in two panels.

The church remained in use until probably the ninth century, but at some point the nave mosaic was 'edited', with the cubes forming the heads and legs of the birds carefully picked out and replaced with tesserae of approximately the same size and colour as the whitish background. These alterations were not intended to damage or deface the church; instead, they were designed to reconfigure the content of the floor with as little disruption to its quality as possible. We should not imagine, however, that Byzantine iconoclast policy was directly responsible, for, as noted already, Palestine was under the jurisdiction of Damascus, not of Constantinople.[127]

The mosaic floor of St Stephen's basilica at Kastron Mefaa (modern Umm al-Rasas), about 30 km southeast of Madaba, is dated by an inscription at the east end of the nave to 718.[128] The donors of the mosaics were originally portrayed on either side of the inscription, at the east end of the two aisles. It is still evident where the donors were pictured, but the greater part of each figure has been reconstructed by removing the tesserae and replacing them at random (Figure 3). This scrambled cube technique was also later applied to the animate motifs in the mosaics of the main body of the nave, which shows a vine scroll that was once filled with figures and animals. Around this is wrapped a river scene, also disfigured, but with intact representations of ten cities of the Nile delta. The architectural theme continues between the nave and the side aisles, where fifteen cities along the Jordan are represented, eight from the west bank to the north, and seven (including a double-size image of Kastron Mefaa) from the east bank to the south. In the side aisles, geometric patterns are filled with vegetal motifs, jars, baskets, and a few partridges that escaped later damage.

In Ma'in, about 5 km south-west of Madaba, an inscription from the east end of the nave of the church on the Akropolis dates its floor mosaics

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[127] See further 113ff., 233–4 below.
[128] Piccirillo 1992, 218–31, 238–9; Piccirillo and Alliata 1994, 134–240; Schick 1995, 472–3; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 31–2.
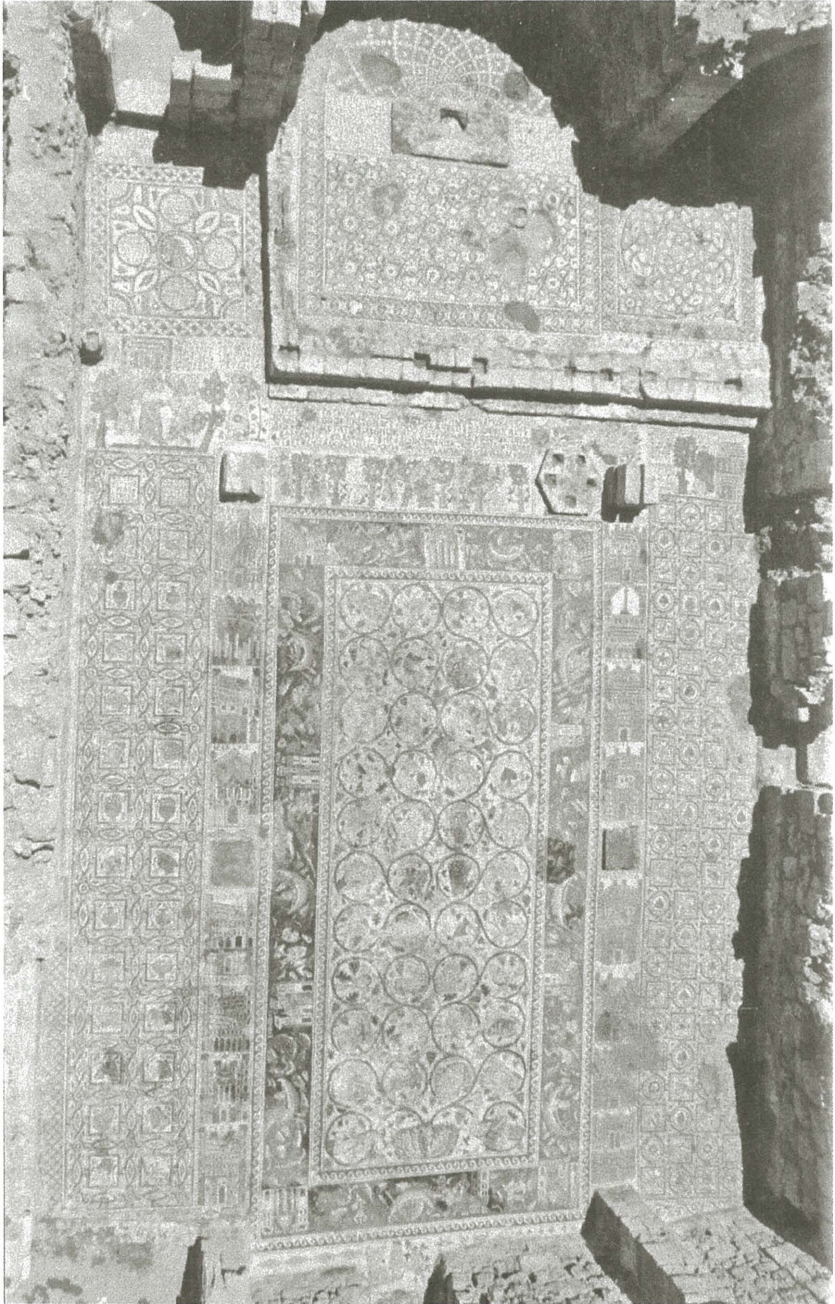
Fig. 3. Umm al-Rasas, St. Stephen's church: floor mosaic

Fig. 4. Ma'in, church of the Akropolis: floor mosaic

to 719/20.[129] The remaining fragments, now in the mosaic museum in Madaba, show a central carpet of interlace that was once filled with animals and perhaps figures, later replaced by flowers, baskets of fruit, and other non-animate motifs.[130] The hunters and animals of the enframing acanthus scroll have been replaced by plants, though segments of animals and hunting weapons remain. As at St Stephen's, the outer frame contained images of cities identified in Greek, eleven of which survive, separated by fruit trees (Figure 4). All except for Ma'in itself represent cities along the banks of the Jordan river that were episcopal sees. Already in the sixth century, as

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[129] de Vaux 1938 believed that the inscription was a later insertion, a thesis countered by Piccirillo 1992, with whom Schick 1995, 399, appears to agree.

[130] de Vaux 1938; Piccirillo 1992, 35–6, 46, 196–201; Piccirillo 1989, 228–34; Schick 1995, 398–9; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 33.

Fig. 5. Ma'in, church of the Akropolis, north chapel: floor mosaic (now in Madaba Mosaic Museum)

exemplified by the famous Madaba mosaic map,[131] patrons from the region around Madaba reveal a taste for representations of cities, and the floors at Kastron Mefaa and Ma'in provide the latest preserved examples.[132] An adjacent room to the north also contained mosaics, which once illustrated Isaiah 65:24, 'And the lion shall eat chaff like the ox'. Most of the ox was later replaced by a tree and an urn (Figure 5); the lion has not survived.

The mosaic pavement at the church of St George at Deir al-'Adas, in southern Syria, retains a dedicatory inscription that gives a date of 722.[133] The floor shows hunting and vineyard scenes, peacocks flanking a vase, and a man leading a caravan of camels, without later disfigurement. This may suggest that later Christian iconoclasm in the Umayyad territories was localised to Palestine, and perhaps especially to the area around Madaba.[134]

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[131] Conveniently reproduced in Piccirillo 1992, fold-out plate between 80 and 81, figs. 62–77. Detailed dicussion and full bibliography in Donner 1992; Piccirillo and Alliata 1999; see also Donceel-Voûte 1988a; Brubaker 2002.

[132] On cityscapes in general see Cantino Wataghin 1969; Deckers 1988; Bertelli 1999; on the Madaba region examples, see Duval, 1994; Canuti 1995; Duval 1999; Brubaker 2002.

[133] Balty 1977, 148–50; Donceel-Voûte 1988b, 45–53; Gatier 1992, 148.

[134] So too Schick 1995, 121, 126, 205–6, 217.

Fig. 6. Cairo, al-Moallaqa, lintel: Entry into Jerusalem and Ascension

Donceel-Voûte has ascribed the undated second phase of the cathedral at Bostra, when the large and centralised church dated 512/13 was reduced to a small basilica terminating in the old sixth-century apse, to the period just following this, but before the end of Umayyad rule in 750.[135]

In addition to the *ex voto* imagery from Jême with which this chapter began, the most striking Christian imagery from Egypt produced during Leo's reign is probably the al-Moallaqa lintel from old Cairo, inscribed and dated to 734/5 (Figure 6).[136] The lintel is carved with two scenes, the Entry in to Jerusalem and the Ascension, a pairing familiar from the Coptic liturgy that, MacCoull has argued, emphasises the divinity of Christ incarnate and should be understood as an 'expression of hope for the future triumph of a church that was beginning to live under persecution'.[137]

The works preserved outside of the empire proper demonstrate that suggestions that Muslim military victories were responsible for Leo's Christian iconoclasm – arguments that, in essence, posit that the emperor believed that God's punishment of the Byzantines for the sin of idolatry defined by the second commandment was their humiliation on the battlefield by the resolutely anti-idol Muslims, and that he atoned for this sin by banishing holy portraits – find no support in the areas most directly affected by Islam. In Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon we have only floor mosaics preserved, and

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[135] Donceel-Voûte 1988b, 34–8.
[136] MacCoull 1986 dates the lintel and cites the previous literature.   [137] *Ibid.*, 234.

these, though full of people, birds, and animals, rarely present images of holy figures, especially after the Council in Trullo.[138] But in Egypt, the wall paintings at Jême and the al-Moallaqa lintel demonstrate conclusively that religious narrative continued in Christian communities under Islamic rule. This does not, of course, necessarily preclude the impact of Islam on Byzantine iconoclasm: people facing the day-to-day consequences of Umayyad rule were in a different situation from the emperor in Constantinople. But capitulating to the opposition's dogma in order to defeat them is rarely seen as a positive option by any group, and Leo's basic ambivalence to the iconoclast tendencies among his Christian subjects suggests that, whatever the motivation for iconoclasm was, when Constantine V finally imposed it officially, it is unlikely to have had tacit agreement with Islamic doctrine at its core.

Further, however coincident the two 'iconoclasms', the Palestinian phenomenon was not the same as that within the Byzantine empire. Byzantine iconoclasm targeted holy portraits while Palestinian iconoclasm was directed at representations of any living creature; and it had more in common with Islamic prohibitions than with the Christian ones from Constantinople.[139] Nor was Byzantine iconoclasm accepted by the Christian church hierarchy in the east, at least after 754: it was condemned in 760, 764, and 767 by eastern synods and patriarchs,[140] and two of the strongest voices against the Byzantine position were raised by the eastern monks John of Damascus and Theodore Abu Qurra. Iconoclasm in Palestine was neither inspired by Byzantine iconoclasm nor, it seems, spurred by any official Islamic policy – which does not exclude the possibility of its being influenced by the practices and ideas of neighbouring religious communities. But even if the caliph Yazid II actually sponsored the iconoclast edict of 721 that is attributed to him by later Christian writers (notably the 787 council at Nicaea), many churches that were assuredly still in use at the time were not affected and there is anyway little evidence for hostile destruction.[141] As Robert Schick has noted, the disfigurement is so carefully done that it

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[138] The Council in Trullo forbade images of the cross on the floor 'in order that the trophy of our victory may not be insulted by the trampling feet of those who walk upon it' (Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 155), and we may assume that fear of insulting holy people had similar consequences.

[139] For discussion of this issue, see Schick 1995, 180–219; Parry 1996, 119–24; Ognibene 1998; Schick 1998, 87–8; Parry 2003; Fowden 2004.

[140] Discussion in Schick 1995, 210–11.

[141] Full discussion of Yazid's edict, with earlier bibliography, in Schick 1995, 215–17; list of churches in use during the Umayyad period that were not altered in *ibid.*, 184–5.

seems most likely to have been done by people who used and respected the buildings affected: the Christian population of Palestine.[142]

As the churches in Palestine demonstrate, Byzantine iconoclasm and Christian 'iconoclasm' as practised in Islamic lands were two different phenomena. Byzantine iconoclasm, with its isolation of the holy portrait, was ideologically distinct from the Islamic prohibition of images of all living creatures. Whatever the connection between the two that later iconophile authors forced (in order to brand the icon-haters as Saracen-lovers), there is no contemporary evidence for Islamic influence on Byzantine iconoclasm.[143] Both in practice and in theory, the response to images was sufficiently distinct that arguments for direct influence would be hard to justify.

Jewish influence is supposed to have been instrumental in the policies of both Leo III and Yazid II, but this view has again been shown to have little or no historical basis.[144] Indeed, in both cases it was contemporary or near-contemporary opponents of iconoclasm who made these connections, sometimes deliberately fabricated, on other occasions based on false reports and rumours,[145] or on false assumptions about how iconoclasm evolved in

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[142] Schick 1995, 180–219; and see also Piccirillo 1996; Ognibene 1998; Ognibene 2002.

[143] The correspondence between the caliph 'Umar and Leo III, in which each defends the main tenets of his own faith and criticises those of the other, probably represents a concoction of the later eighth century, based partly on a knowledge of iconoclast arguments (although arguments for some elements being earlier as well as suggestions that the whole correspondence is of much later date have been made): see Gero 1973a, 44–7, 138ff., 162–71 (eleventh- or twelfth-century interpolations into the text of the late eighth-century Armenian historian Ghevond); and Sourdel 1966, 2ff.; and esp. Gaudeul 1984, 127ff. (late eighth-century creation in Arabic by a Muslim writer in Hims, answered by a Christian). The relatively neutral and distanced position taken by the 'Leo' character led Meyendorff 1969, 127, to argue that the text must represent arguments made before the (assumed) iconoclastic decree of 726. See Jefferey 1944, 322: 'As for images, we do not give them a like respect' (i.e. as for the cross) 'not having received in holy scripture any commandment whatsoever in regard to this. Nevertheless, finding in the Old Testament that divine command which authorised Moses to have executed in the tabernacle the figures of the cherubim . . . we have always felt a desire to conserve their images. . . . But as for the wood and the colours we do not give them any reverence'. This is an argument which would have been acceptable to Germanos as well as to an iconoclast in the period before 746–54, and may reflect an iconoclast text available in Syria in the 740s (such as were clearly available to John of Damascus, for example). Recent surveys of Byzantine–Islamic diplomatic exchanges have, nevertheless, continued to see the letters as part of a real exchange of views, for which there seems to us very little plausible evidence. See Hoyland 1997, 490–501 (with reservations); Kaplony 1996, 207–37; Beihammer 2000, no. 322; Rochow 2001, 309–10.

[144] Crone 1980 with older literature and discussion; Speck 1990a.

[145] The chronographer Theophanes or his sources seem to have jumped to the conclusion, based purely on their hostility to Leo III, his background and the stories by then circulating about him, and their need to locate a non-Byzantine or non-Christian source of the original evil,

the first place,[146] so that modern commentators have taken some time to work their way through the accumulated mythology of the origins of Jewish or Islamic influence.[147] And while the later iconophile tradition places enormous emphasis on the 'Jewish-minded' aspects of the iconoclast emperors' beliefs as well as those of their followers and supporters, this was a relatively easy way of demonising them – since a substantial Jewish critique of Christian imagery (including the cross) existed, and a substantial anti-Jewish polemical literature existed from which appropriate arguments could be drawn.[148]

What is abundantly clear from the letters of Germanos is that the debate about religious images was viewed as a purely internal, theological issue: there is no reason to doubt that, had Germanos been able to cite pagan, Jewish or heretical influences at work, he would most certainly have done so, for this would have been a much simpler way of discrediting the arguments of his opponents. The first firmly attested textual reference to a Jewish-Islamic influence on Leo III – through the legendary figure 'forty cubits' – occurs in an interpolation into the Acts of 787, when the priest John recounts the 'story' of the Jewish soothsayer, the caliph Yazid, and the emperor Leo.[149]

In a similar vein, it has been suggested that the ideas presented by the iconoclasts to justify their position owed something to monophysitism.[150] Again, although the iconophiles themselves made this connection in their later attempts to discredit the iconoclast arguments, neither monophysitism nor the influence of Antiochene theology can be shown to have played

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that he must have been influenced by Islam, and referred to him as 'Saracen-minded' (*sarakenophron*).

[146] See, for example, Griffith 1985, who discusses Theodore's commentary on Islamic hostility to Christian images before iconoclasm.

[147] Some of the most useful recent work in this respect has been that of Gero 1973a, 62ff., 79ff. Speck 1990a, 35ff., has argued that the legend of Jewish and Islamic influence is a later eighth-century invention based on the piecing together of a number of discreet traditions; and that it was from Byzantine sources that Islamic historiographers then incorporated into their own accounts of Yazid's actions an iconoclastic element (73ff.). Although remaining largely hypothetical, this explanation has the advantage of suggesting why there are no contemporary references in any source – Byzantine or Arab – to an edict of the caliph.

[148] Summed up neatly in Auzépy 2004, 146–51; although her suggestion (2004, 151–2) that Leo's policy may have been designed at least in part to attract the loyalty of the Jewish populations of the empire, especially in the threatened cities and fortresses of Asia Minor, while possible, has no substantive support in the evidence.

[149] Mansi xiii, 197 A4–200 B5. The whole issue of the generation of this legend, and the various forms it took, has now been carefully analysed by Speck 1990a, upon which these remarks depend.

[150] See in particular Ostrogorsky 1929, followed to some extent and on occasion by others, including Lemerle 1971, 34; Gero 1973a, 26.

any obvious role in the growth and evolution of an iconoclast theology of images.[151] This is not to say that all of these 'influences' were unimportant: in different ways, and at a later date, they became crucial to both the iconoclast and iconophile perceptions of their arguments and the purposes for which they were developed, points to which we shall return on several occasions in what follows.

The opening stages and the supposed edict against images

The beginnings of an explicit imperial policy with regard to icons has been generally dated to the year 726. The evidence is sparse, but clearly something was believed to have happened at around this time.[152] The later eighth- or ninth-century sources date the opening phase of iconoclasm by a variety of events: the earthquake and accompanying volcanic eruptions on the islands of Thera and Therasia in the Aegean (Nikephoros),[153] the ninth indiction and the year 6218 (Theophanes) (= 725/6),[154] or the tenth year of Leo's reign (the *Life* of Stephen the Younger) (= 726/7).[155] The semi-legendary account known as the *Opusculum adversus iconoclastas*, which includes a version of the beginnings of iconoclasm, originally composed in about 770, implies that 45 years have passed since iconoclasm began, and that this occurred in the ninth indiction, which gives the year 725/6.[156] The ninth-century *Oratio Adversus Caballinum* retains this date.[157]

The reasons given for the imperial adoption of iconoclasm vary according to the source, but it is clear that the idea of Islamic and Jewish influence that appears from the time of the Acts of 787 represent legendary accretions and interpolations of the later eighth century, rather than earlier traditions. Where the latter can be detected with any degree of certainty, Constantine

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[151] See Brock 1977; and 135–9 below.   [152] Stein 1980, 141–8.   [153] Nikeph., 128f.

[154] Theoph., 404.18ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 405). Stein 1980, 146f., shows that Theophanes' chronology is incorrect, as a result of his conflating these developments with the conflict between papacy and empire over fiscal policy referred to above.

[155] *V. Stephani iun.*, 98. 23.

[156] For the argument in detail, Stein 1980, 141–3. The text is in *PG* 96. 1347–62 attributed to John of Damascus; it is also found attributed to John of Jerusalem. The text recurs also in an iconophile *florilegion*. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 265, for literature. Speck 1990a, 579–635, suggests that the earliest sections are the opening and closing chapters (1–3 and 16); Chapters 4–13 seem to be drawn from a pre-iconoclast confession of faith; while the rest of Chapter 13 with Chapters 14–15 dealing with the prayers to be offered before particular holy images are clearly a much later addition.

[157] *PG* 95. 309–44, at 336 C–337 A. On this text, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 250–1; Speck 1990a, 321–440, with 139–90.

of Nakoleia and his false understanding of scripture are generally blamed: thus the account in the *Narratio de synodis et haeresibus*, which appears to preserve such an earlier tradition, makes the bishop of Nakoleia alone responsible, because he and his followers interpreted scripture by the letter and not according to the spirit in which it was intended to be read. The text notes also – in what may well reflect an early tradition – that he had considerable support among the clergy.[158] Similarly, at the Council of 787 the patriarch Tarasios lays the blame at the door of the bishop of Nakoleia.[159]

Later elaborations on the original story all seem to add Jewish or Islamic influences to an original stratum, so that the account of the priest John, *sygkellos* of the patriarch Theodore of Antioch, at the Council of 787 explains how Constantine of Nakoleia heard of Islamic prohibitions on representation and, with others who shared his beliefs, imitated them.[160] The *Oratio Adversus Iconoclastas* notes that it was discussions among the clergy that began in 725/6.[161] In his third *Antirrhetikos* the patriarch Nikephoros associates the emperor together with the bishop of Nakoleia although, as we have seen, there is no suggestion in Germanos' letters that the two had ever met.[162] And it has been plausibly suggested that blame was apportioned according to the exigencies of the moment at which the texts in question were produced. Thus it is not surprising that Leo III is not condemned explicitly in the Acts of 787: his great grandson Constantine VI was presiding at the council, and it would not have been politic to attack a member of the ruling emperor's dynasty so overtly.[163] But in his *Brief History*, Nikephoros is quite clear that it was the emperor Leo who, interpreting the volcano at Thera and Therasia in 726 as a sign of God's anger, began to consider the question of holy images and the issue of idolatry. Thence he turned to impiety and the destruction of holy images, for he thought they were responsible for the sign of divine wrath, due both to their production and the *proskynesis* observed before them.[164] Theophanes repeats the same story, but includes the account of the taking down of the Chalke icon and the consequent massacre of the innocents who attempted to prevent it; the destruction of the *paideuteria* or places of learning; and the resultant revolt

[158] *PG* 98. 77 A. For the complex history of the text, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 247–8. While the main body of this tract appears to have been compiled before the Quinisext Council of 692, chapters 40–2, dealing with iconoclasm, are a later addition, probably made after 787 (although the iconoclast Council of 754 is not referred to: *PG* 98. 77 A1–81 A4). The text in its extant form certainly dates to the later eighth century.

[159] Mansi xiii, 105 B, 108 A; on Tarasios: *PmbZ*, no. 7235/*PBE* I, Tarasios 1.

[160] Mansi xiii, 197A–200B.   [161] *PG* 96. 1362 A3ff.   [162] *PG* 100. 529 C, 532 A.

[163] Stein 1980, 166.   [164] Nikeph., 128.

of the Helladic army.[165] Nikephoros goes on to note that Leo then began to attempt to persuade others that his views were correct, and that the Helladic rebellion followed.[166]

An imperial edict?

The beginnings of iconoclasm are usually associated with an issue of an edict by Leo III, ordering the removal of icons throughout the empire. But there is no evidence that such a general edict was ever actually issued. Only in the *Liber Pontificalis*, in the section treating the *Life* of Gregory II, is there a reference to the despatch by Leo III of imperial commands (*iussiones* – *prostagmata*) regarding icons. As has been noted above, however, there is no reason to assume that these were anything other than specifically addressed to the pope, and not empire-wide. At the most, we may say that these *iussiones* reflect the emperor's demand that the pope subscribe to imperial policy, in the same way that Germanos had been asked to do.[167] Gregory III's letter to Antoninus of Grado, dated to shortly before September 731, mentions a newly arisen Godlessness in Constantinople and various provinces, of which Antoninus has probably heard, whereby all images of the saints and of the Lord and Saviour have been banished. But as we have seen, this whole passage is suspect.[168] Even if we accept this problematic testimony, it is nevertheless apparent that the policy in question is quite new, and that no general imperial edict can have been issued making it official across the empire, especially since – given the reaction to the news of the impiety once it had been received – the Roman church would then

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[165] Theoph., 405 (Mango and Scott 1997, 559–60).

[166] Nikeph., 128f. Only Theoph. and the *V. Steph. iun.* §10 (100.6–101.10) include an account of the destruction of the Chalke icon; Nikephoros makes no reference to this specific act. The three accounts are compared and discussed in detail by Stein 1980, *Bilderstreit*, 152–5; and Auzépy 1990, 451–61.

[167] See *LP* 1, 404.9–17 and the detailed discussion in Stein 1980, 150–1; 201–4 with previous literature (esp. Anastos 1968). Stein 1980, 204ff., shows that the indirect reference to imperial 'measures' and 'laws' (*thespismata*) directed against icons in the first sermon on icons cannot be directly connected with a supposed edict of 730, as argued by the editor of the text, Kotter 1975 III, 7; and sermon i, §1.29–34; §66. 1–25. See also Speck 1981, 182f. Stein assumes also that the first two sermons, in which reference to the emperor Leo is made, must therefore also date to his reign, a point which is, as we will see below, open to question. But either way, John's language in respect of references to imperial 'laws' (in the context of a general argument, that secular rulers cannot make legislation binding on the church) is both too general and too allusive to provide firm evidence of any imperial edicts.

[168] *MGH Epp.* III (*Epp. Langobardicae* 13) 703.13–16; on Gregory III: *PmbZ*, no. 2523/*PBE* I, Gregorios 7.

have taken some five years (from 726) to respond. The most we should say is that some discussion about images does indeed appear to have been going on, and that rumours of this had reached Rome; the imperial *iussiones* reported by the *Liber Pontificalis* may also have referred to imperial policy, and may indeed have incorporated a demand that the pope subscribe in writing to the new imperial policy. It would be only natural for the emperor in Constantinople to wish the pope to follow the imperial position. But again, *iussiones* are specific orders to a specific person in a specific place, not a general edict.[169]

Just as important in this respect is the testimony of the first two sermons on icons of John of Damascus. Whatever the date ascribed to the sermons,[170] it seems that they cannot have been composed as early as 730 or immediately thereafter; and it has been proposed that they were in fact written during the reign of Constantine V, shortly before the Council of 754, and in response to the danger of a formal imperial promulgation and a synodal decision in respect of icons.[171] In both the first and second sermon imperial action remains a future threat rather than a past reality, the reference made to an imperial *thespisma* or edict relates to an event that has not yet taken place,[172] and there is no reference to currently existing legislation hostile to image worship. The point of the sermon was to call for solidarity among the clergy, the Christian people, and their leader, in spite of the fact that many had plainly adopted the new attitudes.[173] Indeed, the only example John gives of an imperially supported synodal decision at which previous laws of the

[169] Detailed discussion in Stein 1980, 151–2. It is possible that the first iconophile *florilegia*, or collections of citations and sources supporting the devotion shown to images, were drawn up for this synod – this is certainly the implication of statements in pope Hadrian's letter of 791 to Charlemagne: see the discussion in Alexakis 1993, esp. 46ff.; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 265–6. The question remains under discussion.

[170] John was born *c*. 675, and died in either 749 or *c*. 753/4. For the date of the sermons see the detailed review of the older literature in Stein 1980, 204ff., with n. 47; Thümmel 2005, 46f., 54. The third sermon is suspect and, if not compiled right at the end of John's life, may well be a later compilation: see Stein 1980, 205, n. 47. The sources and evidence for John's life and origins have been examined by Auzépy 1994, 193–204, who also regards as likely a later date for John's death: 194 n. 82.

[171] Stein 1980, 204ff., argues that the sermons were directed against Leo III, but at an unspecified date in the 730s. He shows quite clearly that they make no reference to any imperial edict or formal promulgation on the issue of image veneration. Speck 1981, 179–243, argues that the first and second sermon were composed in the early 750s, partially in response to an 'iconoclast' tract.

[172] Sermon i, 66.8ff., 17 (these issues are to be decided by councils of the church, not by kings). Thümmel 2005, 47, takes this *thespisma* to have been already issued, but the text does not say this. See Speck 1981, 375 and n. 635; esp. Stein 1980, 201–11.

[173] Sermon i, 3.10–19; 68.1f.

church were cast out is that of the 'robber synod' of Ephesos in 449.[174] Had there been such a decision under Leo, John of Damascus would surely not have missed the opportunity to attack it. This is the more significant in view of the fact that the first sermon makes it clear that some action to remove images from the apse-end of churches must already have taken place, and that the debate on icons was already at an advanced stage.[175]

That the emperor at least tolerated the critique mounted against the veneration of icons is clear from this evidence. But the connection between imperial toleration of such views and actions, and the views of the bishops who promoted them remains unclear. It is possible, as has been suggested, that Leo's attitude, which represented an imperial, Constantinopolitan response to the volcanic eruption of 726, was taken up and expounded in a more theological context by Constantine of Nakoleia and others like him.[176] But Germanos' letter makes no critical mention of the emperors in this respect, praising them, rather, as we have seen, for their setting up an image of the cross with prophets and apostles and texts from scripture. The papacy, while condemning the new policy, pursued no formal break with the empire, and certainly refrained from any outright condemnation of the emperor. And there is not the slightest evidence that there was a break with the patriarchate of Jerusalem until the synod of 754, in spite of the literary activities of John of Damascus and the confused report in Theophanes that Leo was anathematised by the eastern clergy.[177]

The conclusions that may be drawn from the reliable evidence examined so far can be summarised as follows:

(i) in the year 726 the emperor Leo III is reported to have interpreted the violent earthquake and volcano on the Aegean islands of Thera and Therasia as a demonstration of divine wrath consequent upon the spread of idolatrous practices in the Roman world. As a result, he

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[174] See *ODB* 1, 707.

[175] See esp. Sermon i, 13.12–15 where he exhorts the addressee either to issue a law condemning him who ordained images (i.e. God) or to accept the images and their implications. In Sermon ii, 16.68ff., previous emperors who had wrongly issued laws on church matters are listed: Valens, Zeno, Anastasios I, Constans II and Philippikos. Had Leo promulgated any formal decree or edict it would surely have found a mention in this context. At Sermon i, 17.15f., and 20.8f. John implies that images at the front of the church, where everyone could see them, were being or had been removed, or were threatened with removal; and at Sermon i, 1.7ff., he notes that the church is in turmoil and divided into conflicting factions. These all suggest a date much later than the years between 726 and the 730s.

[176] See Speck 2000a, 30–1; 2000b, 58.

[177] Theoph., 408.29–31 (Mango and Scott 1997, 564f.); with the discussion of Stein 1980, 211f.; Speck 1981, 225.

began to consider the issue of the public display of images of Christ, the Theotokos and the saints, and the *proskynesis* by which they had by now come to be honoured; and may have begun to speak publicly on the issue.[178] There seems little reason to doubt the authentic basis of these reports, however much they may have been distorted, emended or supplemented to fit in with later iconophile propaganda and perceptions.[179] From the *Horos* of the Council of 754 it is clear that the major sin of which the Romans were held to be guilty, and for which they had been punished, was that of idolatry.[180] It is equally apparent that the interpretation of the eruption as a sign of God's wrath can only have been based upon Leo's understanding of the Old Testament account in which the Chosen People are punished by God for their lapse into idolatry – Leo's clear evocation in the introduction to the *Ekloge* of 741 of the Old Testament as a source and model for his divinely invested imperial authority is justification enough for this assumption.[181]

(ii) at about the same time the patriarch Germanos received reports that the bishop of Nakoleia had been commenting critically on images and *proskynesis*; he received an account of the bishop's arguments, and also an account of the affair asking for guidance from the metropolitan bishop responsible, John of Synnada; the bishop of Nakoleia then came to Constantinople in person to present his side of the story. A discussion ensued in which the bishop accepted both the patriarch's reprimand and theological argument. Germanos wrote to Constantine's metropolitan, John of Synnada, explaining the situation and setting out his own arguments. Germanos stressed that the matter should be handled unobtrusively and that no local synod need be convoked. A copy of this letter was sent also to the bishop of Nakoleia. Upon returning to his own see, however, he refused to hand over this copy of the letter to John (or concede the arguments made by Germanos), so that Germanos wrote a second letter, this time sternly reprimanding Constantine and demanding that he accept church discipline. He was deposed from his position until he was prepared to obey his superiors.

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[178] Speck 2002, 475–8, suggests that Theophanes' report that Leo discussed or spoke on the issue publicly reflects the transfer of some of the story about Constantine V and his public pronouncements on images to Leo III. This is possible but there is no way of confirming it.

[179] According to Theoph., 406.15–31 (Mango and Scott 1997, 560f.), Leo incorrectly ascribed his victory at Nicaea in 727 to his iconoclasm: see Rochow 1991, 120 for literature and discussion.

[180] Mansi xiii, 221C; cf. 353C, where Constantine V is acclaimed as the destroyer of idolatry.

[181] *Ekloge* (ed. Burgmann), *prooimion* 11.21ff., 160–2.

The only reference to the role of the emperors lay in Germanos' remark that they had themselves erected an image of the cross with prophets and saints.

(iii) in 730 Leo probably required leading clergy, in particular the patriarch Germanos and the pope, Gregory II, to subscribe in writing to his new policy (perhaps to remove images from positions in which they might receive the wrong sort of devotion). While the reports in Theophanes and Nikephoros regarding Germanos, and in the *Liber Pontificalis* about the *iussiones* sent to Gregory II, are problematic, there can be little doubt that they reflect a tradition that Leo III did take some action in respect of the way in which images were to be treated, and that this action affected the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

(iv) by 731 pope Gregory III was (probably, but not certainly) preparing to convoke a synod at Rome, in which some discussion about (imperial) policy towards images at Constantinople may have taken place.

(v) some time after his abdication, resulting from a conflict with Leo III (probably over the issue of icons, but only according to later tradition: no contemporary source asserts this), and from a private residence, Germanos wrote a letter to his erstwhile friend Thomas, bishop of Klaudioupolis, accusing him of betraying Germanos and of removing icons in his see. The letter makes it clear that, by the time it was written, this movement had attained considerable proportions throughout the empire, and that Germanos had been unable to offer any effective or successful resistance to it.

So far, we can cite no clear evidence either of an imperial edict against icons, or of the taking down of an icon from the Chalke gate of the palace, later regarded as the opening episode in Leo's 'campaign' against images. Indeed, there appears to be a contradiction between later accounts, which assert Leo's leading role in the removal of images, and the letter of Germanos to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, in which the emperors are called friends of the images. But it is clear that the patriarch Germanos did resign his position in 730. That this was only in connection with the issue of icons, however, is a ninth-century view, adopted unquestioningly by modern scholarship. Let us look at these issues next.

First, the resignation of Germanos. Theophanes reports that the emperor convened a *silention* against the holy and honoured icons on 7 January of the thirteenth year of the indiction (730), which met in the *tribounalion* of the nineteen couches, during which the patriarch Germanos, refusing

to sign a statement of belief condemning icons, gave up the symbols of his position and resigned the patriarchate, saying that 'If I am Jonah, cast me into the sea. For without an ecumenical synod it is impossible for me to introduce an innovation in belief, o emperor!'.[182] Nikephoros reports more briefly that Leo convoked a *silention* consisting of a great number of the people of the city and invited the patriarch Germanos; for he wanted to compel Germanos to compose something against icons. But the latter refused, saying 'I will publish no document on belief without an ecumenical synod'.[183] Both report that, as a result, the patriarch withdrew to his family property at Platanion, and was replaced by his former *sygkellos*, who became the patriarch Anastasios.[184]

What was actually said at this meeting – at which, in theory at least, no discussion would have taken place[185] – will never be known; but it is clear that the account is heavily influenced by later iconophile propaganda, for no orthodox patriarch (or synod) could claim under any circumstances, whether with or without an ecumenical synod, to introduce a *change in belief* as such, which would be heretical. This is perhaps an indirect reference to the iconoclast synod of 754 – which claimed to be the seventh ecumenical synod. But it is most probable that Leo called the *silention* not 'against images' but rather to obtain some settlement of an issue which had caused dissension at the highest levels. That Leo wanted Germanos to summon a synod to discuss the issue of images must remain a hypothesis only – the fact that his replacement, Anastasios, never convoked such a meeting, or at least is not reported ever to have been asked to do so, must make this unlikely. But under such circumstances, the patriarch may have felt that the only alternative open to him – perhaps because there was already substantial support for the sort of view propounded by the bishop of Nakoleia – was to resign. Equally, however, Leo may have wished Germanos to ratify some other aspect of imperial policy affecting the church: the question of papal opposition to imperial fiscal policy, or of the fiscal position of the papal patrimonial lands, for example, may have aroused the patriarch's opposition, and appears to us to be a more likely hypothesis in view of the recent Helladic rebellion and

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[182] Theoph., 408.31–409.9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 565).   [183] Nikeph., 130 (Chapter 62).

[184] For discussion of the date, and previous literature dealing with the event, see Stein 1980, 186ff. For Anastasios' position, see Theoph., 409.12f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 565); Nikeph., 130. Both writers include condemnatory references or stories about him, legends which were inevitable products of iconophile propaganda: see, for example, Theoph., 408.6ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 564). For the location of Platanion, probably in the Blachernai region, see Theoph., trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 556, n. 11.

[185] See Christophilopoulou 1951, 80f.

other events probably related to imperial fiscal impositions.[186] But even if the question of holy images was an issue, the extent of Leo's support for one point of view or the other remains unclear. Whether he had openly supported the 'iconoclast' arguments of Constantine of Nakoleia (assuming he was aware of them) or not, he would certainly have required a solution to any split within the clergy and – like Constantine I at Nicaea in 325 – would have wished to secure a prompt solution. Either way, the most that can be said is that Leo may have taken very limited and highly localised steps in respect of images, and that he may have required senior clergy to subscribe to these steps. If the suggestion made above concerning the date of the letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis is correct (that it was written after Germanos' resignation), the reference to the emperors as in favour of the use of images, citing the cross erected by Leo and Constantine, supports the contention that Germanos resigned for reasons which had more than just Leo's opposition to images as their motive.[187]

The results of Germanos' resignation included, according to the second oration on icons of John of Damascus, the 'exile' of Germanos – in other words, removal from office and internal banishment – and many others who shared his beliefs.[188] But John was writing some years later, and outside the empire, so it is difficult to know how much reliance is to be placed on his testimony. There is little other evidence that this actually was the case.[189] Anastasios was anointed patriarch on 22 January 730 in Germanos' place, and remained so until 753/4. His election appears to have been regular.[190]

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[186] See Stein's detailed discussion of the meeting of 730 and Germanos' abdication, 1980, 190–3. Stein 1999, 13–14, however, prefers the traditional emphasis on the issue of images as the main reason for the abdication.

[187] An alternative argument, as also noted above, is that his resignation may also reflect an attempt on Germanos' part to deprive the iconoclast camp of imperial support which they had taken for granted. But we should also bear in mind Germanos' somewhat problematic position as patriarch – he had, after all, been a vocal supporter of the re-introduction of monotheletism under Philippikos; and he had given up his see at Kyzikos to become bishop of Constantinople, in contravention of canon law. See also Thümmel 2004, 48–9, who also doubts the close causal relationship between Germanos' reported pro-image stance and his abdication or deposition.

[188] *Oratio* ii, §12.27–30.

[189] Stein 1980, 192 n. 86. Speck has argued that John's sermon may refer to a second banishment of Germanos, accompanied by a wave of persecution of those associated with him, which took place after 746 and under Constantine V: see Speck 1981, 179ff., and below.

[190] Theoph., 409.13f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 565). See Rochow 1999a; Stein 1980, 195ff., for Anastasios' succession and a discussion of the legends which later iconophile propaganda generated and the ways in which his character was blackened. For the writer of the *V. Steph. iun.*, for example, this involved moving the report of the destruction of the Chalke icon by Leo from 726 to 730, so that it would occur during Anastasios' tenure, and not while Germanos was still patriarch: see *V. Steph. iun.*, 100. 13f.

If we accept the problematic section of Gregory III's letter to Antoninus of Grado, then he had by the following year heard of a policy of removing icons from churches in Constantinople and the provinces, which had so divided the community.[191] On this argument, we may also assume from Gregory's response that the policy had been publicly implemented, and therefore that it must have had imperial sanction, and patriarchal and episcopal support; although, as we have also seen, the garbled report in the *Life* of Gregory II that Leo had sent orders for him to apply this same policy in Italy (together with the account that, after the removal of the Chalke icon, all the icons in Constantinople were publicly burned) is unlikely to represent an accurate account of what actually took place. The reference to Gregory II's rejection of Anastasios' *synodika* in the same passage is equally problematic. And even if we are prepared to accept as genuine this reference to attitudes to images at Constantinople, then the letter makes it equally apparent that no official action had yet been taken by Rome against the new policy in the East, nor had the latter yet had any noticeable effect in Italy, although the bishop was warned to be on his guard against its influence.[192] The letter suggests some confusion on the part of the pope as to the exact details of the new tendency in the East, though it permits some idea of the contents of Anastasios' *synodika*, at least as these were understood in Rome.[193]

According to the later tradition employed by the papacy in 769, therefore, it was only at the Roman synod of 731 that a general condemnation of the new tendency coupled with the threat of excommunication for those who promoted it was pronounced, the arguments supposedly being

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[191] See *LP* I, 410.10, and above.　　[192] *MGH Epp.* III (*Epp. Langobardicae* 13) 703.21ff.

[193] See Stein's useful discussion, 1980, 199ff. In his letter to the bishop of Grado, Gregory notes, among other things, that 'the churches of God themselves – a fatal evil and unbearable corruption – are being transformed into dwellings for men and beasts, so that no praise to God can be sung in them' (*MGH Epp.* iii, Abt. x, no. 13, 703.16–19). This appears to be a misunderstanding of an iconoclast argument which equated icons with idols and that went on to affirm that, as a result of the presence of idols in churches, in the form of depictions of both humans (the saints and martyrs) and animal forms (on images and in other representational scenes), churches would be deconsecrated and turned into dwelling places for men and beasts (see the letter of Germanos to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, Mansi xiii, esp. 116 D5–11; 117 B3–10). The only way to reconsecrate them was hence to remove such distractions (120 E7–121A4), and permit worshippers to properly concentrate on the liturgy and divine eucharist. It is possible that these ideas, contained in Anastasios' *synodika*, were taken and, in a somewhat crude manner, turned against the iconoclasts themselves by the pope. Yet it should also be noted that such ideas would be more consistent with what was thought to be going on in the empire after the Council of 754, so that the possibility that this document is compromised by later changes or interpolations should be borne in mind.

founded upon a collection of scriptural and patristic texts established by Gregory.[194] But the decision of the synod is preserved only briefly in the dubious section of the *Life* of Gregory III, and partial summaries of the arguments adduced were repeated in Hadrian I's letter to Charlemagne recounting the decisions of the Roman Council of 769. Neither provides plausible evidence, and in neither is there any indication of a condemnation of the patriarch Anastasios or the emperors Leo and Constantine.[195] And the synod which took place in 732 ignores the whole issue.[196] At some point after the synod Gregory is reported to have written two letters regarding the icons to Leo and Constantine, in which he stresses the different spheres of competence of the spiritual and secular powers.[197] Whether these are among the letters written thereafter and mentioned, along with letters from the church of Italy to the emperors, in the *Life* of Gregory III – which were stopped on two occasions by imperial officials under Sergios, *patrikios* and *strategos* in Sicily – remains unclear.[198] In respect of public politics, it is clear that the papacy continued to follow a fairly cautious position and a friendly attitude towards the emperors.[199] That the papacy had a formal position on Constantinopolitan policy with regard to images at this time, in consequence, seems on the basis of this virtually non-existent evidential basis most unlikely.[200]

[194] The Council of 769 in Rome (see Mansi xii, 713–22) claimed that it used the Acts of 731 (although we have no idea of the form and state in which they were transmitted) for the establishment of its own arguments, and these were summarised in Hadrian I's letter to Charlemagne (JE 2482, a. 793: *MGH, Epp.* V, 18. 15ff. and 44. 8ff.). There is no way of verifying this claim. As we have noted above, the arguments they are supposed to have presented represent a much later, post-Constantine V, stage of the debate. See the brief account in Herrin 1987, 348 and n. 15.

[195] *LP* I, 416.5–15. Stein 1980, 217 n. 98, discusses the other surviving fragments of this synod and argues that only the most general condemnation was issued. See Hampe 1896, 102ff. Note that, whereas in Hadrian's letter of 793 there were supposedly some 79 participating bishops present, the *Liber Pontificalis* claims 93, casting further doubt on the value of the report in the *LP*. See also Speck 2002–3, 586–600.

[196] See note 47 above.

[197] They are referred to in Hadrian I's letter to Charlemagne, but cited only very briefly: cf. Hampe 1896, 105ff., and for their attribution to Gregory III, Stein 1980, 220f.

[198] *LP* I, 416.19–417.4.

[199] Pope Zacharias succeeded in December 741, and his *synodica* to Constantinople make no reference to the iconoclast issue (*LP* I, 432); his later negotiations with Constantine V over the cession of certain estates to Rome are equally silent: *LP* I, 433.6ff.

[200] Marazzi 1991 argues that the synod of 731 definitely condemned imperial policy, a move which signalled an increased degree of suspicion and the potential for misunderstanding between the Italian provinces and Constantinople; and that the consequences were both of a practical-logistical nature (questions of the sources of papal income, supplying the city of

The problem of the Chalke icon

It remains to examine the question of the Chalke image of Christ, which Leo
III is reported by later (iconophile) accounts to have taken down. As we have
seen, the only source which connects Leo in any way with a specific image
is the letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, in which Leo and Constantine are
reported to have erected a cross, accompanied by the prophets and apostles,
and including scriptural quotations. But Germanos' letter merely refers to
this as being erected 'in front of the palace': he does not say that it was
on the Chalke gate, the main entrance to the palace, nor that it replaced
another image.[201] Neither is there any clear date for its erection: it might
just as easily have been put up as a result of Leo's defeat of the Islamic forces
which besieged the city in 717/18.[202] The problem of the Chalke image has
attracted a great deal of attention from historians who have dealt with this
period, and we will briefly summarise the conclusions which may be drawn
from their analyses.[203]

There are no contemporary accounts of this event, and it has been shown
that all the later accounts are romantic and propagandistic elaborations,
highly tendentious and therefore very suspect in most respects. Of the later
eighth-century chroniclers, Nikephoros mentions only the fact that Leo
proceeded to the destruction of holy images, and names no specific icon;[204]
and the Acts of the 787 council also fail to mention the Chalke incident.[205]
Given the anti-iconoclast tone of these Acts, and the abuse its members
regularly heaped upon Leo III, it is virtually inconceivable that, had the
churchmen known of the Chalke episode, they would not have exploited
it. But in fact it is only in the early ninth century that the Chalke image
surfaces in our sources. Writing around 810, Theophanes described the

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Rome, etc.) as much as they were ideological. But his argument is vitiated chiefly by an
assumption that conflict was connected with Leo's iconoclast policies, that an iconoclast edict
was issued by the emperor, and that the account in the *Liber Pontificalis* and the reference in
Gregory III's letter to Antoninus of Grado can be accepted at face value.

[201] Stein 1980, 70ff., argues that it was probably at the Chalke and that, in consequence, the icon
of Christ must have been taken down to make way for it. While the first part of this conclusion
may be acceptable, the second remains entirely unwarranted.

[202] A point stressed by Stein 1980, 70–7.

[203] The literature is enormous. The most recent analyses of the sources can be found in: Mango
1959, esp. 110ff.; Speck 1978, 606–19; Auzépy 1990, 451–72. See further Brubaker 1999a;
Haldon and Ward-Perkins 1999; and also Thümmel 1998 for a discussion of the ways in which
the legends surrounding this supposed event evolved.

[204] Nikeph., 128.

[205] Auzépy 1990, 461, lists other texts which one might expect to mention the episode (had it
happened) but that conspicuously fail to do so.

destruction of an image of Christ on the bronze gate of the palace, but his account, which is closely paralleled by the roughly contemporary version in the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, has been shown to be based on anti-iconoclast legends and stories with no evidence of any genuine historical information.[206] Minor differences between the two versions make this clear. For Theophanes, an aristocratic monk, the group who protested against the removal of the image (and were, accordingly, attacked by imperial soldiers) were men 'prominent by birth and culture'; Stephen's protagonists were instead defenceless women. We are not dealing with simple reportage, but with constructions of opposition, designed to make the same point to diverse audiences by casting different groups in the role of innocent victims. Yet another version, in the so-called second letter of Gregory II to the emperor Leo, mentions the taking down of an icon of Christ in the Chalkoprateia district in a passage clearly derived from the same source or sources as those used by Theophanes and the author of Stephen's *Vita*.[207]

Apart from these and the highly derivative later hagiographical and his-toriographical sources,[208] the only other apparently independent testimony to Leo's removal of an icon from the Chalke is that found in the account, in the ninth-century *Scriptor incertus*, of the action of Leo V in 814, who – in purported imitation of Leo the Isaurian – removed the icon of Christ on the gate of the palace called the Chalke.[209] The text refers to an inscription on

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[206] Theoph., 405 (Mango and Scott 1997, 559f.), and Auzépy's analysis of his account, 1990, 456–60; and Stein 1980, 155–6, who shows that the story of the removal of the icon by Leo in both Theophanes and the *Life* of Stephen the Younger was probably originally an independently circulating iconophile tale, incorporated into these as well as other, later, sources; *V. Steph. iun.* 100. 17ff. The oldest version was compiled *c.* 807/9; but the *Life* contains many elements found also in texts which can be dated to after 809, including elements in common with the *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum* taken from a common anti-iconoclast pamphlet of the later eighth century; and interpolated passages on the nature of figural decoration in the Blachernai church of the Virgin: see Speck 1990a, esp. 158, 509ff., 222–34. An original text of *c.* 809 seems to have been edited and interpolated in at least one later stage, probably after 843. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 226–7; and Afinogenov 2003.

[207] Cf. Gouillard 1968, text ll. 218–8 (293–5).

[208] Such as the closely associated derivative *De SS. martyribus Constantinopolitanis*, in: AS Aug. ii, 434–47 (*Acta Gregorii spatharii*) (*BHG* 1195), a late ninth-century confection composed in 869, drawing partly on the *Chronographia* of Theophanes and the *Life* of Stephen the Younger. See esp. Auzépy 1990, 460, 466–72. For the older literature, see Beck 1959, 561; Mango 1959, 113f.; Karayannopoulos and Weiss 1982, 325. In addition, the *Chronicle* of George the Monk, for example, also incorporated the story: ed. de Boor (Leipzig, 1904) ii, 742 (see Mango 1959, 171 and the discussion of Auzépy 1990, 464–6) as did the so-called letter to Theophilos, purportedly from the three eastern patriarchs Christopher of Alexandria, Job of Antioch, Basil of Jerusalem (attributed in the older tradition to John of Damascus, but in fact of much later date). See literature and discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 279–80.

[209] *Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio*, in: Leo Gramm., 335–62 (= *PG* 108. 1009–37); provided with a critical apparatus by Browning, in: *B* 35 (1965), 391–40. New edn with commentary

the icon of Christ which stated that 'that which Leo the despot took down in ancient times Eirene has set up anew in this place'.[210] As it was, precisely, in Eirene's reign that the legend of Leo and the Chalke icon appears to have been invented, the *Scriptor incertus* passage simply tells us that Eirene made use of it, and so, in a different way, did Leo V. All these texts raise a further issue of some urgency, however: is the evidence for the existence of an icon of Christ on the Chalke itself reliable? Did such an icon really exist?

Until recently, it was generally assumed that it did, although no source offers dependable evidence of this – the sources referred to already are, as we have seen, later than the events in question and, for the most part, unreliable.[211] Theophanes refers to a story in which the emperor Maurice has a premonitory dream that the icon of Christ at the Chalke speaks to him;[212] the same story is recounted in a fragment of the sixth-century chronicler John of Antioch, but no icon is mentioned,[213] which led Mango to conclude that the reference to the icon in Theophanes was a product of later eighth-century assumptions about how the Chalke would have looked before Leo III, a conclusion with which we would concur.[214] The account in the *Scriptor incertus* can only be taken to prove that *in the early ninth century* Leo III was assumed (or 'known') to have taken down an icon of Christ from the Chalke (since the text cannot be used to show that the event *actually* occurred).[215] In addition, an epigram of Theodore of Stoudion refutes a set of iconoclast verses originally situated 'on the gate of the Chalke, below the cross', which stated that 'Leo and his son, the new Constantine', inscribed the thrice-holy sign of the cross upon the gates of the palace, because God could

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and translation Fr Iadevaia, *Scriptor incertus* (Messina 1987): here at 64. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 179–80; Brubaker 1999a; and Haldon and Ward-Perkins 1999. See Speck 1974b.

[210] Auzépy 1990, 449, notes that the text can also be read to say: 'that which Leo the despot took down in this place in ancient times Eirene has set up anew'.

[211] The lack of evidence for the icon before the iconoclast period led Mango to suggest that little importance was attached to it before the eighth century: 1959, 112.

[212] Theoph., 285 (Mango and Scott 1997, 410f.); see Mango 1959, 109–10.

[213] *Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta*, in: *FHG* v, 27–38 (here v, 36); also in: *Exc. de Insid.* 58–150 (here 108). See Mango 1959, 110f.

[214] Discussion in Brubaker 1999, 266–7 and Auzépy 1990, 448–9. In contrast, Speck 1978, 608–9, has argued that the fragment of John of Antioch merely represents an incompetent abbreviation of its source, and that an icon of Christ would have been referred to in the latter's source, since without it the point of setting the story before the Chalke gate is lost (thus the icon did exist at the time). See further Speck 1995b, 219f.; 1993c, 183–5.

[215] Auzépy 1990, 449–50. But Speck 1978, 610ff., argues that this reported inscription is itself a later ninth-century invention, based on contemporary inscriptions (such as the apse mosaic in the Hagia Sophia), invented in order to fill the gap in the writer's knowledge, and to fit in with contemporary assumptions of the real nature of the icon put up by Eirene to replace the iconoclast cross on the Chalke.

not bear that Christ be depicted without voice and deprived of sound. It is now agreed that the emperors in question are Leo V and his son Symbatios (renamed Constantine at his coronation in 815), and that the most that can be deduced securely from the verse is that they erected a cross on the Chalke; although the iconoclast iambics which were set up by Leo V show that he did remove Eirene's icon of Christ.[216]

On the basis of this evidence, it has been concluded that there is absolutely no reliable evidence for any icon of Christ on the Chalke gate before the time of Eirene, who erected one for political-religious propaganda reasons and claimed to be restoring the situation before the iconoclast emperors.[217] The image put up by Eirene in the last years of the eighth century, however, replaced an earlier, iconoclast image of the cross; its erection was commemorated in another, earlier set of epigrams, also attributed to Theodore of Stoudion, and dated *c.* 797–802. These epigrams note that the image of Christ is 'once again' to be seen. It has been argued that this reference is firm evidence for the image erected by Eirene having been visible at an earlier time, hence before its removal and replacement by an iconoclast cross. But the epigrams themselves may just as well reflect a popularly held belief that such an icon had existed and had been removed by Leo III.[218] It must be said, too, that Theodore's verse was not written as an archaeological report on the vicissitudes of the Chalke gate: while images of Christ were indeed 'once again' seen during the reign of Eirene, whether or not the Chalke Christ itself appeared or re-appeared was not Theodore's main point.

[216] See Mango 1959, 123f., and Auzépy 1990, 450. For the iconoclast iambics, see esp. Speck 1974b; 1978, 606f; 1974a, 74; and 1964a.

[217] See esp. Auzépy 1990, 454ff., who points out that it is most unlikely that there were any survivors from the period before 726, in Constantinople in the 790s, who would have remembered whether there had ever been a Christ icon on the Chalke before 726. Speck 1978, 608–9, argues for an icon before the time of Leo III on the basis of (a) the genuineness of the story of the dream of Maurice; and (b) the existence of the Trier ivory which, he argues, illustrates an imperial palace gate – the Chalke – with an image of Christ in one of the lunettes. See below. In addition, the eighth-century *Parastaseis syntomoi Chronikai* contains many references to the decorative statuary and the cross on the Chalke, but only one reference to an icon of Christ. As Auzépy 1990, 446, notes, this reference has actually been added by the modern editor of the *Patria* to fill a lacuna; and while it is a possibility that this was also the original form of the missing text, there is no evidence that this was so, so that this reference cannot be used to show that the Chalke in the eighth century bore anything other than ancient statuary and a cross for decoration. For discussion and further literature, see Brubaker 1999; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 301.

[218] Speck 1995b, 212 and n. 12. Speck interprets the words 'Christ is seen again' to mean that an original image has been restored to its former position, partly on the grounds that the iconoclasts did not destroy, but merely removed, images (see the sources quoted in Speck 1987b, 287 n. 2. Cf. also Speck 1964a, where the three sets of epigrams preserved in the *refutatio et eversio* of Theodore of Stoudion are discussed).

Fig. 7. Trier, cathedral treasury, ivory panel: translation of a relic

The written evidence does not, then, provide compelling evidence for Leo's removal of an image of Christ from the Chalke gate. The visual evidence is equally problematic. It consists of an ivory panel in Trier (Figure 7) that shows an emperor and an empress in an architectural setting, with a colonnade in the background and a four-sided portico on the left with an image of Christ clearly identifiable by his cruciform nimbus in the lunette above one side.[219] It is generally accepted that this portico is meant to represent the Chalke gate,[220] and it is in fact the sign that the action depicted took place within the precinct of the imperial palace.

It has been demonstrated that the subject matter of the ivory is the translation of a relic of St Stephen into Constantinople in 421 (the relic, in a small gabled casket, is held by the two clerics in the cart). But the identification of the scenes as a translation of relics in 421 does not mean that the ivory itself must date from the early fifth century, and it has also

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[219] Volbach 1976, no. 143, 95–6, pl. 76. The literature on the panel is vast. Mango 1959, 104–5 provides a summary of earlier views on the meaning of the panel, as do Holum and Vikan 1979, 115–33. The style of the panel is best summarised by Wessel 1953/4, 12–15 and Spain 1977, 286–94; the best reproductions appear in Schnitzler 1957, pls 1–5. Recent discussions include Weber 1979, 135–79; Wortley 1980, 381–94; Wilson 1984, 602–14; Speck 1987c, 253–83, esp. 275–8; and Brubaker 1999, 270–7. For an excellent technical description, see Delbrück 1927–9, 261–70, esp. 261–4.

[220] E.g. Holum and Vikan 1979, 125 and n. 62; Weber 1979, 136 n. 3.

been pointed out that the date of the event depicted has bearing on the date of the carving only as a *terminus post quem*.[221] Indeed, it has been suggested that the story of the 421 translation was invented after the fact: ignored by all fifth-century commentators (including Sozomen, a staunch promoter of Pulcheria, the empress shown receiving the relic), the account first appears in Theophanes' *Chronographia*, which, as we have already seen, is also one of the two earliest sources for the story of Leo and the Chalke gate.[222] If we agree with the identification of the subject matter as the 421 translation, the Trier ivory must post-date that event; if we prefer the alternative, then the ivory must post-date the story's fabrication in the first decade of the ninth century. But whenever the account itself originated, a portrait of Christ adorned the Chalke gate when the Trier ivory was carved, and the date of the panel is therefore of some relevance to a discussion of the origin of the portrait on the Chalke.

As all scholars who have dealt with the Trier ivory since the late nineteenth century freely admit, there are no close stylistic or technical parallels for the carving.[223] In fact, no other ivory known was carved by the hand responsible for the Trier *adventus*: if one had survived, it would have been brought into discussion generations ago. The salient characteristics of the panel are unusual – the depth of relief (the ivory is cut to 2 cm of the 2.3 cm depth of the panel) is striking, as are the squat figures with over-large heads and hands, the roughly carved detail, and the puffy facial features – but they are not unique. These same elements recur on the Palazzo Venezia casket (Figure 8);[224] some also appear on the so-called Leo sceptre now in Berlin.[225]

These two ivories are identical in style neither to Trier nor to each other: no one would claim that the three were carved by the same artisan.[226] But, like Trier, the Palazzo Venezia casket is deeply cut, with figures in high relief: each panel is between 7 and 8 mm thick, cut to the depth of 6 mm.[227]

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[221] Holum and Vikan 1979, 132–3.

[222] Wortley 1980. An enkomion of Stephen attributed to Proklos (patriarch from 434 or 437 until 446/7) may, however, indicate that the 421 translation of relics was historical (Holum 1982, 104 n. 115). If read literally, the enkomion suggests that Stephen's relics were placed in a chapel in the palace (as shown on the ivory and described by Theophanes); read figuratively, it simply associates Pulcheria with those relics, and could respond to the well-attested translation of Stephen's relics to the church of St Lawrence (also commissioned by Pulcheria, but on her own lands in the city rather than within the palace precinct) in 439, when Proklos was actually patriarch.

[223] See, e.g., Spain 1977, 286.

[224] See Cutler and Oikonomidès 1988; Maguire 1988, both with earlier bibliography.

[225] Corrigan 1978; Cutler 1994, 138, 200–1, 220.

[226] Cutler 1994, 220, nicely contrasts the style of the casket with that of the 'sceptre'.

[227] Cutler and Oikonomidès 1988, 81.

Fig. 8. Rome, Palazzo Venezia, ivory casket: coronation of David;
David and Goliath

Like Trier, the figures are squat, with over-large heads and hands, short
legs, and pudgy faces set with double-rimmed eyes. The 'sceptre' figures are
half-length, but with the large hands and double-rimmed eyes found on
the translation panel and the casket, and with the doughy drapery found
on Trier. All three integrate architectural elements, but in no case are these
similar, and many other differences could be adduced. We stress, again, that
no one would claim that the same hand carved the Trier panel, the Palazzo
Venezia casket, and the Berlin 'sceptre'. But the latter two works do offer a
context of sorts for the translation of relics ivory: they are stylistically and
technically closer to the Trier piece than any other ivories.

The Palazzo Venezia casket has been dated to the years between 867 and 912;[228] the 'sceptre' to 886–912.[229] Because the Trier panel shares general formal and technical attributes rather than any precise signature motifs with the casket and the 'sceptre', the latter two can do little more than suggest a broad-based chronological niche in roughly the last third of the ninth or first quarter of the tenth century for the Trier ivory.[230] If this is correct, the panel unfortunately tells us little about the Chalke gate that we did not know already.

We would argue, in consequence, that while Leo certainly put up a cross, with accompanying representations of prophets, apostles and appropriate scriptural texts, there is no clear evidence that he took down an image of Christ from the Chalke gate. His actions *may* have involved removing a portrayal of Christ, but neither the textual nor the visual evidence offers confirmation of any such action. Similarly, he *may* have spoken about the removal of icons, so that by 730 the impression was generated that this had become an officially tolerated or 'recommended' policy, as (perhaps) reflected in the assumptions (purportedly) expressed in the letter of Gregory III to Antoninus of Grado. But the historical record is so problematic that a definitive conclusion on either of these points remains elusive.

The nature and arguments of early iconoclasm

Until we have examined the later evidence for the nature of iconoclast belief we can give only a brief and incomplete account of its earliest forms. But the available evidence suggests that, whatever the iconoclast movement eventually became, it was initially concerned with emphasising and giving prominence to the cross as a symbol of imperial authority and divine support. Already early in his reign Leo's erection of a cross 'in front of the palace', as described in the letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, makes his interest in it clear (although in this instance, as we have seen, the cross was accompanied by figures). The first two letters of Germanos, as well as the account of Nikephoros, all suggest that both Leo and the bishop of

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[228] Cutler and Oikonomidès 1988; Maguire 1988.   [229] Corrigan 1978.

[230] So too Wortley 1980, on textual grounds. Speck 1987c, 275–8, dates the ivory to *c.* 900; earlier, Speck 1978, 608–9, argued for a seventh-century date; and he believes that the Chalke Christ was first erected under Justinian II (Speck 1984b, 179; following a tentative suggestion in Duket 1980, 297 n. 16). It should be noted that while portraits of living emperors are invariably bearded in the ninth century, portraits of 'historical' emperors such as Constantine need not be: see, e.g., the Khludov Psalter (Moscow, Historical Museum, gr. 129, f. 58v; Ščepkina 1977).

Nakoleia were worried that icons were receiving *proskynesis* that was not due to them, that they were receiving by default the veneration that was rightfully God's. The later Slavonic *Life* of Stefan of Surozh has been shown to contain a much older layer of text, including a clear reference to the fact that Leo III ordered images to be placed high up in churches, to avoid their receiving inappropriate devotion; as does the Metaphrastic version of the *Vita Stephani iunioris.*[231] As we will see in Chapter 5, the emperor Michael II makes it absolutely plain in his letter to the emperor Louis that this was the case;[232] and from these references and the letters of Germanos to John of Synnada, the bishop of Nakoleia and to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, it is possible to reconstruct the basic lines of iconoclast reasoning. Bearing in mind that considerable portions of the theological argument in support of images seem to have been added as later supplements to the text of the letters to John of Synnada and Constantine of Nakoleia, the basic tenets seem to have run as follows:

If one were to observe *proskynesis* before icons, even if the *proskynesis* were itself directed towards God in the mind of the worshipper, one would be showing to an image made by human hands the honour reserved for God alone. This practice was thus to be opposed on the basis of scriptural texts, especially Exodus 20.4f. and Leviticus 26.1. Germanos accepts this, naturally. The bishop of Nakoleia had also made the accusation that God or the Divine was represented in images, which was a blasphemy; and while both Constantine and Germanos agreed on the impossibility of portraying God, Germanos stressed that it was the human aspect which was represented, an argument which was founded upon the 82nd canon of the Quinisext, which required that Christ be depicted in human form.[233] Germanos also stressed that honour was accorded to the saints in prayer, and that intercession was requested from them, presumably in order to contrast the honouring of the saints with the honouring of icons (of saints), which may suggest the importance for the bishop of Nakoleia of the cult of the saints.[234] The counter-arguments presented by Germanos in his account of the debate in

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[231] Discussed in Ivanov 2006, 113–14.

[232] The anonymous ninth-century *Scriptor incertus* specifically notes that Leo proposed to remove icons that were lower down in the church (352.12–16, 357.12). For Michael II's letter to Louis (824) see Mansi xiv, 417–422, at 419–420 (Eng. trans. in Mango 1972, 157–8).

[233] Mansi xiii, 101B. This argument was elaborated in greater detail by the later iconophiles: cf. the interpolated section in the letter of Gregory II to Germanos (Mansi xiii. 93 E3–7), where the Christological arguments for the representation of Christ in his incarnate form from the 82nd canon of the Qunisext Council are repeated. See Gouillard 1968.

[234] Mansi xiii, 100 B–C.

the letter to John of Synnada thus focused on three points: the demonstration that there was no connection intended or accidental between the divine and the images; that images themselves were not made to receive the honour due to God (Germanos fully supports the Old Testament prohibition on graven images); and that images should be understood as condensing and summarising the written word, while neither replacing it nor being in any way prior to it.[235] Even Germanos had doubts about the *proskynesis* offered in the presence of icons, and he implicitly accepts that there exists a more naive practice which does not make these distinctions.[236] But the core of Germanos' position rests on the point that Constantine has failed to appreciate these subtle distinctions in his accusations of idolatry.[237]

It is especially important to underline the fact that there were no Christological elements in the arguments of either party: the debate is primarily concerned with the correct interpretation of scriptural texts.[238] This is emphasised in the later *de synodis et haeresibus*, which notes that the bishop of Nakoleia and his followers asserted the correctness of their own position in contrast to that of previous generations, thus implicitly accusing them of dangerous innovations that ran counter to scripture.[239] More important still, if the hypothesis is correct that the middle section of Germanos' letter to John of Synnada is a later supplement (see above), then the original debate was simply about the relevance of the Old Testament prohibition of graven images, and any discussion about the theological justification of images still remained to be developed.

By the time Germanos wrote to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, the arguments of the iconoclasts seem to have evolved. The *proskynesis* shown to icons was still seen as detracting from the worship properly shown to God; but from Germanos' defence of the use of images, it is apparent that icons were now equated more explicitly with graven images, icon-honouring with idolatry, and the appropriate scriptural texts were cited accordingly.[240] Importantly, the issue of the circumscription of God is avoided in Germanos' letter, and this key Christological issue became a focal point for discussion only at the Council of 754 or immediately beforehand.[241] Equally significant, however, is the fact that the issue of the representation of the saints and

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[235] Mansi xiii, 100 C; 104 A; 116 B–C.

[236] Mansi xiii, 121E; see also xiii, 104 B13–C3, where Germanos permits the *aspasmos*, but as a secondary gesture subordinate to the honouring of God.

[237] Mansi xiii, 121 Dff. For a more detailed discussion of Germanos' views in these letters, see Grumel 1922; and Lange 1969, 85–100; Fazzo 1982.

[238] Mansi xiii, 100 C–D.   [239] *PG* 98.77 B12–C4   [240] Mansi xiii, 117–21.

[241] Mansi xiii, 112 B–C; 117 B–C, where G. clearly accepts the basic position.

prophets was itself not an issue, only the nature of the honour accorded to their images. The cult of the saints was accepted without criticism by both sides (although the later iconophiles claimed that the iconoclasts did not recognise the intercessional power of the saints, because they did not accept the intercessional quality of their relics).[242] It was iconoclast anxieties about the misattribution of the honour shown, through the act of *proskynesis* before icons, which continued to dominate the discussion, for such honour could distract the worshipper from the divine liturgy and the eucharist; the iconoclast fear was that icons were replacing God as the object of devotion. According to their views, it was the church which should be the focal point for the divine, and the latter was to be apprehended through the eucharist and through prayer, not through material objects.[243]

Exactly the same considerations applied to relics, for attitudes to the latter reflect another important aspect of early 'iconoclast' policy associated with attitudes to the location of the sacred and the power to intercede.[244] Later iconophile arguments claimed that iconoclasts rejected the intercessory powers of the saints, although this is clearly not correct, as the *Horos* of 754 makes quite clear.[245] But iconoclasts did have reservations about the relics of the saints. According to the late eighth-century account of Constantine of Tios about the relics of St Euphemia, Leo III had removed these from beneath the altar of the church in which they were preserved and moved them to within the palace (the later part of the story – that he then had them cast into the sea when his sisters and daughters continued to show devotion to them – is certainly legend); and according to other, later notices, there was a general hostility to relics.[246] The real reasons for this suspicion of relics, however, has been shown to reflect not any hostility to the saints, but rather the strong emphasis which had evolved in iconoclast thinking by the time of the Council of 754 that the altar and the space it occupied should be maintained absolutely pure, unsullied by human remains.[247] How soon this aspect of iconoclast views surfaced remains unknown, but it is possible that if the insistence on the centrality of the eucharist and the purity of the altar had clearly emerged during the reign of Leo III himself, which is not impossible, then Leo may well also have devoted some attention to the question of relics, and the story retailed by Constantine of Tios may reflect actual events of Leo's reign. We will return to this issue in the next chapter.

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[242] Mansi xiii, 121 D–124 C. On the intercessory power of relics, see Auzépy 2001, 20–1.
[243] Mansi xiii, 124 A–B. See the discussion in Stein 1980, 181ff.
[244] See Wortley 1982; Auzépy 2001.   [245] Mansi xiii, 348D–E.
[246] Source collected and discussed in Wortley 1982.   [247] Auzépy 2001.

It is clear from Germanos' correspondence that both sides claimed the force of tradition for their arguments: the iconoclasts argued that the custom of showing *proskynesis* to icons was an innovation, not recognised by the canons of the six ecumenical synods (an argument repeated in the synod of 754), thus implying – with justification, as we have seen – that it was only after 681 that the tradition and practice evolved.[248] They may also have argued, without basis, that the production and display of images was similarly a relatively recent phenomenon; it is equally plausible, however, that rather than responding to a real iconoclast belief, Germanos' arguments against this position were rhetorical ballast meant to strengthen his other points.[249] In any event, Germanos argues that it was the iconoclasts who broke with tradition and introduced innovations;[250] and this was no doubt at the root of the story, later incorporated by Theophanes, that Germanos had claimed that he himself had introduced nothing new. It certainly makes clear why the iconophiles were so intent on proving that the use of images was an ancient and honourable tradition, and hence the importance to them of locating and compiling texts and collections of texts to illustrate this position.

The evidence reviewed above and in the previous chapter suggests that both parties could with reason call upon both recent and more distant practice to support their positions. The arguments presented by the iconoclasts revolved around the accusation that *proskynesis* before icons meant that it was icons that were being worshipped, and that God, the divine liturgy, and the eucharist were thereby ignored, coupled with the accusation that this was an innovation justified by neither patristic nor more recent tradition. The counter-arguments characterised by Germanos seem to accept the criticism of *proskynesis* before images, but insisted on the distinction between image and archetype. That the argument remained at this level for some time is suggested both by the relevant chapters (40–2) of the *de synodis et haeresibus*, compiled probably before 754 and reflecting a relatively early stage of the debate;[251] and a *logos* on the icons attributed to Germanos, although probably compiled in the 740s or slightly later by someone else, in which an effort at compromise is clearly visible. In this text, the common ground between the two positions is emphasised (reminiscent of the position outlined by Germanos in the letter to John of Synnada and, to a degree, in that to Thomas of Klaudioupolis) and the aim appears to be to

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[248] Mansi xiii, 116 D; 217 A–B (Council of 754).
[249] Mansi xiii, 116 C–117 B, for Germanos' counter-argument.   [250] Mansi xiii, 109 A.
[251] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 247–8.

argue for a toleration of images within a more critical environment.[252] In addition, the sermons of John of Damascus on icons throw interesting light on the key elements of the debate and the stage it had reached by the 740s and 750s, and make it clear that the question of the *proskynesis* was still a central issue for the iconoclasts.[253]

Leo III *Philostauros*

The role of the emperor Leo III in all this remains uncertain. That he must have at the very least tolerated the iconoclast argument and activities is clear from the account of the appearance of the new tendency in the letter of Gregory III to Antoninus of Grado. That he actually wrote to Gregory II ordering him to remove icons in the papal see is, as we have seen, unlikely, and probably reflects a later addition to the *Life* of Gregory. Leo himself seems to have been especially interested in emphasising the cross as the sign of imperial authority and victory: as we have seen, Leo and Constantine had put up an image of the cross 'in front of the palace' accompanied by representations of the apostles and prophets and texts from scripture; the cross had been a key symbol of imperial, God-granted support and victory in the siege of 717/18;[254] a role it had fulfilled since the fourth century. The inscription on the cross erected by Leo V (to replace the Christ icon erected by Eirene and, it was claimed, to restore the situation as it had been under the iconoclast emperors) read: 'I turn the enemy to flight and slaughter the barbarians', and this may echo an inscription accompanying the cross put up by Leo III.[255]

Since the time of Constantine, the cross had been an important imperial sign, and in the centuries before iconoclasm its use had expanded.

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[252] See the text with translation and commentary in Stein 1980, 269–79 (text: 272–3; trans. 274–5); and Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 247.

[253] Sermon i, 9.1f.

[254] Mansi xiii, 93 B7–12. See 93 B9–10, where the function of the cross as the *tropaion* or symbol of victory over death is emphasised. The role of the cross is repeatedly described in later accounts: cf. the ninth-century *Synaxarion* of the Akathistos, dated to before 860 and containing material based on much earlier traditions, *PG* 92. 1365 C; and see Gero 1973a, 188 and n. 46. But note also Pentcheva 2002, 16–19, who suggests that the reference to a cross in relation to the victory over the Arabs in the siege of 717 refers to past events, in particular to the cross and the *labarum* in Constantine I's victory over Maxentius. As noted earlier, Pentcheva also convincingly demonstrates that the text of the letter of Gregory II refers not to a physical image of the Virgin, but rather to her person.

[255] The verse can be reconstructed from the iconophile verses which eventually replaced it. See Speck 1974b, 377 and n. 1. On the question of the Chalke decoration, see above.

In the sixth century, Tiberios Constantine introduced the cross on to the reverse of the gold denominations; and although Maurice reverted to the traditional pattern, Heraclius took up the cross on steps motif which then dominated until the reign of Justinian II.[256] The events of the Persian war, with the seizure by the Persians of the relics of the True Cross and their later restoration by the victorious Herakleios, followed by their eventual removal to Constantinople, gave the cross an even greater prominence and closer association with the fate of the city.[257] The emphasis placed upon the cross both as a symbol of the Christian *oikoumene* and God's dispensation in favour of the Romans as the Chosen People, as well as a sign of victory, is reflected in the apologia produced in the seventh century and later designed to defend Christian tradition and practice in this respect from Jewish accusations of idolatry.[258] Its importance to the population of Constantinople is especially emphasised by an account, purportedly from the report of a seventh-century traveller and pilgrim, Arculf (or Arnulf), repeated by Adamnan in his *De locis sanctis*, according to which during a three-day ceremony the relics of the True Cross were venerated by different representative groups: the emperor and his soldiers, the empress and women of the city, and the patriarch and clergy.[259] Canon 73 of the Quinisext Council forbade the representation of the cross on the floors of churches, where it might be trodden underfoot.[260] Leo III used the cross on the reverse of the newly introduced silver *miliaresion*, whose quasi-ceremonial role within the coinage system has been pointed out,[261] as well as keeping it on the reverse of the gold denominations.[262] Andrew of Crete composed a homily on the cross which is probably contemporary with Leo III, and which defends the cross as a means of redemption and its representation as a symbol thereof.[263]

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[256] See *DOC* I, 266ff.; 294ff.; and *DOC* II, 244ff.

[257] See Friedländer 1912, 280–1; Frolow 1961, 73ff.; see the literature and discussion in *ODB* 2, 549ff., esp. 552–3; and esp. Thierry 1980–1. For the events surrounding the recovery and eventual removal of the cross to Constantinople, see Speck 1988, 157–60, 176ff., 327–41, 357–66.

[258] See esp. Déroche 1986, 668f.; Corrigan 1992, 41–2, 91–4; Thümmel 1992, 118–49.

[259] The text is traditionally dated to the period after *c.* 670. See Frolow 1961, 194–5; and the report itself: Bieler, ed., *De locis sanctis*, iii, 3 (228.21–7). However, it has been suggested that the origins of much of this text, including the passage dealing with the True Cross, lie in an earlier *Life* of the emperor Constantine I, so that the contemporaneity and therefore the value of this section for the history of the second half of the seventh century is questionable. See Woods 2002.

[260] Rhalles-Potles, II, 474 (Mansi xi, 976 C7–D4). Here, as in many other examples, the cross is referred to as 'the symbol of our victory'.

[261] Hendy 1985, 500ff.   [262] *DOC* III.1, types 22 and 23ff.; see also Gero 1973a, 113ff.

[263] *CPG* III, 8199; edition and commentary in De Groote 2007.

All this must also be taken in the context of the anti-Jewish literature of the seventh century, for as we have seen already (Chapter 1), this genre, with its strong defence of the cross as a symbol of the Passion and of the new dispensation inaugurated by Christ, became an important motif in seventh-century literature. It would be entirely appropriate for an emperor such as Leo to underscore the message of the cross and to use it as an effective theological as well as political symbol of his own, orthodox rule, as a symbol of Christian piety and as a means of stressing the divinely granted power of the Christian Roman emperor and his God-given mission. The views so clearly expressed in the *prooimion* to the *Ekloge* on the God-granted source of his power and his duties, as emperor, to defend orthodoxy and to guide and protect his people, make it quite clear that Leo placed particular emphasis on his own authority.[264] Later, the iconophile belief in the coincidence of Leo's views and those of the iconoclast bishops was sufficient to make his own demonisation a fairly straightforward matter.

For it has been shown, through an analysis of later iconophile arguments, that the opponents of iconoclasm deliberately misrepresented the iconoclasts' arguments, in order to overcome their contention that the cross had an exceptional position. It is apparent that, while those who condemned the devotion to icons as idolatry could do so on the grounds that they were no different from the graven images and idols of the pagans, this could not apply to the cross. From the iconophile counter-arguments, it becomes clear that as well as the scriptural references already noted, the iconoclast position was based on a particularly important text from the *Wisdom of Solomon* 13–15 on 'the evils of idolatry'.[265] In his letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, for example, in which Germanos quotes §§14.12–14, he makes it clear that the iconoclasts themselves relied on other verses apart from these.[266] It is also clear that the *Wisdom of Solomon* was the source of iconoclast arguments from a similar brief allusion in the interpolated section of the letter of Gregory II to Leo III, added probably in the ninth century (see above).[267]

In the *Nouthesia gerontos*,[268] there is a detailed discussion of §§13–15; yet, significantly, the verses 14.2–7, which are interpreted very specifically

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[264] The issue of imperial authority and its source had already become, as we have seen in Chapter 1, of central importance in seventh-century perceptions. See *Ekloge* (ed. Burgmann), *prooimion* 11.21ff., 160–2.

[265] The texts and the way they were employed are discussed in detail by Stein 1980, 157–60.

[266] Mansi xiii, 120 B13–C4.   [267] *Ibid.*, 96 D10–11.

[268] A compilation probably of the ninth century, ascribed to a certain monk, George, but constructed possibly around a mid- or later eighth-century core, of various sections which circulated separately. The theological position is simplistic and repetitive. Some of these sections nevertheless seem to reflect a series of discussions that appear to have taken place in the period before 754 between iconoclasts and iconophiles, one of whom may have been the George 'of Cyprus' who was condemned at the Council of 754 (along with John of Damascus

as a justification of the exceptional position granted to the wood of the cross by God, are passed over with the dismissive comment that there followed 'a few words on the cross'. Yet v. 14.7 states: 'A blessing is on the wood through which right (salvation) has prevailed', a text used already, for example, in Leontios of Neapolis' *Logos against the Jews* (later cited by John of Damascus).[269] Verse 14.8, in contrast, states: 'But that which is made by human hand is accursed and so is its maker – the latter because he made it, the former because it is called a god'. In other words, by omitting all reference to a verse which could be used explicitly to argue for the exemption of the wood of the cross from this condemnation, those in favour of icons could suggest that the iconoclast veneration of the cross likewise involved the veneration of a material object made by human hand. To condemn icons must necessarily also imply a condemnation of the cross.

By deliberately glossing over a passage central to iconoclast argument (and one which could have been problematic for the iconophile position) a major contradiction within iconoclast reasoning appeared to have been highlighted. It is clear from later iconophile polemic that the cross was claimed by those who defended icons, and assimilated to icons in kind, so that the iconoclasts, in rejecting icons, could be accused on exactly the same grounds of rejecting the cross. This appears to have been the fate suffered by Leo III during the course of the eighth century, as the details about the beginnings of iconoclasm were transformed into myths and semi-legendary tales, so that Leo could be represented as an enemy of the icons and of the cross.[270] It is difficult to justify either representation.

and Germanos): see Thümmel 2004, 57–60; 2005, 57–61; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 251–2; and for the passage in question: §§xvi–xviii. See Wessel 2003, who suggests that, since this text argues that the Law of Moses, with its various prohibitions, does not apply to the Christians but only to the Jews (and thus that the second commandment was not directed at Christian images but only at pagan idols), the iconoclast argument against images is essentially a Judaising position and can be dismissed by Christians. The argument about the obsolescence of key elements in the Decalogue to the Christian world – as opposed to the Jewish – was enunciated already during the seventh century in Christian-Jewish polemic, in the so-called *Kephalaia* (see Déroche 1991), and is paralleled by other arguments made by Christian polemicists in defending Christian practice. In the case of the iconoclasts, however, we would argue that this position, as presented by iconophile writers, reflects a later stage of the discussion rather than, as the author asserts, the first period.

[269] See Stein 1980, 159, n. 84 (but cf. the new edition by Déroche 1994). Whether the original text of Leontios is actually interpolated at this point is, in this case, not important. The question of the wood of the cross had been raised in a number of other texts purporting to defend Christian practice against Jewish criticism: see, for example, Alexakis 1998 (the supposedly fifth-century *Dialogue of the monk and recluse Moschos*, although we would suggest that this date needs reconsideration) 191.57–192.72; and texts cited by Wessel 2003, 537 n. 27, on all of which see Cameron 1996a.

[270] See Stein 1980, 160. For the process of iconophile myth-building, see Speck 1990a, *passim*. 'Iconoclastic' ideas about the cross are attacked in the *Discourse* on images and the cross

Artisanal production under Leo III: preserved and documentary evidence

Our failure to establish Leo III as an active iconoclast notwithstanding, little material culture that can be associated directly with his reign is preserved, apart from coins and seals. Except for the rebuilding of a section of the walls of Nicaea after the unsuccessful Arab siege of 727 – recorded in an inscription still preserved above the Istanbul gate – evidence for Constantinople and its hinterlands is entirely documentary.[271] As we have mentioned several times in this chapter, Germanos claimed that 'in front of the palace' Leo III and Constantine V 'have represented the likenesses of apostles and prophets, and written down their utterances about the Lord – thus proclaiming the cross of salvation to be the proud ornament of their faith'.[272] Auzépy has already noted that this (sculptural?) grouping visualised Leo's praise of the apostles, the prophets, their writings and the cross at the beginning of the *Ekloge*, the law code he put forth in 741.[273] Beyond this, the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* (*c.* 780?) attributed a statue at the Neorion harbour to Leo, but provided no further description.[274] The *Patria* adds that Leo's wife Anne commissioned a monastery dedicated to her patron saint, which Janin believes was the same as the monastery of Spoudēs (haste), so-named because – again according to the *Patria* – it was built on the site of the house of a *protospatharios* where Anne took refuge when she unexpectedly went into labour and gave birth on her way back to the Blachernae after a pilgrimage.[275] No more is known about the monastery except that it survived into the tenth century, when the *Book of Ceremonies* records that it was allotted eight *miliaresia* a year to pay for lighting the church.[276]

Outside of the imperial family, we are told by the *synaxarion* that during Leo's reign the patriarch Germanos gave land to Stephen, a monk recently returned from travels in Palestine, and on this land Stephen founded the monastery of Chenolakkos (pool of the geese). Stephen is commemorated

ascribed to Germanos, but which we would argue from its structure and content is clearly to be placed in the 750s or 760s. See note 71 above, and Chapter 3, 237–8 and note 340.

[271] The inscription reads: 'At the place where, with divine help, the insolence of the enemy was put to shame, there our Christ-loving emperors Leo and Constantine restored with zeal the city of Nicaea, having erected in demonstration of their deed a trophy of victory by setting up a kentenarion tower, which Artabasdos, the glorious *patrikios* and *curopalates*, completed by his toil'. See Mango 2005 (inscription at 29–30). There are in addition a handful of ruined ecclesiastical buildings on Cyprus that may date to the seventh, eighth or ninth centuries, but most await excavation and further study: see Papacostas 1999, appendix 6A, nos 13, 21, 23, 77, 104, 105 and appendix 6B, nos. 3, 41, 85.

[272] Mango 1959, 112; Auzépy 1990, 446–8.   [273] *Ibid.*   [274] Cameron and Herrin 1984, 152–3.

[275] Preger III, 251; Janin 1969, 38, 470.   [276] *De Cer* II, 55: ed. Bonn 801, 806.

in the *typikon* of the Great Church for this foundation, renowned as the monastery where Methodios began his religious life and lived until 815, but its location is unknown, and no further details about the complex are provided by our sources.[277]

For preserved monuments other than coins and seals, we must turn to areas away from the capital. Sometime in the early eighth century, or perhaps slightly earlier, a new cross-domed basilica was built in the old church of the Theotokos in Ephesos on the south-west coast of Asia Minor.[278] This perpetuated a church plan familiar from the seventh-century church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki and the church of the Koimesis at Nicaea (*c.* 700), but was considerably larger. At *c.* 12 m., its dome was 2 m greater in diameter than that at Hagia Sophia, a church of some significance at least later in the century, when it was decorated by Constantine VI and Eirene; and it was nearly twice the diameter of the dome at Nicaea.[279] Though little of the church has been preserved, its comparatively large scale indicates an important building of considerable expense, requiring a large workforce, some members of which must have been highly skilled masons.

In Greece, a capital and stone slab dated to the early eighth century have been attributed to the church of Dionysios the Areopagite.[280] More significant remains are preserved further east. In the Tur Abdin (along the modern Turkish–Syrian border), the church of St Symeon, built or restored between 700 and 734, and the contemporary monastery tower at Mar Lazarus survive at Habsenas. The north church of the cathedral at Nisibis dates to 713–58, and the church of the Theotokos is dated by inscription to 740. Other monuments are known only through texts: a church and two mills at Tell 'Ubad, and a monastery church at Mezr'eh are recorded between 700 and 734.[281]

Outside the empire, Rome and Palestine – the latter discussed earlier in this chapter – preserve the largest body of monuments at least potentially related to Byzantium. Eighth-century Rome is often considered almost as a suburb of Constantinople, and there was certainly considerable communication between the two cities.[282] The churches built in Rome during the 720s and 730s do not, however, reveal particularly close cultural ties with Byzantium. Those known only from the *Liber Pontificalis* accounts of the papacies of Gregory II (715–31) and, especially, Gregory III (731–41) are

[277] *Synax. CP* 392–4; Mateos I (1962), 198–9; Janin 1975, 189–90; Ruggieri 1991, 211–12. For various suggestions on the location of this monastery, see Mango 1968b, 174 n.31.

[278] Foss 1979, 112; Karwiese 1989; Ousterhout 2001, 11.

[279] Discussion and measurements in Ousterhout 2001, 10–12.   [280] Frantz 1961, figs. 16–17.

[281] Bell and Mango 1982, 163.   [282] See e.g. Krautheimer 1980, 91–2.

impossible to reconstruct, but five monuments are also identified in other sources or are still at least partially extant. Sta Maria in Sassia, in the *burgus Saxonum* – the area colonised by Saxon pilgrims resident in Rome – and probably founded in 727 by the former West Saxon king Ine, is known through a drawing of 1474; it shows what Coates-Stephens calls a 'decidedly non-Roman form' that is, in fact, most reminiscent of early Saxon churches.[283] Papal patronage was responsible for Sta Maria in Aquiro, SS Sergio e Bacco, SS Marcellino e Pietro near the Lateran, and an oratory in St Peter's. All but the latter were large basilicas; and all anticipate features usually associated with the so-called Carolingian renaissance in Rome such as the enlargement of originally much smaller structures, the reuse of *opus quadratum* blocks, and, at SS Marcellino e Pietro, three apses.[284] Only the dedication to Sergios and Bakkhos recalls the impact of eastern Christianity.

In contrast to the lack of monumental evidence, a considerable body of coinage directly associated with Leo III has been preserved, and we may track three major numismatic innovations during his reign. The first concerned the distribution of portraiture. Before Leo's reign, co-emperors, when they appeared on the coinage at all, shared the obverse (front) with the senior emperor. With the proclamation of Constantine V as co-emperor in 720, however, the system changed: Leo remained, alone, on the obverse of the gold coins (*nomismata*) (Figure 9), while Constantine appeared on the reverse, a location previously occupied by a cross on steps, a motif that was transferred to the silver coinage. This was not entirely new, however, since already under Constans II and again under Constantine IV a co-emperor was placed on the reverse of the coin. Once re-introduced, however, the new formula was normally followed throughout the remainder of the eighth and the ninth centuries.[285] Leo's alteration predates any hints of iconoclasm, and cannot be implicated in the new tendency. The re-introduction of this type is nonetheless interesting given the attention subsequently paid to portrayals of Christ, since it suggests that already in 720 the emperor may have been thinking about portraiture in novel ways. It also points to what appears to be a desire to promote dynastic succession, and in a very visual way.[286] We

[283] Krautheimer 1980, 82; Coates-Stephens 1997, 190–1, with bibliography.

[284] Coates-Stephens 1997, 191–5, 203, 226, with bibliography.

[285] *DOC* II, 2, 410, 429ff., 434ff.; 515, 525ff. For Constans and Constantine IV; III, 1 1973, 226–30
for Leo. For a detailed examination of numismatics during the eighth and ninth centuries, see
also Hendy 1985, esp. 424–5, 496–506; and in particular on the iconography
see Füeg 2007, 117–29. On Leo's coinage, see Füeg 2007, 12–14.

[286] Dagron 1996, 51–2; a point emphasised and illustrated in detail by Füeg 2007, 131f.

Fig. 9. Gold *nomisma* of Leo III (717–41), mint of Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4510: busts of Leo III (obverse) and Constantine V (reverse)

Fig. 10. *Miliaresion* of Leo III (717–41), mint of Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4518: inscription (obverse) and cross (reverse)

may conclude that Leo understood the power of images, and was happy to harness that energy to his own ends.

Leo also introduced a new silver coin, the *miliaresion* (Figure 10). This was thinner and broader than earlier Byzantine coins, features that seem to have been adopted from the Muslim dirhem introduced in the 690s. Leo's *miliaresion* also repeated the triple dot border of its Islamic exemplar, and, like it, filled the obverse with an imperial inscription. The inscription itself, however, was resoundingly Christian, as was the obverse, on which was depicted the cross on steps (a reference to the cross Constantine I the Great was believed to have set up after his victory at the Milvian Bridge, and which had formerly been applied to the reverse of the *nomisma*) with a

new invocation to victory: *Iesus Christus Nika* replaced the *victoria augusti* of earlier coins. Again, once introduced, the type remained standard for a century.[287] The coins were apparently intended for ceremonial use, for which reason the inscription took the form of an acclamation, and until the reign of Theophilos they were always struck with the names of both the senior and the junior emperors.[288] As a final new feature, the *miliaresion* carried the first use of the term *basileus* on coins.[289] The invocation formula, in other media usually abbreviated to IC XC NIKA, became ubiquitous during the eighth century. Whether or not it was actually invented by or for Leo III, it was during his reign that it began to appear regularly in both triumphal and protective contexts: on the coins, as its inscription and association with Constantine's victorious cross indicate, the former prevails; on the walls of Constantinople, where it first appears at the very end of Leo's rule (740/1), the latter came into play.[290] The emphasis on victory, the cross, and current imperial nomenclature, combined with the ceremonial use of the coin, suggest that the typology – the thin and flat profile borrowed from the Muslim dirhem – was not read as 'Islamic' (and, indeed, it came to Damascus from the Sasanians), but instead had a particular resonance that fed into the message of imperial prestige that Leo intended to convey.

In the 720s the copper coinage mimicked the *miliaresion* by locating Constantine on the reverse, but in the 730s the previous formula, with the two emperors side by side on the obverse and the value mark on the reverse, was reinstated (Figure 11). Now, however, the mint mark was omitted – presumably because only one eastern mint, in Constantinople, remained in operation – and the date was replaced by the purely decorative formula XXX NNN.[291] The significance of the regression is unclear. Despite the timing, it is unlikely to have had anything to do with the beginnings of iconoclast talk, for the gold coins continue to show imperial portraits on obverse and reverse.

When he appears, Leo III is always shown frontally and from the shoulders up;[292] he wears a chlamys and a crown, usually surmounted by a cross. In his right hand he holds a *globus cruciger* (an orb surmounted by a cross that

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[287] *DOC* III.1, 5, 62, 179, 182, 227, 231–2. Grierson believed that the cross and inscription were borrowed from seals.

[288] *Ibid.*, 63–4. Fractional silver was also struck briefly.   [289] *Ibid.*, 177–8.

[290] See Walter 1977 and Brubaker 1999a, 152–4; Walter 2006, 39–42.

[291] *Ibid.*, 227, 232–4. Western mints in Sicily, Naples, Rome and Ravenna continued: *ibid.*, 234–40. Interestingly, though Roman coinage became debased during Leo's reign, the (assumed) introduction of iconoclasm had no other impact on the appearance of coins produced in Rome (*ibid.*, 239).

[292] Facing busts remained normal until the reign of Basil I (867–86): *DOC* III.1, 107.

Fig. 11. Copper *follis* of Leo III (717–41), mint of Constantinople; The
Barber Institute Coin Collection B4531: busts of Leo III and
Constantine V (obverse) and value mark (reverse)

symbolised imperial power), in his left the *akakia* (a cylinder made of silk
that contained dust and was symbolic of imperial humility).[293] Constantine
V first appears as a beardless youth with short hair, and subsequently is
portrayed as increasingly mature and sometimes bearded.[294]

Imperial seals, too, survive. For the first three years (717–20), Leo retained
the image of the Virgin Hodegetria that had been favoured on imperial
seals from the time of Constantine IV (681–5);[295] but, as on contemporary
coinage, Constantine V appeared on seals after his elevation in 720, now as
a substitute for the Virgin. It is unlikely that the removal of the Hodegetria
responded to any iconoclast sentiment, no hint of which had yet appeared
in 720; instead, the insertion of Constantine seems to play into the same
type of dynastic concerns that informed his appearance on the coinage.
Leo and the beardless Constantine appeared either in bust form (type A)
or standing (type B); both forms seem to have been used from the time of
Constantine's elevation in 720 until Leo's death in 741.[296] A third version
(type C), also assigned to the years 720–41, combined a cross on steps with a
long inscription that began on the obverse and continued on to the reverse;
this read 'in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit/Leo
and Constantine, faithful emperors of the Romans'.[297] The emphasis on the
Trinity here may anticipate its role in later iconoclast rhetoric.[298]

From the sixth through to the ninth century, a variety of officials used
seals that incorporated imperial portraits on the obverse, and sometimes

[293] See further *ODB* 1, 42 and 3, 1936; *DOC* III.1, 127, 131, 133–4.

[294] *Ibid.*, 227–8, with descriptive lists at 241–63, pls I–IV. On the distinction between bearded and
beardless emperors, *ibid.*, 110.

[295] *ZV* 23, 25, 27–33.   [296] *Ibid.*, 33 bis, 34.

[297] *Ibid.*, 34 bis.   [298] On which see Chapter 1; Auzépy 2001; and Barber 2002.

indicated the indiction (the year within a repeating fifteen-year cycle) in which the die was struck.[299] We have therefore more dated seals from this period than from any other in Byzantine history. The vast majority of those from the reigns of Leo III through to Theophilos (after whose reign the number of dated seals decreases sharply) follow one of two formulae: busts of a pair of emperors, with the junior beardless, on the obverse with an inscription on the reverse;[300] or two emperors, shown either half-length or as busts, flanking a cross on the obverse with an inscription on the reverse.[301] Rarely, the emperors are shown in full.[302] During the brief periods of sole rule, the emperor (or later, under Eirene, empress) appears alone often, as was the case under Leo III between 717 and 719, standing frontally on the obverse with an inscription on the reverse.[303]

On the so-called monogrammatic seals, the monograms are typically located on the obverse in a block or in a cruciform shape. The reverse may continue or spell out the owner's name, or contain a short inscription. In seals that appear to belong to the period of Leo III, this is most often the formula 'Mother of God, help thou ... ';[304] though the Lord and, more rarely, Christ are also designated. 'Holy Trinity, help thou ... ' and 'servant of the cross' appear as well, though less often; such invocations are sometimes interpreted as indicative of iconoclast sympathies.[305] A few examples have brief quotations from Psalms; these have been associated with first iconoclasm.[306] Decoration is rare, and is usually limited to crosses, sometimes with basal tendrils.[307] On one example, dated by Nesbitt and Oikonomidès to first iconoclasm, the cross on the obverse is complemented by a cruciform inscription reading 'I am the seal of the metropolitan of Nikomedeia, printing in two fashions the life-giving sign [of the cross]'.[308] It must be said, however, that cruciform inscriptions are the most common form of ornament on all seals ascribed to the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, and during this same period the cross was the most common decorative motif. In a period characterised by anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim

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[299] For excellent general introductions to seals see Oikonomidès 1985 and *idem* 1986b.

[300] For Leo III and Constantine V: *ZV* 224–39.

[301] For Leo III and Constantine V (when the latter is bearded the seal dates to after his father's death): *ZV* 242–62.

[302] For Leo III and Constantine V: *ZV* 240–1, apparently at the beginning of the series (see further Oikonomidès 1986b, no. 31).

[303] *ZV* 221–3.

[304] E.g. *ZV* 387, 403, 405, 406, 425, 487, 555B; 1409–11, 1419, 1421–3, 1426, 1427, *passim*; Oikonomidès 1986b, nos 32, 33, 37, 41, 48.

[305] E.g. *ZV* 1425 (Παναγια Τριας . . . .), 1440; 2781; for commentary, *ibid.*, I, 1, p. 549.

[306] E.g. *ZV* 323, 579; 2835; for discussion, see *ZV* 1984.

[307] E.g. *ZV* 320.   [308] *DOSeals* III, 83.10.

polemic that fronted and defended the significance of the cross,[309] it would be naïve to circumscribe the value of the motif: rather than signalling iconoclast tendencies, the cross and cruciform monograms marked, first and foremost, a Christian.

Seals with representations of eagles are relatively common until the middle of the eighth century, and show an eagle on the obverse. Examples dated to the first half of the century, and thus perhaps to Leo's reign, are usually inscribed with the familiar formula 'Mother of God, help thou . . . '.[310]

On seals with bilateral inscriptions, as the name suggests, the content of the seals is restricted to an inscription, which begins on the obverse and is completed on the reverse. Those atttributed to the eighth or ninth century invoke the Theotokos, the Lord, Christ, and the Holy Trinity.[311] As noted above, the latter invocation may signal iconoclast tendencies. Dated or datable seals with figural representation from Leo's reign are thus limited. They show imperial portraits, the Virgin, and perhaps occasionally a saint: seals associated with Andrew of Crete, for example, which date some time between 710/11 and 740, portray St Titus.[312]

Conclusions

The results of this survey of the sources for the first years of iconoclasm can now be summarised. First, there is no reliable evidence for an imperial edict of Leo III condemning the use of holy images or ordering them to be removed. Assumptions based on the issue of such an edict – for example, that the image of the Virgin in the apse of the church of the Koimesis at Nicaea must have been made before 726 – can thus no longer be taken as secure.[313] When the western pilgrim Willibald (later bishop of Eichstätt) visited Nicaea in the years 727–9, he referred to the icons or portraits – *imagines* – of the Fathers of the Council of Nicaea in 325 without comment. Given that these icons had been paraded around the walls of the city during its siege by the Arabs in 727, and the attribution of their defeat was credited at least in part to their intercession, this is an important point. During his

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[309] See Sahas 1996.

[310] E.g. *ZV* 590A, 598, 624 (also invoking the Holy Trinity), 628, 643, 645, 684, 693, 703, 709, 716, 727 (the final four with a cross).

[311] Theotokos: *ZV* 760, 783, 784A, 827, 845, 849, *passim*; Lord: *ibid.*, nos 735, 748, 831, 840, 905, 909, *passim*; Christ: *ibid.*, 785, 878, 1070, 1073; Holy Trinity: *ibid.*, 743, 751, 752, 753, 759A, 770A, *passim*. Once, the sign's owner is identified as a 'servant of the cross' (*ibid.* 2937).

[312] *DOSeals* II, 36.8a–b.   [313] See, e.g., Barber 1991, 44.

stay in Constantinople, Willibald made no mention of any activity, imperial or otherwise, regarding the removal or destruction of icons.[314] By the same token, there is no mention of any imperial action in Germanos' letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis which, as we have seen, probably dates after 730. More importantly, perhaps, neither is there any such reference in the much more openly critical views expressed by John of Damascus, writing outside Byzantine territory.

Second, there is no reliable evidence for any real opposition to the emperor's policy, although it is possible that the later, exaggerated iconophile legends about the first martyrs in Constantinople were based on misconceived reactions to Leo's speeches about the cross and (if he actually uttered them) about images.[315] Germanos may have resigned because he could not heal the rift in the clergy, and perhaps because he objected to the emperor's policy with regard to taxation in Italy, Sicily and other western provinces, or also because he would not subscribe to a document concerning devotion to images presented to him by the emperor. Whether one or all of these were at issue cannot be known. But there is no evidence that he was an especially spirited defender of images, as the later legends portray him (note that his anathematisation at the iconoclast Council of 754 described him as *dignomos*, ambiguous in his views, a clear enough indication).[316] Willibald of Eichstätt passed over the issue of images as though it did not exist, at a period when, according to the later iconophile myths, Leo was carrying out mass persecutions, exiling lay and ecclesiastical personnel and destroying images.[317] The Venerable Bede refers to a possible critique of images at Constantinople, based on reports from a recent visitor there. From Germanos' correspondence, as well as from the (later) sermons of John of Damascus, it seems that the clergy were initially divided, but increasingly accepted the critique of images. There is, however, no evidence for popular support for the new policy. The story of the iconoclast soldier who threw a stone at an icon of the Virgin during the siege of Nicaea in 727 is probably apocryphal;[318] while the citizens or the local administration put up

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[314] *Vita Willibaldi*, in *MGH SS* xv/1, 86–106, at 101.18–28 for the visit in Constantinople; 101.23–6 for the Fathers of the synod of 325.

[315] Stein 1980, 152ff.   [316] Mansi xiii, 356 C6; and see below.

[317] As in the accounts of Theophanes, Nikephoros and the *V. Stephani iun.*

[318] Theoph., 405.25ff., 406.5ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 559f.); although, when the Kamoulianai image was employed in helping to quell mutinous soldiers in the later years of the sixth century, it is reported to have been pelted with stones: Theoph. Sim., iii, 1.11–12 (111 De Boor). Speck 2002–3, 491–7, argues that the story probably represents the ghost of a tale or cycle of tales favourable to Leo III, later reworked in parts and incorporated into anti-iconoclast writings.

an inscription, commemorating the victory (attributed to God's help) and the reconstruction of a tower in the fortifications by the emperors Leo and Constantine, described as *philochristoi*.[319]

Finally, there is no evidence for the systematic removal of images under Leo, although it is perfectly possible that some were removed, along with the relics located beneath or near the altars in some churches. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the imperial coinage under Leo was changed in line with a putative iconoclasm.[320] It is quite possible that Leo did attempt to restrict the public display of certain types of image and to remove them from certain places in churches (near the altar and in the apse, for example) to avoid their receiving the honour due to God alone. Theophanes reports that in his first regnal year the emperor Constantine V demanded that the patriarch Anastasios renounce the divinity of Christ and deny the role of the Virgin as Mother of God. There can be no doubt that this is a deliberate misrepresentation, but echoes perhaps an attempt by the new emperor to continue, or perhaps to resume, his father's policy in respect of images.[321] The references in the letter of Gregory III to Antoninus of Grado (which reports only the rumour that all images were being removed, which was certainly incorrect), those of Germanos in his letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis (which note the tendency to move from a position critical of the veneration of icons to their being equated with idols), and those in the first two sermons on the icons of John of Damascus (which address the issue of the false interpretation of scripture, and imply only in passing that some icons have been removed, and on a selective basis)[322] provide some support for an imperial demand for compliance with a new policy, but little or none for a generalised policy of removing icons. The two homilies arguing in favour of devotion to sacred images by Andrew of Crete, and Germanos' letter to Thomas, certainly suggest that the devotion shown to images had been called into question and that images themselves were the focus for discussion; they also suggest that there was some opposition to these ideas, even if probably very limited in extent. The early ninth-century evidence for the nature of iconoclast action against images suggests that it was concerned primarily with removing icons from positions where they would receive the wrong sort of attention (see Chapter 5). Given the

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[319] In Schneider and Karnapp 1938, 49, no. 29.

[320] As Füeg 2007, 131, has emphasised, not only do the motifs employed by the Isaurian emperors continue a pre-existing tradition, but in many respects the conventions they employed were carried on through the reigns from Eirene to Michael I and after Theophilos, points also made by Grabar 1957.

[321] Theoph. 415.24–30 (Mango and Scott 1997, 576).   [322] E.g. Sermon i, 13.12ff.

1	Exarchate of Ravenna	9	Command of Thrakesion
2	Venetia and Istria	10	Command of Anatolikon
3	Duchy of Rome	11	Command of Kibyrrhaiotai
4	Duchy of Naples	12	Command of Armeniakon
5	Duchy of Calabria	13	Duchy of Sardinia
6	Command of Hellas	14	Command of Sicily
7	Command of Thrace	15	Crete
8	Command of Opsikion		

The empire c. 750

Lost to Lombards or local princes c.751

Lost to Saracens from 820s

Map 1. The empire c. 750

derivative nature of imperial policy during the second iconoclasm, it is not unlikely that this was also the case originally, a possibility supported by an anomalous passage in the Slavic *Vita* of Stephen of Sogdaia (Surozh) as well as by the Metaphrastic version of the *Vita Stephani iunioris*.[323]

Apart from his (possible) initial critique of images in certain public locations, therefore, there is hardly any solid evidence at all for any active imperial involvement in the question of images. Instead, Leo's critique, or a discussion among the clergy in the 720s, resulted in a debate within the church which generated an attitude, apparently accepted by the majority of clergy by the later 730s or early 740s, critical of images, or of images in certain locations. Leo may have required subscription by leading churchmen to a policy which was critical of the devotion shown to images, but it is difficult to then conclude that this represents an imperial 'iconoclast policy' at this stage. The complete absence of any concrete evidence for imperial persecution or destruction of images, apart from the dismissal from office of Germanos (and possibly Andrew of Crete), the continued good relations with the papacy, and the total absence of any papal critique other than the initial anxieties expressed in the early 730s, would bear this out. On this basis, it would be reasonable to conclude that the emperor Leo III was not an 'iconoclast' in the sense imposed upon him by later iconophile tradition, and accepted by much modern historiography.

[323] Noted by Bréhier 1938, for example. See Ivanov 2006, 113–14.

3 | Constantine V and the institutionalisation of iconoclasm

Constantine V (741–75) is considered the most 'iconoclast' of the eighth- and ninth-century emperors. Many of the most dramatic events of iconoclasm are ascribed to his reign: his general, Michael Lachanodrakon, is held responsible for the infamous monastic humiliations in the hippodrome; he himself is credited with the defacement of churches and the destruction of icons; and it is around Constantine V that the accusations of antipathy toward relics and the Theotokos cluster.[1] But, while it is true that Constantine sponsored the oldest preserved definition of iconoclasm (he summoned the 754 Hiereia council that produced the iconoclast *Horos*), and is probably responsible for the first official promotion of iconoclasm as state policy, we shall see that many of the more lurid accusations against him are problematic. Certainly, in terms of material culture, Constantine's rule is characterised not by destruction, but by renewal. First, however, he had to assume control of the empire.

Rebellions and reforms

The opening years of Constantine's reign were marked indelibly by his struggle with his brother-in-law Artabasdos,[2] and by a series of other attempted coups. Artabasdos, who had occupied a position of great importance and influence under Leo III, and who held the title of *kouropalates*, seems to have hoped that he would be able to succeed to the imperial position, by virtue of his marriage to Leo's daughter, Anna. There is some evidence to suggest that he may have hoped to be crowned co-emperor with the young Constantine: his reign seems to have been dated from the days immediately following Leo's death, as was that of Constantine, and it has been suggested that he may have presented himself as the protector or guardian

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[1] See 242, 199–212, and 238 below.

[2] The best analysis of the rebellion: Speck 1981; see also the review by I. Rochow, in *BS* 44 (1983) 216–21; also Rochow 1986; Treadgold 1992; with the comments in Speck 1995c. For literature and a brief survey of Constantine's life and reign, see *PBE* Konstantinos 7; *PmbZ*, no. 3703. For Artabasdos: *PBE* Artabasdos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 632.

of the young emperor.[3] The exact grounds for his reasoning remain unclear; but it is apparent from the later sources, biased and contaminated though they are by iconophile and other views, that a chronic ailment from which Constantine suffered – possibly leprosy[4] – was later used in an attempt to disqualify him from the purple, and may have played a role at the beginning of the reign. But one of the greatest difficulties confronting the historian reading the sources relevant to the events of Constantine's reign is the almost uniformly hostile nature of the tradition about him which evolved, partly based on antagonistic sources contemporary with the reign – including a lost *Vita* of the patriarch Germanos[5] and an account of the rebellion of Artabasdos favourable to the latter[6] – and partly based on later eighth- and ninth-century iconophile propaganda and reworking of earlier material.[7] Nevertheless, recent work has made considerable progress in elucidating both the interdependencies and tendencies of the various sources and the actual or probable course of events.

In addition to the high office of *kouropalates*, Artabasdos was also commander of the *Opsikion* field army, established in north-west Asia Minor and concentrated in Bithynia. This was the field army upon which the emperors also depended for their own defence, and from which it seems that units to garrison the imperial capital were drawn.[8] The revolt began almost exactly a year after Leo's death on 18 June 741, when Constantine with a small body of troops marched to Dorylaion, where he met Artabasdos together with units of the *Opsikion* field army, assembled in preparation for a campaign against the Arabs.[9] Artabasdos' exact plans remain unknown, and it may

[3] See Speck 1981, 122–37.

[4] Speck 1981, 261–5 suggests epilepsy, but Rochow 1994, 18f. prefers leprosy, chiefly on the basis of the only explicit reference, in a western source: Constantine eventually died *elephantino morbo*, i.e. from leprosy.

[5] See Speck 1981, 25, 44ff.   [6] *Ibid.*, 113f.

[7] For a detailed analysis of the process and of the various texts involved, see Speck 1990a.

[8] See Haldon 1984, 196ff. If Speck's redating of the rebellion of Anastasios from 718/19 to 717 is correct, then Artabasdos will have succeeded Isoes as *komes Opsikiou* at that point, when the latter was deposed and executed for his part in the attempted coup. See Haldon 1984, 359–60; Winkelmann 1985, 73; Speck 2002; Chapter 2; *PBE*, Isoes 1; *PmbZ*, no. 3518.

[9] According to Theoph., 414.18 (Mango and Scott 1997, 575) the revolt began in 742 and ended in 743, but the other sources place the beginning a year earlier. According to Nikephoros, it began in 741 and ended in 742 (Nikeph., 132f.). As has been shown, both these accounts have a gap in their narrative which reflects their sources, and the revolt in fact lasted from June/July 741 until November 743 (when Constantine re-took Constantinople) or some time thereafter (perhaps in the first half of 744: it is not known how long Artabasdos was able to hold out in the fortress at Pouzane, to which he had fled): see Speck 1981, 19–126, esp. 75ff.; Treadgold 1992; Speck 1995c. Füeg 2007, 14ff., argues for the rebellion beginning shortly after Constantine's accession, which seems as plausible as the alternatives, even if the dating issue remains problematic. He also argues, on the basis of the issues of gold *nomismata* of Leo III and

be that he was put in a position by those who preferred him, again for reasons unknown, to Constantine, to which he was forced to respond by publicly opposing Constantine.[10] The cause of the final rupture is equally unclear, although Theophanes claims that Constantine asked for the sons of Artabasdos, Nikephoros and Niketas, to join him, on the grounds that he feared Artabasdos' intentions.[11] At this point, Artabasdos attacked Constantine, and in the process Beser, one of Constantine's retinue and a trusted supporter of Leo and his son, was killed. Constantine fled to the *Anatolikon* districts, while Artabasdos sent a message to the imperial *ek prosopou* or representative in Constantinople, the *magistros* Theophanes, announcing Constantine's death.[12]

Contrary to the account in some of the sources, it seems that he was not acclaimed by his troops, nor did he obtain an oath of loyalty from them.[13] But he did then march to the city, which he entered – the *magistros* Theophanes Monotes having dealt with any pro-Constantine elements and allayed the suspicions or anxieties of the broader populace – and established himself. Whether or not he was crowned by the patriarch Anastasios, as one dubious report has it, remains unclear, although his son, Nikephoros, was crowned in 740 (or 741 depending on which set of dates for the rebellion one prefers).[14] But they were recognised by the papal chancery as

Constantine V, that Leo in fact died in 740, so that the rebellion began in the same summer and ended in the November of 742 with Constantine's recovery of Constantinople. Constantine was probably accompanied by his own *spatharioi* and some units from the *Opsikion* corps: see Nikeph., 132; the fact that he barely escaped with his life suggests that his forces were greatly outnumbered and unable to offer any effective resistance; see Haldon 1984, 207f. Artabasdos will have been at the head of his own *Opsikion* division. Dorylaion was one of the key military bases for the north-western Anatolian region. The emperor and the *Opsikion* forces probably intended to march to the frontier and collect the other provincial forces en route. The practice in the ninth and tenth centuries throws some light on probable earlier campaign routes: see *Const. Porph. Three treatises*, 62–4; 155.

10 Speck 1981, 58f.

11 Nikeph., 132; Theoph., 414 (Mango and Scott 1997, 575). See *PmbZ*, nos. 5374, 5260/*PBE* Niketas 4, Nikephoros 4.

12 Theoph., 414.18–415.18 (Mango and Scott 1997, 575f.). Beser seems to have been a close confidant of Leo III; Speck has argued that the later stories of his having represented an evil influence were in fact based on an originally popular and positive tale about him which was later transformed by stages through propaganda hostile both to Leo III and Constantine V as iconoclasts and to Constantine V as an individual: Speck 1981, 75–7. See *PBE*, Beser 1, 2; *PmbZ*, no. 1010.

13 Nikeph., 132; Speck 1981, 53–9.

14 See Theoph., 408.12f. and 417. 23–5 (Mango and Scott 1997, 564, 578); Nikeph., 134; Speck 1981, 127–8; Speck 1995c. For Theophanes: *PmbZ*, no. 8092; *PBE* Theophanes 1; and for the patriarch Anastasios: *PmbZ*, no. 285; *PBE* Anastasios 2; Rochow 1999a, 25–6. The extent of Anastasios' involvement in Artabasdos' rebellion is unclear; although punished by Constantine

legitimate emperors in that year, and Artabasdos issued coins and seals in his name.[15] Contrary to the later semi-legendary accounts of the rebellion icorporated into the iconophile tradition of the later eighth- and ninth-century sources, however, there is in fact very little evidence to suggest that Artabasdos held anything other than the same views as Constantine himself with regard to the question of sacred images. We will return to this shortly.

Constantine had meanwhile taken refuge with Logginos (or Lagkinos), the *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* theme, retaining also the loyalty of the commander and soldiers of the *Thrakesion* army. Artabasdos was supported by his own command, the *Opsikion* division, and by the *Armeniakon* forces as well as by the Thracian troops, who were commanded by Nikephoros the son of Theophanes the *magistros*.[16] Over the next eighteen months Constantine established himself firmly in Asia Minor. In the first half of 741 (or 742) Artabasdos sent his son Niketas as commander-in-chief of his forces to take charge of the *Armeniakon* division;[17] in May Constantine was able to bring Artabasdos to battle near Sardis and defeat him, capturing Artabasdos' military and other supplies, and provoking desertions from Artabasdos' soldiers to his own army.[18] Artabasdos escaped to Constantinople having lost much of his force. In August Constantine defeated Niketas near Modrine in north-west Anatolia, in a battle in which both sides suffered heavy casualties, and was able to blockade Artabasdos in Constantinople.[19] The ensuing siege lasted a further year, ending with an effort to break the blockade, which was causing great hardship in the city, when Artabasdos again confronted Constantine, this time before Constantinople, and was again heavily defeated. His son Niketas similarly attempted to rally his forces, but was turned back at Chrysopolis and captured at Nikomedeia.[20] On

after his final defeat of the rebel, the patriarch was permitted to take up his position once more. As Rochow points out (26), the effects of this on Anastasios' spiritual authority as well as his political influence is unknown, but cannot have been ignored.

[15] See Rochow 1994, 23 with sources; Speck 1985. On the coinage, see 226 below.

[16] Theoph., 415. 2ff., 417.24, 418.5ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 575, 578f.).

[17] Theoph., 417.23f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 578); Nikeph., 134.

[18] Theoph., 417. 26–32 (Mango and Scott 1997, 578); Nikeph., 134; for the deserters, Mich. Syr., 502; *Chron. anon. 1234*, 244.

[19] Theoph., 417.32–418.7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 578); Nikeph. 134. According to the *Chronicon episcoporum Neapolitanae ecclesiae*, during the siege Constantine paid the merchants supplying his troops with leather *nomismata*, later redeemed for gold; he apparently believed that this followed ancient Roman practice (*DOC* III, 1, 291). If true, the episode provides an example of the self-conscious imperial use of ancient Roman models.

[20] Theoph., 419.14–420.4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 580f.); Nikeph., 136 (Constantinople); Theoph., 420.4–10 (Mango and Scott 1997, 581); Nikeph., 136 (defeat and capture of Niketas).

2 November 742 (or 743) Constantine stormed the city, while Artabasdos
fled by ship to Asia Minor. He managed to assemble a small force and
retreated to the fortress of Pouzane (probably, but not certainly, in the
Opsikion region), where he was finally run to earth and captured in late 742
or early 743.[21]

Artabasdos and his sons were blinded, paraded in the hippodrome,
and banished to the monastery of the Chora in Constantinople: a certain
Artabastine is mentioned in a later eighth-century source, possibly a daugh-
ter of Artabasdos.[22] According to the tradition incoporated by Theophanes,
the patriarch Anastasios was also humiliated in public in the hippodrome;[23]
but it has been shown that this is a later story, designed to discredit an
'iconoclast' patriarch, based on the actual disgrace of the patriarch Con-
stantine II in 766/7.[24] Whatever actually happened, Anastasios remained in
office until 753, the year of his death. In the months following Artabasdos'
defeat, but possibly before his punishment had been carried out, several
other imperial officials were also punished: the *patrikios* Baktaggios, who
had accompanied Artabasdos to Pouzane, as well as Constantine's supporter
Sisinnios, *strategos* of the *Thrakesion* army, suspected of plotting against the
emperor, both of whom were executed. Whether they were implicated in
an attempt to remove Constantine or some other treasonable activity is
unknown, but the harsh measures taken by the emperor suggest a serious
threat to his position.[25]

Constantine's defeat of Artabasdos and those who may have sympathised
with him established him firmly on the throne, and he immediately set to
work to assert his authority both within the state and externally. From the
administrative point of view, he gradually introduced a series of reforms
of both the provincial military administration and the palatine units (later
referred to as the *tagmata*), the chronology of neither of which is certain,
but the results of which were to strengthen his position at Constantinople

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[21] Theoph., 420.10–15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 581); Nikeph., 136. See the account in
      Rochow 1994, 24–8 with further sources and literature; Treadgold 1992; Nichanian 2004,
      519–47.
[22] For the various sources dealing with Artabasdos' punishment see Speck 1981, 34–5, 292–5;
      Rochow 1991, 157f.; and for the banishment to the Chora, Speck 1981, 36f. For Artabastine:
      Constantine of Tios, 84–106; also ed. in: *AS* Sept. v, 274–83, see §16 (p. 103).
[23] Theoph., 420.29–421.2 (Mango and Scott 1997, 581).
[24] Theoph., 441.19–30 (Mango and Scott 1997, 609). See Speck 1981, 35, 38–9; Rochow 1991,
      158; *PmbZ*, no. 3820/*PBE* Konstantinos 4.
[25] See the detailed discussions, with sources and further literature, in Rochow 1991, 157–9;
      Speck 1981, 33, 43f., 265f.; with *PmbZ*, no. 737/*PBE* Baktangios 1/*PmbZ*, no. 6753; *PBE*
      Sisinnios 3.

and create a new elite force at Constantinople which was loyal to him and which was paid and controlled directly from the city, thus setting up a counter-weight to the power of provincial forces and the threats posed by powerful provincial officers.[26] He may also have carried through a number of changes in the fiscal administrative apparatus.[27] These policies were not undertaken in isolation from one another, of course: fiscal and military changes were directly related. The fiscal and economic policies were again connected with a number of other known events during his reign. The devastating plague which swept across the empire from 746 decimated the population of Constantinople, and the emperor was able to reinforce the latter only by the compulsory movement of people from the Aegean islands, Hellas and the Peloponnese (although the exact date of the transfers is unclear).[28] Indeed, during the epidemic Constantine himself left and took up his residence in Nikomedeia, receiving regular reports from the city and writing back.[29]

In Constantinople itself, Constantine continued and accelerated the repairs to the urban fabric begun by his father after the earthquake of 740. Numerous inscriptions attest to further strengthening of the land walls,[30] including one of 740/1 with the earliest securely dated use of the inscription IC XC NIKA on a city wall as an apotropaic device, a phrase associated with Constantine the Great's triumph at the Milvian bridge that now becomes closely linked with imperial victory.[31] Following the drought of 766, Constantine restored the old aqueduct of Valens, damaged by the Avars in 626, and apparently augmented it with additional water channels.[32] While this

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[26] Detailed analysis in Haldon 1984, 208ff., 222–7 (the establishment of the reduced *Opsikion*, and the separation of the divisions of *Optimaton* and *Boukellarion*); 228–56 (reform of the *scholai* and *exkoubitoi*). See further below, Chapter 11.

[27] See Rochow 1994, 39ff.; Brandes 2000, 380–4 and below, Chapter 11.

[28] Theoph., 422.29ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 585f.); Nikeph., 140 and the discussion with sources and literature in Rochow 1991, 160–4. For the population transfer: Theoph., 429.22–5 (Mango and Scott 1997, 593) (for the year 754/5); Nikeph., 140 (immediately after the plague). See Rochow 1991, 173.

[29] Reported in Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* iii, 65 (496 B–C). None of this correspondence survives.

[30] Meyer-Plath and Schneider 1943, 126f., 130–2, 134 (inscriptions nos. 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 18, 24, 29a & b, 32, 38, 39); Foss and Winfield 1986, 53–4; Rochow 1991, 136; Ousterhout 2001, 18. Documentation in Theoph., 412 (Mango and Scott 1997, 572) and the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* (Cameron and Herrin 1984, 58–9), which Kresten 1994, 33ff. shows to refer to the year 740/1, rather than to a rebuilding (not mentioned in any source) of the walls after the siege of 717/18, postulated by Cameron and Herrin 1984, 20f. and 170f.

[31] Frolow 1956, 106; but see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 65, n59. On the symbolic role of the cross in eighth- and ninth-century Byzantium, see further Brubaker 1999b, 152–7.

[32] Theoph. 440 and Nikeph. 160; both identify the old aqueduct as that of Valentinian: trans. and commentary Mango and Scott 1997, 608; Mango 1990, 161. See Dalmann and Wittek

may in part have responded to a disruption of more local water supplies by the earthquake, exacerbated by the drought,[33] it is nonetheless a notable example of significant urban renewal, particularly given the apparent scale of the project. According to Theophanes, Constantine 'collected artisans from different places and brought from Asia and Pontos 1000 masons and 200 plasterers, from Hellas and the islands 500 clay workers, and from Thrace itself 5000 labourers and 200 brickmakers'.[34] Whether or not these figures are inflated, it is clear that Constantine was committed to a large-scale undertaking; even Theophanes, no friend of the emperor, felt compelled to conclude that it was a success: 'when the work had thus been completed, water flowed into the city'.[35] Repercussions of this project were presumably felt along the entire length of the water supply system, which ran for over 250 km from springs in the Istranja mountain range near Vize (Byzantine Bizye).[36] An inscription now in the Edirne museum but, according to museum records, from the Vize/Kırklareli area, records the repair of a bridge during the reign of Constantine V and Leo V (769–75) and documents work either on the aqueduct near its water source or, more likely, on a nearby footbridge crossing one of the rivers close to the Bulgarian border.[37] Whichever, the economic impact of Constantine's massive public works project must have been considerable, and beneficial both for the workforce (skilled and unskilled) and for the local markets and services that supplied the imported workers with materials, food and lodging. The project was sufficiently impressive to spill over into other arenas, generating the legend of Constantine V as a dragon slayer, according to which Constantine dispatched a dragon blocking an aqueduct, whose appalling smell killed many.[38]

The massive urban renewal initiated by Constantine V played into what may have been a conscious effort to promote the emperor as the second founder of Constantinople. As Paul Magdalino has observed, the 754 council

1933, 5 and 47; and, for the archaeology, Bono, Crow and Bayliss 2001, with extensive bibliography.

[33] *Pace* Mango 1995, who suggested that the 626 damage to the water supply of Constantinople had potentially disastrous consequences, Bono, Crow and Bayliss 2001 suggest that others of the many local water sources were probably sufficient to maintain the population.

[34] Trans. from Mango and Scott 1997, 608, who note that the clay workers presumably made water pipes.

[35] *Ibid.*   [36] Bono, Crow and Bayliss 2001; Çeçen 1996; Mango 1995.

[37] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 384–93, who argue that the bridge repair was connected with the Bulgarian campaign of 773/4.

[38] Gero 1978; Zuckerman 1988, 200; and Auzépy 2002, who believes that the dragon represents idolatry.

'acclaimed him as "New Constantine", the equal of the apostles, who had abolished idolatry'.[39]

East and west: the stabilisation of state frontiers

In respect of foreign policy, both the Balkan and Islamic fronts demanded attention. Constantine V continued and intensified the offensive operations begun against the Arabs during his father's reign, and inaugurated a series of punitive attacks against the Bulgars, employing both military and diplomatic strategies to achieve his ends.[40] The Balkans represented for Constantine a particularly problematic region. During the later sixth and seventh centuries Roman authority had been increasingly limited to the coastal districts and the central plains and river valleys of the southern Balkan region. Colonisation by a number of 'Slav' groups who had migrated across the Danube – a process which began already in the middle of the sixth century – had meant the effective de-Christianisation of much of this region, so that Byzantine authority survived only in the coastal strips and river valleys around towns such as Thessaloniki, Thebes and Corinth in central and southern Greece, with isolated centres at fortified places such as Monembasia; in Anchialos, Mesembria and Debeltos on the western coast of the Black Sea; and along the central Illyrian coast, effectively isolated until the recovery of central and northern Greece during the ninth century and the establishment of the *thema* of Dalmatia.[41] Those areas which remained firmly under Byzantine control – the coastal strip along the coast around Thessaloniki and southern and eastern Thrace – were subject to regular raids or invasion by the various politically dominant groups who were able to control the Slav incomers: the Avars in the period up to the later 620s; indigenous Slav chieftains during the middle years of the seventh century; the Bulgars from the 680s.[42] The collapse of the Avar hegemony, the short-lived rise of the Slav 'kingdom' of Samo, and (according to some later sources) good diplomatic relations between various south Slav groups, such as the Serbs and Croats during the reign of Herakleios, gave the Byzantines the possibility of re-asserting their claims to political authority over

[39] Magdalino 1999, 141–6 (quotation at 141). For the council, Mansi XIII, 225, 353.
[40] On diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the caliphate, see the valuable survey and analysis by Kennedy 1992; and Kaplony 1996.
[41] See especially Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou 1986; Ditten 1978; Lemerle 1954; Zásterová 1976; Haldon 1997a, 44–8; Curta 2006, 70ff.
[42] Haldon 1997a, 44f.

the whole region up to the Danube;[43] although in practical terms – as the various expeditions mounted by Constans II, Constantine IV and Justinian II demonstrate only too clearly[44] – this was a political fiction much of the time: imperial authority existed locally and only when an imperial field army was present.[45]

The establishment of the Bulgar khanate from 680 saw the entrenchment of a permanent and well-organised hostile power in the north-east Balkans, which thenceforth dominated the neighbouring Slav populations and was able increasingly to intervene in Byzantine affairs, either by diplomatic political means, or through military action. The involvement of the Bulgar ruler in the internal politics of the empire is apparent during the reign of Justinian II, and during the first years of Leo III: on both occasions, the Bulgar leadership was interested in securing its own power and authority over the territories already held and in enhancing its role in 'international' politics.[46] It was probably in response to the Bulgar threat, the danger from nearby autonomous Slav chieftains and the long-term failure of the campaigns of Constans II in the Balkans that the military commands of Thrace (although garrisoned with soldiers from the praesental, or *Opsikion*, army), and of Hellas in the southern Balkan peninsula, were established in the last years of the seventh century.[47]

Although relations between Byzantines and Bulgars remained peaceful during the first years of Constantine's reign, his settlement in Thrace in the mid-750s of considerable numbers of forcibly removed emigrants from north Syria and the Anatolian region seems to have caused the Bulgar leadership some concern. This was undoubtedly exacerbated by Constantine's construction of a chain of fortresses and forts to protect them, and which presumably also received garrisons.[48] This prompted the Bulgars to demand

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[43] Popovic 1980; Lilie 1985. For Samo, see Obolensky 1971, 59; further literature and discussion in Ditten 1978, 127 with note 5, 128.

[44] See Haldon 1997a, 56 and nn. 45, 46; 60 (Constans II in 658 and 661/2); 66–7 (Constantine IV in 678); 71 (Justinian II in 688/9).

[45] See Haldon 1997a, 64f.

[46] For the Bulgars, see the literature and discussion in Haldon 1997a, 66f. (establishment and initial defeat of Byzantine forces under Constantine IV); 77 (khan Tervel helps Justinian II); and Chapter 2, 71–2 (Bulgar raids after the deposition of Justinian II); 73 (peace treaty between Tervel and Theodosios III in 716); 77 (Bulgar khan hands over rebels in 717 to Leo III); and Curta 2006, 77–84.

[47] See below, Chapter 8 on the evolution of the state military and fiscal administration at this period; for Thrace, see Lilie 1977, 28–35; and for Hellas, see *TIB* I, 50–78.

[48] Nikeph., 144; Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos iii*, 73 (512B); and discussion in Ditten 1993, 184–8 with further sources and literature. For a summary and review of the history of the Bulgar state in the eighth century see Curta 2006, 82–90.

renewed payments from the emperor, which were refused; a Bulgar army marched into Thrace and may have reached the Long Walls, but was repulsed by the emperor.[49]

In the following years Constantine mounted nine expeditions into Bulgar-dominated territory. Campaigns in 759–60, 762–3, 763–4, 764–5, 766, 772, 773, 773–4 and 774–5 resulted in three substantial victories (in 763, 765 and 772/4), even though the Byzantine transports and fleet accompanying these campaigns were on two occasions destroyed or damaged in storms.[50] In addition, he was active in the affairs of the *Sklaviniai*, the independent or semi-independent Slav clans and peoples of the central and western Balkans.[51] He campaigned against those settled in the Macedonian region in 758–9 who, nominally under Byzantine rule, had taken advantage of the Bulgar attack of that year to assert their autonomy, re-imposing Byzantine authority and probably exacting the payment of tribute or 'taxes' in kind.[52] Following internal conflict within the regions controlled by the Bulgars, many people, identified simply as 'Slavs' in the Byzantine sources, fled to Byzantine territory in 762, from which Constantine transported them to re-settle parts of Asia Minor; in the following year Slavs fighting in the Bulgar army deserted to the Byzantines.[53] Constantine was also able to launch smaller raids against Slav chieftains, capturing and executing some of the most important; while he succeeded in buying the freedom (in exchange for silk garments) of many Byzantines who had been taken prisoner during Slav raids on the Aegean islands.[54] The re-assertion of Byzantine authority

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[49] Nikeph., 144 and Theoph., 429.26–30 (Mango and Scott 1997, 593f.), give differing accounts. See Rochow 1991, 173f.

[50] 759/60 (victory at Markellai): Theoph., 431.6–11 (Mango and Scott 1997, 596); Nikeph., 144, with Beševliev 1971, 366 and Rochow 1991, 175–6; 762–3 (victory at Anchialos): Theoph., 432.29f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 599); Nikeph., 148–50. See Rochow 1991, 179–81; 763–4: Theoph., 436.21f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 603) (Rochow 1991, 185–6); Nikeph., 150–2; 764–5: Theoph., 437.19–25 (Mango and Scott 1997, 605); Nikeph., 156 (failed land and sea operation); Rochow 1991, 190–1; 772–3: Theoph., 447.13ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 617) (victory at Lithosoria, misplaced in Theophanes' text after the campaign of 774 – see Rochow 1991, 215); 772–3: Theoph., 446.27ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 616f.) (and see Rochow 1991, 214–15); 773–4: Theoph., 447.29ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 618) (and Rochow 1991, 215–16); 774–5 (last incomplete campaign during which Constantine dies): Theoph., 448.12ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 619) and Rochow 1991, 216–17.

[51] See Chrysos 2007 for a useful warning against over-interpreting the term *Sklavinia* as a territory or political entity, at least before the later eighth and early ninth centuries.

[52] On the *Sklaviniai*, see Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou 1986, 352–5. For Constantine's campaigns: Theoph., 430.21ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 595). See Ditten 1993, 234–5.

[53] Theoph., 432.27ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 599); Nikeph., 148. See Ditten 1993, 83–6.

[54] For the capture of the leader of the Scamares and of the chief of the 'tribe' of the Severi (in 764–5): Theoph., 436.14–21 (Mango and Scott 1997, 603), and the discussion in Rochow 1991, 185. For the exchange of prisoners: Nikeph., 162; Ditten 1993, 51.

was not dependent entirely on military control, however: in 772–3 Constantine's expedition against the Bulgars was intended in part to protect the Slav Verzitai from Bulgar aggression, thus offering a route to peaceful incorporation. Given the evidence of continued widespread Slav immigration into the Peloponnese as late as the 740s a later source could describe the region as entirely Slavised.[55] The serious threat which the very existence of the Bulgar power in the Balkans had posed had been warded off; and the fact that Constantine had not succeeded in destroying or incorporating the Bulgar power – if this was indeed his purpose – does not alter the effective result of his efforts: the firm re-assertion of Byzantine power in the south and central Balkans and the establishment of a stable relationship between the two states.

In spite of the victories won by Leo and Constantine in the later 730s, regular raids from north Syria and Mesopotamia through the Taurus–Anti-Taurus barriers continued to disrupt the local economies of the affected regions, with all the consequences for the local population and for communications in the frontier zones. Raids took place every year until 744, when internal conflict distracted the attention of the chief military leaders (although smaller raids may well have continued).[56] The great Berber revolt in north Africa after 741, and the beginnings of the civil war which was to result in the Abbasid revolution, distracted the Umayyad leaders from their preoccupation with the Byzantine frontier.[57] At the same time, Constantine seems to have pursued a deliberate policy of depopulating the frontier zones to establish a no-man's land through which smaller raiding parties would pass with difficulty. Imperially ordained transplantations of populations from the north Syrian frontier region occurred in 745/6, for example, after a successful attack on Germanikeia. These people, reportedly mostly monophysite in belief, were removed to Thrace; similar deportations occurred in 750–1 and 754–5 from the regions of Melitene and Theodosioupolis. The policy served a double purpose, both in respect of the depopulation of the north Syrian border zone, and in terms of the strengthening of the population in Thrace, which had suffered from Slav and especially Bulgar raids and attacks.[58] By the same token, captives were deported from the Balkans to Asia Minor, on at least two occasions, in 759 and in 762, although where exactly they were settled remains

[55] For the Verzitai, see Theoph., 447.11ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 617); Rochow 1991, 215; Ditten 1993, 237; Curta 2006, 88f. For the continued 'Slavic' migrations into the Peloponnese: *De Them.*, 91 (ii, 6.33ff.).

[56] Lilie 1976, 144–55 for raids between 720 and 740.   [57] See Shaban 1971, 150–2.

[58] For detailed analysis with sources and literature, see Ditten 1993, 179–90.

unknown.[59] These efforts reflect the destruction wrought by the constant incursions of the Islamic raiders, and the need felt by the central government to stabilise the situation.

The troubles in the caliphate certainly aided the emperor in this. The expedition planned by Constantine for 742, which had been aborted by the usurpation of Artabasdos, would have been a further demonstration of imperial military power right at the beginning of his reign, and would have underlined the effects of the emperor's victory at Melitene in late 741. In 743 both Artabasdos and Constantine had sent embassies to the new caliph Walid II in the hope of gaining his support, although nothing is known of his reaction.[60] But in the same year Byzantine forces stormed and destroyed the frontier fortress at Sozopetra, a success repeated in the following year. Constantine's strategy seems not to have been to occupy enemy territory, however, but rather to destroy frontier installations and devastate an area sufficiently broad to create a deserted zone through which Islamic forces would have difficulty in passing and at the same time to give better warning of raids to the defending outposts. Between the mid-740s and early 770s numerous expeditions were mounted against fortress-towns in Islamic-held Armenia, Mespotamia, north Syria, Cilicia, and (by sea) Lebanon, such as Melitene, Germanikeia, Theodosioupolis, Kamachon, and Tripolis. Arab forces were just as actively on the offensive: a number of successful raids were mounted against Byzantine strongholds, and Arab forces defeated Byzantine armies in open battle on several occasions. But Byzantine armies were similarly victorious in a number of battles, and it can reasonably be concluded that during the reign of Constantine the Byzantine-Islamic frontier was stabilised and a degree of equilibrium established which marked the territorial extent of the two powers for the next 150 years and more. Diplomatic relations between the rulers of the two states continued throughout these years, in spite of the continuous state of conflict, and especially in respect of the exchange of captives – examples of such exchanges are recorded from 756/7 and 768–9, while proposals for a peace treaty are known from Arabic sources for the year 772.[61]

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[59]　Ditten 1993, 234ff.

[60]　Theoph., 416.9–11 (Mango and Scott 1997, 577); see also Agapios, 510; Beihammer 2000, nos. 332, 333; Rochow 2001, 312–13; Kaplony 1996, 243–8. For the Byzantine siege of Melitene and subsequent victory: Lilie 1976, 154; Baladhuri, 290–1.

[61]　For a catalogue of raids and expeditions on both sides, with an analysis of the pattern which emerges from them, see Lilie 1976, 162–72; and for the nature of the warfare which evolved, see Haldon and Kennedy 1980. On diplomatic missions, see the summary in Rochow 1994, 78ff. and 2001, 313–15. See Beihammer 2000, nos. 341 and 342. Other diplomatic missions or discussions about treaties or truces took place in 746 (Beihammer 2000, no. 334), 773–4 (Beihammer 2000, no. 343).

This series of military and diplomatic undertakings was, needless to say, extremely expensive in terms of resources. The military effort in particular demanded an adequate income from taxation, both direct and indirect, and it is likely that administrative changes were introduced during Constantine's reign in order to exploit more efficiently (subject to the constraints of the times) the state's ability to wage war, raise and maintain soldiers, construct fortifications, and so on. The building and garrisoning of the chain of forts and defended strongpoints erected by Constantine in the later 750s in the Balkans is illustrative. Likewise reforms of the military administration and the creation of a centrally paid and controlled palatine force played an important role in this context.[62] The achievement is the more remarkable when we consider that the empire was struck by a devastating plague in the 740s, which had dramatic effects on the population of Constantinople itself, and which very probably served also as the stimulus to Constantine – just as the earthquake and volcano on Thera and Therasia in 726 had perhaps affected Leo III – to pay more attention to religious and spiritual matters. We will return to this below.

In his relations with the papacy and the western kingdoms, Constantine had fewer successes.[63] The situation in Italy was especially fraught, for effective imperial control had come by the mid-740s to be confined to the hinterland of the city of Ravenna, the capital of the exarchate; the military command of Sicily, consisting of the island itself with parts of southern Italy; and the duchy of Rome.[64] Ravenna had fallen briefly already to the Lombards in late 739, although they were rapidly expelled with Venetian and papal help.[65] Although the purportedly hostile correspondence between Leo III and Gregory II and his successor Gregory III is supposed to have soured relations somewhat, there is no evidence for any permanent breach and, as we have seen, the rift between Rome and Constantinople was probably entirely based on papal opposition to imperial fiscal policy. Pope Zacharias (741–52) sent his legates to Constantinople after his election in the usual way, bearing his declaration of orthodoxy;[66] and as we have seen in Chapter 2, there is no reference in the *Life* of Zacharias to any lack of orthodoxy on the part of the Byzantine ruler. Even though he recognised Artabasdos as emperor (as is clear from certain papal letters),[67] it is apparent that

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[62] On all this see below, Chapter 11.

[63] For a recent very general survey, see Brown, in McKitterick 1995, 327–9, 333f.

[64] For the best surveys of the situation, see Brown 1984; and Guillou 1969; and Ruggini 1980.

[65] See the revised account of these events in Zuckerman 2005, 89–92.   [66] *LP* I, 432.

[67] See esp. Speck 1981, 114–19, 122–34; and Jaffé, *Regesta*, 2270, 2271 (letters of 22 June and 5 November 744: in fact, as Speck 1981, 126–7, has demonstrated, it is almost certain that these

recognition of Constantine quickly followed his recovery of Constantinople and of the throne.[68] Thereafter, Zacharias worked actively on behalf of imperial interests, arranging a truce between the Lombards in the north and the exarchate under the exarch Eutychios. This did not save the beleaguered imperial outpost in the north. In 751 the Lombard king Aistulf (749–56) finally succeeded in taking Ravenna, although Byzantine naval power meant that coastal districts, especially Venetia and Istria, remained under imperial authority.[69] But the despatch of imperial ambassadors via Rome to the Lombard king, and the presence of Roman legates on the same missions, in 752/3 and the following year, did nothing to persuade Aistulf to return the territories and cities which the Lombards had seized. Since military intervention was out of the question due to the Byzantine commitments in the Balkans and on the eastern front (and probably also in view of Leo III's failed military intervention in 732/3), the papacy was effectively left to its own devices, in spite of papal encouragement to the emperor to intervene directly.[70] The result – the appeal to the Franks for support from pope Stephen II (752–7) – was to mark the beginnings of a fundamental shift in the relations between east and west thereafter, a shift already marked by Gregory III's approach to the Frankish leader Charles Martel after 731 for military support, after his unsuccessful attempts to forge a working alliance with the Lombard duchies of Benevento and Spoleto against the Lombard king Liutprand (712–43).[71] In 753 Stephen travelled through Lombard territory with a Frankish guard sent by Pippin, the king of the Franks, and, in spite of a meeting with king Aistulf at Pavia, at which the king tried to dissuade the pope from continuing his journey, Stephen finally met Pippin on Frankish ground in 754, where a treaty of mutual support was agreed. At the same meeting the Frankish king is supposed to have granted the pope authority over the recently conquered Lombard lands,

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dates – given in indictional form – are corrupt, and should belong in the year 743); and Chapter 2, 89.

[68] Constantine sent a papal legate back to Rome with presents of imperial properties in Italy, which the *Vita* of Zacharias (§20) states the pope had requested. It is likely that the legate was originally received, and presented with the property, by Artabasdos; but Constantine seems to have taken advantage of the situation to re-assert his own authority. See Speck 1981, 120; and esp. Bertolini 1968); Herrin 1987, 354f.

[69] For Zacharias' efforts on behalf of the empire with the Lombards, see Herrin 1987, 353–5; for the capture of Ravenna and the resistance of the Byzantine-held coastal regions, Bertolini 1941, 479ff., and Nicol 1988, 1–19. Aistulf: *PmbZ*, no. 155; *PBE* Aistulf 1.

[70] On the diplomatic efforts of pope and emperor, see Herrin 1992, 98ff.; and 1987, 359f.; Bertolini 1941, 525ff.; and Brown 1988. For pope Stephen's encouragement: *LP* I, 442.6–16; and for the failed expedition of 732/3, see above, Chapter 2.

[71] See the account in Herrin 1987, 352–3; Rochow 1994, 107ff.

including the exarchate and the pentapolis.[72] In 754 Pippin marched into
Lombard territory, defeated Lombard forces again and blockaded Aistulf
in Pavia, where the latter came to terms and agreed to observe the rights
of the papacy and recognise its position under Frankish protection. But
almost immediately afterwards the Lombard king ignored the terms of this
agreement, sending troops to besiege Rome; and Frankish forces had to
enforce the terms after defeating the Lombards a second time in 756.[73]
Desiderius, who succeeded after the death of Aistulf in 758, adopted a more
peaceful policy, as did the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento, so that Stephen's
policy seemed to have had immediate beneficial results for the papacy.
For the empire, in contrast, they meant the effective end of any imperial
presence, or effective influence, in northern Italy. In spite of missions to
the Frankish king, Byzantine interests were ignored, cities and territories
claimed by the emperor were not returned to his authority, but rather placed
in Roman hands.[74]

Constantine maintained good relations with the Frankish king, how-
ever, in spite of these rebuffs, in the process devoting less attention to the
papacy which, it was felt, had betrayed imperial interests. The emperor's
main concern focused on the maintenance of the imperial possessions in
the south. To this end continuing good relations with the Franks as well
as the Lombards were vital, and the limited evidence suggests that Con-
stantine was relatively successful in his aims. When Pippin formally became
king, a Byzantine embassy, sent effectively to recognise his new authority,
brought him presents which included an organ, following a Frankish diplo-
matic mission to Constantinople in 757;[75] as well as silks;[76] furthermore,
an agreement was made in 758 with Desiderius to recover Otranto for the
empire (an undertaking which appears to have been successful).[77]

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[72] Bertolini 1941, 529–44; Herrin 1987, 373–5, with sources and literature; Jarnut 1975.

[73] Bertolini 1941, 547–69; Herrin 1987, 377ff.

[74] Detailed account in Herrin 1987, 379–81; Bertolini 1941, 569–72; for the history of the
territories of the exarchate and the pentapolis after 751, see the survey in McKitterick 1995,
333–8. See *PBE* Desiderios 3.

[75] For a survey of the diplomatic missions of the Frankish kings from Pippin III to Louis the
Pious, see Ganshof 1971, 162–204; and Herrin 1992, 100ff. This exchange: *Cont. Fredegar.*,
MGH, script. rer. Merov., ii, 186 (although Miller 1975, 51 and n. 14, denies that this embassy
actually took place). Imperial recognition was vital to Pippin, of course, so lavish gifts from
Constantinople were of particular significance for his esteem both locally and in respect of the
papacy.

[76] See de Micheaux 1963; Starensier 1982, 146–7; Muthesius 1992, 242–4; Muthesius 1997, 68–9;
Duchesne 1905, 106–14.

[77] Herrin 1987, 383; Rochow 1994, 114–15. See *Cod. Carol.*, nos. 17 (515) for 758; 25 (529), for
759, for pope Paul's letters to Pippin informing of these moves.

A complex web of alliances and treaties between the empire and the Franks and Lombards, on the one hand, and on the other between the papacy and the Frankish king for the maintenance and defence of the newly established Roman 'republic', involving extensive Byzantine naval activity in the Tyrrhenian Sea and joint Byzantine-Lombard military undertakings, marked the 750s and 760s.[78] The papacy continued to recognise imperial authority in theory, but did nothing in reality to confirm it; coins of the emperors continued to circulate in Rome; yet no taxes flowed from the papal coffers to the empire.[79] At the same time Arichis II of Benevento (758–87) attempted to secure his own position by cultivating diplomatic and cultural contacts with Constantinople.[80] The letters of pope Paul I (757–67) to Pippin illustrate his anxieties in respect of the precariousness of his alliance with the Franks, but also in respect of the activities of the empire, in both its efforts to establish good relations with the Frankish king (and the threat of a Byzantine-Frankish agreement to reverse the recently established pattern of political power in Italy) and to woo the smaller Lombard duchies.[81] Paul emphasised in particular the efforts he had made to persuade Constantine to return to the orthodox fold in respect of the holy images; his influence probably underlies Pippin's refusal to contemplate a marriage between Constantine's son and co-emperor, Leo, and his own daughter Gisela, perhaps proposed in 766/7. But this is the only reference to such matters, so it seems that in general terms Paul's relationship with the empire and Constantinople was entirely determined by the concerns of Italian politics.[82] It was at this meeting that the letters of Constantine carried

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[78] *Cod. Carol.*, nos. 17 (515); 20 (521), for 764: pope Paul reports the movements of Byzantine fleets in the regions of Sicily and Otranto, and the Tyrrhenian sea, and requests Pippin's aid.

[79] On naval activities, see Eickhoff 1966, 47. For the diplomatic and military action, Herrin 1987, 382ff.; Miller 1969; Rochow 1994, 114ff.; and esp. McCormick 1994a. For the imperial coins, see Grierson 1982, 169.

[80] Belting 1962, 145ff.; and see *ODB* I, 281; *PmbZ*, no. 888.

[81] See *Cod. Carol.*, nos. 25, 29 and 36 (764–6), and esp. nos. 11 and 30 for papal worries; and the discussions of Miller 1969, 59–61 and Bertolini 1941, 606ff. For pope Paul: *PmbZ*, no. 5890; *PBE* Paulus 49.

[82] For Paul's entreaties to Constantinople: *Cod. Carol.*, no. 36 (546.13ff.) and cf. nos. 30, 32, 37, 38 (dated 757–61), which refer to the unorthodox religious position of the Byzantines; Kehr 1896. Cf. also *LP* I, 464.1–5: the pope had frequently begged the emperors Constantine and Leo to restore the veneration of the images of Christ, the Virgin, the apostles, saints, prophets, martyrs, and confessors. This is the official version, of course, and while it must be treated with some caution, as the editor of the text notes (e.g. 457, n. 17), Paul's letters show that the popes had serious concerns about imperial iconoclasm after Hiereia. For the proposed marriage, *Cod. Carol.*, no. 45 (562.10–12), for the year 770/1 (the sole reference to the proposal, in a letter of Stephen III to Charles and Carloman); and the discussion in McCormick 1994a, 130, and with

by the imperial representatives Anthes (or Anthimos) and Synesios were purportedly mistranslated or misrepresented by, or through the agency of, the Roman *primicerius* Christopher, who appears to have been a key figure at Rome. And it was also at about this time that a short passage in one of Paul's letters to Pippin (the letter is undated, but appears to be from the last years of his reign) refers to a representative of the patriarch of Alexandria coming to Rome to inform him of a difference in view between Rome and the other churches. Whether this refers to the issue of images remains unclear.[83]

The synod held at Gentilly in 767, the Acts of which have not survived, but at which Roman and Byzantine theologians are reported to have debated the issue of the holy images before the Frankish king and his lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries, resulted in a clear rejection of the imperial position.[84] This seems to have been Constantine's final attempt to win support for his policies in the West; and it is notable that it is at just this time (and immediately following the discovery of a major plot against him in Constantinople) that the emperor seems to have turned to a much more repressive policy with regard to the individuals and groups identified with the opposition to his rule or his policies within the empire, as we shall see below. In spite of the imposition at Rome of pope Constantine II, brother of Toto, duke of Nepi, by a party hostile to the Frankish alliance, the situation remained fundamentally unfavourable for the empire. Constantine II was himself removed in 768, his deposition plotted by a pro-Frankish, anti-imperial faction in collaboration with the Lombards and king Desiderius. He was replaced by Stephen III, the candidate of Christopher the *primicerius*.

The Lateran synod of 769 was convened as a result of the meeting at Gentilly and the arrival of a synodal letter from the eastern patriarchs, addressed to the former pope Paul, including a passage which set out their disagreement with the church at Constantinople over the question of images, and enlisting the support of Rome.[85] It seems fairly clear, there-fore, that until this point Rome had made no formal pronouncement on the issue, even if the papacy had thus far rejected the position adopted by

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corrections to some of the dates of Paul's letters; Lounghis 1980, 149–52. For the emperor Leo (IV), see *PmbZ*, no. 4243; *PBE* Leo 4.

[83] See the detailed account in Auzépy 1995c, 55–6; Brown 1984, 172–89 for the whole affair. Anthes/Anthimos: *PmbZ*, nos. 470, 471, 486/*PBE* Anthimos 17; Synesios: *PmbZ*, no. 7217/*PBE*, Synesios 2. For the eastern representative visiting Rome: *Cod. Carol.*, no. 40 (553. 7–12).

[84] For Gentilly, see the detailed discussion in Herrin 1987, 384–5; McCormick 1994b; 1994a, 113–16, where the sources are presented; Thümmel 2005, 84.

[85] In *Cod. Carol.*, no. 99 (652.35ff.). The *Hadrianum* (*MGH Epp., Epist. Karolini. aevi* III, 5–57 [*JE* 2483]) (pope Hadrian's response to the *Capitulare adversus synodum*, the Frankish response to the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787) also mentions this letter and its content: 11. 12–28. Speck 2002–3, 637–46, argued that the *Hadrianum* is, in fact, a later, ninth-century confection, but Lamberz 2002 shows that this is not the case.

the Constantinopolitan church during the Council of 754 (on which see below), and that the stimulus to the elaboration of a clear Roman argument in favour of images was the letter from the eastern churches. At the Lateran synod the Council of Hiereia was condemned (the first explicit reference to the 'official' nature of imperial iconoclasm in western sources) and the Acts of the synod of 731 confirmed; and under the new pope, Stephen, and his supporters, Rome further intensified its ties with the Franks and loosened those with the empire.[86] The only potential ally remaining to the Byzantines in the north of the Italian peninsula was now the king of the Lombards; yet in 774 Desiderius was besieged and captured in Pavia, and his kingdom extinguished by Charles, king of the Franks. His son, Adelchis, who received thereafter the name of Theodotos, fled first to Verona and then to Constantinople. After Desiderius' death, the imperial government continued to recognise Adelchis as legitimate ruler of the Lombard kingdom until his death following the unsuccessful expedition of 788 to restore him to power. Possibly at the same period (although there is now some discussion about its original date, the third or fourth decade of the ninth century being also proposed), the Donation of Constantine seems to have made its appearance, during the papacy of Hadrian I (in 778). It purported to be an agreement between the fourth-century bishop of Rome Sylvester and the emperor Constantine I, implied an ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the investiture of secular rulers, and was employed in crediting the papacy with a greater authority and independence in secular affairs than it had hitherto in theory enjoyed. Its importance was primarily in the field of western ecclesiastical politics at this time, however, and it was not known in the east until much later.[87] In short – and as the failure of Eirene's later expedition to restore the Lombard kingdom in 788 illustrates – Byzantine power in the central and northern regions of Italy was effectively terminated.[88]

[86] The Lateran synod: *MGH Conc. II.1*, see 77 and 79; *LP* I, 477; Herrin 1987, 393–5; and esp. Lanne 1986. For the accession and deposition of pope Constantine and the various factions at Rome, see Brown 1984, 172ff.; Auzépy 1995c, 59–60. Auzépy 1995c, 58–9, has suggested that both the Greek and the Syrian/Palestinian monastic communities at Rome, focused in the monastery of St Saba there, played a considerable role in the international politics of the opposition to imperial religious policies at this time; see also Sansterre 1988; Patlagean 1964. Absence of Roman reaction to 754 until the 760s: Thümmel 2004, 84–5 with literature.

[87] Frankish conquest of Lombard kingdom (which continued to exist, governed by Frankish dukes): Herrin 1987, 398; fate of Adelchis/Theodotos: *ibid.*, 408; 424–5; the Donation of Constantine: Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 268; Herrin 1987, 385ff. See *PmbZ*, no. 7943; *PBE* Adalgisus 1.

[88] For the fate of Istria, which fell under Lombard rule twice, briefly after 751 and a second time in the years 768–72, before being finally lost after 788, see McKitterick 1995, 338; Krahwinkler 1992; McCormick 1998b, 47–51. The province of Venetia remained under Byzantine authority, although in practice autonomous after the first decade of the ninth century: McKitterick 1995,

The reign of Constantine V, whose priorities lay in the Balkans and the east, spanned the final stages of the process. At his accession in 741 imperial power, albeit under constant threat, was still a reality in the north of Italy. The Franks had not yet become a significant factor. By the end of his reign, only Sicily and Calabria, with the smaller duchies of Otranto (recovered with Lombard aid in 758) and Naples were under Byzantine rule, and the latter was effectively autonomous.[89] Together these areas were under the authority of a *strategos* of the army of Sicily, and represented an economically as well as strategically important command. With Sardinia, Malta and the Balearic isles, although occasionally raided by Arab naval forces (and quite heavily at certain points), continued control of this region gave the Byzantines a good strategic base in the central and western Mediterranean and enabled them, if not to intervene directly, then to maintain an economic and military presence of some importance.[90]

It is very probable that it was also at this time (and not during the reign of Leo III) – perhaps as late as after the synod of Gentilly – that the dioceses of Sicily and Calabria, together with Illyricum, were taken from the authority of Rome and placed under that of the patriarch of Constantinople. This move should not be associated or confused with the appropriation by Leo III of the papal patrimonial estates. The appointment at about this time (from *c.* 754–67) of a number of bishops who employed aniconic seals, in

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338–41. Along the Adriatic coast Byzantine authority was occasionally asserted by naval force, but the imperial presence was largely a token one north of Epiros. See Goldstein 1996.

[89] The duchy of Naples played an important role in the maintenance of a Byzantine and Greek presence in southern Italy at this period: see the remarks of Auzépy 1995c, 57–8; and McKitterick 1995c, 341–3. The bishop Calvus was reported to have been loyal to Constantine V, and it is notable that only the *gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum* report the legend of Constantine V and the slaying of the dragon (*Gesta Ep. Nap.*, 423). See Bertolini 1970, 381–7. On Calabria and Otranto, *ibid.*, 343–4; and on Sicily, *ibid.*, 345–7.

[90] See the discussion of Eickhoff 1966, 38ff.; and Ahrweiler 1966, 11, 33–40, 51–2. For the position of Sardinia in the empire's naval administration in the later seventh and early eighth centuries, see Leontsini 2001, 115–17; Cosentino 2005b; and Chapter 11; and for the Arab raids on the island in the seventh and early eighth centuries, Kaegi 2000, 2001. A naval expedition of some importance involving vessels from the Sicilian fleet as well as others – from Sardinia, perhaps, and/or the imperial fleet – was in action in 760 in the Tyrrhenian sea, for example: see Eickhoff 1966, 224; von Falkenhausen 1967, 4. See also Cosentino 2002. The Byzantine presence on Mallorca in the Balearics is attested by a small number of lead seals of officials – of George, *apo eparchon*, of Sergios, *dux*, and of John, *hypatos* and *spatharios* – all dateable in the first third of the eighth century. See Ilisch *et al.* 2005, 28–30 (S-2–4). Also from Mallorca is a seal of a certain Theodotos (?) *hypatos*, which the editor connects with a similar seal in the Vatican collection for a *hypatos* and *doux Sardinias* (Ilisch *et al.* 2005, 30f., S-5). The limited numismatic evidence for the eighth century on both Mallorca and Minorca supports this picture of continued long-distance connections with both Constantinople and Byzantine Sicily at this period. See Morrisson 2008, 660, with references.

particular for Crete, may re-inforce this interpretation.[91] If the so-called 'iconoclast *notitia*', a list of episcopal sees, does indeed date to some time in the second half of the eighth century (as opposed to the period after 787), the fact that it includes the see of Corinth, for example, under the authority of the patriarch of Constantinople, would support this. But its date remains problematic.

In addition, in 766, the year before Gentilly, Constantine had uncovered a conspiracy of considerable extent against his rule, a conspiracy which involved not only leading elements of the monastic community in the capital, but several key members of the civil and military administrations and their officers. Although no connection between these events is made in the sources, it is entirely possible that the politically radical transfer of the western dioceses followed the final collapse of the emperor's efforts to woo the Franks and outmanoeuvre the papacy which the condemnation of Hiereia at the Lateran synod of 769 meant. The plot of 765/6, the failure of Constantine's proposal of a marriage alliance with the Franks, and the work of the anti-imperial faction in Rome may in some ways have been inter-related; and it is certainly possible that the emperor's agents had supported or connived at the accession of the 'false pope' Constantine II.[92] It is also very probable that the betrothal and marriage of Constantine's son Leo to the Athenian Eirene in 769, accompanied by particularly elaborate ceremonial and public celebrations, represented not only the emperor's final abandonment of an alliance with the paramount western European power, but was intended to emphasise Leo's position as chosen successor, and thus at the same time underline what the Frankish ruler had lost in breaking off the possibility of an alliance.[93]

After the synod of 769, it would have been apparent that the empire had nothing more to lose, and the transfer of Sicily, Calabria, and Illyricum may in addition have seemed a suitable way of recompensing the empire and the patriarchate of Constantinople for the 'betrayal' of its interests in Italy by the papacy.[94] But in all these developments, the issue of holy images

[91] Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 125–6.

[92] For Illyricum, see Chapter 2 (with reference also to similar transfers of ecclesiastical authority during the middle years of the eighth century), and esp. Grumel 1951–2 (who prefers the period 752–7); Miller 1975; Auzépy 2004, 140, n. 44. For the iconoclast *notitia* and its date, see Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 127, and 1994 for discussion and older literature; and Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 299. For the pope Constantine: Theoph., 432 (Mango and Scott 1997, 597), notes his pontificate and ascribes a reign of five years to him, suggesting that the source employed by the chronicler reflected an official imperial recognition.

[93] See esp. Lilie 1996, 41–3, with sources and literature.

[94] See Chapter 2, n. 65, for sources and literature. Grumel 1951–2, 191–200, prefers a date in the period 752–7.

and their veneration played an insignificant role. Pope Paul I referred on occasion to the impiety of 'the Greeks' in his letters to Pippin,[95] and he may have played on the question in his efforts to dissuade Pippin from engaging in a marriage alliance with the emperor Constantine.[96] But – as several historians have emphasised – imperial iconoclasm was an issue, but not the major issue, in the breach between Rome and Constantinople. Only at the synod of Gentilly did the issue become a matter of public dispute, and the imperial delegation suffered a defeat, although the details of the debate remain unknown.[97] And it was only in the Lateran synod of 769 that the issue of images seems to have been raised at a formal level. Importantly, the *Libri Carolini* do not mention the Isaurian emperors in an unfavourable light at all. The theological position adopted here is, in fact, closer to that of the Council of Hiereia than it is to that of Nicaea in 787.[98]

The question of the images: theology and pragmatism

We have already seen in Chapter 2 that there exists no convincing evidence that Leo III issued an edict to enforce an official policy of iconoclasm, nor that holy images themselves suffered widespread destruction at imperial command. On the contrary, the evidence of the letter of the patriarch Germanos to Thomas of Klaudioupolis suggests that it was still quite reasonable in the 730s to represent Leo as being not hostile to images. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly the case that there did exist a debate about attitudes to holy images, more particuarly about whether or not one should observe *proskynesis* in their presence; that a number of bishops and communities within the empire were involved in this debate; and that the papacy, insofar as it had any information on the issue, had condemned in 731 what it perceived as a dangerously innovatory practice.

Given the absence of any evidence for an official iconoclast edict issued by Leo, or of any persecution of 'iconophiles' during his reign, the question of whether and, if so, when Constantine V himself introduced or continued such a policy must be asked. As we have seen, the most Leo can be

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[95] *Cod. Carol.*, nos. 36 (546.13ff.); 40 (552f.); see note 82, above.

[96] See Herrin 1987, 382ff.

[97] Paul praised Pippin afterwards for rejecting the Byzantine views and the schism they had engendered: *Cod. Carol.*, no. 42 (554–5).

[98] See Gero 1973b (although that the *Libri Carolini* present Eirene in a less favourable light is incorrect); Freeman 1985; Heitz 1987; Freeman 1994. Further literature and discussion: Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 241–2.

said to have done is impose restrictions on the placing of images in public places – churches in particular – and possibly on the production and display of certain categories of image. For the first years of the reign of his son and successor the only evidence is a reference in Theophanes to the effect that Constantine had demanded that the patriarch Anastasios renounce the divinity of Christ and hence the key role of the Virgin as Mother of God – an unlikely act for a Byzantine emperor at any time! If there is any truth underlying this misrepresentation, it is probably associated with the emperor's desire to follow in his father's footsteps with respect to imposing some limits on the display and public use of images of the Virgin in churches.[99] It is sometimes believed that Constantine reacted immediately and sharply against the supposed 'restoration' of icons by Artabasdos after his initial victory and his entry into Constantinople. Artabasdos' attitude toward images is, however, unclear; and a careful analysis of the relevant sources suggests at the most that, if he did act in favour of images, it was from pragmatic political motives, and presumably simply involved granting permission to replace those images which Leo and perhaps Constantine had ordered to be removed or distanced.

Only two sources refer to Artabasdos' restoration of images, the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, and the *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros. The latter is dependent on the original version of the former, that is to say, the *Chronography* prepared by George the *sygkellos*, from which the sentence in question was taken. And it has been argued that, since it occurs at a point where the report George would have had at his disposal about Artabasdos was clearly incomplete, George completed the sentence describing what 'Artabasdos restored throughout the city' by adding the words 'the sacred images' to fill the gap and make sense of an incomplete text.[100] It has also been proposed that the original text probably described the restoration of buildings and monuments in Constantinople damaged or destroyed by the great earthquake of 740 – Theophanes refers to the effects of this natural event and the fiscal measures introduced by Leo III to pay for the reconstruction of the walls, which were severely damaged.[101] The fact that George could have added this – there is no reason to doubt that he firmly believed that Constantine was an iconoclast at this time – is thus to

[99] Theoph. 415.24–30 (Mango and Scott 1997, 576).

[100] See Theoph., 415.21f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 575) and Nikeph. 134 with the detailed analysis of Speck 1981, 138ff.

[101] Theoph., 412.6–21 (Mango and Scott 1997, 572); Nikeph. 130f. For archaeological evidence of these measures, see Cormack and Hawkins 1977, 210–11; the discussion of Speck 1981, 352 (n. 477); and Kresten 1994, 43, n. 86; and above, 69.

be explained by the tradition that Artabasdos had opposed Constantine on religious grounds, which, for Nikephoros, must have meant over the issue of the sacred images.[102] It is worth adding that Artabasdos could have, indeed he surely would have, produced a traditional, iconic, imperial seal on the older model, with the Virgin Hodegetria on the obverse, had he wished to make a clear statement about images. Yet he did not – his seal is exactly the same as those of Leo III and Constantine V.[103] But we do not need to push the notion that Artabasdos did not 'restore' images so far beyond the limits of the sparse evidence we have – it is enough to point out that he may well have adopted a policy of 'restoration' of former practices merely out of pragmatic populism, in order to secure his position in the capital.[104] And if we take into account the evidence from the *Life* of pope Zacharias, which does not question the emperor's orthodoxy and makes no mention of the rebel Artabasdos as being anything but a usurper (there is no mention of his 'restoring' icons, or indeed of any actions to do with icons at all),[105] there remains no solid evidence for Constantine's supposed extremist iconoclasm at this time, nor for Artabasdos' supposed religious motives. Constantine's lack of iconoclast fervour up to the early 750s is further, if indirectly, supported by another passage in the *Liber Pontificalis*, written before Zacharias's death.[106] Here it is claimed that pope Zacharias (741–52), 'built from the ground up in front of the Lateran office a portico and a tower where he installed bronze doors and railings, and in front of the doors he adorned it with a figure of the Saviour . . . [and] at the top of the tower he constructed a triclinium and bronze railings, and there he painted a representation of the orb of the world and decorated it with various verses'.[107] The location, function and use of bronze suggested to Krautheimer and Ward-Perkins that Zacharias commissioned this portico in emulation of the Chalke gate,[108] just as, three centuries earlier, Theodoric had evidently named the gate to his palace in Ravenna after the famous bronze entrance to the palace in Constantinople.[109] The details do not correspond – the Chalke had, so far

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[102] Speck 1981, 143f.   [103] See *ZV*, nos. 23, 24, 26–32; and 35.   [104] See Gero 1977, 15ff.

[105] See n. 67 above on the letters of Zacharias of 743 in which Artabasdos is referred to as the reigning emperor.

[106] *LP*, I, clxii–clxvi, ccxxiv–ccxxv.

[107] 'Fecit autem a fundamentis ante scrinium Lateranensem porticum atque turrem ubi et portas ereas atque cancellos instituit et per figuram Salvatoris ante fores ornavit . . . in superioribus super eandem turrem triclinium et cancellos aereos const uxit, ubi et orbis terrarum descriptione depinxit atque diversis versiculis ornavit': *LP*, I, 432; trans. Davis 1992, 44.

[108] Krautheimer 1980, 121; Ward-Perkins 1984, 175; Haldon and Ward-Perkins 1999; Brubaker 1999a. For Zacharias' patronage, see also the excellent discussion in Osborne 2003.

[109] *MGH* SRL, 337; discussion in Mango 1959, 26; and Johnson 1988, 91.

as we know, no orb of the world; and as we have seen it almost certainly lacked a 'figure of the Saviour'[110] – but Krautheimer and Ward-Perkins are surely correct to assume a generic reference to the entrance to the imperial palace in Constantinople. Zacharias evidently felt it appropriate to emulate the imperial palace, and it is unlikely that this would have occurred had papal opinion already branded Constantine V as an enemy of orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, one point is worth further examination. It is clear that rumours that Constantine was not an orthodox ruler and that he had always been a fervent iconoclast were well-embedded in the later eighth-century tradition of the history of iconoclasm; by the same token, Constantine himself, in his *Peuseis*, defends himself against a current of opinion which represented him as being in some way not a properly orthodox ruler because he was opposed to the image of Christ.[111] But it is important to note that Constantine was accused in the later tradition not simply of being an iconoclast, but was associated also with a whole range of disgusting practices and portents (including the story of his soiling the baptismal font, and hence one of his later nicknames, *kopronymos*). It has been argued that there were thus two strains to the anti-Constantine propaganda, one of which probably had no connection with the issue of holy images, but which was later blended into an overall hostile image of a wicked iconoclast ruler.[112] This 'original' tendency, which probably pre-dated the events of 741, was critical of Constantine, not because he was an iconoclast, but rather because he was believed to have – in his own words – 'distanced himself' from Christ.

But by the time he composed the *Peuseis*, his views on the devotion shown to icons had been causally connected with these earlier charges; so that, in the concluding section of his *Peuseis*, as they are transmitted in a somewhat abridged and very selective form by the patriarch Nikephoros,[113] the emperor sets out to refute the charges which he says had been levelled against him, noting that these accusations date back to the time when even his relatives opposed him (presumably the time of the revolt of Artabasdos) and even beforehand, and when he was condemned by many as a result. According to Constantine, he swore his innocence of the charges

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[110] See 128ff. above.

[111] The three *Antirrhetikoi* of the patriarch Nikephoros deal with the first two *Peuseis*: *PG* 100, 205–553; see also Alexander 1958a, 168–70; Ostrogorsky 1929, 8–11, for *Peuseis* 1 and 2; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 6–7. There may originally have been thirteen *Peuseis*: Ostrogorsky 1929, 7ff.

[112] See Speck 1990a, 139–90, esp. 153ff. for a detailed analysis of the sources in question.

[113] See Rochow 1994, 134 on the highly subjective and tendentious nature of Nikephoros' use of the surviving writings of the emperor; and Speck's discussion: 1981, 71–5, 245–66.

before certain bishops.[114] But it is clear from the text in question that these charges had not been entirely forgotten. Perhaps, as has been suggested, they were kept alive in the propaganda of those who had supported the usurper Artabasdos, and that they were connected with the illness with which he seems to have been afflicted: leprosy would fit well here as a possible disqualification from imperial office and as a possible source of rumours of ungodliness.[115]

The three main sources contemporary with Constantine's religious policies which can be used to throw some light on the issue of his iconoclasm all present problems of dating. The *Peuseis* have been traditionally assumed to represent arguments made at the Council of Hiereia in 754, or in association with the preparations for such a council. In fact, they can be shown to have little to do with such an event.[116] Rather, they seem to have been generated in the atmosphere created in the after-effects of the pestilence which struck Constantinople in 748, and reflect its effects on Constantine's understanding of both his father's policy and related aspects of contemporary observance and practice in respect of images and the saints. They also represent arguments intended to question the idea that Constantine's policy of challenging the (for him, idolatrous) devotion shown to particular types of image, in particular to that of Christ, meant that he had thereby moved away from Christ. Indeed, Constantine maintains that it is specifically through this that he proves his true devotion to Christ. The *Peuseis* represented perhaps meetings held with churchmen and others,[117] and were specifically intended to win approval and support for his views, and the idea that he was both orthodox and Christ-loving.

In the first of the *Peuseis*, Constantine dealt in particular with the question of the possibility of representing Christ in the form of an image. His basic argument was straightforward, although it has been described by modern commentators as somewhat naive.[118] He argued that Christ could not be represented in a picture because his divine nature was itself not representable. Christ was a single person consisting of two distinct natures made one, divine and human.[119] The two natures cannot be separated,

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[114] See Ostrogorsky 1929, frg. 23; Speck 1981, 245f.   [115] Speck 1981, 261–3.

[116] See the discussion in Speck 1981, 248f.; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 6. The traditional association: Thümmel 2004, 65f.; 2005, 65–8.

[117] Theoph., 427. 20 (Mango and Scott 1997, 591).

[118] See, for example, Ostrogorsky 1929, 13–17.

[119] The fact that Constantine seems to have argued that the person of Christ derived *from* or *of* two natures, rather than – as in the Chalcedonian creed – *in* two natures, gave rise already in Byzantine times to accusations that he was adopting a monophysite position, an argument taken up by more recent commentators: see, e.g., Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* i, 12 (224A; 232A;

but only the human aspect can be represented in matter. Thus, to create an image of that human aspect neglects the divine, and results in the creation of a mere mortal.[120] The second *Peusis* stresses the importance of the eucharist. This is the real image of Christ, for through the consecration the bread and wine of the eucharist represent the body and blood of Christ.[121] To support these arguments, Constantine commisioned a collection of citations from the Fathers of the church, which included texts from the works of Eusebios of Caesarea, Basil of Caesarea, Athanasios, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzos, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanios of Salamis, and John Chrysostom.[122] The arguments marshalled by both sides in the debate are reflected to a degree in the *Nouthesia gerontos*; but, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the iconophiles also quoted and used iconoclast texts selectively, to suit their own purpose, so that we do not have a fair account of the debates that actually occurred. Thus, as we have seen, the detailed discussion of §§13–15 of the *Wisdom of Solomon* passes over the verses 14.2–7, which can be interpreted specifically as a justification for the exceptional position granted to the wood of the cross by God, noting simply that there followed 'a few words on the Cross'.[123] Those who supported the devotion to and use of icons clearly tried to refute the arguments of their iconoclast opponents by stressing that the iconoclast veneration of the cross likewise involved the veneration of a material object made by human hand, so that in condemning icons the iconoclasts were by definition condemning the cross. The arguments could be presented in such a way, therefore, as to appear to point up a major contradiction in iconoclast thinking.[124]

296C) (Fr. trans. Mondzain-Baudinet 1989, 70). Modern discussion (for a monophysite tendency): Ostrogorsky 1929, 25ff.; Florovsky 1950; and critical of this interpretation see esp. Loos 1983, 131–42, where the agreement between the iconoclast and Neochalcedonian theology is clearly shown. Note also Brock 1977.

[120] The fragments are most easily accessible through the excerpts of the Migne text reprinted in Hennephof: see frgs. 141–87 (52–7). Fr. trans. in Mondzain-Baudinet 1989, 297–302, German trans. in Dumeige 1985, 283–6; and in Rochow 1994, 177–88; Eng. trans. in Gero 1977, 37–52.

[121] See the detailed account in Loos 1983, 133ff.; Gero 1976; and Thümmel 1991a, 34–5; 2004, 66–8.

[122] See Gero 1977, 47; Thümmel 2004, 204f. For the probable existence of an earlier iconoclast *florilegium*, with which John of Damascus was familiar, see Stein 1980, 56; Speck 1981, 274. To what extent western *florilegia* supporting devotion to images were known or available in the east at this time remains unknown. The evidence for the contents and scope of a *florilegium* which may have been compiled for the synod of Rome held in 731 by Gregory III is debated. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 264–6 with nn. 103–5; and the discussion in Thümmel 2004, 210–13, with literature (*contra* Alexakis 1996).

[123] See for the passage in question: §§xvi–xviii.   [124] See also Speck 1987b, 289–90.

The *Peuseis* seem to fit in with what the chronographer Theophanes says about the years immediately preceding the Council of 754: for the years 752/3 he notes that Constantine did many things against the church and orthodoxy. In every town (or every day – the text is not clear), he says, he organised meetings – *silentia* – at which he tried to persuade the people to share his impious views, thus preparing the path for his future Godlessness.[125] Similar reports of this activity on Constantine's part appear in other sources, and suggest that the fragments of the *Peuseis*, as far as they can be reconstructed from the partial account of the patriarch Nikephoros, reflect part of the process.[126] The author of the *Life* of Niketas of Medikion remarks that he had himself read thirteen of the emperor's sermons, delivered over a period of two weeks.[127] The *Nouthesia gerontos*,[128] the original version of which seems to be representative of a series of discussions that appear to have taken place in the period before 754 between iconoclasts and iconophiles, records that Constantine organised meetings throughout the empire to present his views, sending imperial representatives – in one definite example, a bishop – to put across his own opinions.

These sources have in common the information that Constantine began to polemicise against icons in his tenth year as sole emperor, thus in 751/2, and there is no concrete evidence that his attentions were turned in this direction beforehand. But why this should have been the case remains unclear. The most probable hypothesis, which is supported by a re-interpretation of some of the relevant texts, is that he was affected by the terrible plague which afflicted Constantinople and the remaining territories of the empire in the years 746/7–49/50.[129] According to this view, Constantine's interpretation of a natural catastrophe was reflected in his understanding of the event as a divine punishment or warning. In the

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125 Theoph., 427.19–23 (Mango and Scott 1997, 591) (but dated to 751/2).
126 Thus a number of Constantine's writings have been tentatively identified from the *Antirrhetikoi* of Nikephoros: a tract against *proskynesis* before images of Christ (see Ostrogorsky 1929, 8–11; Gero 1977, 37–47); a treatise against images of the Theotokos and the saints, and containing patristic texts and citations hostile to images (Ostrogorsky 1929, 13; Gero 1977, 47–52).
127 *Vita Nicetae hegumeni Medicii*, in: AS April. i, §29 (xviii–xxxiii) (*BHG* 1341–2). See Beck 1959, 510. Niketas died in 824; the *Life* was written by the monk Theosteriktos before 844–5. Ševčenko 1977, 118.
128 *Nouthesia gerontos peri ton agion eikonon*, viiiff.; Gero 1977, 25–36. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 251–2, and detailed analysis in Speck 1990a, 565–77.
129 Theoph., 422.29–424.3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 585f.); Nikeph., 138–40; parallel references collated, and detailed discussion with extensive bibliography on the medieval plague epidemics of the period, in Rochow 1991, 160–4. The plague seems to have had its roots in Syria and Jordan, where it raged between 740 and 749, spreading thence to Cyprus, the Aegean and Peloponnese, Constantinople, and westwards to Sicily and Italy.

context of the history of his father's reign and attitudes, and the limited debate on images which had then taken place, it is a reasonable hypothesis that he responded in a similar vein. It is thus not a coincidence that his preaching – which was clearly quite fervent and committed – against the devotion offered to icons, is said to have begun almost immediately after these events.[130] The evidence of the concluding section of the *Peuseis*, in which Constantine defends his record in respect of the rejection of *proskynesis* before images, does not contradict this.

The pestilence of the late 740s thus apparently affected Constantine's attitude to the images, and revived in him an interest in the role they played and the way in which they were treated in day-to-day affairs. He was stimulated to formulate his own ideas on the theology of images and the question of the devotion offered to them, ideas which are reflected in the *Peuseis*. His efforts were also directed to discrediting the rumours about his unfitness to rule, rumours perhaps stemming originally, as we have seen, from the fact that he suffered from a chronic disability or illness such as leprosy or epilepsy, which had probably been exploited by Artabasdos in his own claims to imperial authority, and which had now been associated by his critics with his attitudes to images. The iconoclasm of Constantine V thus appears as a phenomenon of the late 740s and early 750s.

This picture is borne out by a re-interpretation of two further sources. To begin with, the three polemical sermons directed against the iconoclasts by John of Damascus have usually been dated in the early years after Leo III's espousal, or supposed espousal, of an iconoclast policy, that is to say, in the 730s, a dating partially dependent on the supposed date of John's decease.[131] But certain references in the text of the first two sermons in particular have led to a reconsideration of this dating and, hence, to the nature and date of the events to which they may be alluding. More importantly, it has been pointed out that there exists a considerable number of similarities in vocabulary and theological terminology as well as in quotations from the scriptures between the surviving fragments of the *Peuseis* and the first two of John's sermons. This has been seen as a reflection of a common source for the written debate, and of a closeness in the time of composition of the two sets of writings, in short, as reflection of the fact that the first and second sermons were written in response to the *Peuseis*.[132]

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[130] See Stein 1980, 254 and n. 152; followed by Speck 1981, 254; and esp. Turner 1990a; Thümmel 2004, 64–5.

[131] Fl. *c.* 675–753/4 (although some have argued for an earlier death in 749). See Noble 1987.

[132] The texts: *Contra Imaginum calumniatores orationes tres*, in: Kotter 1975. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 248–9, with nn. 22–3 and literature; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 26–7.

According to the author of the sermons, no formal imperial act or edict had yet taken place, but imperial influence is alluded to; the threat of such an act, in the form, perhaps, of a formal ecclesiastical gathering, was also referred to, and John asked for unity and solidarity among the clergy in standing firm, even though he also made it clear that many had already accepted the new teaching. It has generally been thought that this refers to the *silention* held in 730, at which Germanos resigned, and that the imperial influence in question was that of Leo III. But the introduction to the first sermon makes it very clear that the issue of images has already had a very marked effect: the church is split into different factions, and is rent as if by storms, and indeed the greater part of the church has returned to its original foundations, presumably a reference to the dependency of the iconoclasts on arguments derived from an emphasis on Old Testament texts and the commandments.[133] This situation is more closely paralleled by that described in the letter of Germanos to Thomas of Klaudiopolis which, as we have seen, reflects a debate and a controversy already well advanced; and this bears little relationship to the relatively limited scale of the debate up to the year 730. The theological argument justifying the devotion to images and the existence of images themselves is, as has also been noted by several scholars, very similar indeed to that in the letter to Thomas, which was probably written some time after Germanos' resignation; it also responds to the sort of arguments presented against icons in the *Peuseis* of Constantine V and, as we shall see, in the *Horos* of the Council of 754.[134] In the concluding section, John notes that pious emperors do not overturn the law, an act which would amount to robbery, as the 'Robber Synod' of Ephesos (in 449[135]), and that 'we', i.e. those who disapproved of the new dogma, would not accept any imperial order or command promoting such a reversal of tradition. There is thus every likelihood that the first sermon was written at a later date, when the threat of a renewed imperial initiative was on the horizon. This can only have been the Council of 754.[136]

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[133] I, i. 7–18; ii. 6ff.; lxvi. 8ff.

[134] See the review of the argument it presents, and the reflected iconoclast position, in Speck 1981, 186ff.

[135] See *ODB* i, 707.

[136] I, lxvi. 10–16. Speck 1981, 179ff., argues that the sermon actually embodies an original response to a non-imperial iconoclast treatise, which was then extended by the addition of a polemical prologue and conclusion to respond to the specific political moment for which it was re-formulated. He suggests that this was more likely to have been the period immediately before 754 than that before 730, given the complete absence of any evidence for any formal imperial act at that time.

The second sermon seems to represent a slightly later development: John returns to the issue of the inappropriateness of imperial meddling in affairs of dogma and theology, noting that while the subjects of the emperor are beholden to him for taxes and related matters, they owe allegiance to their priests in spiritual affairs; he also notes that Germanos has 'now' been beaten and exiled, along with many other bishops and priests whose names are unknown to him. From the emphasis on the 'now', it seems very likely that this represents a (second) punishment of the former patriarch, which later commentators misunderstood and conflated with the first (supposedly in 730).[137] John addresses the emperor directly, referring to his dogmas and teachings.[138] In drawing parallels between the attitudes of the Manichaeans to material things, and those of the iconoclasts, he remarks scathingly that whereas the former had an apostle (Thomas) upon whom they could base their teachings, the latter have rewritten scripture according to Leo, that is, an emperor (but the reference seems to suggest that Leo is no longer alive).[139]

It is worth noting also that, in listing the names of those emperors who had intervened in the affairs of the church, he does not mention Leo III – perhaps a further indication of the fact that this emperor issued no 'formal' document regarding icons (and that Germanos had not resigned because of that issue in particular).[140] The second sermon is clearly addressed to an iconoclast readership; but it does not attempt to persuade them to change their views, in contrast to the first sermon, which is both theologically more sophisticated and written in a more complex style. Both would provide iconophiles with an arsenal with which to combat iconoclast arguments; but the impression gained from the second sermon – which is in effect a

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[137] II, xii.1–43. Speck 1981, 225ff. (an argument rejected, however, by Thümmel 2004, 61, 63). Thus Theophanes and Nikephoros, as well as several hagiographical and polemical writers, took over from George the *sygkellos* the notion that Germanos' punishment was connected only with the events of 730 and with Leo III.

[138] Whether the emperor is actually meant, or simply his supporters in general, is unclear (see Speck 1981, 217ff.); but this may well refer to the sermons and writings of Constantine V, and so fix the date of the composition of the second sermon in the early 750s.

[139] II, xiii.1–6; xvi.62ff.

[140] II, xvi.68–81. Although neither does he refer to Justinian, or Herakleios, both of whom intervened in precisely the way of which John so clearly disapproved (Herakleios issued the *Ekthesis*, in 638, for example, directly intervening in spiritual matters). The emperor Constantine referred to here (along with Valens, Zeno, Anastasios and Philippikos) is probably Constans II, responsible for the *Typos* and the punishment and banishment of Maximos Confessor, pope Martin, and many others during the prosecution of his monothelete policy, rather than Constantine IV (*pace* Speck 1981, 220), whom John would surely have seen as a thoroughly orthodox ruler. All the rulers named issued documents or edicts which, from John's standpoint, could be viewed as 'interference' in church matters.

simpler and more directly polemical version of the first – is that the real battle against imperial involvement has already been lost. Nevertheless, the theology evolved by John in these sermons breaks new ground by moving the focus of the discussion from the question of whether or not Christ could be represented because he had become incarnate as a man – in other words, away from the issue of the natures of Christ – or whether or not the use of images was an ancient practice within the church, to issues of the *hypostasis* of the Trinity and Christ's position as one person in the Trinity. John argues, in effect, first, that a representation of Christ the man represents also an aspect of the *Logos*, not simply the human aspect, which was inseparable from the divine, but one facet of the unitary *hypostasis*, so that the beholder was ineluctably drawn on to a revelation or an apprehension of the divine. Furthermore, if this was not the case, and the human aspect of the Trinity could not be represented, then this was in practice a denial both of the incarnation and of the redemption or salvation of humankind which it accomplished. For John, therefore, whether in response to Constantine's *Peuseis* or to some other written iconoclast treatise which has not survived (except perhaps indirectly in the *Nouthesia gerontos*), the soteriological basis of Christianity itself was threatened.[141]

The brief analysis in Chapter 2 of the letter of Germanos to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, written in the 730s and possibly as late as the late 740s, suggested three important conclusions: first, preaching about, and removal of icons, had caused dissension and concern throughout the cities and communities of the empire; second, Germanos is no longer in an official position from which he can influence affairs – instead, he has to rely on the support of his fellow clergy. Importantly, part of his reason for writing the letter, with its iconophile arguments, at such length, was to make sure that he would not be (any longer is the implication) associated with recent developments: he had been unable to influence events.[142] Third, he had taken Thomas's agreement and support for granted since the latter had not raised the issue of images, which implies that the issue was indeed a recognised topic for debate within the church. It suggests in addition that Germanos had around him a group of like-minded bishops and other churchmen, among whom Thomas had been counted. Taken as a whole, this evidence suggests that the letter to Thomas was actually written after

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[141] There have been many recent summaries of the theology of John of Damascus, although the question of possible later interpolations, and the point at which they were composed, remains unresolved. See Kotter 1975, Introduction; Rozemond 1959, 4–49. On John see *PmbZ*, no. 2969 with further literature, and *PBE* Ioannes 11.

[142] Mansi xiii, 124 D6–9.

Germanos had abdicated and after the debate about images had become
an issue of some importance to the subjects of the emperors and to the
church.[143] It is worth re-iterating this here, because the situation assumed
within the empire is remarkably close to that described in the first sermon
of John of Damascus.

One of the interesting points raised by Germanos is the contrast between
the pious emperors, who have erected a cross with accompanying repre-
sentations of apostles and prophets, and the iconoclasts.[144] Also, according
to the letter, Thomas had been moved to remove images on the basis of a
commonly held *dogma*, communicated through means which Germanos
does not describe.[145] It is clear that the emperors in question are Leo III
and Constantine V, since they certainly erected a cross with accompanying
representations 'in front of the palace', perhaps in 726; but whether both
are to be understood as still alive is not clear from the text. While it cannot
be proved definitely, it is much more probable, as has been suggested, that
the letter was written after Leo had died, and reflects that moment when,
after Constantine's *silentia* and during his propaganda campaign through-
out the empire as described by Theophanes and the other texts noted above,
Thomas decided to change his mind on the issue of images.[146]

On the basis of this re-assessment of the letter of Germanos and the first
two sermons of John of Damascus, it has been reasonably suggested that
all three texts were conceived and written at the time that Constantine V
was becoming publicly involved in the debate on images; that Germanos'
'second' punishment is indeed to be taken as such, and that, along with
the punishment meted out to the other churchmen John mentions in his
second sermon, reflects in fact a punishment for treason; and that this accu-
sation in turn stemmed from Germanos' involvement in the distribution
of iconophile propaganda from his internal exile.[147] The extremely critical

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[143] See esp. Speck 1981, 267–81; and 98–105 above.   [144] Mansi xiii, 124 E1–125 A2.

[145] *Ibid.*, 108 C8–9, D1ff.

[146] Speck 1981, 267–81, esp. 278ff., argued the proposition in detail. Although it remains to a
large degree hypothetical, it is in fact no more hypothetical than any other interpretation of
events, and has the advantage of making more sense of some of the texts without trying to
force them into a partially contradictory pattern.

[147] Germanos is anathematised at the 754 synod, where he is described as a 'worshipper of wood'
and as *dignomos*, that is to say, two-minded: there is no evidence that he was involved in any
anti-imperial activity under Leo III; whereas, if the hypothesis proposed by Speck is correct,
that he became involved in anti-iconoclast and, hence, anti-imperial designs thereafter (after
746), he could accurately be described in this way (a Byzantine equivalent of 'two tongued'):
Speck 1981, 226ff. The location of his exile after 730 is unclear, as are the events surrounding
his 'second' punishment. But there are several direct and indirect references in other sources,
based on now lost earlier materials perhaps contemporary with the events in question, which

tone of John's second sermon, along with the threats implicit in both that those who meddle in the affairs of the church will be liable to anathematisation, and the accusation also that the emperor was not orthodox, all were sufficient to merit this response on the part of Constantine himself. The official gathering which the first sermon fears can thus be supposed to be the synod at Hiereia in 754, plans for which will have reached John in Jerusalem, since the patriarchate there will undoubtedly have been invited to send representatives. And it was this critical position which earned John the accusation of treason and the multiple anathema pronounced against him at the Council of 754.[148] It has been suggested that, in association with this – or at least, at some point in the years between 746 and 754 – the patriarch Anastasios issued an ecclesiastical edict prohibiting public displays of devotion to images at the east end of churches. While this may seem very possible, particularly in the months immediately preceding the council, there is no substantive evidence to prove that this was indeed the case.[149]

It is worth pointing out here that John's criticism of the emperor seems to have come from a relatively limited segment of eastern Christian society within the caliphate. In the eastern historiographical tradition John is generally regarded with some hostility, partly because of his family's history, reaching back into pre-Islamic times, as tax farmers, and partly because they worked also for the Islamic regime – John's father was certainly a fiscal official in the Damascus administration. The majority tradition associated with the monastery of St Saba, of which he was, according to the favourable tradition, a member, is entirely silent on John's membership, even though Theodore Abu Qurra was certainly a monk there. And there seems to have been just as much tacit support in the east for imperial policy as there was opposition (see below). Just as significantly, while John is mentioned in the *Horos* of 754, his name appears hardly at all in the Acts of the Council of 787, while his work remained unknown to, or unused by, the mainstream Byzantine iconophile tradition until much later. Given his attack on the emperor (we assume, Constantine V) and the serious accusation of treason made against him at Hiereia, this absence must reflect the care taken at the Council of 787 not to insult the dynasty of the reigning emperors. The condemnation he received in 754 seems as much to do with his position as

support the notion that Germanos was indeed involved, along with John of Damascus (through the latter's writings) and others, in actively opposing Constantine V's iconoclasm. For a detailed discussion of all the relevant sources, see Speck 1981, 226–43.

[148] Mansi xiii, 356 C–D, trans. Gero 1977, 94. See Speck 1981, 240–3; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 26–7.

[149] Speck 1987b, 287–90; 1990a, 98–104; but for a more cautious position, see Rochow 1999a, 27.

a man of influence and authority in the caliphate, and his activities there, although it has been suggested that Constantine V recognised also the threat posed by John's theological arguments, fashioned his own responses in distinction to them, and had John condemned so roundly because of the recognition of this challenge.[150]

The Council of 754 and its results

The consequence of these considerations, however, is that Constantine V appears to have done little in respect of the issue of images during the first five or six years of his reign. Concerned with the eastern front, distracted by the rebellion of Artabasdos, it was only after the great pestilence of 746 that he seems to have decided to take the issue up; and even then there is no evidence to suggest that it became the dominant issue in his concerns: the repopulation of Constantinople and the areas most affected by the plague, the rebuilding of the city, and the economic stability of the state seem to have occupied his attentions to at least the same degree, if not more so. But there existed a groundswell of criticism affecting his own position and authority, and it seems to have been this, coupled with the effects of the plague, which turned his attention to the ideological issues raised by the question of images. In response to Constantine's views and public campaign, the former patriarch Germanos seems once more to have taken up the matter, stimulated perhaps by the change in the views of his friend Thomas of Klaudioupolis. As the emperor took up an increasingly radical position, becoming more and more actively involved himself, so the opposition responded in writing, with the result that, shortly before the council which was arranged for 754 to debate the whole issue thoroughly, Germanos and many others were punished by the imperial authorities for their challenge to imperial authority.

The synod held in 754 regarded itself as of ecumenical standing, and may have been accepted as such by the eastern patriarchates. The evidence is ambiguous. It is not clear whether representatives from the three patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria were present or not, although those from Rome do appear to have been absent, thus permitting the Council

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[150] Noble 1987, 104; and esp. Auzépy 1994, 193–204. He was cited as a leading opponent of iconoclasm: Mansi xiii, 157, and was acclaimed at the seventh session of the Council: Mansi xiii, 400. See Mansi xiii, 356 (for the anathema laid against him during the proceedings at Hiereia in 754). See *PmbZ*, no. 2969; *PBE* Ioannes 11.

of 787 to claim that the 754 meeting was unlawful and without authority.[151] In contrast, however, several western bishops attended – those of Sicily, Dalmatia, and Hellas are mentioned specifically in the much later chronicle of Michael the Syrian, but his source tradition, complex though it is, derived from a number of sources which were themselves closer to the events in question.[152] But neither is there any evidence that its status was challenged from Rome until very much later. The position adopted by the imperial church was summed up in its *Horos*, or definition, which can be reconstructed from the writings of those who later condemned it, both in the Acts of the seventh Council of 787, and in other writings, for example, those of the patriarch Nikephoros I.[153]

It is not known when the decision to convene a synod to deal with the issues was taken: if the redating of the first two sermons of John of Damascus against the iconoclasts to the early 750s is accepted, then the implication that an official synod or meeting was imminent suggests that Constantine began to plan the event at the same time as he was composing his *Peuseis*. The council was held in the imperial palace at Hiereia[154] from 10 February until 8 August in 754. As we have just noted, although representatives from the provinces of Rome, Dalmatia, Hellas, and Sicily were present, there is no evidence that papal representatives attended, although legates from Rome had been in the city shortly beforehand, and must surely have known of the forthcoming council. There is no trace of the council in sources dealing with the papacy, however – the *Life* of Stephen II (752–7) makes no mention of the council, nor indeed of the icon issue at all, concentrating on papal-Lombard-Frankish relations, with the empire playing only a shadowy background role, and the reasons for this absence remain

[151] See Mansi xiii, 208D–209C; and Auzépy 1999, 232–3, 253–6; Thümmel 2005, 68ff. Speck 2002–3 argued that representatives of the eastern patriarchs were probably present, although there is no evidence directly to support this contention.

[152] Mich. Syr., ii, 520.

[153] See Krannich *et al.* 2002 for a detailed discussion of the context and proceedings of the council; Thümmel 2002, 46–56; 2004, 68–77. It is not clear which of the eastern patriarchates accepted the claims of the Council of Hiereia to be the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Michael the Syrian notes that some did not recognise it as such (Mich. Syr., ii, 520); Agapios (*Kitab al-Unvan*, 533) accepted its ecumenical status. Somewhat later, in 766/7, the patriarch Theodore of Jerusalem (*PmbZ*, no. 7575; *PBE* Theodoros 12) sent a *synodikon* to Rome expressing his acceptance of images, a statement apparently supported by the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria: see the discussion in Gouillard 1976, 32; Auzépy 1999, 218–25; and the Latin transl. in *CC* 99 (*MGH Epp.* III, *Epist. Karolini aevi*, I), 652f. See Beck 1980, 74–5. See also Alexander 1958b.

[154] Modern Fenerbahçe (Phanaraki): there was a small harbour there in addition to the palace. See Janin 1964, 149f., and 498f. with map XII. For the origins of the name, see Pertusi, in *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi* 1: *Expeditio Persica*, i, 157 and 144–7.

obscure.[155] Pope Stephen was himself very much concerned with his visit to king Pippin in Frankish territory, a visit which spanned the whole period during which the synod of 754 was in session, and this may also explain the lack of interest in eastern affairs. This was, of course, directly relevant to the fact that papal concerns with the Lombard threat, and the failure of Constantinople to offer an effective military response, had forced the popes to look elsewhere – to Pippin – for help. The Council of Hiereia would have appeared a relatively minor issue in this respect, although it would certainly have offered the papacy further grounds for shifting its allegiance to the Frankish king.[156] The three eastern patriarchs were invited, but did not attend – according to later sources, they refused the invitation on the grounds that the emperor wished to compel their agreement, but the reliability of this testimony is very questionable.[157] Nevertheless, of the 338 bishops who are reported to have attended, virtually all were from the Constantinopolitan patriarchate.[158]

It is almost certain that the patriarch Anastasios would have been intimately involved with the planning and preparations for the meeting, although no theological statement on his part survives at all. But particularly significant for later commentators and critics was the fact that Anastasios had died just before the synod met, some time in late 753 and before the beginning of February 754.[159] A new patriarch – the monk and bishop of Syllaion, Constantine II (754–66), who had been temporarily in Constantinople (since 752) following a disagreement with the metropolitan bishop of Perge – was elected only during the final session of the synod, which met in the palace of Blachernai in Constantinople on 8 August.[160] Until that time, the synod was presided over by the metropolitan of Ephesos, Theodosios, a son of the former emperor Tiberios II Apsimar (698–705) who, it is reasonable to assume, was probably very much under the influence of the emperor.[161] The final act took place on 27 August 754, when the

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[155] See Theoph., 427.33f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 591); *LP* I, 442; 444f. and Mich. Syr., ii, 520f.; cf. Gero 1977, 66ff.

[156] See 169 above, and Rochow 1994, 107–9.

[157] See *V. Steph. iun*, 125. 26–126. 3; 145. 3–6; Mansi xiii, 204A.

[158] Mansi xiii, 232D–E; Theoph., 427.31 (Mango and Scott 1997, 591).

[159] Theoph., 427.25–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 591); Nikeph., 142. For the date, see Rochow 1991, 167f., with parallel sources and literature; Rochow 1999b, 27–8.

[160] Note that his election was also, like that of Germanos, uncanonical, as he was appointed to the see of Constantinople from his existing see at Syllaion.

[161] For an account of the synod, see Herrin 1987, 368ff.; on Theodosios of Ephesos: Theoph., 427.31f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 591 and n. 2); Mansi xiii, 400A, 416C; Nikeph., 142; for his seal, see Laurent, *Corpus*, I, no. 255. See also Sumner 1976, 291ff.; the comments in Chapter 2; *PmbZ*, no. 7845 and *PBE* Theodosios 3. For Constantine II see *PmbZ*, no. 3820 and Rochow 1999b (see 31–2 for the conflict with his metropolitan and its possible grounds).

emperor and his son Leo, together with the bishops who had taken part and the newly elected patriarch, processed to the Forum of Constantine[162] where the Acts were read before those who were present. The three best-known defenders of icons were anathematised on the same occasion.[163]

Although the Acts have not survived, the *Horos*, or definition, was read out at the Council of 787 in order that it might be proofed and refuted, and it is clear that it represents a slightly different theology from that outlined in Constantine's *Peuseis*.[164] In particular, the *Horos* insisted that Christ could not be represented in an image, since this would be to separate the human from the divine; the eucharist was the true image of the divine dispensation which is Christ. Significantly, the definitions of the term *eikon* and *typos* are more carefully drawn in the *Horos* in contrast with the way the two terms are employed in the *Peuseis*.[165] It was equally critical of images of the Virgin and the saints, prophets, and apostles: those who argued that, if an image of Christ could not be made of matter because of the indivisibility of his human and divine natures, images of the Virgin and saints, who were simple mortals, could in consequence be permitted, were also misguided. For, if the first proposition was accepted, then images of the Virgin and other mortals were unnecessary, and represented indeed an insult to their memory, for they live eternally beside God.[166] In summary it rejected the devotion shown to images, along with their display in churches as well as in private houses, and threatened those who disobeyed these injunctions with punishment. But it by no means rejected the honouring of the Virgin, the saints, and their relics, as claimed by iconophiles after 787, and indeed emphasised the honour due to the Virgin.[167] At the same time, however, it

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[162] See Janin 1964, 62–4. For ceremonial routes through Constantinople, see McCormick 1986, 214ff.

[163] See Theoph., 428.9ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 592); Mansi xiii, 356C–D: the patriarch Germanos, George of Cyprus, John of Damascus (referred to as Mansur). It is generally assumed that George of Cyprus is to be identified with George, archbishop of Cyprus (*PBE*, Georgios 5; *PmbZ*, no. 2157). Attempts to identify him with the George who debates with the iconoclast bishop Kosmas in the *Nouthesia gerontos* (*PBE*, Kosmas 4, George 237; *PmbZ*, nos. 2125, 4101) have not met with general acceptance. See (in favour) Beck 1959, 487; Mango 1975, 30; (against) Gero 1977, 29–30 and 108f.; Speck 1990a, 577; 1982, 241 and n. 749. Other sources and literature: Rochow 1991, 171; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 88.

[164] Text at Mansi xiii, 205–365, English trans. in Gero 1977, 68–94; Sahas 1986; analysis: in Gero 1977, 95–108; Ostrogorsky 1929, 16–22; Anastos 1954; summary in Auzépy 2004, 157–62. Greek text and German trans. in Krannich *et al.* 2000, 30–69, with extensive notes and lit. 70–89. Literature also at Rochow 1991, 171.

[165] Mansi xiii, 245E–252B; Gero 1977, 74; detailed discussion in Krannich *et al.* 2002, 16–20.

[166] Mansi xiii, 272B–277D; trans.: Gero 1977, 78–80; Sahas 1986, 99–105.

[167] Mansi xiii, 345A–B. Anyway, as Magdalino 2004, 21, has pointed out, that a final session was held at Blachernai – firmly associated with the Theotokos – hardly suggests a lack of reverence for the Virgin.

also forbade the tampering with or reworking of liturgical vessels, or the laying of hands on altar cloths or hangings bearing images, without special permission from the patriarch and the emperor, lest the devil employ this as an excuse by which to abase the church. In addition, state officers and their subordinates may not on similar grounds lay their hands on the holy churches and place them under their power, as had already occurred in certain cases of indiscipline.[168]

The results of the council, and of the deliberations of the emperor and others which it incorporated and articulated, were to give shape to a theology of which the main tenets can be summarised as follows: an insistence on the central role of the eucharist as the only true 'image' of Christ, on the centrality of the Holy Spirit (which renders the bread of the eucharist holy) and on the centrality of the Trinity;[169] the centrality of the cross as the symbol both of the crucifixion and of the God-protected and victorious emperors (reflected in both sigillographic and numismatic usage);[170] the rejection of sources of spiritual authority vested outside the church, its buildings and appurtenances, especially the altar, and thus a rejection of the spiritual worth of images;[171] an emphasis on the clergy, authorised through their ordination to be the only authoritative intermediaries between the sacred and humankind, able to pronounce the prayers which translated the commonplace into the sacred (something which images were incapable of); an emphasis on the spoken or chanted word – led by the clergy but in which all could participate;[172] and an emphasis on the saints as intercessors, reached through prayer rather than through empathetic mechanisms such as relics

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168 Mansi xiii, 324D–332E; trans. in Gero 1977, 86ff.; Sahas 1986, 143–51; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 57–9 and nn. 132–4. On the question of iconophile accusations about iconoclast attitudes to the Virgin and saints, see Speck 1978, 649, n. 54; 1990a, 334f.

169 Mansi xiii, 233C–D, 240C, 246C, 264B–C (and see Gero 1975b).

170 Both the cross and invocations to the Trinity can be associated with a number of lead seals of the middle and later eighth century, and have been reasonably assumed to reflect such iconoclast values: the evidence is surveyed in Walter 1977. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 131, 133, and notes. For examples of imperial seals invoking the Trinity: *ZV* nos. 34 bis (Leo III and Constantine V), 35 (Artabasdos), 35 bis (Constantine V), 49 (Leo V); for non-imperial seals invoking either Trinity or the cross, largely of senior military or palatine office – or title-holders: *ZV* nos. 743, 751–3, 759A, 770A, 790, 834, 846, 862, 917, 919, 923, 941A, 956, 957, 966, 1006, 1425, 1440, 2781 (and see 549 for commentary). Note also the invocation to the Trinity in the opening section of the *Ekloge*, pr. 160. For the numismatic aspect: Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 121–7 with further references; *DOC* 3, 1, 175.

171 Reflected in comments made by Nikephoros: *Antirrhetikos* iii, 45 (*PG* 100, 464C); 54 (477C) (Mondzain-Baudinet, 302); Mansi xiii, 268.

172 Mansi xiii, 264C; and see *Eucologio Barberini*, 163, an eighth-century *Euchologium* in which one prayer in particular emphasises the central role of the sanctified building – the church – as the pre-eminent sacred space in which prayer and devotion is to be practised (on the text see Beck 1959, 246–7).

or imagery. All these points can be illustrated from a variety of sources apart from the text of the *Horos* of 754.[173] A radical disassociation was thus proposed between images, on the one hand, and spiritual authority, a disassociation which vested spiritual power and authority in official media – the churches and the clergy. By implication, and by imperial action thereafter, monks, holy men, and 'unofficial' claimants to spiritual authority were circumscribed and confined to specific activities – prayer and charity.[174] As we shall see below, this perspective lies at least in part behind the persecution of some monks.

Since its significance for the iconoclast position is crucial, we reproduce here certain key extracts from the text, which were read out in sections at the Council of 787, but without the refutation that originally followed each section.[175]

[Mansi xiii, 240C] *After examining these matters with much care and deliberation . . . we have found that the illicit craft of the painter was injurious to the crucial doctrine of our salvation, i.e., the incarnation of Christ, and that it subverted the six ecumenical councils that had been convened by God, . . .*

[241E] *. . . while upholding Nestorius who divided into two sons the one Son and Logos of God who became man for our sake;*

[244D] *yea, and Arius too, and Dioscorus and Eutyches and Severus who taught the confusion and mixture of Christ's two natures.*

[245D] *Wherefore we have considered it proper to demonstrate in detail by the present Definition the error of those who make and reverence [images]. . . .*

[248E] *How senseless is the notion of the painter who from sordid love of gain pursues the unattainable, namely to fashion with his impure hands things that are believed by the heart and confessed by the mouth!*

[252A–B] *(For) This man makes an image and calls it Christ: now the name 'Christ' means both God and man. Hence he has either included according to his vain fancy the uncircumscribable Godhead in the circumscription of created flesh, or he has confused that unconfusable union . . . and in so doing has applied two blasphemies to the Godhead, namely through the circumscription and the confusion. Both deserve the same condemnation in that they have erred together with Arius, Dioscorus, Eutyches and the heresy of the Acephali.*

[256A–B] *When they are condemned by the right-minded for having attempted to delineate the incomprehensible and uncircumscribable divine nature of Christ, they*

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[173] The material is recapitulated in Auzépy 2001.
[174] A point made very succinctly by Brown 1973.
[175] The translation is based on that in Mango 1986, 165–8, with notes.

resort forsooth to another base excuse, namely that 'We paint the images of the flesh alone, which we have seen and touched and with which we have lived;' which is an impiety and an invention of the evil genius of Nestorius . . .

[257E] *Granted, therefore, that at the Passion the Godhead remained inseparable from [Christ's body and soul] how is it that these senseless men . . . divide the flesh that had been fused with the Godhead and [itself] deified, and attempt to paint a picture as if it were that of a mere man? In so doing, they fall into another abyss of lawlessness, namely by severing the flesh from the divinity, and by attributing to the flesh a separate hypostasis and a different person which they claim to represent, for thereby they add a fourth person to the Trinity. . . .*

[264C] *The only true image of Christ is the bread and wine of the* eucharist *as he Himself indicated.*

[268B–C] *On the other hand, the images of false and evil name have no foundation in the tradition of Christ, the apostles and the Fathers, nor is there a holy prayer that might sanctify an image, and so transform it from the common to a state of holiness; nay, it remains common and devoid of honour, just as the painter has made it.*

[277C–E] *How indeed do they dare depict through the gross art of the pagans the all-praised Mother of God who was overshadowed by the plenitude of divinity, through whom an unapproachable light did shine for us, who is higher than the heavens and holier than the cherubims? Or [the saints] who will reign with Christ, and sit beside Him to judge the world, and share in His glory (of whom Scripture says that the world was not worthy of them) – are they not ashamed to depict them through pagan art? For it is not lawful to Christians who believe in the resurrection to adopt the customs of demon-worshipping gentiles, and to insult by means of inglorious and dead matter the saints who will be adorned with so much glory. Indeed, we do not accept from aliens the proofs of our faith: yea, when the demons addressed Jesus as God, He rebuked them, because He deemed it unworthy that demons should bear testimony concerning Him.*

[328B–C] *Let no man dare to pursue henceforth this impious and unholy practice. Anyone who presumes from now on to manufacture an icon, or to worship it, or to set it up in a church, or in a private house, or to hide it, if he be a bishop or a presbyter or a deacon, he shall be deposed; if he be a monk or a layman, he shall be anathematised and deemed guilty under imperial law as a foe of God's commands and an enemy of the doctrines of the Fathers.*

[329D–E] *This we also decree, that no man who has charge of a church of God or a pious establishment shall, on pretext of diminishing this error of icon [-worship], lay his hands on holy vessels consecrated to God for the purpose of altering them if they happen to have pictures on them,*

[332B–E] *or on altar-cloths or other veils or any other object consecrated to the holy ministry lest these be put to waste. If, however, a man receives from God such ability, and wishes to alter the aforesaid vessels or altar-cloths, he shall not presume to do so*

*without the consent and knowledge of the most-holy and blessed ecumenical patriarch
and permission of our most pious and Christ-loving emperors, lest under this pretext
the devil dishonour God's churches; nor shall any dignitary or any of his subordinates,
i.e. a member of the laity, under the same pretext lay his hands on the holy churches
and sack them, as has been done in the past by certain individuals acting in a disorderly
manner.*

These injunctions are rounded off with a series of anathemas, the first
repeating the fundamental dogmas of earlier councils in respect of the Trin-
ity, the incarnation, the consubstantiality, indivisibility, and distinctiveness
of the two natures, wills and energies, human and divine, in Christ.[176] Then
follow some eleven clauses demanding acceptance of a number of funda-
mental premises of the Christian faith, and the impossibility of representing
God in material form, each ending with an anathema for those who reject
them. At the end, the nineteenth clause defines the synod as the Seventh
Ecumenical Council and the twentieth threatens members of the clergy who
do not accept the Acts with deposition, monks and members of the laity
with anathema. John of Damascus, as already noted, was singled out in
particular for condemnation by a fourfold *anathema*, accused not only of
being a worshipper of idols and the writer of lies and fabrications, but also
of being guilty of plotting against the empire, in other words, of treason.[177]
As we shall see, this was to provide the emperor with good grounds for a
series of later actions directed against those who may have opposed him by
refusing to conform to these injunctions.

It is clear from the analysis of the *Horos* that the council attempted to
present an acceptable version of the arguments developed by Constantine V
in his *Peuseis*, in which the formulations evolved by the emperor were refined
and made more exact and rigorous.[178] The possibly monophysite elements
have been suppressed;[179] and a conscious and consistent attempt was made

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[176] Loos 1983, 142 and n. 56 shows that the christology of the iconoclast *Horos* is absolutely in
conformity with that of the earlier ecumenical councils.

[177] Mansi xiii, 333E–352D; transl. in Gero 1977, 88–93; Sahas 1986, 152–65. For the denunciation
and condemnation of John of Damascus: Mansi xiii, 356D (trans. Gero 1977, 94). The
attention paid to John indicates his role in the debates preceding the Council of 754 and
supports the hypothesis that his first two sermons were responses to the *Peuseis* or similar
iconoclast texts of the late 740s and early 750s. He was castigated also as 'Saracen-thinking' –
sarakenophron – because he lived under Arab rule, was not subject to imperial law, and could
thus be accused of being influenced by Islam in his thinking. The insult was later used by the
iconophiles of Leo III and Constantine V, of course, when the legend of Islamic influence on
the iconoclast emperors began to evolve. See Koutrakou 1993, 219–22; Baldwin 1990.

[178] See the comments of Ostrogorsky 1929, 16ff., and Gero 1977, 96ff. See also Loos 1983, 139f.

[179] See Loos 1983, who demonstrates that the arguments of Meyendorff 1969, 237, 245ff.,
followed by Sideris 1979, to the effect that monophysite tendencies were on the contrary very

to associate the council's decisions with the traditional Christology of previous ecumenical synods.[180] In short, the authors of the *Horos* presented themselves as the true inheritors of the apostolic tradition, and took pains to emphasise the unbroken and continuous tradition which existed between the views they expressed and the teachings of Christ, the apostles, and the Fathers of the church – in contrast to the false and innovative doctrine of their opponents.

The nature of iconoclastic persecution: myths and realities

The Acts of the seventh council name a considerable number of supporters for Constantine's iconoclasm, in particular bishops.[181] It is also likely from the (admittedly vague) reference to the damage which had already been done that there was some popular support for Constantine's views. The emperor seems to have faced very little real opposition within the empire, still less from the ranks of the clergy at large (once he had dealt with the former patriarch Germanos and those who agreed with him – exiled and otherwise punished, according to John of Damascus). And it seems clear that the emperor himself was the main instigator of the new theology and the imperial policy which was to impose it on the subjects of the empire. Yet

definitely present, are flawed, since the sections of the *Horos* on which this argument is based represent in fact an argument against Nestorianism. Taken out of context, they can be read this way, given the emphases necessary to the arguments; but, as Loos shows, this would be a considerable misrepresentation of the argument as a whole.

[180] See Mansi xiii, 217A, 233C–D, 236A–D, 237B–C; and for a discussion and summary of the key elements in this theology, see Krannich *et al.* 2000, 12–25.

[181] Among the key churchmen named are Theodosios of Ephesos, mentioned already (*PBE* Theodosios 3; *PmbZ*, no. 7845); Sisinnios Pastillas of Perge (Mansi xii, 1010D = *ACO* III, 1, 52.25; xiii, 400A, 416C; see Gero, *Constantine V*, 56 n. 11, 134f.; *PBE* Sisinnios 27; *PmbZ*, no. 6781); Basil Trikakkabos of Antioch in Pisidia (Mansi *ibid.*; *ACO* III, 1, 52.26; *PBE* Basileios 29; *PmbZ*, no. 866); Gregory of Neocaesarea (Mansi xii, 1051Df., iii 4Ef. (= *ACO* III, 1, 112.29ff.); xiii, 173D; *PBE* Gregorios 38; *PmbZ*, no. 2405); Theodosios of Amorion (Mansi xii, 1007C, 1015C [= *ACO* III, 1, 48.26; 60.22–3]; xiii, 37B, 173D; *PBE* Theodosios 14; *PmbZ*, no. 7846); John of Nikomedeia (Mansi xiii, 400B, 416C; *PBE* Ioannes 140); Theodore of Myra (Mansi xiii, 36E; *PBE* Theodoros 83; *PmbZ*, no. 7596); Basil of Ankyra (Mansi xii, 1007–11, 1015 [*ACO* III, 1, 48.25ff.; 60.21]; *PBE* Basileios 21; *PmbZ*, no. 869), as well as the bishops of Gotthia, of Rhodes and of Karpathos. Other named persons including a certain Atzypios (possibly same as John of Nikomedeia: see *PmbZ*, no. 691; *PBE* Atzypios 1), a Kaballos (possibly the same as Theodosios of Ephesos: see *PBE* Kabalos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 3573, but equally possibly a later invention), and a Kallistos who was an *apographeus*. For the literature and sources on all of these (in the *V. Steph. iun.*, George Mon., the *Synodikon* of orthodoxy), see *PBE* I and *PmbZ* (older literature and discussion: Gero 1977, 58, n. 17; 59 nn. 19, 20, 21; 62 n. 11; and Speck 1978, 56 and nn. 35, 36, 40, 41, 43; 62 with nn. 99; 432f.; 556; 566; 568).

there is also some reason to think that there was evolving, independently of the emperor, criticism of some facets of monasticism, or at least of the behaviour of some monastic communities or their leaders, and that this had created a context within which Constantine's more 'purist' approach might be located. As we shall see below, St Stephen of Saba was critical of the laxity of the leadership of his own community from the 750s on, and the possibility cannot be ruled out (although it cannot be demonstrated) that such criticism was present within the empire as well. There is no reason to doubt that the emperor was quite convinced by the case he was engaged in promoting, as his own efforts make abundantly clear. Neither is there any cause to doubt that much of the support that he received was a direct result of the highly personal nature of power-relations within the dominant elite of the state, a situation which had become particularly pronounced during the middle and later seventh century.[182] There was, as yet, no power elite or dominant social class independent of the emperor and the Constantinopolitan establishment, certainly no group strong enough within the secular church and civil society at large to resist the emperor's will in a matter of direct imperial interest and personal commitment, even if serious localised opposition was manifested in the plots directed against him in the 760s.

Only one source of organised opposition appears to have evolved out of this situation, and that only during the later eighth and early ninth century, in the years when orthodoxy had been restored by the Council of 787; a group we will discuss in greater detail below, but whose ideological authority was both formed and greatly enhanced by the opposition its members claimed their forbears had shown to imperial religious policies. This group, if such it can be called, consisted of those who claimed a spiritual authority granted them by God through their own contemplative and spiritual labours: monks and 'holy men/women' in general. But it is important to emphasise that the

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[182] Speck (1978, 63–72 with nn. 101–86, 443–57) shows very clearly that there was no differentiation between iconophiles and iconoclasts along geographical, professional or social lines; and that the numbers of those involved actively in propagating one or the other point of view must have been very small. From the evidence he cites, it is also clear that those nearest the emperor will for the most part have gone along with his policies; officers in the state establishment who wished to further their own interests must likewise have pursued the imperial policy more or less actively. The best-known example is Michael Lachanodrakon, *strategos* of the *Thrakesion* army, on whom see *PBE* Michael 5; *PmbZ*, nos. 5027, 5049, 5050, 5051. Kaegi 1966 showed convincingly long ago that the armies as such played no partisan role, at least until the views of the palatine (tagmatic) soldiers in Constantinople itself become apparent in the 780s and afterwards. But these views are to do with vested economic and political interests as well as ideological predispositions in the context of the reigns of Eirene and Constantine VI. See Haldon 1984, 234–5, 344–6.

ideology of monastic opposition was a product of the period after 787 and later. Opposition there may well have been before this, although the only evidence for it is of a political rather than theological nature, as will be made clear below (and see Chapter 6). But it is the construction of a *myth* or *legend* of opposition which was of such importance in the ninth century; and it can in any case by no means be treated as a unified social, political or ideological bloc: as we will see, many monastic communities supported or went along with imperial iconoclasm.

The imposition of imperial iconoclasm and its enforcement was never as thorough or as far-reaching as later iconophile propaganda asserts, and it is clear that the almost total absence of iconoclast sources and the strongly pro-pagandistic nature of the iconophile texts has encouraged the development of an extremely biased and largely inaccurate picture of the period. Later sources claim that the iconoclasts destroyed many images. In fact, when examined closely, there is little solid evidence to support these accusations. On the contrary, a picture emerges of very occasional and possibly fairly violent, but not particularly consequential or consistent, measures, mostly associated with specific political events, as we shall see.[183]

The destruction of images?

On the basis of the *Horos* of 754, it has been argued that Constantine's main target was the removal or covering of sacred imagery around the apses of churches, a policy which may have been first officially promulgated by a patriarchal document issued at the time of the synod of 754 or, since this issue is taken up in the sermons against the iconoclasts of John of Damascus, shortly beforehand.[184] It has also been suggested that the destruction claimed by later iconophile sources to have been caused by Constantine's diabolically inspired hatred of images was in fact connected with renovation or other building work actually carried out, perhaps specifically connected with the deposition of the patriarch Constantine II who, as we have seen, had been implicated in a plot against the emperor and eventually executed. While the reference in the *Life* of Gregory II, in the *Liber Pontificalis*, reports the destruction and in particular the whitewashing or painting over of images, these reports manifestly depend on rumour and later notions of

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[183] For a traditional view, see Alexander 1977; and for a modern appreciation, Auzépy 1998; Brubaker 2003.

[184] See esp. I, 17.15f.; I, 20.8f. (ed. Kotter). Detailed discussion in Speck 1981, 195–7; 280f.; 1990a, 98ff., 697f.

what had gone on, as noted in Chapter 2, and probably represent a later interpolation or re-writing of the original. They may reflect, however dimly, some iconoclast activities,[185] although there is very little concrete evidence for any actual destruction. Had the emperor inaugurated a serious, concentrated assault on images, it would surely have been not long after the synod of 754. Yet, paradoxically, we have seen that the *Horos* specifically forbade ill-considered acts of vandalism against ecclesiastical furnishings. Furthermore, the claims of the iconophiles that their enemies set about destroying images rests on a very few events, often some considerable time after the synod of 754, and often of dubious authenticity. Whatever Constantine's feelings, the scanty evidence that we have suggests that he implemented his policies for the most part only when a naturally arising opportunity made it possible.

Iconophile authors paint a different picture. The Acts of the 787 council, for example, give the impression that books were destroyed in large numbers. But few specific instances are cited; indeed the only concrete references are to certain codices having been tampered with: the erasing of an illumination here, the excision of a hagiographical passage dealing with an image there, the purported destruction of a collection of thirty books elsewhere; in the patriarchal library two books were discovered to be missing and the pages of a third, dealing with topics relevant to the theology of images, had been cut out.[186] This latter was John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow*, from which two passages on icons had to be read from a manuscript held by the monastery of Maximinos in Constantinople because they were lacking from the copy in the patriarchal library. The *Spiritual Meadow* was an extremely popular seventh-century text that was constantly updated and revised; the instability of the manuscript tradition hinders the chance of a reliable critical edition for, as its most recent translator noted, 'Names of places and persons are often changed indiscriminately; stories may be conflated or divided, circumstances transformed and so forth'.[187] This process apparently began immediately, and was already noted in the ninth century when Photios observed that 'You will not find the same number of narratives in each copy; some extend to three hundred and forty-two, the figure being increased

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[185] See Theoph., 437.13–19; 438.2–439.5; 441.5–442.13; cf. Nikeph., 156–7 (dB 74–5); *LP*, I 409. 4–13; and the detailed notes of Rochow 1991, 191–201.

[186] Mansi xiii, 184D–192D. The destruction of the collection of thirty books supposedly took place at Phokaia, which lay in the *Thrakesion* region, the location of the activities of the general Lachanodrakon, one of Constantine's most zealous supporters: Mansi xiii, 185. Gero 1977, 115, is sceptical.

[187] Wortley 1992, xiii; discussion and additional references in Nissan 1938, Brubaker 1998, 1239–44.

partly by subdivision of some chapters, partly by the insertion of chapters'.[188] It is thus unclear whether the passage had actually been excised from the copy of the manuscript housed in the patriarchal library (as claimed by the patriarch Tarasios),[189] or whether it had simply not yet been included in that edition of the *Spiritual Meadow*: this is the first mention of the story, which was not cited in the *florilegium* of texts supporting the veneration of images compiled by John of Damascus, and other factors suggest that it may have been a relatively recent interpolation.[190] We must, in other words, treat the council's claims with some caution.[191]

Documenting monumental destruction is equally problematic.[192] Again, there are numerous generic references, but texts describe only five acts of destruction with any specificity in the texts, and one more is known archaeologically. The only example that is both preserved and documented is in the room above the south-west ramp connected to the church of Hagia Sophia, probably the small *sekreton* (council hall) of the patriarchate.[193] In the south tympanum, two medallions flank a now-blocked window. Each contains a gold cross, configured like that set in the apse at Hagia Eirene shortly after 753, backed by concentric circles of blue (Figure 12). The crosses replace figures once identified by inscriptions; these have been picked out but their location is evident from the disruption of the tesserae.[194] The substitution suggests a date during iconoclasm, and the form of the crosses points toward a date roughly contemporary with the apse mosaic at Hagia Eirene; the alteration has been associated with renovations commissioned by the patriarch Niketas (766–80).[195] Theophanes tells us that in 766/7 Niketas 'scraped off the images in the small *sekreton* of the patriarchate, which were of mosaic, and those in the vault of the large *sekreton*, which were in paint, he removed and plastered the faces of the other images'.[196]

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[188] *Bibliotheke*, codex 199: ed. Henry III, 96–7; trans. from Wilson 1994, 182.

[189] Mansi xiii, 192.   [190] See Brubaker 1998, 1242–3.

[191] Evidence of contradictions in hagiographical texts, where an iconophile argument is explicit but behind which lies a more neutral stance, has been noted by various scholars: see, e.g., Auzépy 1992; Huxley 1980; Ševčenko 1977. Note also the comments of Ivanov 2006, 113f., who observes similar contradictions within the Slavonic *Life* of Stefan of Surozh, more especially with the implication that Leo III did not order the insulting or destruction of images. For a similarly sceptical approach, see Thümmel 2005, 50–2.

[192] So too Gero 1977, 111–17.

[193] Mango 1959, 53; Mango 1962, 94; Underwood 1955/6, 292–3; Cormack and Hawkins 1977, 204–5, figs 14, 20–1; Rochow 1991, 206–7; Rochow 1999c, 47; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 20–1.

[194] The suture line indicative of replacement work was noted by Underwood 1955/6, 292–3.

[195] Mango 1962, 94; Cormack and Hawkins 1977, 204–5, 210–11.

[196] Theoph. 443.22–6; trans. and commentary Mango and Scott 1997, 611.

Fig. 12. Istanbul, Hagia Sophia: *sekreton* mosaic, cross

Nikephoros dates Niketas's work to 768/9, when he records that the patriarch 'restored certain structures of the cathedral church that had fallen into decay with time. He also scraped off the images of the saviour and of the saints done in golden mosaic and in encaustic that were in the ceremonial halls that stand there (these are called *sekreta* by the Romans), both in the small one and in the big one'.[197] Assuming that Theophanes and Nikephoros are chronicling the replacement of saintly portraits with the crosses that still

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[197] Nikeph. 160–2; trans. and commentary Mango 1990, 161–3.

survive – which, given that the parallels with Hagia Eirene indicate a dating in the reign of Constantine V, seems likely – three points are significant here. First, the portraits in the ecclesiastical administrative centre of the empire were only removed at some point between 766 and 769, twelve to fifteen years after the *Horos* of 754 that promoted iconoclasm as official orthodox policy. Second, rather than any crude destruction of offending images, the replacement work was done with care, indicating the availability and use of skilled artisans. Third, the substitution seems only to have been undertaken when other renovations were being made. It is, once again, clear that Byzantine iconomachy differed radically from its more violent early modern counterparts in England and France, where offending statues were routinely destroyed.

There is no textual corroboration for the only other witness to what may have been an iconoclast replacement of earlier figural decoration for which we have visual evidence, the substitution of a cross for the original image in the apse of the Koimesis church at Nicaea.[198] This is known only through the photographs taken by Kluge in 1912;[199] the church was destroyed in 1922. It had been part of a monastic complex founded by Hyakinthos, whose cruciform monogram appears on a lintel, capitals,[200] and a marble plaque that reads 'Theotokos, help your servant Hyakinthos, monk, priest, abbot'.[201] The type of inscriptions found here, composed of a series of monograms, are familiar in the eighth century,[202] and an abbot of the Hyakinthos monastery named Gregory signed the Acts of the Council of Nicaea in 787.[203] The documentary evidence, and that of the building itself, points to a late seventh- or early eighth-century commission,[204] though Barsanti and de'Maffei have argued for a sixth-century date.[205]

Kluge's photographs of the apse show the Virgin standing on a jewelled podium, holding the infant Christ; above them, three rays of light and a hand of God emerged from an arc of heaven (Figure 13). An inscription, set in mosaic to follow the circumference of the arc, reads 'I have begotten thee

[198] Schmit 1927; Underwood 1959; Barber 1991 (summarised and contextualised in Barber 2002); Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 21–3.

[199] Kluge's photographs were published by Schmit 1927.

[200] The lintel, found by Peschlow, was published by Mango 1994, 351–2, figs. 4–5.

[201] Schmit 1927, 12–14, pl. X,3. Related formulae appear on seventh-, eighth- and ninth-century seals (see 151 above; 435 below), and on the doors at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople erected by Theophilos (see 00 below).

[202] Weigand 1931; C. Foss in Buchwald 1969, 66–7; Barber 1991, 44.

[203] Gregoire 1930; Mansi xii, 1111E (*ACO* III, 1, 220.12), xiii, 152B, 189B.

[204] See esp. Buchwald 1969, 37–44, 61; Peschlow 1972; Mango 1994, 350–7; Ruggieri 1991, 218; Ruggieri 1995, 97–100; Ousterhout 2001, 10–11.

[205] Most recently by de' Maffei 1982 and Barsanti 1982.

Fig. 13. Nicaea, Koimesis church: apse mosaic, Virgin holding the infant Christ

from the womb before the morning' (Psalm 109:3).[206] The bema vault was crowned with a medallion enclosing a backless throne supporting a jewelled book (the *hetimasia*), along with a dove superimposed on a cross emitting seven rays of light. Lower down, two angels stood on both sides of the vault

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[206] On the citation and its interpretation, Barber 1991, esp. 52–4.

Fig. 14. Nicaea, church of the Koimesis: bema vault, archangels

(Figure 14); each held a staff with a banner inscribed with the Trisagion (*hagios, hagios, hagios*)). The angels, all identified by inscription, represented the states that Christ is exalted above, as enumerated in Ephesians 1:21: Dominions, Virtues, Principalities, and Powers.[207] An inscription below

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[207] Underwood 1959, 240–2, argued that the figures were removed during iconoclasm, then replaced after 843, but given the destruction of the monument this issue must remain unresolved.

the angels ties them to the portrait of the Virgin and child in the conch of the apse: '[And when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith] And let all the angels of God worship him' (Hebrews 1:6, from Psalm 96:6). A final inscription names Naukratios as the restorer of the images.[208]

What is presumed to be Naukratios's restoration is evident even in photographs. The outlines of a cross remain visible in the apse: when it was removed to insert the Virgin and child, the cubes that had been used to outline it were removed and replaced by gold cubes that were slightly darker than those of the original background. However, as Kitzinger speculated and Underwood conclusively demonstrated, the cross itself replaced an earlier image: the suture line tracing where the gold background was picked out in order to insert the cross can be seen.[209] Though there is no written evidence, it has been plausibly assumed that the cross was inserted during iconoclasm.[210] There has been little disruption of the background, indicating that the original decoration occupied only the central portion of the conch, and it is widely (but not universally) believed that a Virgin and child resembling the pair that survived until 1922 anticipated them.[211]

Several acts of iconoclast destruction are recorded only in texts. We have already discussed the supposed destruction of an image of Christ above the Chalke Gate by Leo III, first mentioned 80 years after it was claimed to have happened in the *Life* of Stephen the Younger and, rather differently, by Theophanes. As we saw in Chapter 2, it is unlikely that this episode took place; instead, it appears to have been invented around the year 800.[212]

All remaining accusations of destruction were levelled at Constantine V. The most interesting, and in some ways most plausible, appears in a ninth-century (?) miracle story – which, like all miracle stories, is of questionable authority on 'facts', though important for sociological ambience – which relates what appears to be the only situation comparable to that preserved at Nicaea until 1922. Elias, priest and *oikonomos* at the Great Church (Hagia Sophia), gives a history of the church of the Virgin of the

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[208] For all of the inscriptions, see Weigand 1931, 420.

[209] Kitzinger 1958, 12–16; Underwood 1959.

[210] Cormack 1977a, 39 suggested that the cross was inserted during the reign of Constantine V; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 323.

[211] Contrast de'Maffei 1982, who argued for an original image of Christ (in the sixth century), and Mango 1993/4, who speculates about an image of the Virgin with Christ in an aureole before her breast, with Barber 1991, who assumes that the original image looked like the one destroyed in 1922. Lazarev 1967, 112, argued that the Virgin replaced the cross after 787; most scholars, however, opt for a dating after 843.

[212] See 128–35 above.

Chalkoprateia (coppermarket), which he says was decorated with a mural cycle (presumably in mosaic) of the life of Christ, including what may have been an annunciation in the apse. He relates that Constantine V removed the apse mosaic and replaced the image with a cross; the iconophile patriarch Tarasios (784–806), still according to Elias, then took out the cross, and restored the images of Christ and his mother as they had been before. A miracle, the occasion of Elias's story, occurred shortly thereafter.[213] There are a number of problems with this tale, and especially with the idea of an annunciation in the apse of a Byzantine church. Elias specifically mentions an angel, however, and says that one could almost imagine it crying 'Hail thou that art full of grace' – so clearly he had an annunciation in mind. While unknown in the conch of the apse itself, however, annunciations flanking the apse, with Mary on one side and Gabriel on the other, are relatively common, and this may be what Elias intended his audience to understand. Alternatively, we may be intended to imagine a composition similar to that at Nicaea, or in the 870s at Hagia Sophia, with the Virgin and child in the centre of the apse, and angels on the adjacent vault walls.

The church was a major cult centre, housing the most important relic of the Virgin, her belt; it was the focus of numerous processions, and the feast of the annunciation (25 March) was sometimes celebrated there.[214] The complex, which included other subsidiary churches, was close to the ecclesiastic and imperial heart of Constantinople, about 150 m west of Hagia Sophia itself, and under its clerical direction. The site was clearly sufficiently significant to be the locus of contestation, actual or rhetorical. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 2, the Chalkoprateia is the neighbourhood where Gregory II believed that an icon of Christ had been removed under Leo III.[215] It is thus not implausible that the church of the Virgin of the Chalkoprateia underwent a series of transformations similar to those for which we have visual evidence at Nicaea; one might with equal conviction, however, argue that its rhetorical value was so great that the miracle and the details about the church within which it was embedded was invented after 843.[216] In either case, it is significant, especially in view of

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[213] See Mango 1993/4; Mango 1994, 350 n. 34. The text has been edited by Lackner 1985, 835–60; for Constantine V, see 851–2, trans. 856–7; on the date, *ibid.*, 837–9. For Elias, *PmbZ* no. 1502.

[214] Janin 1969, 237–42; Cameron 1979.　　[215] See 129 above.

[216] See esp. Speck 1987b, 322–4. For similar issues surrounding the Hodegon monastery, see Angelidi 1994. Theophanes claims that Constantine V destroyed the Kallistratou monastery, the katholikon of which was also dedicated to the Theotokos, though according to Nikephoros the monastery was simply sold. Whichever, if either, account is correct, the hegoumenos of the monastery signed the Acts of the 787 council, and other abbots are attested across the ninth century (Janin 1969, 276; Angelidi 1994, 125–6).

later iconophile propaganda that implies Constantine's opposition to relics and the Virgin, that Elias only accuses Constantine V of defacing the figural images – there is no mention of any intent to desecrate or destroy the relics housed in the church, nor any indication that Constantine denigrated the Theotokos.[217]

The final two episodes are recorded in the early ninth-century, overtly polemical *Life* of Stephen the Younger.[218] According to the *Vita* of Stephen the Younger, Constantine replaced the Christian frescoes in the church at Blachernai with secular scenes before the meeting of 754.[219] Gero, noting 'the chronological inaccuracy of the *Vita* at this point', is sceptical, as is Speck.[220] Nikephoros, a far more reliable source, noted only that an icon of the Virgin was covered over, and this appears to receive independent corroboration from Skylitzes, who says that the image was uncovered, undamaged, in 1031.[221] At worst, then, we might accept that Constantine caused an icon to be covered, surely a sensible precaution before a meeting intended to condemn sacred images. 'Editing' an image, in this case by covering it, rather than destroying it also fits better with other evidence. The *Horos* of the synod of 754 specifically condemned the destruction of church fittings – though one was allowed to *alter* them upon requesting and receiving imperial permission[222] – and even images that later targeted iconoclast activity, such as the famous miniature in the Khludov Psalter (Figure 15), do not show the demolition of icons, but simply their whitewashing. We should also be aware, indeed, that 'iconoclast' practice may well have comprised more than one single strand. The very fact that the illustration in the Khludov Psalter shows whitewashing an image, rather than – as the iconophile texts repeatedly claim – burning or otherwise destroying it, is surely significant. It confirms the impression that those who were critical of the ways in which

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[217] For later attempts to paint Constantine as anti-relic and anti-Theotokos, see 192–3, 238, 244 below.

[218] See Auzépy 1999.

[219] *V. Steph.* §29: Auzépy 1999, 126–7, trans. 221–2; trans. Mango 1972, 152–3. Magdalino's claim that 'this iconography was surely imitated from old mosaics that the emperor considered representative of early Christianity' (Magdalino 1999, 143–4) and his suggestion that the 'plants and birds' show 'the iconoclast tendency to sacralise the natural world as indirect images and symbols of the divine' (Magdalino 2006, 68) are both possibilities, but not demonstrable. An imaginative reconstruction of such decoration might recall the mosaic landscapes of the Great Mosque in Damascus, the Nilotic landscapes of the churches of Syria and Palestine, or even the bema vault at San Vitale in Ravenna.

[220] Gero 1977, 112–13; Speck 1990a, 506–13, argues that the paintings were late antique, but there is no conclusive evidence for this.

[221] For Nikephoros, see Gero 1977, 112 n. 5; Skylitzes, 384.21f.; further discussion in Speck 1990a, 506–13.

[222] See 193 above (Mansi xiii, 322B; 329D–E); Speck 1966; 1987b, esp. 287–903; Speck 1987c.
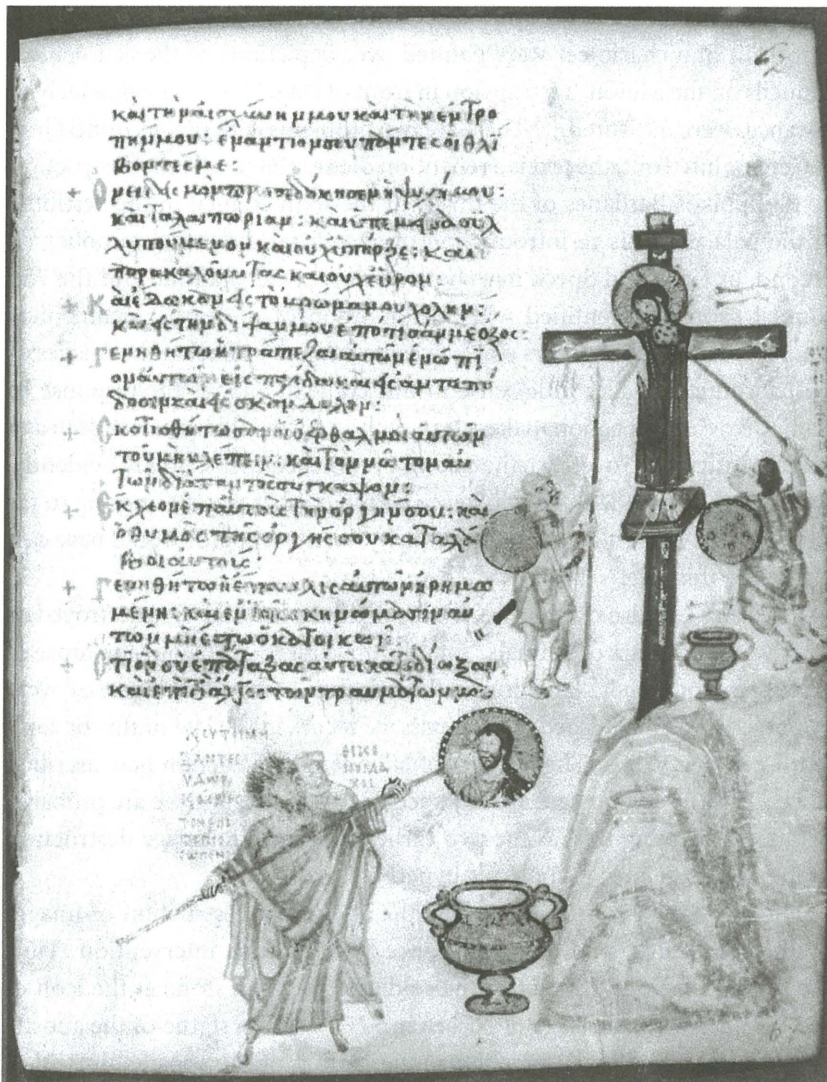
Fig. 15. Khludov Psalter (Moscow, Historical Museum 129, f. 67r): Crucifixion

images were misused were simply moving them out of harm's way, so to speak. It may well be, given the distortion by the iconophiles of iconoclast arguments discussed already, that this was an explicit element of the critical perspective on images, lost sight of in the (successful) iconophile campaign to attribute ignorance and scriptural misunderstanding to the iconoclasts.[223]

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[223] Moscow, Historical Museum, cod. 129, f. 67r; discussion and earlier bibliography in Corrigan 1992, 30–1. See also below, and n. 339.

Equally unlikely is the *Vita*'s assertion that a 'satanic horse race' and a portrait of a charioteer were painted over depictions of the ecumenical councils on the Milion, a tetrapylon in front of Hagia Sophia from which all distances were measured.[224] There are two problems with this account. First, as Gero pointed out, the text is a repetition of the reference to the destruction by Philippikos Bardanes of the image of the sixth council in the vestibule of the palace on his re-introduction of an official monothelete policy.[225] Second, as Gero and Speck have both observed, Constantine and the 754 council expressly identified with the tradition of the earlier ecumenical councils, in which emperors played a central role.[226] Effacing the images of earlier councils makes little sense in this context, and, as the response to Philippikos' earlier action makes clear, such an act would have been seen as a heretical attempt to overturn the canons of earlier councils. This is, evidently, precisely the brush with which Stephen's biographer was attempting to tar Constantine V, but it is extremely unlikely that the emperor would have cast himself in this role.

Stephen's *Life* also claims that, while religious portraits were destroyed or whitewashed, scenes of animals, 'satanic horse races' – a favourite phrase of Stephen's biographer – and 'hunts, theatrical and hippodrome scenes' were preserved and embellished.[227] The passage recurs in the late ninth- or early tenth-century *Vita* of Theophylact of Nikodemia, the action here ascribed to Leo V.[228] In neither case are any specifics provided, and we are probably justified in reading this, as the two earlier references to image destruction in the *Life* of Stephen, as polemic hyperbole.

Finally, many later sources report the attempted destruction of images by the iconoclasts, and their hindrance by wondrous intervention. Thus the story of the punishment of the soldier who cast a stone at the icon of the Virgin during the siege of Nicaea in 727;[229] that a statue of the apostle Andrew was saved by a miraculous intervention of the apostle himself;[230] or that iconoclasts in Cyprus were punished by divine intervention for their impiety,[231] along with a range of similar stories in the later tradition, may probably be discounted as legends and embroiderings attached by

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[224] *V. Steph.* §65: Auzépy 1999, 166, trans. 264–5; trans. Mango 1972, 153. For a sympathetic interpretation of Constantine's promotion of the hippodrome, see Magdalino 1999, 142–3.

[225] Gero 1977, 113–14.   [226] *Ibid.*; Speck 1978, 446–7.

[227] *V. Steph.* §26: Auzépy 1997b, trans. 215; trans. Mango 1972, 152.

[228] Auzépy 1997b, 215 n. 174; on the *Vita*, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 231.

[229] Theoph., 406.5–14.

[230] From a later *Life* of the apostle: see *PG* 120, 220B (*Vita* by a certain Epiphanios the Monk).

[231] Mansi xiii, 77C–E (a story told by the bishop Constantine of Constantia at the Council of 787).

iconophile/post-iconoclast orthodox writers to stories of iconoclast activities (many of which may themselves, of course, be inventions designed to suit the assumptions of those who wrote at a later date about what 'really happened' under the iconoclast emperors).[232] A curious story that Constantine V destroyed, then rebuilt, the church of St George of Sykeon is found in a ninth-century text;[233] but that the emperor really burned the images concealed in a *Gerotropheion* (old people's home) has been shown to be an invention of iconophile propaganda.[234] In short, the evidence for any sort of coherent campaign of destruction directed against images is very dubious;[235] while both preserved pre-iconoclast imagery (for example, at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki) and textual references to icons (for example, the portrait of St Theodore the Recruit at Euchaita) indicate that religious representation came through iconoclasm unscathed.[236]

While the evidence for a similar violent campaign directed against relics is even more doubtful, and has been shown to rest mostly on later legends which have no foundation in actions undertaken by any emperor of the period, there does appear to have been an iconoclast view of relics as an intrusion into the sanctity of the altar, tainting its purity and that of the eucharist.[237] Conversely, evidence for construction and artisanal innovation during Constantine's reign is strong. We have already noted his repairs to

[232] These points have all been stressed at length by Speck in the various works referred to, esp. 1990a, 1981, 1984b; and 1987e.

[233] Sceptical discussion in Kaplan 1993b, 76; more positive assessment in Auzépy 1993, 127 n. 52 and Magdalino 1996, 16 n. 29; see also Janin 1969, 77.

[234] See *Patria*, ii, 240.1f. and the discussion in Berger 1988, 492.

[235] Speck 1978, 71–2 with note 184, discusses a number of other legendary or misunderstood examples of iconoclast activity in this respect.

[236] On Thessaloniki, see Cormack 1998, esp. 156–8; on Euchaita, see Zuckerman 1988, esp. 192–3 (although we are doubtful of his eighth-century dating so would not insist on this: see Artun 2008), and Auzépy 2004, 140, both with earlier literature.

[237] See Wortley 1982, although the author does not exclude the probability that certain radical iconoclasts did take action against relics or the devotion shown them: compare, for example, the stories surrounding the supposed insults to the relics of St Euphemia in 766/7: see Rochow 1991, 195f. The fact that the seventh canon of the Council of 787 orders that those churches which had been consecrated without relics should now receive them, and that no bishop, under threat of deposition, should dare to consecrate a church without relics: Mansi xiii,427C–D suggests that Constantine did look upon the ways in which relics were employed (as opposed to the relics as such) with disfavour, and that those of his supporters who wished to curry favour may have taken more radical action: Lachanodrakon's burning of relics, if it happened, may be an example (Theoph., 446.4–6 [Mango and Scott 1997, 615] with Rochow 1991, 213). In his *Antirrhetikos* ii, 4 (341D) and 5 (344A) the patriarch Nikephoros also speaks of the burning of relics (Fr. trans. Mondzain-Baudinet, 158–9). But that this was in any sense an 'official' policy seems unlikely. For a balanced view which emphasises the theological argument for a rejection of relics, but which also notes the concern shown by the Council of 754 that neither relics nor images be damaged, see Auzépy 2001.

the urban fabric of Constantinople, and we will now turn to other artisanal production.

Artisanal production under Constantine V

Various texts claim or imply that Constantine commissioned portraits of himself, but these are problematic. Nikephoros, for example, accuses the emperor of being a new Midas, but seems to be talking of numismatic portraits rather than glittering statuary.[238] At the 787 council, Epiphanios said that the iconoclast emperors 'depicted on icons and on wall paintings' victories over barbarians, but this is part of a rhetorical trope setting appropriate against inappropriate imperial behaviour, and, while it may nonetheless reflect some actual representations, it is completely non-specific.[239] The preserved evidence in (or from) Constantinople is either monumental or numismatic.

Architecture and architectural decoration

The sixth-century church of Hagia Eirene in Constantinople had been severely damaged in the 740 earthquake, and was rebuilt by Constantine's masons.[240] Dendrochronology provides a *terminus post quem* of 753; following normal Byzantine practice, the rebuilding probably used recently felled wood and may thus be attributed to the second half of the 750s.[241] The eighth-century structure retained the scale, the basilican plan, the atrium and the synthronon of the Justinianic church, but introduced new vaulting systems that 'corrected a major structural flaw in the original', and most earlier, domed basilicas.[242] Barrel vaults in the shape of a cross supported a large dome that, at nearly 15 metres across, was second in size only to Hagia Sophia; while a domical vault was placed over the west end of the nave. These innovations were matched by those in the apse mosaic, which shows a cross, outlined in black, set against a ground composed of small, closely set

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[238] Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* i, 27 (276B–D); trans. Mondzain-Baudinet 1989, 108–9.

[239] Mansi xiii, 356A–B; trans Sahas 1986, 167–8. On the problematic references to the current emperor, perhaps Constantine V, and his activities in the *Parastaseis*, see Cameron and Herrin 1984, 23–5 and Dagron 1974, 30 n 26, 137, 178–9, 316, 326, who notes the *Parastaseis/ Patria*'s consistent association of Constantine with the hippodrome.

[240] George 1912; Buchwald 1969, 53; Peschlow 1977; Krautheimer 1986, 286–7; Ruggieri 1995, 93–5; Peschlow 1996; Ousterhout 2001, 6–8.

[241] Ousterhout 2001, 5–6.   [242] Ousterhout 2001, 8.

Fig. 16. Istanbul, Hagia Eirene: apse mosaic, cross

gold tesserae into which silver cubes are randomly inserted (Figure 16).[243] Hagia Eirene preserves the oldest known example of this formula, introduced in order to soften and lighten the impact of the gold.[244] The mosaic

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[243] George 1912, 47–56, pls 17, 18, 22; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 19–20.

[244] See George 1912, 47; Brubaker and Haldon, 2001, 19–20. The formula continued in Constantinople into the ninth century, e.g. in the 867 apse mosaic at Hagia Sophia: Mango

is also distinguished by its use of visual compensation. The cross arms are not straight, but curve downward: the mosaicist counteracted the curve of the apse in order to make the arms of the cross appear horizontal from the ground.[245] This was an expensive mosaic, using far more gold than was necessary in its densely packed tesserae, and is of exceptionally high technical quality.

The cross motif was, of course, the appropriate iconoclast image, especially during Constantine's reign, when the belief that only the cross and the eucharist were acceptable images of Christ received full expression.[246] In addition, as already noted, the symbolic resonance of the cross as a victorious standard closely associated with the imperial house became increasingly important under Constantine V, and had complementary force as an emblem of Christian opposition to Islam.[247] It was already thoroughly familiar in Constantinopolitan churches: though the original decoration of the dome and apse at Hagia Sophia is not known, surviving sixth-century ornament elsewhere in the church consists of crosses and non-representational motifs; the stepped cross had also appeared on coins from the sixth century onwards.[248]

In addition to the apse mosaic, remnants of wall painting are preserved in the south side aisle, and pieces of what appears to have been the templon screen, carrying the monogram of Constantine V, are now set into the floor of the north colonnade;[249] these are too fragmentary to contribute significantly to our understanding of the building, though they are sufficient to indicate that the entire interior was lavishly decorated.

A decade later, Hagia Sophia and the neighbouring patriarchal palace were also repaired, this time under the auspices of the patriarch Niketas, who, we are told fifteen or twenty years later by Nikephoros, 'restored certain structures of the cathedral church that had fallen into decay with time' in

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and Hawkins 1965, 141. Around the edge of the conch, a frame, formed of wreaths of leaves and lozenges with fleur-de-lis infill, encloses two long inscriptions from Amos 9:6 and Psalm 64:4–5 (George 1912, 48–51); the latter, cited as a reading for the *enkainia* of a church in the typikon of Hagia Sophia (*c.* 900), recurs forty-odd years later in slightly modified form at Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki: Mateos 2, 1963, 186–7; on Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki, see 294–6 below.

[245] George 1912, 47; Underwood 1959, 239.

[246] See esp. Gero 1975b; for a survey of the literature, Parry 1996, 178–90 and 181ff. above.

[247] On the cross in anti-Muslim polemic, see Corrigan 1992, 91–4; see also the survey of anti-Islamic literature in Sahas 1996.

[248] Gero 1977, 162–4; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987; Cameron 1992; Brubaker 1999b, 153–5; Cormack 1994, 235–6.

[249] In addition to the references in n. 240 above, see Ulbert 1969/70, 349–50; Cormack 1977, 36–7.

768/9. As we have already seen,[250] it was during this restoration that crosses were substituted for portraits of saints in the mosaic medallions flanking the window (Figure 12).

Constantine's building programme in Constantinople was extensive: with the restoration of the walls and water system he engaged in extensive urban renewal; with the reconstruction of Hagia Eirene he introduced new structural and decorative systems that impacted on later Byzantine architecture; and both Hagia Eirene and Hagia Sophia retain clear evidence of continuous, high quality artisanal practice. Were it not for his iconoclast policies, to which the (iconophile) historians whose chronicles and histories have survived responded with near universal condemnation, Constantine V would now be celebrated alongside Basil I as the restorer of Constantinople after the so-called Dark Ages.[251]

In other areas of the empire, too, there was building work. Remains of the church dedicated to Hagios Nikolaos at Myra (modern Demre) in Lycia, on the south-west coast of Asia Minor, are now generally dated to the eighth century.[252] The church was a cult centre focused on the tomb of the fourth-century bishop Nicholas; it had earlier been reconstructed by Justinian, and continued to receive attention until the saint's body was stolen by Italian merchants in 1087. Like Hagia Eirene, Hagios Nikolaos is a large domed basilica built on the site of a Justinianic church, and retains its large scale; the plan, atrium and foundations of the synthronon were kept from the older building, while surviving capitals appear to be spolia.[253] Also like Hagia Eirene, the reconstruction of Hagios Nikolaos was part of a larger programme of urban renewal: in association with the rebuilding of the cult site, new walls were built around the church, and the old walls around the acropolis were restored.[254]

The remains of another large church, a basilica with an arcosolium in the south wall of the nave, were excavated in 1907 at Parthenion (then known as Parthenit, now as Sinyagino), at the east end of the Crimea.[255] Inscriptions from 906 and 1427 allow the building to be identified as the central church of the monastery of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, founded by John,

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[250] See 201–2 above.   [251] See 161–3 above.

[252] Buchwald 1969, 49; Peschlow 1975; Krautheimer 1986, 288–9; Ruggieri 1991, 240; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1993, 192, 196–7; Ruggieri 1995, 101–4; Ousterhout (2001), 9–10. Foss 1994, 31, n. 120 notes that attested Arab raids of 809 might suggest a slightly later dating.

[253] The surviving fresco decoration is later; but the *opus sectile* floor may date from the eighth-century reconstruction: Feld 1975, 360–8 (capitals), 378–94 (frescoes), 394–7 (floor, which Feld believes dates to the eleventh century).

[254] Foss 1993, 22 (1996a, 28); 1994, 31.

[255] The report was not available to us. It is summarised in Vasiliev 1936, 94.

bishop of Gotthia, who died *c.* 792 in Amastris and was carried back by ship to his Parthenion monastery for burial.[256] John's foundation, which dates to some time between *c.* 750 and *c.* 785 (when he was imprisoned by the Khazars before fleeing to Amastris for the final four years of his life), is noted in his *Vita*, which praises the magnificence of its buildings, holy vessels, and books.[257] Though rebuilt at least twice after the eighth century, and awaiting a modern scientific excavation, the *Vita* and the remains together provide another example of large-scale building activity, this time apparently from scratch.[258]

A handful of other churches are noted in various sources but no longer survive. The *Logos Diegematikos*, a text discovered in 1988 and published by Christine Angelidi, suggests that the chapel of the Hodegon was expanded and given monastic status under the auspices of Constantine V who, it is claimed, gave the church to the monk Hypatios in thanks for his mechanical skills.[259] Though later associated with the Theotokos, at this time the chapel was primarily focused on a healing spring, particularly efficacious at curing blindness.[260] Constantine may also have founded the Pharos church which, like the Hodegon, was apparently renovated and rededicated to the Virgin in the ninth century during the reign of Michael III.[261] More evidence survives concerning Constantine's involvement with the double monastery of Anthousa at Mantineon in Paphlagonia, which is mentioned in several sources, the most informative of which is the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople.[262] The complex was apparently constructed around 740, or slightly earlier, and included two large churches, one dedicated to the Theotokos (for the nuns), the other to the Holy Apostles (for the monks). According to the *Synaxarion*, the monastery housed 900; while these numbers are presumably inflated, it seems clear that it was

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[256] Auzépy 2006, 80–3 (§4–5) and discussion, 70–5; *Vita Ioannis Gotthiae*, in *AS* June VII, 167–71; *Synax. CP*, 772–4; Vasiliev 1936, 89–96; Ruggieri 1991, 232.

[257] *AS* June VII, 169.

[258] The Panagia at Antalya, which has been dated anywhere from the late sixth to the mid-eighth century, awaits scientific excavation. Bibliography in Ruggieri 1991, 240.

[259] Angelidi 1994. Angelidi dates the text to after 843, and perhaps the tenth century.

[260] Janin 1969, 199–207; Angelidi 1994; Angelidi and Papamastorakis 2000, esp. 375.

[261] See e.g. Janin 1969, 232. However, although it is first mentioned in 768 as the site of the betrothal of Eirene and Leo V (Theoph. 444; trans. and commentary Mango and Scott 1997, 613), the sources do not suggest that it had only recently been built. For discussion and further references, see Magdalino 1996, 15–16; Angelidi and Papamastorakis 2000, 375; Magdalino 2004, esp. 20–2.

[262] *Synax. CP*, 848–52. The most complete discussion appears in Mango 1982b; see further Kazhdan and Talbot 1991/2, Ruggieri 1985, Ruggieri 1991, 173–4, 238–9, and Herrin 2006, 4–5.

a large establishment, and it was here that at least two reasonably well-attested monks – Peter of Atroa's spiritual mentor Paul, and Romanos the Younger – entered religious life in the 740s.[263] The *Synaxarion* relates that Anthousa was a staunch iconophile who refused to recant even when hot coals – produced by burning the icons held by the monastery – were poured over her head, a torture from which she survived unscathed and was exiled. The *Synaxarion* then shifts tone: Constantine V arrives at the monastery to question Anthousa, who predicts that the empress (Constantine's third wife, Eudokia), then enduring a difficult pregnancy, will have a boy and a girl. In response, Eudokia gave villages and donations to the monastery, and Constantine 'desisted from his hostile intentions';[264] a separate entry in the *Synaxarion* tells us that the couple named their daughter Anthousa, presumably after the abbess who foretold her birth.[265]

If the *Synaxarion* is to be believed, the reconciliation of Anthousa and Constantine provides an extraordinary indication that family was more important than ideology to the emperor. But whatever Anthousa's beliefs, and whatever Constantine's reaction to them, the Mantineon episode adds significantly to our understanding of material culture during the eighth century. First, with Hagia Eirene and Hagios Nikolaos, it provides another example of large-scale ecclesiastical building in the middle of the eighth century. Second, it supplies the first of many demonstrations that monasteries continued to prosper in a period that has sometimes been viewed as hostile to them,[266] thus again demonstrating how different Byzantine iconoclasm was from early modern versions. Third, it suggests that imperial patronage was not confined to Constantinople but that, as the restoration of the capital's water supply system hinted, the emperor's largesse extended into the provinces.

Also outside of Constantinople, but without imperial associations, are the monasteries associated with Stephen the Younger. These are primarily of historical significance, for we know little about the architecture or its furnishings. Stephen's *Vita*, written by Stephen the deacon in the 807 or 809,[267] ascribes two monastic complexes to the saint. The first, dedicated to St Auxentios, was founded between 745 and 756 on Mount St Auxentios (modern Kayış Dağı),[268] a holy mountain since the fifth century which

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[263] See Mango 1982, 404–5.

[264] *Synax. CP*, 851; the entire account is translated in Mango 1982b, 401–2.

[265] *Synax. CP*, 613–14; Mango 1982, 404.   [266] See 377 below.

[267] Auzépy 1997b (for the date, 5–9); Auzépy 1999.

[268] *V. Steph.* §18: ed. Auzépy 1997, 110–11; trans. and commentary *ibid.*, 16–17, 203–4. See also Ruggieri 1991, 200.

rises to a height of 1320 m and is situated about 15 km south-east of Constantinople on the Bithynian side of the Bosphoros. The *Vita* records the existence of a chapel, cemetery and cells but offers no significant description, though it does tell us that Stephen's foundation was associated with the female monastery of Trichinareai, founded in the fifth century and situated lower down the mountain.[269] The pair thus formed in effect a double monastery similar to that at Mantineon. According to his *Vita*, Stephen's monastery was destroyed by Constantine V in 763,[270] though the emperor spared the Trichinareai monastery, either out of deference to the nuns or because they accepted iconoclasm.[271] Remains of what may have been a monastic complex were discovered in the nineteenth century; but, as the area is now a military zone and access is not permitted, no modern excavations or site reports exist.[272]

Stephen's second monastery was founded after his exile to the island of Proikonesos (Marmara adası) in the 760s. According to the *Vita*, Stephen first built a church dedicated to St Anne.[273] When the faithful monks from Mount St Auxentios arrived, they formed another monastic community; Stephen's mother and sister left the Trichinareai monastery to join them in 763/4.[274] The *Vita* provides no details except that Stephen's cell was narrow.[275]

Icons

Comparison with wall paintings datable to 741–52 in the Theodotus chapel at Sta Maria Antiqua in Rome has suggested a contemporaneous dating for

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[269] On this monastery, see Janin 1975, 45–7.

[270] *V. Steph.* §40–2: ed. Auzépy 1997, 139–42; trans. and commentary *ibid.*, 235–9.

[271] Auzépy 1997b, 17.   [272] Auzépy 1997b, 10.

[273] *V. Steph.* §46: ed. Auzépy 1997, 147; trans. and commentary *ibid.*, 245.

[274] *V. Steph.* §47: ed. Auzépy 1997, 147–8; trans. and commentary *ibid.*, 246–7. See also Ruggieri 1991, 205.

[275] Ruggieri lists three additional citations of monastic complexes or churches: a church dedicated to Sts Kyriakos and Julitta in Mysia built by David of Mitylene around 762/3; an oratory of St Andrew near Sinope the foundation date of which is unknown though it is documented in the tenth century as having received unwanted attention from Constantine V's minions (Ruggieri suggests, for no clear reason, a mid-eighth-century dating); and a church dedicated to St Andrew near Amasra ascribed to St Hesychios, probably built in the eighth century (the *Synax. CP*, 516, specifically notes its connection with Constantine VI and Eirene): Ruggieri 1991, 219, 231–2. On St Andrew at Sinope, see also Mango (1972), 153. A few other churches (the monasteries of Aminsos in the region of Samsun, of Alie and Astoukon in Constantinople; a chapel dedicated to Hagios Kyrus, also in the capital) are attested by seals, on which see Ruggieri 1991, 192, 211, 231.
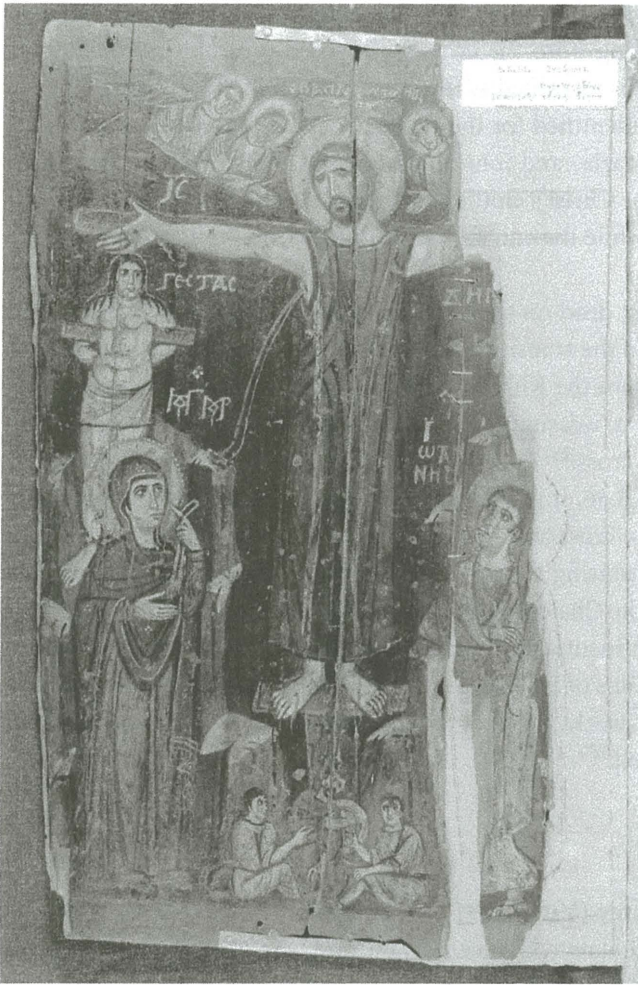
Fig. 17. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.36:
Crucifixion

an icon in the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai (Figure 17).[276] In
addition to general iconographic similarities, each follows the rulings of the
Quinisext Council of 692, when the liturgical practice of mixing water with
the wine of the eucharist – represented in both by twin streams of water and
blood emerging from Christ's side – was first instituted.[277] The icon shows

[276] Sinai B.36: Belting and Belting-Ihm 1966, 37–8; Weitzmann and Galavaris 1990, 63; Kartsonis
1986, 40, 68, 234–5; Kalavrezou 1990, 169–70; Belting 1994, 120. On the Theodotus chapel,
see 315 below.
[277] See Kartsonis 1986, 234–5.

the crucifixion, with Christ (IC [XC]), wearing a *kolobion* and crowned with thorns, hanging from the cross with closed eyes.[278] Unusually for a Greek icon, Christ is identified as the 'king of the Jews'. He is flanked by the two thieves, here identified for the first time as Gestas and Demas,[279] and by Mary (Hagia Maria) and John the evangelist.[280] Below the cross, three soldiers gamble for Christ's clothes; half-figures of angels fly on either side of Christ's head, while the sun and, presumably once, the moon complete the composition.

Images of Christ dead on the cross become common only after the end of iconoclasm, and the transitional nature of the iconography in the ninth century is clear from the Khludov Psalter of *c.* 845, where both the living and the dead Christ, wearing either a loincloth or the *kolobion* (Figure 15), are shown on the cross.[281] If we accept a dating in the mid-eighth century for the icon Sinai B.36, it provides the oldest known representation of the dead Christ on the cross and of the crucified Christ wearing the crown of thorns.[282] Texts stressing the reality of Christ's death, however, appeared earlier, as part of the Chalcedonian response to the monophysites. A particularly clear and influential discussion is found in the *Guidebook* (*Hodegos*) written by Anastasios of Sinai in the 680s.[283] This, and stylistic details characteristic of other works made at Sinai, suggest that the icon was made in the monastery itself.[284]

Manuscripts

The Vatican Ptolemy (Vat.gr.1291), an illustrated copy of Ptolemy's tables for computing the date of Easter, was produced in Constantinople in the 750s.[285] The manuscript is written in a careful upright majuscule, and

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[278] Weitzmann and Galavaris 1990, 61–4, pls. XXV, LXXXIX–LXC; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 60–1.

[279] Weitzmann and Galavaris 1990, 62, and Kartsonis 1994, 185 n. 32, believe that Gestas is here presented as a female; we do not: see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 60 n. 25. The next appearance of the names is apparently at the church of Kiliçlar in Cappadocia (*c.* 900): Restle 1967 II, fig. 258.

[280] The omission of the epithet ὁ ἅγιος before John's name follows early practice that lingered well into the ninth century (and sometimes later): Mango and Hawkins 1972, 28.

[281] Moscow, Historical Museum 129, ff., 45v (dead, *kolobion*), 67r (alive, *kolobion*), 72v (dead, loincloth): Ščepkina (1977).

[282] So too Belting and Belting-Ihm 1966, 36.

[283] See esp. Belting and Belting-Ihm 1966 and Kartsonis 1986, 40–68.

[284] 95 folios; 280 × 204 mm. Canart and Peri 1970, 566–7; Wright 1985; Ševčenko 1992; Spatharakis 1978; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 37–40.

[285] Detailed arguments in support of this dating in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 38–9.
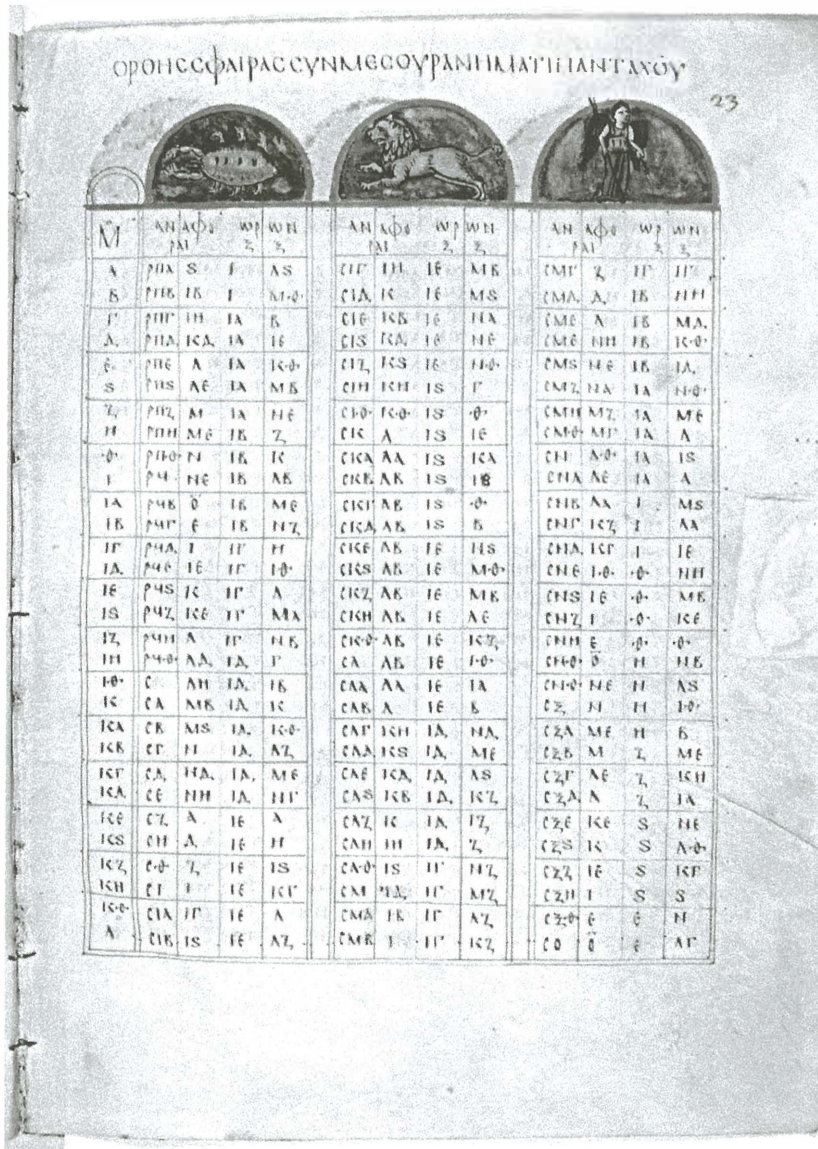
Fig. 18. Vatican Ptolemy (Vat.gr.1291, f. 23r): astronomical table with Cancer, Leo, and Virgo

includes eight representations of all members of the zodiac spread, three per side, across thirty-two pages (Figure 18), along with three full-page miniatures. These show the constellations of the north (f. 2v; Figure 19) and south hemispheres (f. 4v), and a 'sun table' (f. 9r), with personifications of the hours, the months, and the signs of the zodiac in concentric circles
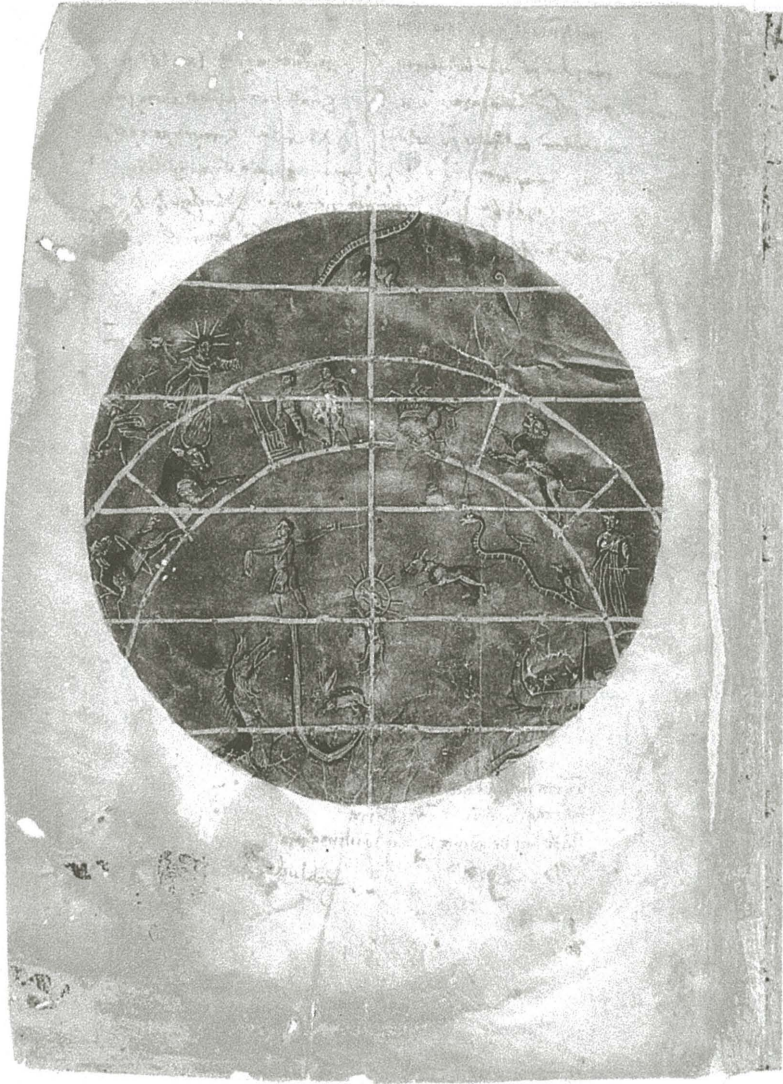
Fig. 19. Vatican Ptolemy (Vat.gr.1291, f. 2v): constellations of the north hemisphere

around a personification of the sun in a chariot (Figure 20). The Ptolemy illustrations are an important witness to Byzantine interest in accurate scientific information in the eighth century – the tables, for example, were calculated to be accurate from the latitude of the capital, and the sun table indicates the precise time that the sun enters each zodiacal house – and
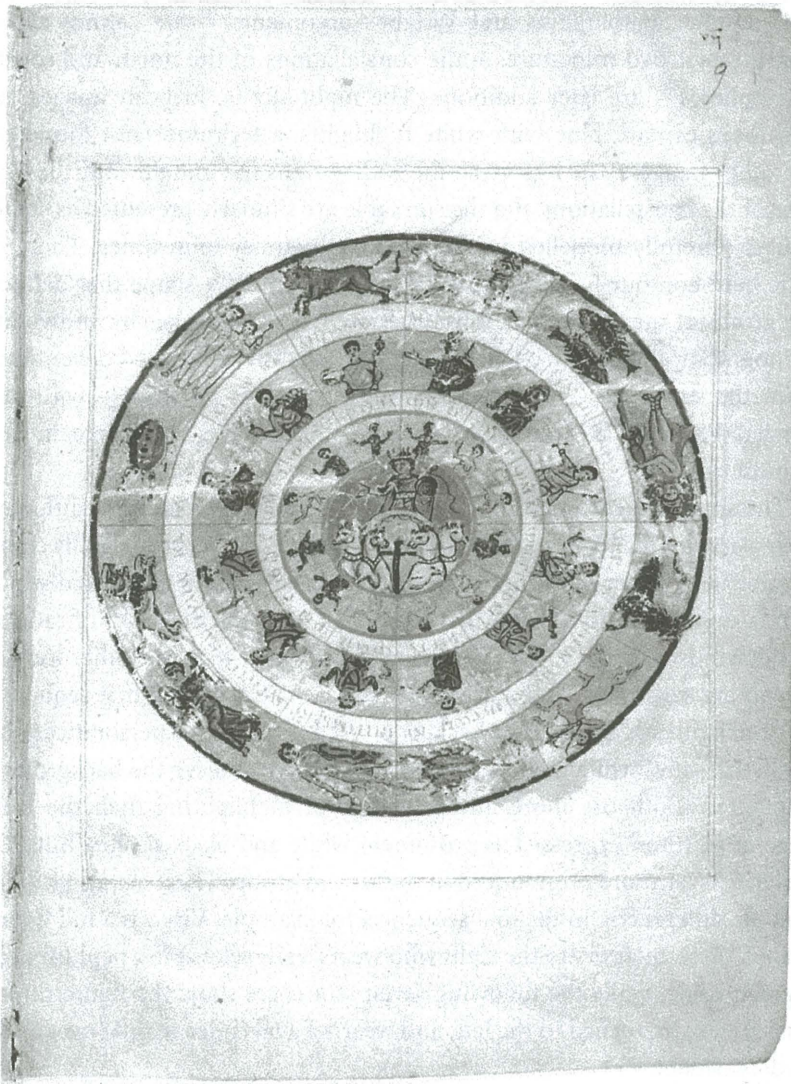
Fig. 20. Vatican Ptolemy (Vat.gr.1291, f. 9r): Helios surrounded by personifications of the hours, months, and signs of the zodiac

are also our best evidence for painting styles in Constantinople during iconoclasm.[286]

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[286] On the 'scientific renaissance' during the second half of the eighth century, as exemplified by the Vatican Ptolemy and by the appointment of a court astrologer in 792, see Magdalino 2006, 23–4, 50–1, 55–6.

At least two, and probably three, hands are evident in the miniatures, but, despite Spatharakis's and Wright's arguments,[287] we cannot agree that the first two miniatures – the constellations of the north and south hemispheres – are later additions. The night sky is, in both images, in two tones of dark blue with white highlights, a technique not found in the other images, which portray the zodiac signs in sunlight. But the figures of the constellations and the sun table are similarly presented as small figures, carefully modelled in three, and sometimes four, tones. There is little hard contour line, except for a sharply pointed v-shape that defines the groins of the personifications; faces are particularly sketchy and vivid. Iconographically the constellations follow slightly different conventions from the sun table – though not from the lunette portraits – with the winged Virgo of the sun table shown without wings elsewhere in the manuscript.

The small images in the lunettes at the top of the tables have different formal requirements from the full-page miniatures and are not readily comparable with them. The lunette images were clearly painted by two distinct hands, one responsible for the first set (ff. 22r–23v) and the personifications of the winds, day and night, and the moon (ff. 45v–46v), the other for the remaining seven sets of zodiac figures (ff. 24r–37v).[288] The first sequence sets the figures against a blue backdrop (gold for the later personifications on ff. 45v–46v) while the following seven sequences leave the background unpainted. Both use more linear systems of highlighting than the full-page miniatures, expressed as prominent white and black slashes, but this linearity is far more pronounced in the second group. There are also iconographic differences. In the first sequence, for example, Virgo is a full figure turned three-quarters to the right who wears a sleeveless pink peplum over a green tunic, while the following seven sequences show the figure three-quarter length, turned to the left, and wearing a lavender mantle over a red undergarment.

Throughout the manuscript, the painters used a wide range of colours, including the most expensive, gold and blue. Figures and animals are carefully modelled, and meticulously executed; the night sky is a technical *tour de force*. Like the apse mosaic at Hagia Eirene, the miniatures of the Vatican Ptolemy demonstrate that high quality, innovative artisanal production continued during iconoclasm.

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[287] Spatharakis 1978, 47–9; Wright 1985, 359–61.

[288] The zodiac sequence on ff. 22–3 also follows a different order from that in the rest of the zodiac tables.

Fig. 21. Lyon, Musée historique des Tissus, inv. 904. III. 3: imperial hunters

Silks

Silks are notoriously hard to date, but, as we have seen, Constantine V bartered silks for prisoners, and sent silks as diplomatic gifts, so it seems likely that silk production did not stagnate during his reign. Three fragments of a silk showing imperial hunters (Figure 21), from the tomb of St Austremoine at St Calmin in Mozac, may date from the mid-eighth century. The silk shows two spurred horsemen in Byzantine imperial costume spearing a lioness; against a dark blue ground, the scene (woven in red, pale yellow, and using an unusual pale blue for the flesh tones) is set within a medallion decorated with hearts, lotus flowers, and polylobes.[289] The silk

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[289] *Splendeur* 1982, 211; *Byzance* 1992, 197; Muthesius 1997, 68–9, 175, 213, pl. 24b (reversed). The horsemen use stirrups, for an earlier example of which see the seventh-century wool and

was purported to have been donated to St Calmin in 764 by Pippin the Short, and Anna Muthesius believes that it may have been sent to Pippin as a gift from Constantine V in 756/7 during negotiations about the proposed marriage of Constantine's son and Pippin's daughter.[290] Marielle Martiniani-Reber is sceptical, and has instead associated the Mozac hunters with an eleventh-century textile from the tomb of bishop Gunther of Bamberg that portrays an equestrian emperor.[291] But while the light blue silk thread used for the faces of the Mozac hunters has eleventh-century parallels, it is not used for flesh areas;[292] and although the iconography of the Mozac and Bamberg pieces is generically related, the lions find no counterparts in middle Byzantine silks:[293] stylistically the two textiles are quite distinct. The horse trappings and lions point to an earlier rather than a later date, and it may be that a dating in first iconoclasm is sustainable.

Coins

Artabasdos (742–3): The coins struck during the brief reign of Artabasdos continue the mint practices of Leo III save that the emperor holds a patriarchal cross, with two cross bars.[294]

Constantine V (741–75): Except for apparently ceremonial issues commemorating Constantine's accession in 741 and the coronation of his son Leo IV in 751, fractional gold coinage (the *semisses* and the *tremisses*) ceased under Constantine V.[295] *Nomismata* continued, and indeed reveal a major innovation: the retention of portraits of Constantine's deceased father (Figure 22). Until 751, Leo III occupied the obverse;[296] after the elevation of Leo IV, Leo III was moved to the reverse. Philip Grierson has speculated that Constantine created 'a pictorial representation of the filiation formulae which played a major role in Arab personal names' (the 'son of' formula).[297] The three generations of leaders who appear after 751 were

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<div style="footnotes">

linen Alexander roundel now at the Textile Museum in Washington DC, which is believed to have been copied from an imperial silk: Friedman 1989, 162, with discussion.

[290] Muthesius 1997, 68–9.

[291] *Byzance*, 197. Reproductions in Muthesius 1997, pls 52b, 53a.

[292] E.g. Muthesius 1997, 51–2, pls. 16a, 61b.

[293] Compare, e.g. Muthesius 1997, pls. 2–3, 10–11.

[294] *DOC* III,1, 284–5, descriptive lists at 286–9, pl. VII; full discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 122; see now Füeg 2007, 14–16.

[295] *DOC* III,1, 291–2, 294. For Constantine's coinage see Füeg 2007, 15–18.

[296] It is thus difficult to distinguish between coins minted toward the end of Leo's reign from those minted toward the beginning of Constantine's: see *DOC* III,1, 226–7, 291.

[297] *DOC* III,1, 9, 292. It is possible that delays in changing mint moulds were responsible for the continuation of Leo's portrait until 751, a prospect that Grierson has raised in regard to the

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Fig. 22. Gold *nomisma* of Constantine V (741–75), mint of
Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4547: busts of
Constantine V and Leo IV (obverse) and Leo III (reverse)

clearly intended to make a point about the stability of the Isaurian dynasty,
a practice continued into the following reigns – from 776 to 780 Leo IV was
represented together with his son Constantine VI on the obverse and with
Leo III and Constantine V on the reverse.[298] This was evidently considered
to be sufficiently important that the pattern was replicated on the copper
coinage as well: after 751, Leo IV appeared with the bearded Constantine V
first as two busts on the obverse, and then as two enthroned figures.[299]
In silver, however, the *miliaresion* continued the model established by
Leo III.[300]

Artisanal production outside the empire

Christian building work in areas peripheral to Byzantium, but culturally
associated with the old east Roman empire, was also extensive. We have
already mentioned pope Zacharias's version of the Chalke gate, located in
front of the Lateran in Rome.[301] He also rebuilt Sant'Eusebio, a large basilica
of the standard Roman type,[302] and perhaps the Greek church of S Gregorio
Nazianzano, first noted in the *Liber Pontificalis* in 807. Seventeenth-century
accounts cite a tenth-century document that claimed that the church was
founded by Zacharias to house Greek nuns who moved to Rome in order to

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copper coinage, some versions of which continued to show Constantine as a beardless youth
well into the 740s: *ibid.*, 294.

[298] So too Dagron 1996, 51–2; see Füeg 2007, 18. [299] *DOC* III,1, 295; Füeg 2007, 17f.

[300] *DOC* III,1, 294. During Constantine's reign, mints are attested in Sicily, Rome, perhaps
Naples, and until 751 Ravenna: *ibid.*, 295–8. Descriptive lists and reproductions of all coins at
ibid., 299–324, pls VIII–XI. On the leather coins that were perhaps issued during
Constantine's siege of the capital in 743, see 159, note 19 above.

[301] See 178 above. [302] See Coates-Stephens 1997, 195.

escape the persecution of Constantine V, bringing Gregory's relics with them.[303] Any such persecutions are, as we have seen, unlikely to have occurred during Zacharias's papacy, and the story is anyway typical of later anti-iconoclast interpolations: Sansterre is rightly sceptical of the details.[304] It may also be noted that, according to pseudo-Symeon *magistros*, Gregory's relics were only discovered (in Cappadocia) and translated to Constantinople in the tenth century.[305] It remains possible that Zacharias commissioned a convent for Greek nuns, but any association with iconoclasm is doubtful.

The best known Roman monument that dates from the period of Constantine V is the chapel to the east of the apse in Sta Maria Antiqua, painted between 741 and 752 for Theodotus, as identified in the inscription once on its west wall: 'Theodotus, *primicerius* of the *defensores* and *dispensator* of [the church of] the holy mother of God, ever virgin, Mary, which is called Antiqua'.[306] This was apparently a funerary chapel, and retains a crucifixion in the apse (Figure 23), below which was once a panel showing the Virgin flanked by St Peter, the martyr St Julitta and pope Zacharias on her right, with St Paul, the martyr St Quiricus (Julitta's son) and the donor Theodotus on her left. On either side of the entrance the painter portrayed Theodotus with his family presenting candles to the Virgin and child and, opposite, Theodotus dedicating candles to Julitta and Quiricus; a cycle of the martyrdom of Julitta and, mostly, her son Quiricus fills the rest of the pictorial space.

Unlike earlier frescoes at Sta Maria Antiqua, the style of the paintings has little in common with examples preserved from the empire. There is admittedly no monumental representation from the capital with which to compare the Roman murals, but they are notably more linear and less three-dimensional than the figural imagery in the Vatican Ptolemy, discussed above. But, as often at Sta Maria Antiqua, the subject matter selected for inclusion is comparable to what Constantinopolitan production is known from the period of iconoclasm or the half-century following. The patriarch Tarasios, for example, is said to have commissioned a martyrdom cycle for

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[303] Sansterre 1983, 34–5, 157; Coates-Stephens 1997, 195–8.

[304] See previous note.   [305] Ps-Symeon 755.

[306] [T]HEODOTUS PRIMICERIO DEFENSORUM ET D[ISP]ENSATORE SANCTAE DEI
GENETR[IC]IS SENPERQUE BIRGO (for virgo) MARIA QUI APPELLATUR ANTIQUA.
When we were last in Rome, the panel with the inscription had not been *in situ* for some time,
but was stored in the office of the Soprintendenza del Foro Romano. Krautheimer *et al.* 1959,
249–68; Belting 1987; Teteriatnikov 1993; Jessop 1999. Theodotus was also responsible for the
construction of Sant'Angelo in Pescheria, a triple-apsed basilica dedicated in 755:
Coates-Stephens 1997, 198–200.

Fig. 23. Rome, Sta Maria Antiqua, Theodotus chapel: Crucifixion

(probably) the monastery of All Saints that he founded;[307] Theodore of Stoudion describes scenes from the martyrdom of John the Baptist;[308] and later in the ninth century cycles of the martyrdom of the Makkabees, the apostles, and Cyprian, along with individual scenes of the martyrdom of Isaiah and Zacharias, appear in the Paris copy of the *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzos (Paris.gr.510, ff. 32v, 137r, 332v, 340r, 347v) while the stoning of St Stephen is depicted in the Vatican *Christian Topography* (Vat.gr.699, 82r).[309] The *ex voto* and donor portraits at Sta Maria Antiqua recall even earlier Byzantine products: they are closely comparable to those produced at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki in, probably, the first half of the sixth century.[310] The crucifixion, with Christ in a long *kolobion* tormented by soldiers and flanked by Mary and John the Evangelist, resembles earlier Byzantine works but is also quite similar to some images of the crucifixion in the Khludov Psalter (Figure 15), probably produced shortly after 843.[311] Style aside, in other words, the basic programme of the Theodotus chapel

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[307] *V. Ignat.* §49–51: ed. Efthymiadis 1998, 134–41; trans. *ibid.*, 194–6; commentary *ibid.*, 238–42.
[308] *PG* 99: 768–9.
[309] Brubaker 1999b, 245–51, figs. 8, 18, 33, 35; Stornajolo 1908, pl. 47.
[310] Cormack 1969, 49–50; Megaw and Hawkins 1977, 62, n. 178; see also 69 above.
[311] Moscow, Historical Museum 129, f.67r: Ščepkina 1977.

conforms with Byzantine practice, and at least hints at what contemporary orthodox interiors might have looked like.

Christian monuments in the east are also numerous. In the Tur Abdin, portions of a handful of dated monuments – the Büyük Kaçıçluk monastery of 748, the Mar Musa monastery of 751, Üç kilise near Edessa of 766/7, and perhaps, if the inscription dated to 772 is in its original location, the Mar Addai church at Heshterek – survive.[312] Others are known from texts: at Amida (Diyarbakır), the church of St Thomas church was renovated around 750, then restored in 770; the Athanasios monastery at Tell Beshmai was constructed around 750; and at Martyropolis (Mayafarquin), a Jacobite church was built in 752.[313]

Moving southward, several dated churches, or decorative programmes within them, survive from Syro-Palestine. As we saw in Chapter 2, the nave of the basilica of St Stephen at Umm al-Rasas received an extensive mosaic floor in 718; nearly forty years later, in 756, bishop Job had the floors of the bema and apse decorated in mosaic consisting of non-figural, geometric patterns (Figure 24).[314] This same bishop Job provided a mosaic at the western entrance to the monastic chapel of the Theotokos at 'Ayn al-Kanisa, near Mt Nebo; the mosaic, geometric and non-figural like that at St Stephen's, celebrates the rebuilding of the chapel in 762. An apparently earlier floor showing a vine scroll housing birds and animals, at some point mostly removed and reworked, covers the nave, while sheep and fruit trees flank a curtained door on the floor of the bema. The inscription accompanying these sections of the mosaic is undated, but its epigraphy is quite distinct from that dated 762; Piccirillo dates it to the sixth century, and argues that the reconstruction of 762 was restricted to the entrance mosaic.[315] In the same year as the reconstruction at 'Ayn al-Kanisa, a mosaic floor was installed in the church of St George in the monastic complex at Ramot, just outside of Jerusalem; the decoration consists of the dedication inscription within a frame.[316] Five years later, in 767, the mosaic floor at the church of the Virgin in Madaba was reconstructed, with geometric ornament interspersed with a few heart-shaped leaves, stylised flowers, and two bowls of fruit, each accompanied by a knife (Figure 25). The first of the

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[312] Bell 1982, ix, 163, 118–19, 163.   [313] *Ibid.*, 123, 126–7, 163.

[314] Piccirillo 1992, 220, 238; Piccirillo and Alliata 1994, 136–7; Schick 1995, 473; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 34.

[315] Piccirillo *et al.* 1994; Piccirillo 1995; Schick 1998, 87; Piccirillo and Alliata 1998, 359–64, 448–51; Ognibene 1998; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 34.

[316] Arav, Di Segni, and Kloner 1990; Gatier 1992, 155; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 34. On Jerusalem in this period, see Linder, 1996.
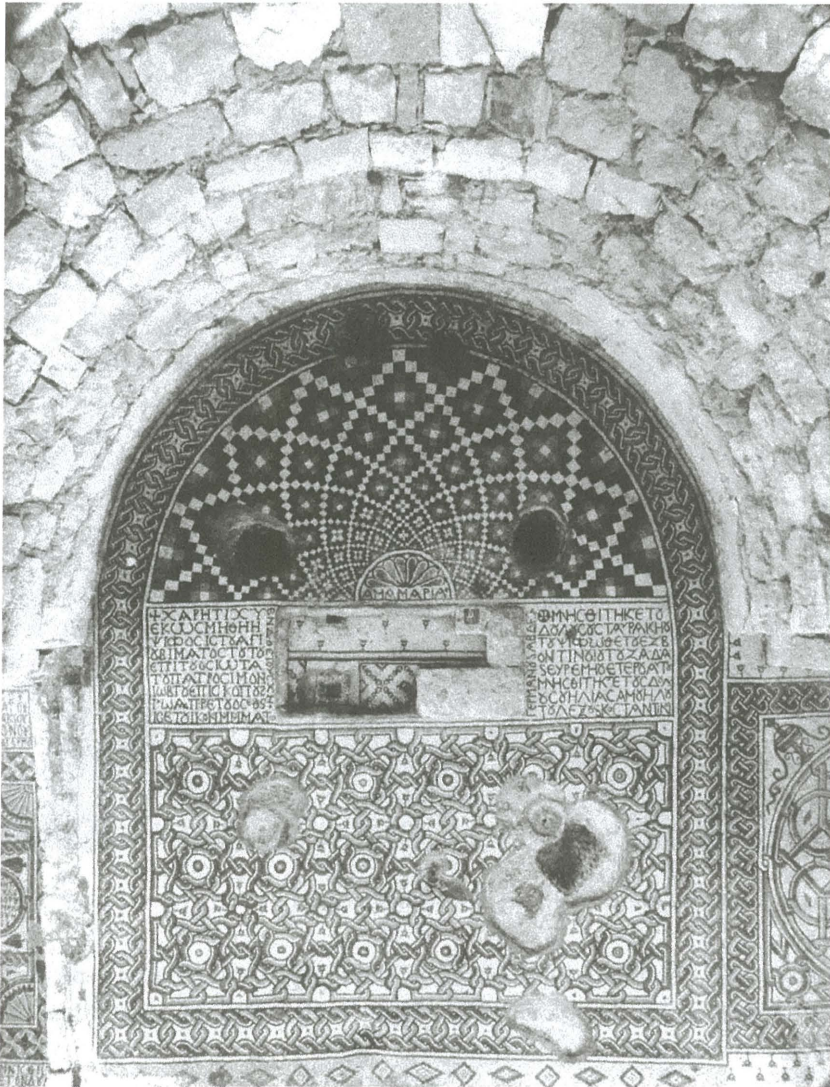
Fig. 24. Umm al-Rasas, St Stephen's church: apse floor mosaic

pavement's two inscriptions, on a panel at the east end of the nave, provides the date. The second, inserted into a central medallion that is the focus of the floor, reads 'if you want to look at Mary, virginal mother of God, and to Christ whom she generated, universal king, only son of the only God, purify [your] mind, flesh and works. May you purify with prayer the people of God.'[317] This is often taken to indicate that an icon of the Virgin and

[317] Di Segni 1992; Gatier 1992, 149; Piccirillo 1992, 50, 64–5; Schick 1995, 395 (with an incorrect date). Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 34–5.
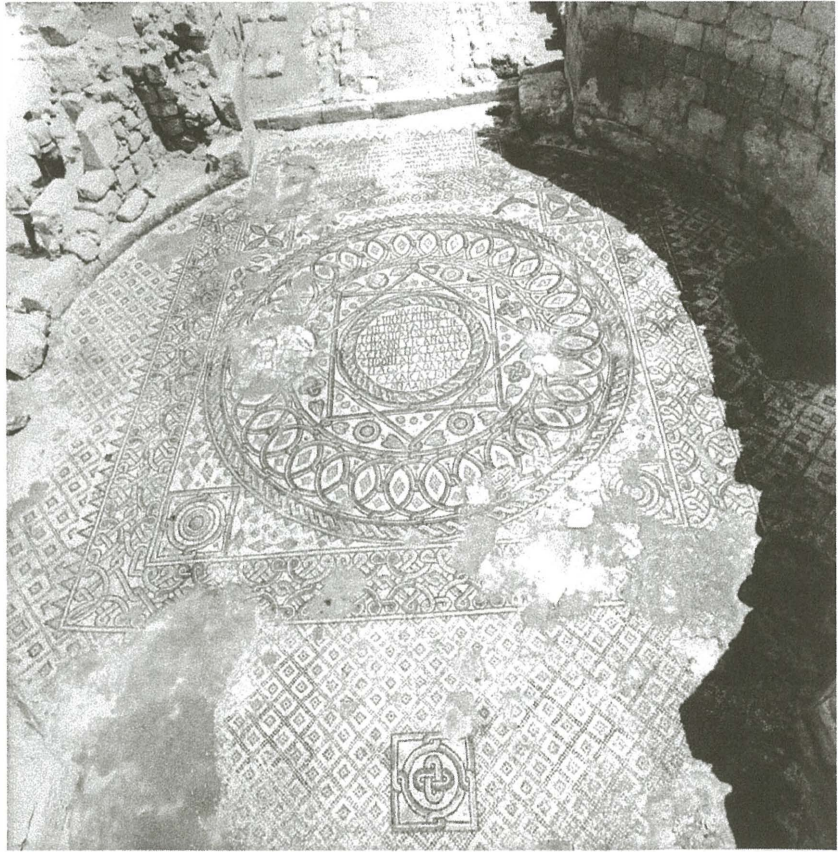
Fig. 25. Madaba, church of the Virgin: apse floor mosaic

Christchild stood in the apse, though it could equally well refer to spiritual rather than physical sight. Finally, in Egypt, in the small church at Philae an altar was dedicated to the Theotokos in 753.[318]

'Iconoclasm' in Palestine

At 'Ayn al-Kanisa, an undocumented fire has blackened the tesserae of the original floor, including the 'iconoclast' modifications. As the 762 panel shows no signs of heat damage, Susanna Ognibene has suggested that the 762 restoration was triggered by the conflagration. This has prompted her to argue that, since the latest known figural mosaic in the region, at Deir al-'Adas, dates to 722, the modifications at 'Ayn al-Kanisa date before 762, and

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[318] Nautin 1967, 42.

geometric ornament dominates churches dated to the mid-eighth century, 'iconoclasm' in Palestine appeared sometime between *c.* 720 and *c.* 750.[319]

As in Byzantium, Palestinian 'iconoclasm' was not consistent. But we reiterate that 'iconoclasm' in Palestine was not the same phenomenon as it was within the empire. Byzantine iconoclasts targeted holy portraits; Palestinian Christians directed their modifications more widely, to include representations of any living creature. Palestinian 'iconoclasm' was more similar to Islamic prohibitions than to the imperial iconoclasm generated in Constantinople, and for this reason Ognibene prefers the label 'iconophobia' for the Palestinian phenomenon.[320] We continue to discount any significant impact of Islamic practice on Byzantine iconoclasm, even if we also accept that the cultural to-and-fro between the Christian and Islamic worlds may well have rendered many commonly held ideas on both 'sides' accessible.[321]

Byzantine iconoclasm does not, therefore, appear to have inspired 'iconoclasm' in Palestine. Neither, it seems, was it forced by any official Islamic policy against Christian representation. As noted in Chapter 2, even if the caliph Yazid II actually sponsored the iconoclast edict of 721 that is attributed to him by later Christian writers (notably the 787 council), many churches that were assuredly still in use at the time were not affected and there is virtually no evidence for hostile destruction.[322] As Schick has argued forcefully, the disfigurement, when it appears, is so carefully done we must assume that the people who used and respected the buildings affected were responsible – in other words, the Christian congregations modified their own church floors.[323]

As we have already seen, the Christian church hierarchy in the east condemned Byzantine iconoclasm in 760, 764, and 767,[324] while two of the most compelling voices against the Byzantine position belonged to the eastern monks John of Damascus and Theodore Abu Qurra.[325] The differences between their approaches is, however, telling. John of Damascus wrote his anti-iconoclast treatises in Greek, and directed his arguments against Constantinople. Fifty years later, we learn from Theodore Abu Qurra that Islamic arguments against images were now often persuasive. Writing in

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[319] Ognibene 1998; and for a catalogue of all affected mosaics, Ognibene 2002, 149–459.

[320] For discussion, see Schick 1995, 180–219; Ognibene 1998; Schick 1998, 87–8; Ognibene 2002, 95–147.

[321] For our original arguments, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 30–6. For similar arguments, see Ognibene 2002; Fowden 2004.

[322] Full discussion of Yazid's edict, with bibliography, in Schick 1995, 215–17; list of churches in use during the Umayyad period that were not altered in *ibid.*, 184–5.

[323] Schick 1995, 180–219; Ognibene 2002.   [324] Discussion in Schick 1995, 210–11; 114 above.

[325] On both of whom see 246 below.

the first decade of the ninth century, Abu Qurra wrote a tract in Arabic about the value of Christian images to convince his Christian audience, influenced by the beliefs of their Islamic neighbours, that icons were not idols.[326] Christians in Palestine were not responsive to edicts coming out of Constantinople; they were concerned with dealing with their neighbours. Palestinian 'iconoclasm' is about negotiating social practice – and it is a very different phenomenon from the Byzantine imperial policy made official by Constantine V.[327]

Constantine V and the monasteries: persecution – or a response to 'treason'?

The evidence for a serious persecution of individuals is equally sparse. A reference in the *Vita* of Stephen the Younger, who was executed in 765, refers to three areas to which iconophiles fled from persecution: Cherson and the Crimea (partly because after the synod of 754 its bishop was appointed by Constantine V to the see of Herakleia in Thrace; thereafter the province elected John of Gotthia, who had his position confirmed in Iberia and sent his declaration of faith to the patriarch of Jerusalem, thus detaching his see from Constantinople);[328] the Greek-speaking regions of southern Italy with Crete and the western Peloponnese; and the south-western coastal districts of Asia Minor around the Gulf of Attaleia. These are all regions which lie well outside the immediate supervision of Constantinople, although there is no reason to doubt that the state officials there remained true to the emperor – exiles from Constantinople were still sent to Cherson throughout this period, for example.[329] Naples also remained loyal to the empire, though

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[326] See Griffith 1998, esp. 189–90.

[327] See also Schick 1995, 218–19, who however thinks that Yazid II's edict had a more precise effect than do we.

[328] In fact, as Auzépy 2006, 70–4, suggests, John may have been a rebel ecclesiastic whose position reflected local opposition to imperial ecclesiastical authority and involvement in the region under Constantine V (and not iconoclasm as such); that there was an official bishop apart from John; and that he was himself abandoned by his own supporters in the course of his failed attack on the Khazars (an attack possibly encouraged by the empress Eirene in the mid–late 780s in respect of imperial policy with regard to challenging their dominance in the region). Zuckerman 2006b offers a somewhat different interpretation of events in Gotthia, preferring to see John as the regular bishop rather than as a 'counter-bishop', but agreeing that his 'rebellion' probably took place with the assumption or promise of imperial support, and in the context of Eirene's attempt to re-assert imperial power in the region.

[329] *V. Steph iun.*, 125.12–25. See, for a detailed discussion of the passage and the related sources, Speck 1978, 58–61, with accompanying notes. See also Ahrweiler 1977, which Speck's

this was almost certainly less about attitudes toward images than about demonstrating Neapolitan autonomy to Rome.[330]

The evidence for the flight of people from iconoclast persecution is really rather meagre, however, and depends to a great extent on much later sources. More importantly, the account in the *Life* of Stephen, which purports to describe areas which were safe for iconophiles in 754, has been shown to be largely an invention of the author. This invention had a certain basis in actual events, drawing as it did on the reality of certain persons who were exiled following the plot of 765–6, and perhaps also on a refusal to accept imperial authority during the short-lived persecution of some monastic communities after 767. The purpose of the story may well have been to legitimate and reinforce the position of those monks who had come from these regions in 787, presenting them as the righteous who had resisted imperial policy, in contrast to those who had stayed under more immediate imperial control, and who were thus in some way compromised by virtue of their lack of resistance. That there was also a certain rivalry in the later eighth and early ninth century between the monastic house of St Auxentios, represented by Stephen and his hagiographer, and others, such as the Sakkoudion monastery, may also be significant.[331]

It has often been assumed that the persecution of monks and monasteries undertaken by Constantine and his supporters – notably by the theme *strategos* of the *Thrakesion* district in western Asia Minor, Michael Lachanodrakon – was also closely bound up with the issue of iconoclasm. In fact, there is no evidence, other than the assertions in later iconophile texts such as the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, to show that this association was the motivation for Constantine's policy in this respect. The persecution of monks – with the exception of an isolated case in 761/2[332] – appears to have been a relatively short-lived phenomenon: it begins in 765 and ends in about 772.

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discussion brings up to date. For southern Italy, see Kislinger 2000b, 140; Schreiner 1988, 374–6; and esp. Auzépy 1999, 272–81.

[330] Luzzati Laganà 1989; Auzépy 1999, 277–9.

[331] See Auzépy 1999, 272–81, 284ff. for a detailed exposition of this hypothesis.

[332] The monk Andreas (or Peter – there are conflicting traditions) was executed because he had challenged the emperor's orthodoxy and called him a new Valens and new Julian: Theoph., 432.16–21 (Mango and Scott 1997, 598); *PmbZ*, no. 398; *PBE* Andreas 5 (with *PmbZ*, no. 6004; *PBE* Petros 69). But no connection with icons is mentioned, and a different motive may be assumed on the part of the emperor. See Rochow 1991, 176–8; Gero 1977, 122. It is most unlikely that the mention in the *Parastaseis synchronoi chronikai* (chapt. 63: Preger ed. i, 61 [Cameron-Herrin, 140]) of a monk Anastasios who was burned alive in the hippodrome took place during the reign of Constantine V, which – if it is not legendary – probably occurred in the period 775–87: see Berger 1988, 46, with 304–5, 697; and Ševčenko 1992, 290 and n. 32. See Auzépy 1999, 284–8; *V. Steph. iun.*, 34–40.

Stephen the Younger, whose *Vita* dates from 808/9 or later, was imprisoned and executed for his criticism of the emperor (he is even supposed to have trampled on a coin bearing the emperor's image, a symbolic act of defiance that was, of course, intended to reveal Constantine's hypocritical denial of the force of sacred portraits even as he reacted against the humiliation of the imperial portraits on *nomismata* – but remained, nonetheless, a treasonable act that even Stephen's hagiographic biographer included in the narrative)[333] and his (apparently successful) attempts to attract men from the establishment in Constantinople and from the emperor's own circle to the monastic life.[334]

But the *Vita* also makes it plain that Constantine put a great deal of effort into attempting to bring Stephen over to his own point of view and to obtain his agreement to the decisions of the Council of 754.[335] Even after initial refusals on Stephen's part to conform to the emperor's wishes, he was permitted to return to his monastery. Only later was he imprisoned, and even at the last minute the emperor attempted to win him over: the *Life* implies that, in spite of his anger at Stephen and his irritation with him, Constantine needed to gain his support or agreement.[336] Only when all his efforts had failed did he go ahead with his execution, and only then because – so it would appear – Stephen was directly implicated in a treasonous plot against the emperor himself. Theophanes confirms that Stephen was in contact with some of the conspirators, and makes no mention on this occasion of any attempt on Stephen's part to convert them to the monastic life.[337] Like the earlier criticisms voiced by the monk Andreas (or Peter), Stephen's critique seems also to have involved a personal attack on the emperor's lifestyle, piety, and orthodoxy and was, in consequence, tantamount to

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[333]   *V. Steph. iun.*, 156. 15–157. 5. See Speck 1978, 446: while this motif may have been derived from the *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, the fact that the hagiographer included it at all is indicative of the real reason for the imperial authority perceiving Stephen as a danger.

[334]   See Theoph., 437.5–7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 604); Nikeph., 154–60; SynaxCP., 263.20–23. On Stephen, see *PBE* Stephanos 2; *PmbZ*, no. 7012; Auzépy, in *V. Steph. iun.*, 39–40.

[335]   Ed. Auzépy with extensive commentary and analysis. The *Life* of Stephen served as the basis or model for many later lives, but its history is complex – an initial *Life* may have been composed by 809, but later additions and interpolations have also been suggested. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 226–7; Speck 1990a, esp. 158, 509ff., 222–34. For Stephen's arrest and death, see the discussion, with parallel sources and literature, in Rochow 1991, 186–8; Auzépy, in *V. Steph. iun.*, 29–34. For the most recent discussion of the date, context, content and structure of the *Vita*, see Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 5ff.; Auzépy 1999.

[336]   See especially the account of Rouan 1981, and note *V. Steph. iun.*, 168. 27ff., where Stephen is described as the leader of the 'idolaters', i.e. the monks, also described as the 'unmentionables' (on which term – *amnemoneutos* – see below).

[337]   Theoph., 438.6f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 605). See the summary with literature at Rochow 1991, 186–8.

treason. The punishment meted out to him, along with that of a number
of imperial officers thereafter, may be connected with accusations of being
an enemy of the state.[338] And although Theophanes makes a connection
with icons (the wave of imprisonments and punishments was, according
to him, on account of the piety of those involved and the fact that they
had prostrated themselves before icons), other factors clearly played a role.
Other monks suffered as a result of their connection with Stephen: soldiers
in particular, probably from the Constantinople district, were punished by
exile or physical chastisement.[339]

The exact reasons for Constantine's action and attitude will never be
known, nor the precise relationship between the persecution of Stephen,
the plot of 765/6, and the persecution of selected monks and monastic com-
munities which commenced at the same time. The arrest and punishment
of many important state officers and simple soldiers and junior officers fol-
lowed shortly after the exhaustion of Constantine's patience with Stephen,
and (presumably) the discovery of the plot with which he was involved. It
preceded the oath which Constantine is supposed to have demanded from
all his subjects promising to honour no image and have nothing to do with
monks – in effect, an oath of loyalty to him and his policies, suggestive – if it
was really extracted – of his insecurity at the time.[340] Stephen's execution was

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[338] Theoph., 437.9–11 (Mango and Scott 1997, 604) and Rochow 1991, 188–9; *V. Steph. iun.*, 39f.
See below.

[339] See Theoph., 437.9–10 (Mango and Scott 1997, 604); Nikeph., 152f., 156f.; and *Synax. CP.*,
263.20–264.10. In addition, a variety of later hagiographies describe punishments dealt out to
iconophiles on account of their refusal to accept the emperor's iconoclast views. But most of
these are compiled from *topoi* of the hagiographic genre, and have little or no worth as firm
historical evidence. See the commemorations of the monks John, Paul, and Andreas 'in Crisei':
Synax. CP., 151; 261–4; Theoph., 442.17ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 610); *AASS* Oct. VIII,
135–49; with the discussion of Rochow 1991, 202 (and on Andrew in Crisei, see Auzépy 1993,
128–34). Constantine also punished the nun Anna for her (allegedly sexual) relationship with
Stephen: *V. Steph iun.*, 132. 4–15, although he had ignored earlier accusations made against
Stephen on this count. Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 21ff., and 1999, 281ff., is able to demonstrate
that there is no connection between the decisions of the Council of 754 and the persecution of
Stephen. Instead, she shows that the *Life* of Stephen was constructed as a propaganda piece
designed to exemplify the horrors of iconoclasm and iconoclast persecution, to stress the role
of the monastic community in opposition, and to challenge contemporary views about the
efficacy and ability of the Isaurian emperors. It also marks the first stage in a process whereby
hagiography was adapted to the political needs of portraying the martyrs to iconoclasm and
the type of sainthood they represent: hagiography begins to be aligned with image theory, the
'real' saint is reduced to his or her representational archetype. Thus the sign comes to replace
the object represented, and the hagiographical text is transformed into a pendant of the icon.

[340] Theoph., 437.11f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 604f.); Nikeph., 154 with Rochow 1991, 189.
Whether this oath was ever actually demanded is uncertain: see Schwarzlose 1890, 63 and n. 3,
who suggests a confusion with the *silentia* held by Constantine to present and discuss his own
views on images referred to already. It is possible that it is in this context that the *Discourse* on

followed by the deposition and banishment of the patriarch Constantine, the beginning of the emperor's anti-monastic policy, and the punishment of a further nineteen high-ranking officers.[341] The emperor is also accused of preaching against the devotion to the Theotokos and the saints,[342] as well as the cult of relics and those who possess them.[343]

In the following year (766/7) the patriarch Constantine II was brought back from his exile, publicly humiliated, and executed. It is likely that during his banishment the investigation and the interrogation of others involved in

images and the cross ascribed to Germanos should be understood (*pace* Van Esbroeck 1999, 22ff.). Whether or not an original sermon by Germanos lies behind the text which survives, the parallels between the arguments it makes regarding the cross, the false nature of an oath demanded under duress (Van Esbroeck 1999, §§1, 2, 5, 17), and the arguments set out in the first sermon of John of Damascus, all support this contention. The *Horos* itself (see above, 195–6) refers to the fact that images on holy vessels, altar cloths and elsewhere were not to be wantonly damaged, and the *Discourse* explicitly mentions that they, along with all kinds of sacred images, should be protected (§18). The *Discourse* notes that even if *proskynesis* before images is no longer possible, they can be honoured standing, since honour still passes to the prototype (§19); the *Horos* explicitly forbids *proskynesis* before images; and this is a major issue in John's first sermon also (Sermon i, 9.1f.). The *Discourse* refers to the plastering over and the destruction, 'or, at least, the removal or concealment' of images (§§6, 12 – an interesting formulation), reinforcing our argument that the iconoclasts covered images up rather than destroying them (see above). As we have already shown, there is no evidence for any edict or official promulgation regarding images on Leo III's part; whereas in 765, and in the wake of the conspiracy against him, Constantine V is reported to have extracted just such an oath of loyalty and acceptance of his iconoclast policy. In sum, the whole text recalls the debates and arguments of the 750 and 760s, not the 720s, or indeed any time during the reign of Leo III.

[341] See Theoph., 436.26–437.19; 437.25–439.5 (Mango and Scott 1997, 604–6); Nikeph., 154–60. It is possible that this is a repeated reference to the first group; although these nineteen may equally have escaped detection during the first wave of arrests, and were betrayed, or their complicity otherwise discovered, at some point in the interim. Eight officers are named: Konstantinos Podopagouros, *patrikios* and *logothetes tou dromou*; his brother Strategios, *spatharios* and *domestikos* of the *exkoubitoi*; Antiochos, *logothetes tou dromou* and *strategos* of Sicily; David, *spatharios* and *komes* of the *Opsikion*; Theophylaktos, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrace; and three possibly less senior figures: Christophoros, *spatharios*; Konstantinos, *spatharios* and imperial *protostrator*; and Theophylaktos, *kandidatos*. In the last three cases, family connections are named which were clearly significant in respect of the loyalties involved. See Winkelmann 1987a, 47–8 for parallel sources and literature. The role of the patriarch Constantine remains unclear: see Rochow 1999b, 37–40.

[342] Theoph., 439.15–27; 442.30ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 607, 610); Rochow 1991, 203. Although many of these accusations have been accepted by several historians (see, e.g., Lombard 1902, 117), this seems in fact to be a defamatory misunderstanding of an attempt by Constantine to hinder the overuse of oaths in the name of the Virgin. Constantine's own writings in the *Peuseis* contain no suggestion of such a challenge to the position of the Theotokos in orthodox thinking. The emperor seems also to have been concerned with the suppression of superstitious beliefs and observances of all kinds: according to one source, he did away with the crosses placed at crossroads, an act later cited as evidence of his impiety (Constantine of Tios, §10 [96]). In fact, this was probably aimed at what the emperor considered to be superstition, rather than at practices which could be associated with genuine piety.

[343] On which see Auzépy 2001.

the plot had revealed his role in this respect.[344] According to Theophanes the officials in question were persecuted because of their 'piety'; but given the fact that Stephen was accused, in effect, of threatening the allegiance of these and others like them to the emperor; and given the accusations purportedly made by Stephen (and taken up by others?) about the emperor's moral weakness, it seems very likely that Constantine was confronted by a plot of considerable complexity.[345] That the patriarch Constantine II was involved, as we have seen,[346] and that the other plotters were likewise regarded as guilty of treason, is apparent from the nature of the punishments imposed upon them. And it is noteworthy that it was at just this time that the emperor compelled the patriarch formally to give up his monastic position and become a member of the regular clergy.[347] It is also significant that the new patriarch, Niketas, had been appointed some time before these events to the position of *archon* of the monasteries.[348]

There thus seems to have existed a broadly based conspiracy, orchestrated from within Constantinople by high officers of state and members of their retinues, including leading military commanders both in the city and the provinces and some of their soldiers, and at least one leading churchman, the patriarch. It also probably involved monks and others who had been influenced by, or who had offered support to, Stephen the Younger, whom the sources clearly implicate in the affair.[349] Whether this reflected a general discontent with the direction of the emperor's pronouncements on religious matters, or dissatisfaction with other aspects of his policy – military and fiscal reforms, for example – remains unclear. And whether or not the failure of the plot had repercussions in Rome and was thus in some way connected with the failure of Constantine's final efforts – at Gentilly in 767 – to reach an accord with the Frankish king (a failure procured by the hostile attitude

[344] Theoph., 439.15ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 607) with Rochow 1991, 192–3; Rochow 1999b 40–3. The importance of the plots and events of the years 765–6 has been especially emphasised by Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 22ff.

[345] Note that Nikeph., 156, refers explicitly to the severe nature of the charges brought against them.

[346] According to the *V. Steph. iun.*, 142. 15–20, the patriarch refused to participate in the mission to Stephen in 763 sent by the emperor to persuade him to accept the results of the Council of 754. This, and the fact that he was himself a monk, may be connected with his attitude to the way the emperor dealt with Stephen. See Gero 1977, 129–35, who notes that one oriental source tradition makes the patriarch the original instigator. But note that, according to Theoph., 438.28f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 605f.) (and cf. Nikeph., 158), the patriarch was betrayed by certain of his confidants, who were probably (pro-imperial/'iconoclast') monks.

[347] Theoph. 437.13–19 (Mango and Scott 1997, 604f.).

[348] Nikeph. 160; Rochow 1994, 233. On Niketas, see *PBE* I, Niketas 1; *PmbZ*, no. 5404; Rochow 1999c.

[349] See Ševčenko 1977, 128 and n. 112; and on the conspiracy Winkelmann 1987a, 48ff.

of the papal *primicerius* Christopher in Rome) is unclear, but must remain a possibility.[350]

Whatever the motivating cause, the sum of the various actions undertaken by Constantine between 765/6 and 772/3 seems to represent a purging of his opponents within the state and church, combined with an attack on those monastic establishments whose members threatened to undermine his moral authority as orthodox emperor of the Romans. The events of 765/6 appear quite clearly as the stimulus to his actions. In this respect, although his iconoclasm, one element in his policies as a whole, played a role – which we will come to below – it was indirect and part of a wider theological position. The extent to which this was the chief cause and motive for his actions remains unclear. What does seem clear is that a monastic defence of images and rejection of imperial iconoclasm was not, contrary to what the later caricatures of his reign and personality maintained, the key stimulus.

It is important to emphasise that the persecution of monks was both highly selective and limited in scope. It was restricted to those monks who refused to take the oath of loyalty to the emperor's iconoclast position in 766, a point made explicit by the patriarch Nikephoros.[351] Only two monks are definitely known to have died, both in connection with 'political' issues.[352] There is no reason to think that Constantine had harboured any hostility to monks before 765/6: the *Ekloge* regulates various matters concerning the monastic state as a matter of course;[353] his wife had made donations to the monastery of Anthousa of Mantineon, which was probably founded during the reign of Leo III;[354] Constantine V had a number of monks among his closer associates and advisers: it was, among others, monks in the palace who informed on the patriarch Constantine's involvement in the plot of 766.[355] And that not all monks or monasteries were targets of Constantine's persecution is clear from the sources: some monks were imprisoned in monasteries loyal to the emperor; many monks or abbots accepted the imperial policy with regard to images.[356] There is no reason to doubt that

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[350] See above, 172 and n. 83.

[351] Nikeph., 152: "'those who adhered to their own confessional view'".

[352] Stephen the Younger; and Peter (the Stylite, see Theoph., 442 [Mango and Scott 1997, 610]), see Theoph., 432.16–21 (Mango and Scott 1997, 598).

[353] Ed. Burgmann, vii, 1; xii, 4; xvii, 23–4; also Simon 1976, for a novel ascribed to Leo and Constantine, at 27 (§8.147–51).

[354] See *Synax. CP.*, 850 (*BHG* 2029h); and discussion in Mango 1982b; Kaplan 1993a, 213.

[355] Theoph., 438.28–31 (Mango and Scott 1997, 605f.).

[356] Stephen the Younger's follower Anna was held in a Constantinopolitan monastery (*V. Steph. iun.*, 136. 14–17); Stephen himself was imprisoned in the monastery of Philippikos near

there were many iconoclast monks.[357] The majority of monasteries probably survived unscathed, so that it seems clear that the persecution of monks must in fact have been very partial.[358] People continued to enter the monastic life thereafter, as can be seen from the fact that at Nicaea in 787 no less than 132 monks were present,[359] and that Leo IV installed a number of monks in leading metropolitan sees after his accession in 775.[360] Constantine's measures – which, as we have seen, lasted barely seven years in all, and appear to have affected Constantinople and the western districts of Asia Minor the most[361] – seem to reflect a particular decision taken at a specific moment, rather than any general or casual hostility to monks. It is notable that monks may have been involved in a pro-Isaurian plot which was revealed in 811–12.[362]

The attack was pursued at two levels. Public degradation was aimed at altering the perception of the monastic condition. In August 765, for example, monks and nuns were reportedly forced to parade hand in hand in the hippodrome, to the jeers and amusement of the crowd (although it is very difficult to know how much credence should be ascribed to such accounts, all much later than the events they purport to describe). At the same time, Constantine is alleged to have demanded that these monks and nuns be absolutely shunned; he referred to them henceforth as 'those who are to be forgotten' or 'unmentionables' (*amnemoneutoi*), employing a term which had also a technical significance in law, referring to someone omitted from their father's will.[363] Shortly thereafter he moved against monastic

Chrysopolis (*V. Steph iun.*, 141. 23–5); Gregory Dekapolites leaves his monastery because his abbot is an iconoclast (*V. Gregorii Decapolitani*, ed. Dvornik, p. 48.28f.); Theodore of Stoudion remarks on the number of monks who conformed with the imperial policy and the number of monasteries that accepted the official policy: *Ep.*, 65; 112; 231. But see also Speck 1978, 428 (n. 25).

[357] Iconoclast monks are known from other contexts: although the story of the soothsayer/monk Sabbatios who prophesied the reign of Leo V is an invention, a tale with a very complex and multi-layered history, the figure it presents was probably not a stranger for the Byzantine reader/listener. See Genesios, 10.12ff., Theoph. cont., 26.9ff. and Gero 1977, 140 with n. 113. The best recent discussion: Speck 1990a, 190–253, esp. 241ff.

[358] See the discussion in Speck 1978, 55 with nn. 25, 26 (426–9), who shows quite clearly that men continued to take up the monastic life during Constantine's reign, and that many monasteries clearly survived with minimal or no interference from the state authorities. The *V. Steph. iun.*, 171. 11–12, 172. 25, mentions the monasteries of Monokioniou and of Diou as untouched by the persecution.

[359] Auzépy 1988, 8ff.   [360] Theoph., 449.15f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 620f.).

[361] Although the lack of explicit evidence from other areas does not rule out the probability of a more widespread action.

[362] See Theoph., 496–7; Auzépy, in *V. Steph. iun.*, 9.

[363] Theoph., 442.30ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 610); *V. Steph. iun.*, 119. 20–120. 12; 137. 7–141. 9. Parallel texts in Rochow 1991, 203. The patriarch Nikephoros reports that the emperor forced

properties in the capital and elsewhere. According to Theophanes, the Acts of the Council of 787 and a number of other later eighth- or ninth-century sources, a number of monasteries were affected, some being abandoned, some being so depleted that almost no monks remained, others converted to billets and stables for soldiers, some sold off (to whom?) with the proceeds going to the fisc, others converted to workshops or fodder stores.[364] The extent to which these accounts are plausible varies; but it is clear that the emperor must have been concerned by the issue, and it has been suggested that the fact that two monasteries (the buildings, or their land, or both?), and the plate and other possessions of a number of other establishments, were sold shows not simply that Constantine was hostile to monastic establishments, but that his actions were part of a wider policy concerned with imperial finances too. It is also notable that, even in a source so vehemently anti-iconoclast as the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, the monastery of Dios, and several others, appear to have been unscathed in the mid-760s, being reported as damaged, sold or destroyed subsequently only during the persecution of 767, in association, therefore, with the political opposition to Constantine.[365] In the district of the *Thrakesion* corps in the year 771 the general Michael Lachanodrakon is supposed to have assembled all the monks and nuns of his region in the *tzykanisterion* at Ephesos and informed them that they must marry and wear white clothing (the emperor had referred to monks as 'black-coats' and as devotees of darkness), or be blinded and banished to Cyprus.[366] Although the martyrological *topoi* in the story are very clear, some monks certainly appear to have refused Michael's order, since five are later reported to have fallen into the hands of Arab raiders; but many did obey and gave up their calling.[367] In 772 Michael

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monks and nuns to abandon their calling: see *Antirrhetikos* III, 77 (517A); 80 (524A) (trans. Mondzain-Baudinet, 287, 290f.). For the term *amnemoneutos* see Nikephoros, *Refutatio*, §23. 19–21 (49) and Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 212, n. 55.

[364] See Theoph., 443.1–7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 611); Nikephoros, *Refutatio*, §22. 54ff. (48), with the parallel sources and further literature in Rochow 1991, 203–4. The establishments affected included, according to a varied range of sources, the monasteries of Dalmatos, Kallistratos, Floros, Maximinos, Stoudios, Myrelaion, the Chora, as well as the churches of St Julian and St Andrew. Nikephoros, in contrast, names only two monasteries, those of Floros and Kallistratos: Nikephoros, *Antirrhetikoi* iii, 493D.

[365] See Speck 1978, 455–6 (n. 184). According to the Acts of 787, several secularised monasteries were still in lay hands: Mansi xiii, 329B–C. Canon 13 notes that monastic properties had been sold off: Mansi xiii, 431D; canon 12 forbids the alienation of church and monastic lands henceforth: *ibid.*, 431D. For the monastery of Dios, see Auzépy's comment in *V. Steph. Iun.*, 272 n. 444 and 273 n. 447.

[366] Theoph., 445.3ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 614), with Rochow 1991, 210f.

[367] See *V. Romani iun.*, 419.27ff.: a near contemporary account, markedly iconophile, but plausible record of the saint's life and martyrdom.

is reported to have proceeded to close and sell off the monasteries in his jurisdiction, punishing and slaying many of their inhabitants, and sending, according to Theophanes, the income derived from the sale to the emperor, which gained the general imperial approval, and encouraged others to follow suit.[368] More lurid accounts contained in other, even later sources are most probably highly embellished, although references to Lachanodrakon's persecution make it clear that he was especially zealous in this respect.[369]

At a different level the emperor seems to have tried to persuade many monks and nuns to abandon their calling and to return to a secular life: Nikephoros claims that this was achieved by threats, by flattery and trickery, and by bribery: he says that many were persuaded to abandon the monastic habit in exchange for court titles, money or property, for example.[370] This matches the information from other sources about the secularisation of monastic estates and buildings surveyed above.

While the later accounts of these persecutions regularly assume a connection between all monks and images, there is very little reliable evidence to show that this really underlay Constantine's attack on the monastic order, although they clearly did become associated in the later tradition, and possibly during the reign of Constantine himself. But other reasons have been suggested as playing a more important initial role. In the first place, the danger of men in particular being attracted away from productive labour in agriculture and hence becoming a threat to the fiscal base of the state or from the possibility of recruitment into the army may both have influenced imperial policy. Both Theophanes and Nikephoros refer to the fiscal pressures placed upon the ordinary population,[371] and the evidence for Stephen persuading people to abandon the imperial establishment for the monastic life might suggest that this was at least perceived as a danger by Constantine and his advisers.

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[368] Theoph., 445.28ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 615).

[369] See the notes and discussion with sources and literature in Rochow 1991, 212–13; Speck 1978, 648–9, illustrating the implausibility or unreliability of many of these accounts. On Lachanodrakon see Speck 1978, 228, 648 (n. 53): Speck emphasises the fact that Lachanodrakon's later career, until his eventual disappearance from the historical record under Eirene, shows him to be a loyal servant of the emperors; iconoclasm plays no part in his later deeds – i.e. after 772, and certainly not in the reigns of Leo IV or Constantine VI – which suggests that his anti-monastic persecutions of the early 770s, whatever their actual extent, were simply the response of a loyal officer serving his ruler. He was no less loyal to later emperors whom he served.

[370] Nikeph., 152–3.

[371] On fiscal structures in the period, see below; and see Schreiner 1988, 355–6; see Theoph., 443.19–22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 611) and Rochow's discussion, 1991, 205–6.

In the second place, there seems also to have been a significant ideological element, and we would suggest that, in the context of the events of 765/6 and the turn towards a more 'hard-line' policy of iconoclasm which followed, that element was in fact far more important. We have alluded to this already. The *Horos* of 754 praises monks and holy men as 'living images' whose deeds and lifestyle were to be imitated, an attitude which must have reflected the iconoclast position, and is reflected in iconoclast hagiography, which was in some ways more pragmatic and socially engaged than non-iconoclast hagiographical writing.[372] Attacks on the worldly possessions of those monasteries which, it was felt, did not live up to these standards – books, vestments, land, buildings – and upon the dress and lifestyle of the monks and nuns concerned may well have been connected with the view that many members of this community were not fulfilling their spiritual obligations in respect of the wider community; the purported suspicion with which some practices and beliefs associated with the cult of saints – relics, miraculous cures, and so forth – were also held by Constantine may in fact be a reflection of this, rather than any real attack on, for example, relics themselves, as we have seen.[373] Criticism and humiliation of those who represented such alternative sources of spiritual authority was thus inevitable in a context in which the priesthood was emphasised by some as the sole mediator of divine authority.[374] Monks and nuns who did not recognise the legitimacy of his critique, and who by their actions, in particular, in Stephen's case, in attempting to attract key secular officers of the state to a monastic life when their energies were important for the empire's struggle against its external foes, jeopardised the security of the empire. In the context of what can be gleaned about iconoclast theology, with its concentration

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[372] See Mansi xiii, 309E–312A (quoting Theodotos of Ancyra); and Auzépy 1992 (the examples of the *Lives* of George of Amastris, Eudokimos, Philaretos, and Leo of Catania), where it is argued that saints' *Lives* which show elements of their iconoclast origin exemplify several significant features which serve to distnguish them from those clearly conceived within an iconophile tradition: the saint is defined in terms of what he achieves for his fellows, rather than his essential characteristic as a holy man; such achievements are not miracles, but charitable deeds and the exercise of mercy; when miracles are performed, they often reflect acts beneficial to society as a whole; the ideals of sainthood are drawn from scripture, thus from textual tradition, rather than from the custom and practice of the church. The apostles, the prophets, the Fathers of the church are the heroes upon whose characters, accomplishments and reputation the iconoclast hagiographers modelled their actors. At the same time, the deeds and lives of the saints in question are set firmly in a real social context, in which the work of the peasant, the duties of the soldier and the spiritual functions of the priest in administering the eucharist are central.

[373] See, for example, Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* iii, 76 (*PG* 100, 516), for Constantine's hostility to miracles as superstition; and n. 342 above.

[374] This is a notion well argued by Auzépy 1995a. The confection of a number of spurious *Lives* at this time, designed to ridicule such practices, seems to have been part of the strategy employed.

on the idea of the holy and the sacred being mediated through the clergy and through the church, it seems not improbable that the persecution of certain monks and monastic groups, together with some churchmen and laypersons, represents in fact an attempt to eradicate a direct challenge to this set of ideas.[375]

There is some slight evidence for a more widespread criticism of the monastic establishment. In the *Life* of Stephen of Saba,[376] written by the Sabaite monk Leontios in the later 790s or early 800s, the hero of the hagiography is presented as being particularly critical of the laxness of the monastic leadership, and describes a decadence in monastic circles in Palestine, and in particular in the community of St Saba, which had begun already to be apparent in the 750s.[377] The monks of St Saba in Palestine appear, from the *Life* of Stephen, not to have been united in all their views – in respect of the liturgy, for example, as well as other observances.[378] And by the same token, it can be shown that the 'purist' position represented at St Saba in Palestine by Stephen (demonstrably an important and influential figure in Palestine in the 780s and until his death in 794) and his supporters placed great stress on the key role of the eucharist, the cross, and the use of prayer, and appears to have ignored images almost completely. There is no evidence that this reflects any direct association between those who represented the policies of Constantine V at Constantinople and the community at St Saba, but since communications were relatively open throughout this period, there is equally no reason to reject the notion that some at least of the emperor's views were part of a wider set of attitudes to such issues which spanned the whole of the eastern Christian world. Similar views were represented in the works of Kosmas of Jerusalem, likewise a monk of Palestine, and possibly from St Saba, possibly also a contemporary of Stephen, views which, it has been suggested, were very close to those of Constantine V in certain respects.[379] Epistolary connections between Palestinian monasteries and Constantinople can be demonstrated for the early ninth century through letters of Theodore of Stoudion, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that such connections existed in the later eighth century also.[380] And, as

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[375] See the comments of Auzépy 2004, 158–64.   [376] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 227.

[377] *V. Steph. Sabaitae*, 2, 173 (605B); and a more detailed discussion in Auzépy 1994, 188–90; see also *PmbZ*, no. 7010 with further literature.

[378] Auzépy 1994, 187–9.

[379] Views on Kosmas' dates vary: Kazhdan and Gero 1989 tentatively suggest a ninth-century dating; Auzépy 1994, 213, prefers a date in the second half of the eighth century, with which we would concur. For Kosmas' views: Kazhdan 1990.

[380] Auzépy 1994, 191–2; and for the letters from Theodore of Stoudion: Theod. Stoud. Ep., nos. 277 and 278.

Theodore Abu Qurra – a monk in the same monastery – noted in the opening section of his treatise on images, composed in 799, numerous Christians had abandoned prostration before images of Christ and the saints, in part at least because of accusations of idolatry.[381] This shift in orthodox practice went hand in hand with the careful removal of figural imagery from some churches in the region. As we have seen, however, Palestinian 'iconoclasm' was not the same as Byzantine iconoclasm, and appears to have owed nothing to imperial policy.[382]

That opinion was divided across the Christian world is, therefore, very clear. Rumours or tales of persecution, whether exaggerated or accurate, seem to have spread to monastic communities outside the empire. Syrian and possibly Greek monks in Rome were responsible for organising opposition to imperial overtures to the papacy and for orchestrating the rejection of the Council of 754 which took place at the Lateran Council of 769. The extent of the connection between the Syrian, Roman and Constantinopolitan opposition to Constantine V is unclear; but it has been proposed that the propaganda effort directed against the emperor came from this quarter. It has been noted, for example, that the monastery of St Sabas in Rome served as a prison for the deposed pope Constantine II, and that the abbot of St Sabas at Rome, Peter, acted as papal emissary in 787. Yet while this illustrates that there existed very significant divisions within different religious communities across the eastern Christian world, it is also highly suggestive both of the role of a particular monastery at Rome, which maintained regular communication with both Palestine and Constantinople, as well as of the fairly easy flow of communications between these three regions.[383]

There is no solid evidence to connect Constantine's policies in respect of monks in the years 765–72 with the issue of images alone. On the contrary, Constantine's iconoclasm until the late 740s – if indeed, in view of the total absence of any evidence for his views before this time, we can speak of his being an iconoclast at all – seems to have been very low-key. Only after the plague of 746 is there some evidence – in the writing of John of Damascus, and in the *Peuseis* of Constantine himself – of a change in attitude, culminating in the Council of 754. Even then, it is only with the events of 765 and after that Constantine can be shown to have inaugurated a much more radical policy, as he responded to another clear threat to his position and his authority. The evolution of his 'iconoclasm' was thus a multi-layered

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[381] See the English trans. of the treatise in Griffith 1985, 58; further, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 30–6.

[382] See 232–4 above, and Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 30–6.

[383] See Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 270, 279–81; and the references in note 86 above.

and fairly complex phenomenon. It reflected his own understanding of the events of the 740s, including both the rebellion of Artabasdos and the plague of 746, together with his reaction to the plot of 765/6 and the individuals and institutions which he associated with the attempt to depose him; it is also possible that, after 767, his failure to win the Franks over to his views was also influential. But in addition, there seems to have developed a genuine personal commitment to reforming the shape and to a degree the content of Christian worship, to purifying orthodoxy of the accretions of the years, and returning – as John of Damascus himself says – to a church firmly grounded in the writings of the church Fathers, scripture and tradition, views reflected in Constantine's *Peuseis*.[384] The majority appears to have gone along with his policies; just as, after 787, it conformed to a different imperial policy.[385] And even at the highest level, there is little evidence for personal commitment to iconoclasm as such, in contrast to the loyalty shown to the emperor and his authority. The harsher policies introduced from 765/6 represent the emperor's reaction to the plot he had uncovered; his response to the implict or explicit challenges which they represented to his own authority and his policies regarding the security and well-being of the empire and the Christian orthodox community; to the norms for monastic comportment and devotion laid down in the Acts of the Council of 754; and perhaps also, after 767, to his failure to win the Franks over to his views and the criticism of monastic communities outside the empire to his policies in respect of some monks. For, as has been argued, Constantine's policies in criticising some monks and in degrading the outward signs of their calling – their appearance and public behaviour – could be, and indeed was later, taken as an attack on all monks, and was exploited to the full by those who opposed imperial policy in this respect.[386]

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[384] I, ii. 6ff.; lxvi. 8ff.
[385] This has been very clearly shown by Speck 1978, 63–72 with sources.
[386] Auzépy 1999, 271ff.; *V. Steph. iun.*, 34ff.

4 | The triumph of tradition? The iconophile intermission, 775–813

Leo IV and his political inheritance

When Constantine V died in 775, he left a regenerated Roman state with strong finances, an army that was proud of its successes, and a church that was, on the face of things, united in its support for the established régime. Leo was 25 years old when he succeeded to the imperial throne as sole emperor, although he was by no means the only legitimate claimant. Constantine V had married three times and produced seven children, of whom six were sons. Leo was the only son of Constantine's first wife, the daughter of the Khazar khan, who died in the year of Leo's birth (749/50). Two of his brothers, Nikephoros and Christopher, were awarded the title of *caesar* in 769; two others, Niketas and Anthimos, were *nobelissimoi*. As co-emperor, Leo's own son Constantine was crowned in April 776 in response, it would seem, to the demands of the provincial and Constantinopolitan soldiery, as well as the senate and the population of the city; and at the same time, the youngest of the brothers, Eudokimos, received the title of *nobelissimos*.[1]

That Leo's position was not entirely secure, however, is evident from the events immediately preceding and following these ceremonies. Shortly before, Leo had appointed a number of new men to metropolitan bishoprics,[2] he had also recruited or conscripted (or both – it is not clear) considerable numbers of soldiers into the army, both the provincial and palatine units.[3] Leo then arranged for the presence of provincial soldiers, along with palatine troops, representatives of the senate and the broader

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[1] See Theoph., 449.17–450.23 (Mango and Scott 1997, 620f.) (acclamation by the army and officers of Constantine; award of the title *nobelissimos* to Eudokimos; proclamation of Constantine as *basileus*; coronation); see Rochow 1991, 219–21, for sources and literature, and esp. *PmbZ*, nos. 487, 499, 1101, 1635, 5267, 5403 (*PBE* Anthimos 1, Anthousa 1, Christophoros 1, Eudokimos 1, Nikephoros 5, Niketas 5) for his brothers and sisters. For a general survey of Leo's reign, see Rochow 1996 and the literature and sources in *PmbZ*, no. 4243; *PBE* Leo 4. For Constantine, Leo's son: *PmbZ*, no. 3704; *PBE* Konstantinos 8.

[2] Theoph., 449.15f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 620), and Speck 1978, 55.

[3] Theoph., 449.16–17 (Mango and Scott 1997, 620). See Speck 1978, 72–3; Lilie 1976, 320; Haldon 1984, 218, 234, 255, 281, 299.

population of the city, at a ceremonial occasion at which they requested the naming of the young Constantine as emperor, and at which an oath of loyalty to the future emperor, and to his immediate descendants, was made, a step which might have appeared to exclude his half-brothers and their offspring from any recognised title to the throne.[4]

This was clearly a pre-arranged affair, but it had the consequence of provoking a plot against Leo (which may well have taken place regardless), involving the *caesar* Nikephoros and some officers. It was suppressed, and with only minimal punishments meted out to those involved.[5] He faced one further plot in the last year of his reign, although the background and aim of the plotters remains unclear. They included six palatine officials who, according to Theophanes' version of events, were accused of honouring images, although it is generally accepted that this is unlikely to have been the main or real reason for their arrest and punishment, and that a plot against the emperor – possibly involving his half-brothers – was behind the punishments meted out.[6] Nevertheless, it is significant that, as has been shown in recent studies of his rule, Leo seems to have aimed at establishing a certain distance between his own policies – regardless of the fact that he made no formal changes in the religious politics which he inherited from his predecessor – and the more radical or extreme measures followed by, or associated with, Constantine V.[7]

This is perhaps clearest in his appointment of the 'neutral' *anagnostes* Paul as patriarch at the end of February 780, shortly after the death of the patriarch Niketas. There is no evidence that Niketas had attempted to hinder Leo's moderate religious policy – if indeed the new emperor had had any time to delineate such a new policy – and there is every likelihood that Paul was selected because he would support the emperor's policies in general terms.[8] In this sense, Paul – who seems to have come from a much

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4 Theoph., 449.17–32 (Mango and Scott 1997, 620–1). In fact, as legitimate sons of Constantine V, to whom the people and army had also sworn an oath of loyalty (see Theoph., 437.11–12 [Mango and Scott 1997, 604]) in 765/6, their legal rights were hardly lessened. See Rochow 1996, 9–11.

5 Theoph., 450.23–451.2 (Mango and Scott 1997, 621f.) (Nikephoros lost his title of caesar; others were tonsured and exiled to Cherson). See Speck 1978, 90–1. Leo convoked a *silention* in the palace and asked representatives of the people how the conspirators should be punished. The crowd denounced them as oathbreakers, although Leo actually treated them fairly mildly, as Speck notes; see Rochow 1996, 11.

6 Theoph., 453.10–20 (Mango and Scott 1997, 625). See Speck 1978, 100; 1988, 476 and n. 1037; and Rochow 1991, 226–7; Rochow 1996, 12; Lilie 1996, 79–80.

7 See the discussion in Speck 1978, 53–5.

8 Theoph., 453.6–10 (Mango and Scott 1997, 625); Rochow 1991, 225–6. According to Theophanes, Paul tried to avoid his election but was forced to concur by the emperor. Speck has

humbler clerical status (he is described variously as 'reader' – *anagnostes* – or deacon) – probably belonged to the majority group within the state establishment, people who went along with imperial policy, both because it was in their own interests – from the point of view of career and social position – and because they had no strong feelings on the issue; but who would thus make no objections to shifts in that policy where those shifts did not directly damage or adversely affect their position. More particularly, and in view of his humble background, he is much more likely to have been selected for the patriarchal throne because of his willingness to conform to imperial policy (whether or not iconoclasm was an issue).[9]

Leo's relations with the empire's neighbours changed only insofar as he pursued a relatively subtle policy in respect of the Italian and Bulgarian fronts, although he was presented with two excellent opportunities for intervention: the flight of the Lombard Adelchis, son of the last king, Desiderius, in 774, following the Frankish invasion of his kingdom under Charlemagne;[10] and of the Bulgar khan Telerig in 777 following internal strife.[11] Both were rewarded with the title of *patrikios*; but Leo did little to exploit the situation (although he may have used it to maintain or increase imperial influence at the Bulgar court – there is no information for this), and seems positively to have been unaware of the possibilities with which he was presented in Italy of renewing his father's attempts to take up relations with the Franks and attempt once again at least to neutralise the papacy and thereby stabilise the situation of the empire's south Italian provinces.[12] A potential conflict in Istria, where pro-Byzantine elements deposed the papally appointed bishop Mauricius on suspicion that he wanted to hand the territory over to the Franks, came to nothing. On the other hand, Leo did effectively defeat a papal attempt to recover the papal patrimonies by force, through the seizure by papal troops of the town and territory of Terracina in 778, which were then offered back in return for the patrimonial lands. The

plausibly suggested (1978, 98–9) that this must represent an attempt retrospectively to clean up Paul's image, since later tradition also has it that it was he who prepared the way for the reintroduction of images. In fact, he probably signed a declaration against images, thus maintaining the policies inherited from his predecessor Niketas, who had certainly supported Constantine V. See Theoph., 440.11–12 (Mango and Scott 1997, 608). For Paul's background and career, see Lilie 1999b; *PmbZ*, no. 5829; *PBE* Paulos 4.

[9] Lilie 1999b, 50–2 for Paul; Speck 1978, 54f., 70f., 99ff.; Rochow 1996, 15; and see below, Chapter 8 on the social composition of the dominant elites within the empire.

[10] Theoph., 449.1–3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 619) (and see Rochow 1991, 217); *PmbZ*, no. 7943; *PBE* Adalgisus 1 (with *PBE* Desiderius 3).

[11] Theoph., 451.5f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 622); Rochow 1991, 222; 1996, 20; *PmbZ*, no. 7243; *PBE* Teleryg 1.

[12] See Herrin 1987, 408; Rochow 1996, 21–2; and esp. Bertolini 1965, 618.

attempt was defeated by the *strategos* of Sicily in alliance with the Lombard Arichis of Benevento. The pope Hadrian's appeal to the Franks fell on deaf ears.[13]

But the pope clearly regarded imperial activities in the south as a real danger, as his letters, which make frequent reference to the threat posed by the presence of Byzantine forces and Byzantine intervention in south Italian affairs, make clear.[14] It was in this context that the so-called *Constitutum Constantini* or *Donation of Constantine* is first mentioned (in a letter of Hadrian to Charlemagne of May 778). There are, however, problems with the structure of this letter, and the dating remains uncertain.[15] It is highly unlikely that the Byzantine government was aware of the existence of the *Donation* until much later, in the tenth century; so that, in spite of its implications for the secular powers in the west and for Byzantine-papal relations, Leo's failure to take any centrally planned action is hardly surprising, although the independent activities of Byzantine commanders in southern Italy appear to have carried on, if Hadrian's letters are to be believed. But even if Constantinople had known of the existence of the *Donation* at this time, it is unlikely that they would have taken it seriously.[16]

The conversion of Telerig, whose Christian name became Theophylact, and the award of the title and honours of *patrikios* again offered an opportunity for Leo to intervene in Bulgar affairs to the advantage of the empire, although he did nothing.[17] In contrast to this inaction, the emperor's eastern policy seems to have been to pursue an actively aggressive strategy, although there appears also to have been an irregular flow of diplomatic activity, the aims and outcome of which remain unclear.[18] In 775/6 an Arab expedition achieved considerable success in Cappadocia, capturing one of the underground or cave settlements in the region with many prisoners; a Byzantine expedition in the same year struck into Muslim territory in

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[13] Sources and discussion: Rochow 1996, 23–5 with sources and literature. For Arichis: *PmbZ*, no. 586; *PBE* Arichis 4; and for the pope Hadrian: *PmbZ*, no. 2536; *PBE* Hadrianos 1. For Istria at this time, see Curta 2006, 100–6.

[14] See *Cod. Carol.*, nos. 59, 61, 64, and 65; with Classen 1965, 556, and n. 73, who suggests that Hadrian's alarmist letters were designed to encourage a deeper Frankish involvement in the defence of the papal territories and papal interests. See also Rochow 1996, 24–5.

[15] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 268. Its dating is still debated and, although the reign of pope Stephen has been held the most likely (see Fuhrmann 1973; Noble 1984, 134–7, and the contextualising discussion of Davis 1992, 113–14), a much later date – in the 830s, and in the Frankish kingdom – has been proposed. See Fried 2005.

[16] Davis 1992, 114 and n. 7; Alexander 1963.

[17] See *ZV* 3188 and W. Seibt, in *BS* 35 (1975), 212; and Runciman 1930, 43. As Speck (1978, 96) notes, however, it is possible that Leo would have taken some action had he not died in 780.

[18] Rochow 2001, 315–19.

the region of Samosata.[19] In 776/7 the usual Arab summer expedition took place, returning unmolested with prisoners and booty;[20] but in 777/8 Leo launched a major expedition into Arab territory, commanded by five generals with troops from all the provincial armies. According to the Arabic sources the Byzantine forces numbered some 80,000 men.[21] The considerable success of this attack provoked an equally major Arab response in the following year; but in spite of the (unsuccessful) sieges of Dorylaion and Amorion, the Byzantine scorched earth defensive tactics, refusal to offer battle, and constant harassment of the invading column meant that it withdrew without achieving any notable results.[22] A second major attack was launched against Byzantine territory in 779/80: two columns pushed into the *Armeniakon* region. The fortress of Semaluos surrendered and its garrison and population were transported into the caliphate and re-settled; but the second column was defeated by Lachanodrakon and retired.[23] Leo's strategy was thus successful in maintaining a degree of military equilibrium between the two powers, and in continuing to assert the empire's military recovery on its southern front. Diplomatic means were also employed.[24] His death in 780 does not appear to have brought any major change in this policy.

The succession of the young Constantine VI with his mother and regent Eirene on Leo's death in September 780 took place with no opposition. The later tradition, heavily influenced by the legends surrounding the iconoclast emperors and by the need, after the Council of 787 in particular, to present the reigns of Constantine and Eirene in a different light, regards Leo's death

[19] Theoph., 449.9–11 (Mango and Scott 1997, 620); Rochow 1991, 218; Speck 1978, 93 and nn. 353–5.

[20] Theoph., 451.4f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 622), and Rochow 1991, 222; Lilie 1976, 171.

[21] Theoph., 451.11–452.2 (Mango and Scott 1997, 623); Baladhuri, 295f.; see Rochow 1991, 222–4; Speck 1978, 93–4. The Byzantine commanders were Michael Lachanodrakon, with the *Thrakesion* forces, as commander-in-chief; Artabasdos Mamikonian, commander of the *Anatolikon*; Tatzates, another Armenian princeling, commander of the *Boukellarion*; Baristerotzes (Varaz-Tirots), commander of the *Armeniakon*; and Gregorios, son of Mousoulakios (Grigor son of Musegh Mamikonian). The strong Armenian presence in the high command is very significant: see below. On these and their family and dynastic backgrounds, see the references in Rochow 1991, 223; Speck 1978, 92–3 and nn. 341–52; *PmbZ*, no. 2407; *PBE* Gregorios 10; *PmbZ*, nos. 5027, 5049, 5050, 5051; *PBE* Michael 5; *PmbZ*, no. 640; *PBE* Artabasdos 3; *PmbZ*, no. 7241; *PBE* Tatzates 1; *PmbZ*, no. 8568; *PBE* Karisterotzes 1 (=Baristerotzes).

[22] Theoph., 452.4ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 624) and Rochow 1991, 224; 1996, 16–18; Speck 1978, 94–5.

[23] Theoph., 452.20ff.; 453.20–5 (Mango and Scott 1997, 624f.). For parallel sources, literature and discussion: Rochow 1991, 225, 227; 1996, 18–19.

[24] Summarised in Rochow 2001, 315–17.

as the well-deserved end to the reign of a cunning and deceitful man, who had set out to win over those who opposed the iconoclast policies of his predecessor, but who had secretly always supported them. Thus Eirene's rule in particular is portrayed as the success of a 'mere' woman over an essentially evil man.[25] The bare facts of the joint rule of Eirene as regent with her son Constantine VI reveal two tendencies: on the one hand, a decline in the effectiveness of Byzantine armies in Asia Minor and in the Balkans, with an increasing number of successes registered by Bulgar and Arab forces (even though, as we will see, there was in fact a consolidation of Byzantine power in the south Balkan region, while diplomatic exchanges between Byzantine and Arab courts continued sporadically[26]); together with an increase in the interest shown by the imperial government in rebuilding its relations with the Frankish kings, in intervening more directly in the affairs of its territories in southern Italy, and in attempting to neutralise papal power in the peninsula. On the other hand, the abandonment of the openly but moderate iconoclast policy of Leo IV, the recognition of the damage the radical politics of Constantine V had done to the empire's position within the Christian community as a whole, and the attempt to maintain a degree of continuity of internal policy throughout this process illustrate an element of political independence. The picture which emerges from the sources and which results from these two strands is, in consequence, divided in its judgement of Eirene: negative, in respect of her military and foreign policy failures; positive, as far as concerns the re-establishment of orthodoxy and the results of the Council of 787.[27]

In fact, Byzantine forces continued to hold their own in the first years of the young emperor and his mother, and some successes were registered: in 780/1 over Arab forces, and under the *sakellarios* Ioannes, whom Eirene appointed as commander-in-chief over the Armenian and other generals of the Anatolian armies;[28] in a lengthy campaign beginning in the summer

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[25] See esp. the detailed discussion, with sources, in Speck 1978, 105ff.; *PmbZ*, no. 1437; *PBE* Eirene 1; and for political historical surveys, Treadgold 1988, 60–126; Herrin 2001b, 51–129; Herrin 2004a.

[26] Rochow 2001, 318–21.

[27] For a detailed discussion of the different ways in which the sources present these two facets, see Speck 1978, 107, and sources. Speck has also demonstrated very clearly that Eirene was not objected to on any 'constitutional' grounds, i.e. because she was a woman: *ibid.* Only in the iconoclast *Horos* of 815, and in the letter to Louis the Pious of Michael II and Theophilos in 824, are the empire's problems ascribed to Eirene's re-introduction of the worship of images and her womanly weakness. See Chapter 5.

[28] Theoph., 455.2–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 627), with Rochow 1991, 231 and Speck 1978, 116–17, esp. on the grounds for Eirene's appointment of the *sakellarios* as commander-in-chief (*monostrategos*).

of 783 under the *logothetes tou dromou* Staurakios, over the Slavs in Thrace and around Thessaloniki, and in the regions of Hellas and the Peloponnese, which may have led to the earliest permanent garrison and the nucleus of a separate army of the Peloponnese;[29] but there were also some substantial defeats, in particular that resulting from a major attack on imperial territory in 781/2, in which the twelve-year-old son of the caliph al-Mahdi, Harun, took part. Conflicting information from Byzantine, Arabic and Armenian sources does not permit a clear picture of events; but the Arab forces clearly had the upper hand and may have defeated tried generals such as Lachan-odrakon, as well as more recent appointments by Eirene such as Niketas, commander of the *Opsikion*. It was eventually only through the commit-ment of the commander of the imperial elite units, Antonios (who had held his appointment since the time of Constantine V) that the Arabs were checked and a truce arranged, whereby the imperial government agreed to pay a substantial, and humiliating, tribute. A peace – which lasted some two and a half years – was also agreed, and it was during this period that the opportunity was taken to re-assert Byzantine authority in the southern Balkan provinces, with the campaign under Staurakios the *logothetes tou dromou*.[30] The situation was compounded by the need to send soldiers to remove Elpidios, the newly appointed *strategos* of Sicily, for reasons which remain unclear but which may be connected with palace scandal rather than any serious political threat. Elpidios had himself been re-appointed to this post by Eirene shortly after a plot, involving several high-ranking military and civil officers, was discovered in September 780 and crushed. The con-spirators were punished and the imperial brothers, who appear once more to have provided the excuse for the attempted coup, publicly humiliated;[31]

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[29] Theoph., 456.25f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 630); Rochow 1991, 238–9; Speck 1978, 113, 128ff.; Lilie 1976, 176. A forged inscription, which seems to have been fraudulently 'discovered' in Thrace in 781, claimed to prophesy the glorious reign of Constantine and Eirene, and may have been connected both with their policies in the region as well as with attempts to inaugurate a break with the policies and associations of the previous reigns. See Mango 1963. For Staurakios (whom an account preserved in the Syriac tradition credits with leaving a garrison in the Peloponnese): *PmbZ*, no. 6880; *PBE* Staurakios 1; and Curta 2006, 109.

[30] Theoph., 456.2ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 628f.); Lilie 1976, 173–6; Speck 1978, 123–5; Rochow 1991, 236–8; Lilie 1996, 147–55. For diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the caliphate, and the peace treaty of 782, see Beihammer 2000, nos. 345, 346, 347; Rochow 2001, 318; and on the treaty of 781–2, Kennedy 1992, 136. One of the results of Eirene's intervention in the establishment of the military leadership – perhaps in an effort to secure a loyal following of her own, since the entire high command had served under either or both Constantine V and Leo IV – may have been the desertion of the Armenian general Tatzates in the following year to the Arabs: see Theoph., 456.11–14 (Mango and Scott 1997, 629) with Rochow 1991, 237f.

[31] Theoph., 454.12ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 627); Rochow 1991, 229f.; Speck 1978, 111ff.; Winkelmann 1987a, 51–2; Lilie 1996, 79–80 *PmbZ*, no. 1515; *PBE* Elpidios 2.

Elpidios was appointed as *strategos* of Sicily shortly thereafter, but then recalled. The local soldiers prevented his arrest by the imperial officer sent to bring him back, and it was only with the despatch of a considerable expeditionary force and fleet in 781/2 that the situation was brought back under control, Elpidios himself fleeing with his *doux* to the Arabs of north Africa, where he was proclaimed emperor.[32]

From 785 hostilities began once more between the forces of the caliphate and the empire, and in 789 on land (near Podandos in the *Anatolikon* region[33]) and 789/90 at sea the empire suffered a number of serious defeats. In 793 the fortress of Kamachon was captured during the civil war within the empire and the rebellion of the forces of the *Armeniakoi*, and in the following years a number of small but significant victories were conceded to Arab armies: the fortress of Thebasa was taken in 793, and Arab armies reached Amorion in 796, ravaged Cappadocia and seized Ankara in 798 (in spite of an embassy from Eirene to Harun, led by Euthymios, bishop of Sardis, to avert the attack), defeated the combined forces of *Opsikion* and *Optimaton*, and took Malagina with considerable booty, in 799. The only known Byzantine success was achieved in 795, when Constantine VI defeated an Arab raiding force. Yet in spite of this series of conflicts and confrontation on the military level, diplomatic contacts were maintained, and there appear always to have been some Byzantine ambassadors or emissaries at the court in Baghdad.[34]

On the northern front, Byzantine fortunes were improved after the victorious expedition of Staurakios by the consolidation of his conquests and the permanent re-occupation of territory and settlements which had not been under imperial control since the middle of the seventh century. Policy in the southern Balkans may well have been connected with Eirene's own background, for she came from the Sarantapechys, an important local family based at Athens.[35] In 784 Eirene herself and Constantine visited the recently subdued regions of Thrace, ordering several fortresses and settlements to

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[32] See Theoph., 454.25–455.2 (Mango and Scott 1997, 627); Rochow 1991, 230–1; Speck 1978, 119, 120–3; and esp. the discussion and analysis in Winkelmann 1987a, 52–4; Lilie 1996, 80–2; Kislinger 2000a.

[33] Theoph., 463.17 (Mango and Scott 1997, 637), refers to 'Kopidnadon', which is probably a miscopying of *kome Podandos*: see *TIB* 2, 261f.

[34] For sources and literature, see the account in Lilie 1976, 176–8; 1996, 155–69; Rochow 1991, 249, 252f. (for the naval engagement), 256, 259–60, 261, 264, 267, 271. Diplomatic traffic: Rochow 2001, 319–21. The embassy of 798: Kennedy 1992, 136; Beihammer 2000, no. 348.

[35] On the family, see Winkelmann 1987a, 157 and 193; for Eirene, see Lilie 1996, 35–40; *PmbZ*, no. 1439; *PBE* Eirene 1.

be rebuilt.[36] In 786 they again toured Thrace in force, and by 787 the Thracian frontier had almost reached that of the imperially controlled districts around Thessaloniki in the west.[37] The establishment of new bishoprics and the revival of a number of older sees in the region testify to the success of the measures.[38] Bulgar victories in 788/9 in the Strymon region, and indecisive campaigning against the Bulgars in 790/1, in the first year of Constantine VI's sole rule, might suggest that the imperial forces were beginning to lose the advantage established by Constantine V and exploited by Eirene and Constantine in the mid-780s.[39] Nevertheless, by the end of Eirene's reign, ecclesiastical administration in Hellas had been further strengthened,[40] central authority in the provincial administration of the region of Hellas had been reinforced,[41] and the new army of Macedonia had appeared.[42]

Relations with Italy and the Franks in particular were accorded more attention than under Leo IV. Indeed, on his arrival in Rome at Easter 781 Charlemagne found a Byzantine embassy awaiting him with proposals for a marriage between Constantine VI and his daughter Rotrud. While the marriage had to be postponed until both children were older, a betrothal was agreed, and documents – the contents of which are unknown – were signed. For the Byzantine government this represented a major diplomatic advance on the situation that had prevailed hitherto, and threatened to isolate the

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[36] Theoph., 457.6–11 (Mango and Scott 1997, 631) and Rochow 1991, 239f.; Speck 1978, 130f. For the Balkans at this time, see also Curta 2006, 109f.

[37] See Mansi xii, 990 C8–9 (*ACO* III, 1, 12.17–18) for the emperors in Thrace in 786; and Speck 1978, 571–2 (n. 432).

[38] See in particular Darrouzès 1975, 22–6; the detailed discussion and analysis in Lilie 1977, 35–46; and the most recent analysis of the lists of signatories to the Council of 787 in Lamberz 2004. Note also Zuckerman 2006b, 210–14.

[39] Theoph., 463.28ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 638) (defeat and death of the *strategos* of Thrace, Philetos); 467.6ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 641) (Constantine's expedition against the Bulgars: both the Bulgar forces uner the khan Kardam and the Byzantine forces under Constantine withdrew after an indecisive afternoon engagement). See Rochow 1991, 250 and 256.

[40] Athens was probably raised to metropolitan status: see Darrouzès, *Notitiae*, no. 2 (although somewhat later than Eirene's reign).

[41] One of Eirene's supporters during the rebellion of March 799 was a certain Konstantinos Serantapechys (probably a brother, brother-in-law or cousin of Eirene, since his son Theophylact is described as her nephew) – which may or may not be the same family as the Sarantapechys mentioned earlier (255) – who may have been the *strategos* of Hellas: see Speck 1978, 738 with n. 25; Winkelmann 1987a, 157, 193; and Theoph., 474.3–4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 651).

[42] See Theoph. 475.22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 654) (for the year 802); but see also Winkelmann 1985, 91: this early reference is not entirely clear. The first unambiguous reference to Macedonia as a *thema* in its own right is for the year 813: see Theoph. 501.1 (Mango and Scott 1997, 684) and the *Script. incertus*, 337. For a short survey of the empire's policies in the Balkans between 780 and 789 see Lilie 1996, 172–9.

papacy, or at least to reduce its influence in Italy once again.[43] Already since
the 770s Rome had been asserting its independence of Constantinople in
a number of subtle and not-so-subtle ways: changes in dating formulae,
to exclude the eastern emperor and introduce a system based on the date
of Christ's birth; the introduction of the Frankish king into the regular
prayers, as well as the eastern ruler; the replacement of the emperor's name
on papally minted coins by that of the pope (first under Hadrian).[44] At the
same time, Charlemagne's assertion of his own political rights in Italy and
his connection with imperial precedent were emphasised by his decision
to employ the title of *patricius* (which he had held since 754, when he, his
father and brother were granted the title by Constantine V, in an effort to
establish a counterweight to the Lombards in the north[45]) in the year 774,
possibly in response to the award of the title to the refugee Lombard king
Adelchis.[46]

   But the papacy remained suspicious: Hadrian was quick to write to
Charlemagne about Byzantine military reversals in the east, for example.[47]
Relations appeared to improve when Eirene and Constantine wrote to
Hadrian with their suggestion for an ecumenical synod to restore orthodoxy,
and followed this with the despatch of plans for his itinerary to facilitate his
participation.[48] But in spite of these positive moves at the level of ecclesi-
astical and theological relations, the political and military strains between
empire and papacy, and between the interests of the empire and – as long
as the papacy continued to play a key role – those of the Franks in Italy,
could not be so straightforwardly resolved. In his reply to the emperors, for
example, Hadrian demanded not only that Rome be recognised as the head
of all the churches (objecting thereby to the title *oikoumenikos*, 'universal',
used by Tarasios in his *synodika*), but that the fiscal and other rights of
the papacy in the see of Illyricum – which had probably been removed by

[43] See Theoph., 455.19–25 (Mango and Scott 1997, 628) and Rochow 1991, 234f. with parallel
    sources and literature. See also Speck 1978, 119ff.; Herrin 1987, 412f.; Lilie 1996, 193–9. On
    Byzantine-Frankish relations: Classen 1965, 558–60. For Rotrud: *PmbZ*, no. 1606; *PBE* Erythro
    1.
[44] Summarised by Herrin 1987, 414–15.   [45] See Deér 1965; 1970.
[46] See Classen 1965, 552 and note. Speck 1978, 96f., and n. 400 suggests that, since it is uncertain
    when exactly Adelchis received the title, the order of events might be reversed: that Adelchis
    might rather have been given the title as a counterbalance to Charlemagne's official and public
    adoption of the title after his occupation of the Lombard kingdom in 774.
[47] See *Cod. Carol.*, no. 74. This occurred between 781 and 783, and probably refers to the
    Byzantine defeat at the hands of Harun al-Rashid in 781/2: see Theoph., 456.2–23 (Mango and
    Scott 1997, 628f.); Lilie 1976, 173–6; Rochow 1991, 236–8.
[48] See below. For the despatch of the imperial invitation and proposal, as well as the *synodika* of
    the new patriarch Tarasios, see Theoph., 458.10–461.6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 632–4).

Constantine V in the 750s after the loss of Ravenna – be restored, a demand to which Constantine and Eirene could hardly accede.[49]

On the Frankish conquest of the Lombard kingdom in 774, the deposition of king Desiderius, and the flight of Adelchis to Constantinople, the duke of Benevento, Arichis, had begun to style himself *princeps gentis Langobardorum*; thereafter, and in alliance with the Byzantine commander of Sicily, he threatened both Amalfi and Gaeta as well as papal territories in the region of Naples. But he was compelled to reach an arrangement with the Frankish king, who arrived in 786 following an appeal for assistance from Hadrian. His son Grimoald was given as a hostage to guarantee the treaty that was agreed.[50] In the meantime, both the Byzantine and Frankish rulers had, for reasons which remain debated, decided to break off the betrothal arrangements between Constantine and Rotrud.[51] Relying on imperial assistance, however, Arichis reneged on his agreement with Charlemagne in 787. Imperial officers were despatched to Salerno, bringing with them the title of *patrikios* and plans for a joint attack against the Franks, intended to consolidate Arichis' position in Benevento and the south and to re-establish a Byzantine protectorate in the north under Adelchis, who was to be restored to his throne. But Arichis died before the imperial embassy arrived. In 788 Charlemagne permitted Grimoald to take up his inheritance under Frankish suzerainty, and with a small Frankish force he was able to outmanoeuvre and defeat the Byzantine forces which had been sent to support Adelchis.

This was effectively the end of any hopes that Constantinople might have entertained for the restoration of a Lombard puppet state in the north, or for the expansion of Byzantine power from its southern provincial base. It was also a major set-back for Eirene's western policy as well as her position

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[49] Parts of the letter are omitted in the extant Greek version: see Mansi xii, 1055–71 (*ACO* III, 1, 118. 3–162.5) for the Greek version; Mansi xii, 1073–6 (ACO III, 1, 163–73) for the Latin of the section later excised. For a detailed analysis of the omissions in the content of the letter (undertaken by Photios in the 860s, in the context of his conflict with pope Nicholas I, and not at the time or shortly after the Council of 787), see Lamberz 2001; Lamberz, in *ACO* III, 1, XLV–LVI. While the imperial church had always accepted the primacy of St Peter, the question of whether this primacy had been passed on to his successors was the focus of a complex debate. See Congar 1968, 363ff.

[50] See for good general surveys Belting 1962; Bertolini 1965. For Grimoald, see *PmbZ*, no. 2525; *PBE* Grimoald 6.

[51] Theoph., 463.21–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 637f.); Rochow 1991, 249–50. Instead, Eirene arranged a marriage between her son and Maria of Amnia, daughter of Philaretos, an impoverished Anatolian magnate in Paphlagonia. According to the story in the *Life* of Philaretos, Maria was chosen through a bride-show arranged by Eirene and her chief adviser Staurakios. The extent to which this event is legendary remains disputed: see Speck 1978, 203f., Rydén 1985, Vinson 1999, Vinson 2004 (bride-shows as legendary); Treadgold 1979; 1988, 90f. (bride-shows as real events); and compare also de Jong 2004.

in Constantinople. Only through the continued tacit support which the imperial government must have decided to give Grimoald in the following years, as a necessary counterweight to the Frankish presence in Italy as well as to the papacy – involving also his marriage to the youngest sister of the empress Maria, Constantine's second wife, probably between 789 and 791 – did the empire maintain its interests in the affairs of the Franks in the region. But little is known of the real form this relationship took.[52]

The events of 788 marked the last known contact between the Frankish court and the Byzantine emperors until, in 797, Constantine VI despatched a letter to Charlemagne at Aachen, carried by a subordinate official of the *strategos* of Sicily, Niketas. The purpose of the mission remains unknown, and there is no indication that it was to open a discussion about the attitude of the Frankish church to the seventh council, which had been condemned at the synod of Frankfurt in 794, a move which further increased the distance between the two powers (although the synod was equally critical of the papal position with regard to images, as we will see below).[53] Territorial concerns connected with Byzantine lands in Italy; the recovery of prisoners taken after the Byzantine defeat in 788 in Italy; and most importantly the fact that the newly elected pope, Leo III, may have raised once more the question of the papal patrimonies seized by Constantine V, and attempted to recover the support and goodwill of the Frankish king which Hadrian had, to a degree, lost since the late 780s,[54] all these issues may have been on the agenda. In addition, the embassy was very probably connected with the complex factional politics of the Byzantine court, for it was at just this time that the faction favourable to Eirene began to move against Constantine VI.[55] In 798 a high-ranking prisoner (Sisinnios, the brother of the patriarch Tarasios, captured during the failed Byzantine expedition to Italy of 788) was released to another Byzantine embassy, this time sent by Eirene to inform the Franks of her accession as sole ruler and of her son's death.[56]

Eirene maintained a regular diplomatic contact with the Frankish court in the following years, exchanges which included a Frankish embassy in either 801 or 802, informing Eirene of Charlemagne's coronation and – if the sources, which may reflect the politics of the next emperor, Nikephoros I,

[52] See Belting 1962, 140ff.; Bertolini 1965, 648ff.; Speck 1978, 208–9; 300ff.; and the summary in Lilie 1996, 199–205.

[53] See Herrin 1987, 426ff., and 434–9. For Niketas: *PmbZ*, no. 5424; *PBE* Niketas 160.

[54] See Speck 1978, 185ff., with sources and literature; 301; 331; and esp. Fried 2001. For the pope: *PmbZ*, no. 4239; *PBE* Leo 11.

[55] Speck 1978, 298–9; Classen 1965, 566 (and n. 129).

[56] Classen 1965, 568ff.; Speck 1978, 329ff.; Herrin 1987, 453.

can be credited – offering a marriage between the two rulers, and the unifi-
cation of the two empires. A Frankish short chronicle refers to negotiations
between the two rulers for the year 798.[57] The extent to which these plans
were acceptable to the Byzantine court, particularly in view of the rela-
tions between papacy and patriarchate, and the issues of primacy raised by
Hadrian in his letter of 785 welcoming the plans for the Seventh Ecumenical
Council, on the one hand, and the results for official Byzantine political ide-
ology and theory, on the other, remains unknown – although they must have
presented the imperial government with a number of political-ideological
difficulties – for the proposals lapsed after Eirene's deposition by Nikephoros
I. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that the original plan was encouraged by
Eirene herself.[58] Proposals to reach a peace in respect of Byzantine-Frankish
relations in Italy were made by the Franks in 803, however; thereafter,
diplomatic relations lapsed until after the death of Nikephoros I.[59]

The Council of 787 and the 'restoration' of images

The traditional version of the events leading up to the seventh ecumenical
council, eventually held in Nicaea in 787, saw the empress Eirene as a pious
iconophile from the beginning of her reign as *augousta* and wife of Leo
IV, who was only biding her time until the appropriate moment when she
could disembarass herself of the iconoclast elements at court and in the army,
appoint her own officials and clergy to positions of power and re-establish
orthodoxy.[60] It is an account based on a straightforward acceptance of the
picture presented in the heavily biased sources of the later eighth and early
ninth centuries, sources which, as we have seen, were written, compiled, re-
written or emended by iconophile churchmen and others to suit the picture
of the development of iconoclasm and its supporters which they wished to
present and – it must be emphasised – which they also believed represented
the realities of the period with which they were concerned.[61] It is also a

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[57] On this complex of issues, see Herrin 1987, 454–6; 464–5; Speck 1978, 327ff. For the so-called
'Cologne Notice' recording the negotiations, added to a Frankish chronicle, see Fried 2001.

[58] This has been argued at length by Speck 1978, 327–71. For a detailed discussion of
Byzantine-Frankish relations at this time, see Ohnsorge 1966, 63–76; and the survey in Lilie
1996, 205–15.

[59] See Speck 1978, 332ff., 357ff.; Grierson 1981; Classen 1965, 597f.

[60] See, for example, Ostrogorsky 1968, 147–9 or, more recently, Treadgold 1988, 60–5, 75ff. Much
of this picture rests on the iconophile propaganda of the period immediately following the
council: see esp. Auzépy 1998; and the comments of Schreiner 1988, 345f.

[61] Speck's work in particular makes this very clear: see, for example, Speck 1984b (see review by
W. Lackner, in *Südostforschungen* 46 [1987] 516); and 1987e. Speck has also stressed the

picture which was made necessary in the later tradition by the Byzantine perception or understanding of the morality of creation, and by the very fact of the seventh council having been convoked and the results it produced. Byzantine views of 'good' and 'evil' applied to the essential characteristics of an individual, with the result that people were understood to have been one or the other, but never both (whatever the external appearances they may have possessed at different times): that people could be of one character for part of their lives and another thereafter was (normatively) inconceivable. The point is illustrated by the literary treatment afforded the iconoclast emperors and other heretical rulers and churchmen, both before and after this period.

But work by several recent historians has revealed the cultural imperatives informing this version of late eighth-century history, challenged the picture of events derived from them and adopted by most modern scholarship, and shown that things were both more complex and less readily understood through categories such as 'iconophile' and 'iconoclast' than has generally been thought.[62] A careful interrogation of the sources contemporary with the seventh council and the events which followed shows that the situation at the time was rather more complicated than this picture allows.

In the first place, and as we have noted already, there is good reason to believe that the great majority of those about whom our sources tell us anything – mostly members of the upper clergy, the state administration, and the court – were fairly indifferent to the major issue which the ninth-century historiography and legends which purported to account for the developments of the previous century claimed was the focus of popular opposition.[63] Similarly, it has been demonstrated that there were no specifically military factions for or against iconoclast policies: neither 'eastern' nor 'western' provincial forces can be shown to have been particularly supportive of one position or the other but, like the great majority, followed imperial policy so long as it did not conflict obviously and detrimentally with their own specific factional or regional interests.[64] The only group which may have been particularly 'iconoclast' in its identity and loyalties consisted of elements of the palatine units, recruited first under Constantine V

importance of the fact that the writers in question did not set about consciously to falsify the past: on the contrary, they were writing it on the basis of their own common-sense assumptions about what *must* have taken place, and interpreted the sources and information at their disposal on that basis.

[62] See the remarks of Speck 1990b, esp. 252; and in general 1990a on the evolution of a set of legends appropriate to the supposed character and actions of Leo III and Constantine V; 1978, 99–103, 105ff.

[63] Speck 1978, 56–72. See further Chapter 9.   [64] Kaegi 1966. See also Kaegi 1981, 221ff.

and employed quite deliberately in the assertion of his authority in the capital and its hinterland. But even here it can be reasonably suggested that loyalty to the emperor himself and to his successors or other members of his family was paramount; iconoclasm was a contextually convenient vehicle and a symbolic avowal of the public expression of that loyalty.[65]

In addition, it is also generally agreed that Leo IV, while certainly an iconoclast in the most limited sense of the term (which is to say, he maintained his father's policies as represented in the *Horos* of the Council of 754), was a good deal less active in his oppression of those who may not have accepted the definition of 754 – as we have already observed, accusations that he was a treacherous and deceptive ruler owe more to later iconophile legend-building designed to show Eirene in the most positive light, than to Leo's actual policies.[66] As we have seen, the punishment of certain persons towards the end of his reign was connected with a political conspiracy, which may not necessarily have had anything to do with images, in spite of the later iconophile tradition. He had secured his position by gaining a clear indication of the support of the soldiers and their commanders at the beginning of his reign; in his foreign policy, he showed little interest in the West (and in the need to move towards a reconciliation with the papacy); and his domestic concerns focused on the military and fiscal administration rather than issues of dogma.[67]

On the other side a background hostility or resentment towards the imperial policy as set out in the *Horos* of 754 clearly subsisted, however marginalised it had been. The fact that there was a plausible, if highly exaggerated, tradition of monastic opposition so soon after 787; the fact that Tarasios was able to gather such ready support within the church for the mass conversion of the episcopacy to the new dogma, even if backed by the emperors and the higher secular establishment; the fact that icons were taken for granted as an element of popular piety, and the honour shown to them seen not in itself as an innovation during the sessions of the council; and the fact that the only opposition to the decisions of the council came – at a slightly later date – from disaffected soldiers of the Constantinopolitan garrison, all this points to iconoclasm having been almost entirely focused in and around Constantinople, the court and the immediate dependants of the ruler and his or her circle. Further, the fact that Eirene and Tarasios could contemplate such a massive reversal of imperial policy and succeed, however skilful Tarasios' management of the council may in the event have

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[65] Haldon 1984, 232ff.; 343–5; and Rochow 1991, 188.   [66] See Speck 1978, 105ff.

[67] Theoph., 453.10–20 (Mango and Scott 1997, 625); and above, 249.

been, shows that they must have thought that, provided no key vested interests were threatened (or rather, provided that they were able to address satisfactorily such vested interests), they could count on the tacit approval of most of the key elements concerned, quite apart from the generality of the population in the provinces. Opposition may not have been vocal, but it must at the very least have been passively present and recognised. Tarasios' explicit concern to heal the rifts within the imperial church as well as to heal the rifts between the church of Constantinople and the other patriarchates likewise demonstrates that both he and Eirene, and probably others in the senior circles of church and court at the capital, were concerned by the festering – and potentially dangerous – nature of this resentment against official imperial policy.

But Eirene's accession to power as regent with her son Constantine VI in 780 was not marked by any sudden radical shifts in policy. Indeed, there is every reason to think that she also belonged to the rather indifferent majority for, as has been pointed out, it is unlikely that Constantine V (assuming that he was indeed personally involved, which is by no means certain) would seek out a wife for his son from a family with iconophile sentiments, nor that she would have been able to present herself as an acceptable iconoclast for so long, had she actually been – as the later tradition has it – a fervent supporter of images. It may even have been the case that the issue of images was so unimportant in private life that whoever did select Eirene paid only minimal attention to her attitude in this regard, or simply assumed that, because she was a young woman, she would do as she was told.[68] In 784 the patriarch Paul abdicated due to illness, the sources have it, and retired to a monastery, without informing the emperors. During their visit to him shortly afterwards, however, he is supposed to have regretted having accepted his position as patriarch and the fact that he supported the imperial iconoclast position, sentiments he is reported to have repeated before a number of high-ranking officials whom Eirene then sent to visit him. The extent to which this is an accurate account of what happened, whether Paul really made such a confession, and whether he retired genuinely due to illness or because pressure of some sort had been exerted upon him is something we cannot know.[69]

[68] Argued most forcefully by Speck 1978, 112f., 115–16, 132ff. See also Herrin 1987, 411.

[69] Theoph., 453.6–10 (Mango and Scott 1997, 625), for his appointment, with the remarks of Speck 1978, 98–9. For his abdication: Theoph., 457.13–458.6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 631); Lilie 1996, 51–5; 1999b, 53–6, who suggests the possibility that Eirene encouraged such tales in order to secure a possible scapegoat for the future, should her intention to re-admit the public devotion to images fail; Speck 1978, 98–9, 132ff.

What is known is that he was replaced by the educated layman Tarasios, a member of the imperial administration with the post of *asekretis*, himself the son of a high-ranking imperial official and *patrikios*, whom Eirene appears to have singled out as a suitably loyal patriarch in the context of her gradual distancing of the court from the iconoclast politics of her predecessors. As *asekretis* (head of the imperial chancery) Tarasios could undoubtedly have been a close confidant of the empress. An alternative candidate appears to have been the monk Sabas, *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Stoudion. His failure to secure the position appears to lie at the root of his hostility to many of the policies of Tarasios during and after the Council of 787, a hostility justified by the fact that Tarasios' appointment was uncanonical, a point noted both by the papacy in the correspondence preceding the seventh council as well as by the patriarch's domestic opponents, but which also reinforces the fact that Eirene had a specific motive for his promotion.[70] The appointment was ratified by 'popular' acclaim at a well-orchestrated public meeting, held – after some four months of careful planning by the empress and her advisers – in the Magnaura hall in the great palace, at which Tarasios was proposed, and at which he explained his doubts about accepting the position, but stated that he would accept if the emperors would convoke a council to bring about unity within the church. This last condition almost certainly reflects a later perspective and interpretation of events, designed to place Tarasios in the most positive light as a convinced iconophile; although there is no doubt that the preliminary discussions between the emperors and senior clergy (and Tarasios himself?) must have commenced well before the invitation which was sent to the pope, since this was despatched at more or less the same time that Tarasios sent his *synodika* announcing his appointment and affirming his orthodoxy (although the letters say nothing about the question of images).[71] While the Acts of the

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[70] See Theoph., 458.10f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 632), for Tarasios' appointment (with Rochow 1991, 241ff.); and Speck 1978, 67, on his background and family; 136f. on the possible reasons for Eirene's choice. See also Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 57–62; *PmbZ*, no. 7235; *PBE* Tarasios 1. Tarasios' father had been a loyal member of the 'iconoclast' administrative personnel of the previous rulers, and can reasonably be supposed to have represented the 'politically indifferent' state elite referred to above. The iconophile tradition maintains that the patriarch Paul proposed Tarasios as a worthy successor, although this seems unlikely: see Speck 1978, 134f.; and the *PBE* and *PmbZ* entries for Tarasios. For Sabas as a possible candidate and the origins of his hostility to Tarasios: Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* 38 (108–11) and Ep. 53 (156f.); with *PmbZ*, no. 6442; *PBE* Sabas 4.

[71] The text of Tarasios' (well-planned) speech is preserved among the documents associated with the Acts of the seventh council: Mansi xii, 986D–990B (*ACO* III, 1, 8–10). Much of the story surrounding his appointment, at least as reported in Theophanes and in Ignatios' *Vita Tarasii*, has been influenced by the need to make him the protagonist in the restoration of images, so

council held in 787 show that there remained some hard-line opposition to Tarasios' appointment thereafter,[72] these decisions met with popular acclaim (although dissenting voices continued to be heard), and Eirene thus achieved both the favoured appointment and the popular support for a change in official policy.[73]

It is important to recognise that it was only from this moment that the 'iconophile' politics of Eirene become obvious in her actions. Later iconophile and semi-legendary accounts presented Eirene as being an iconophile from the outset, even being caught by her husband Leo IV with icons hidden under her pillow, and verbally chastised accordingly.[74] In fact, there is little to support such tales. Careful analysis of all the relevant evidence suggests, indeed, that Eirene's family was probably already related either politically or through marriage to that of the emperor Constantine V before her marriage to Leo IV, which would mean that it cannot have been publicly hostile to official imperial policy, and which would, of course, explain why Constantine selected this particular wife for his heir apparent. And as we will see below, issues of imperial coinage not only continued as before well beyond the council of 787, with busts of all the Isaurian emperors on the reverse, but Eirene herself was not even represented on the imperial coinage until the year of the Council itself.[75] In the context of the early years after the death of Leo IV, therefore, it seems far more likely that Eirene, together with Tarasios, seized the occasion of Paul's abdication – which may indeed have involved his expressing regret about the schism between Constantinople and the other patriarchates – opportunistically in

that the role of the emperors is pushed into the background, while at the same time the leading churchmen of the day are exonerated from complicity in iconoclasm, even where it was well-known that they had offered no resistance to the imperial policy. By the same token, iconoclasm is emphasised as a particularly imperial heresy. See Lilie 1996, 55–60; Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 62–72.

[72] See Auzépy 1988, 12–13.

[73] Theoph., 458.10–460.17 (Mango and Scott 1997, 632f.) and Speck 1978, 137–40.

[74] For this story, see Kedrenos 2, 19.17–20.3; different version: Theoph. 453.10–20 (Mango and Scott 1997, 625), with the detailed discussion in Speck 1990b. The whole subject is dealt with in detail by Speck 1978, 133ff. Although a more traditional interpretation – according to which the stories about Eirene's iconophilism and her long-term plans to restore icon 'worship' are credited as plausible accounts of her actions as *augousta* and later regent – is still maintained by some writers: see, for example, Treadgold 1988, *passim*, and in particular Treadgold 1984 (and the review by Speck 1990b). A similar story was told of Theodora, who likewise presided over the restoration of icons in the 840s: see Theoph. cont., 91.11ff.; Speck 1990b, 251 n. 33; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 71–2.

[75] For discussion of the relevant sources: Lilie 1996, 36–40; 48–50. For Eirene and her family, see also *PmbZ*, no. 1439; *PBE* Eirene 1. For the coinage, see below, and esp. Füeg 2007, 18–22 and 131.

order to re-integrate Constantinople into the wider church and at the same time to disarm the festering hostility against the official line, thus removing the need for the state to involve itself in the repression and half-hearted iconoclasm which had come to be the hallmark of the imperial establishment. It also seems likely that Eirene's position was felt to be extremely fragile: her absence from the coinage before the Council of 787 alone is a significant indicator that breaking with tradition was regarded as a dangerous step. Certainly, the re-unification of the church of Constantinople with the other patriarchates, together with the unity of the church and the Christian world, were emphasised time and again during the sessions of the Council of 787, and if Eirene could take credit for promoting such a change it must have been seen as an enormous advantage in respect of her political situation as well as a possible source of political support from without the empire.[76] In the *Vita Tarasii* of Ignatios the Deacon, written when iconoclasm had clearly been defeated, the implication is that it was the emperors – effectively, then, Eirene at this point – who were behind the plans for a council. And whatever the exact motive, Eirene and Tarasios clearly did almost immediately begin planning an ecumenical council which they hoped would restore the imperial regime and the Constantinopolitan patriarchate in the eyes of their Christian neighbours.

Indeed, given Eirene's interest in the political relations between Constantinople and the Franks, it is highly likely that this was the key motif in her policy, for the peace and the associated betrothal between Rotrud and Constantine VI which she had negotiated with Charlemagne in 781 represented a direct threat to the position of the papacy in Italy, as we have seen. Healing the religious schism between the two patriarchates would be one way of both attempting a reconciliation between Constantinople and Rome, at the same time of cutting away much of the grounds for criticism which the papacy had been able to employ in its own efforts to cement a Frankish-papal alliance, and of strengthening her own position as regent and co-ruler. The political and diplomatic advantages would be considerable.[77] Some confirmation of this interpretation can be derived from the process of the council itself, when it eventually convened at Nicaea in 787. For it is important to note that the first three sessions of the council were concerned primarily with matters of ecclesiastical discipline, the return of the episcopate to 'orthodoxy' and hence their retaining their sees, and

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[76] See the survey in Lilie 1996, 231–6; Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 86ff. See Mansi xii, 999Df. (*ACO* III, 1, 38f.), for Tarasios' introductory address in which the reunification of the churches is presented as the sole aim of the council.

[77] See in particular the discussion in Auzépy 1995c; also Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 73–7.

the establishment of an officially recognised consensus that image devotion was both acceptable and, indeed, necessary. The theological implications were not given emphasis – on the contrary, the refutation of the theology of iconoclast belief, as presented in the *Horos* of 754, was reserved for the sixth session.[78]

As noted already, pope Hadrian received in 785 the *synodika* of the newly appointed patriarch, together with a letter from Eirene making her intention of convoking an ecumenical council known, and requesting the involvement of the papacy and the western church. In her letter, Eirene noted that the ancient traditions of the eastern church had been corrupted by the introduction of new practices and by errors in dogma and interpretation. She claimed that she had been instrumental in the abdication of the former patriarch Paul; and she recounted Tarasios' consecration as patriarch. The latter justified his rather rapid rise through the ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in his own letter to the pope.[79]

Hadrian responded favourably, although demanding also the recognition of Rome's primacy and the return of the sees of Illyricum removed from papal authority under Constantine V, as noted already. This was perhaps in response to a rather oblique attempt in the imperial letter of invitation to justify the Constantinopolitan jurisdiction over this region.[80] That the Greek translation, read out eventually at the synod of 787, missed out some of the sections which would have been found most offensive to the

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[78] The point is developed in greater detail in Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 96f. For detailed discussion of the Acts of the sessions of 787, the accompanying texts, and the process of the council, see Dumeige 1985; Thümmel 2004, 38ff.; 2005, 87–101, 128–80.

[79] See Mansi xii. 984ff. (*ACO* III, 1, 5–6) and Rochow 1991, 242f. Only fragments of Tarasios' declaration of faith have survived: 1079A–B (*ACO* III, 1, 176–8). Whether Tarasios sent the same letter to the pope as to the three oriental patriarchs (see Grumel, *Regestes*, 351), or a different letter, is a point of disagreement: cf. Speck 1978, 140–3; in either case it is fairly clear that the letter to the eastern patriarchs (Mansi xii, 1119–27 = *ACO* III, 1, 234–44), together with the eastern patriarchs' response (Mansi xii, 1127–35 = *ACO* III, 1, 244–54) and the *synodikon* of Theodore of Jerusalem (Mansi xii, 1135–46 = *ACO* III, 1, 254–68), were prepared in Constantinople in the period leading up to the council (possibly with the assistance of the eastern legates John and Thomas): see Lamberz, in *ACO* III, 1, LIV–LV with notes. For the background to the Council of 787, see also the summary of events in Thümmel 2005, 102–6; but note the critical remarks in Brandes 2008 (review of Thümmel 2005).

[80] The full text of Hadrian's reply is included in his so-called letter-treatise (the *Hadrianum*) to Charlemagne, written in about 791, defending the decisions of Nicaea against Frankish criticism: *MGH, Epp.* III (*Epist. Meroving. et Karol. Aevi* III), 5–57 (*JE* 2483). See also the brief summary in Speck 1978, 145–6. For the passage about Illyricum in the letter to the pope, see Mansi xii, 985C (*ACO* III, 1, 6. 5–6), where it is noted that the apostle Paul – claimed by Constantinople as its particular representative (to contrast with Peter for the see of Rome) – had preached 'from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum'. See the discussion in Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 76–7.

Constantinopolitan church, has been shown to be unlikely.[81] Importantly, the pope responded to a request from Eirene that her imperial predecessors should not be blamed for the heresy, insisting in particular on the restoration of images as the single most important issue.[82] Representatives from the eastern patriarchates were similarly invited,[83] as were all the bishops of the see of Constantinople and a number of monks. Although the latter appears to have been something of a novelty at a general council of the church, and has thus been seen as an indication of the newly discovered power and authority of the monks in the wake of their reportedly fierce opposition to iconoclasm, it seems that Constantine V also included representatives from the monastic community in a general council, when a number of monks appear to have been invited to participate in the council held in 754.[84] Furthermore, the traditional assumption that monks had been an active and identifiable group of opponents of iconoclasm is in need of considerable revision. For as we have seen, there is no evidence for any monastic opposition to the synod of 754, nor to Constantine's policies in general, before the events of 765/6. Monks were numbered among Constantine V's entourage and supporters; many are supposed to have abandoned their vows in return for state positions and titles and the accompanying emoluments; and his 'persecution' of monks seems to have been both limited and directed at particular individuals or groups.[85] Furthermore, there was no unified monastic 'party', for the monastic establishment was split into at least three loose groupings or factions before the council: a group of hardliners

[81] Lamberz 1997; 2001.
[82] Mansi xii, 1055–84; see esp. 1055C (*ACO* III, 1, 118.20ff.: previous emperors); 1074D–1075B (*ACO* III, 1, 169: restoration of images, although in the section later omitted by Photios from the Greek translation).
[83] By Tarasios, however, not by the emperors themselves: see Theoph., 460.31f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 634) and Rochow 1991, 243; Speck 1978, 140ff. As a result of difficulties with the Muslim authorities (see Theoph., 461.10f. [Mango and Scott 1997, 635], who notes that Harun-al Rashid persecuted the Christians in his lands), the patriarchal legates never reached their destination, however. Instead, the message was transmitted by two monks; they are referred to as the '*topoteretai* of the three apostolic thrones' of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. As we have noted (n. 79 above), the documents they supposedly brought with them were probably confected in Constantinople, and their introductory letter does not appear to give them any formal mandate (see their letter, Mansi xii, 1128C–1135B [*ACO* III, 1, 244.17–254.13], and the *synodikon* of the recently deceased patriarch of Jerusalem [1135C–1146C = *ACO* III, 1, 254.14–268.7]). Of these, John, *presbyter* and *sygkellos* of the patriarch of Jerusalem is probably to be identified with the John of Jerusalem who read the *narratio* about the history of iconoclasm at the seventh council; Thomas was *presbyter* and abbot of the Arsenios monastery near Alexandria: see sources and lit. in Rochow 1991, 243; Speck 1978, 151–2.
[84] See Alexander 1953, text 2 (58), and the argument of Auzépy 1988, 5–6; Krannich *et al.* 2002 (although a different position is argued by Thümmel 2002).
[85] See the detailed discussion in Chapter 3, and esp. Nikeph., 152–4.

who refused to attend the council; those who wished to bring about a change in imperial religious policy, but who would accept the re-admission to the church of former 'iconoclasts'; and those who would make no compromise at all. Apart from these – the great majority from the metropolitan region – there may also have been monks who were either active supporters of established imperial policy, or relatively apathetic with regard to images, about whom we know nothing.

The council was initially planned to meet in the church of the Apostles in Constantinople at the beginning of August 786. Papal legates were present, as were the representatives of the eastern patriarchs; but Eirene and Tarasios had failed accurately to gauge the possibility of opposition, and the emperors themselves were absent from the city (in Thrace[86]) when the delegates to the synod began to arrive. All the bishops under the authority of Constantinople were loyal to imperial policy, and will certainly have feared for their future (as events preparatory to the council eventually held in 787, and the demand of the more rigorously inclined monastic participants during that meeting, demonstrate very clearly).[87] In the event, a number of 'loyalist' bishops had already organised protest meetings before the synod assembled;[88] members of the state administration may similarly have been concerned about their future, for it is clear that members of the laity were involved in the meetings (which Tarasios banned), and may have voiced their discontent at the meeting in the Magnaura when the synod was first proposed.[89] On the evening before the council met, groups of soldiers belonging to the imperial guards also met and began to denounce the synod; and although the patriarch informed the emperors of these developments, the council went ahead as planned. But the opposition was too strong. On its first day, the soldiers, together with some of the bishops and clergy, denounced the meeting and eventually broke it up after only a few hours. And although in the later accounts as well as in much of the modern literature the blame for the failure of this first attempt has been laid at the door of the palatine soldiers, in fact the bishops seem to have played the key role, certainly when the Acts of the first sessions of the Council of 787 are examined more closely (see below).[90] The council was called off, the bishops were sent back to their dioceses, and within a few days the papal legates had set off on their return

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[86] See above, n. 37.   [87] Speck 1978, 152 and 154–5.

[88] Several of these are named by Tarasios in his opening speech to the synod of 787: see Mansi xii, 999D–E; 1007C; 1015D–E (*ACO* III, 1, 38. 14–20).

[89] See Mansi xii, 990B (*ACO* III, 1, 12. 18ff.).

[90] See Theoph., 461.16ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 635), and the parallel sources and literature in Rochow 1991, 243–5; Speck 1978, 153–5. The *syggraphe syntomos* (Mansi xii, 990B–991D [*ACO* III, 1, 12–16]), the account of these events, was incorporated into the Acts of the Council

journey, while Eirene and Tarasios were faced with the task of planning an alternative date and meeting place and, most importantly, of ensuring that the opposition demonstrated by clergy and soldiers did not recur.[91]

Two strategies were followed to secure these conditions. In the first place, the *scholai* units were ordered to Malagina, the imperial base camp in Bithynia,[92] where – surrounded by provincial troops loyal to the emperors – the troublesome elements were dismissed and sent back to their home provinces.[93] At the same time, Eirene had secured the support of the Asia Minor troops currently based in Thrace, and she drew on these units to fill the ranks of those who had been weeded out. She also seems to have drafted in a further group of units under their commander and established them as her own guards regiment, a unit which became known as the *Vigla* but whose other name – the *Arithmoi* or *Arithmos* – betrays its origins as a provincial unit.[94] As soon as she had secured her position, the council was reconvened, this time in Nicaea – the papal legates were recalled by the time they had reached Sicily, which suggests that she began to arrange for the council very quickly after its initial abandonment. It can be assumed that Tarasios assured the bishops that no action would be taken against them merely because they were nominally iconoclast.[95] In September 787 the council met once again, and this time with success, lasting until the end of October. Although now shown not to have been part of the council proceedings and certainly not constituting an eighth session, as has been traditionally but incorrectly assumed, a final meeting was held, not in Nicaea, but in

of 787 by Tarasios and drawn upon extensively (but selectively) by Theophanes (461–2 [Mango and Scott 1997, 634ff.]). The first two sessions of the Council of 787 were taken up extensively with the issue of the admission of the bishops involved in the protests and disruption of the 786 council: see, e.g., Mansi xii, 1002–34 (*ACO* III, 1, 38–88). See Lilie 1996, 61–3, 82–3; Thümmel 2005, 118f.

91 Useful account in Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 77–8.

92 See *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, p. 156; *ibid.* for the other marching camps along the various military routes southwards and eastwards.

93 Mansi xii, 991C–D (*ACO* III, 1, 14. 28–16. 10); Theoph., 462.5–18 (Mango and Scott 1997, 635f.); Haldon 1984, 235, and notes; Speck 1978, 160–1; Rochow 1991, 245–6 with parallel sources and further literature. The soldiers were duped into leaving Constantinople on the spurious grounds of an Arab attack. The *Vita* of John of Gothia notes (alone of all the texts) that they and their families numbered some 6000 persons, although there is no way of knowing whether this is a reliable testimony, nor whether every soldier had wife and children. See Auzépy 2006, 74 (comment); 80 (text).

94 The name, meaning simply 'regiment', reflects its origins in the provincial armies descended from the armies of the late Roman *magistri militum*. See Haldon 1984, 240ff.; Speck 1978, 161.

95 See *V. Tarasii*, 11.33f.: the hagiographer claimed that Tarasios promised to exclude no bishop appointed by the heretics, and to treat with '*oikonomia*' all who subscribed to the definition of the council.

the Magnaura hall in the great palace, purportedly on the 23 October.[96] Here, the patriarch is reported to have given an account of the council's work and its decisions, the *Horos* or definition of faith was read out, and all present – including especially invited representatives of the army, of the urban populace, and of the palatine orders – acclaimed it. Orthodoxy had been re-established.[97]

The council met in seven main sessions, each devoted to a specific theme or problem, the majority carefully planned by the imperial and patriarchal authorities in advance, to ensure both a maximum consensus and the desired results.[98] The numbers of those present varied from session to session, as the lists of signatories demonstrates – 257 at the first session, 335 at the fourth, 306 or so at the seventh.[99] Although neither Eirene nor Constantine was present, two high-ranking imperial officers, Petronas, the *komes* of the *Opsikion* army, and John, the *sakellarios* and *stratiotikos logothetes*, were present throughout, and took an active part in the proceedings (indeed, Tarasios was on several occasions forced to prolong the debate, against their wishes for a rapid end to certain sessions, in order to put into effect his tactic of conciliation, particularly in order to ensure that the monastic element did not feel any cause for resentment).[100] Tarasios presented a conciliatory position, designed to heal the rifts within the imperial church with the minimum of disruption and internal wrangling, and aimed at winning the support of the bulk of the episcopate, which remained for the most part filled with men who had at the least compromised with imperial policy, if not actively supported it. And it is significant that the monks present at the council played throughout a relatively muted role in all respects save that of the question of re-admitting former iconoclast bishops to the church

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[96] See esp. Lamberz 2004, 26–9, 36, who shows convincingly, and on the basis of a careful analysis of all the manuscript witnesses, that the report of an 'eighth session' was a later addition to the text of the Acts. Thümmel 2005, 91f. disagrees.

[97] See Rochow 1991, 246–9 with sources and literature; Speck 1978, 172–9; Lilie 1996, 63–70; Auzépy 1999, 235ff.

[98] See the short descriptive summary in Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 84–95; for other aspects (sources, political perspective etc.): Rochow 1998; Thümmel 2005, 133–82. The *Vita Tarasii* provides a session-by-session account of the whole event in chapters 29–32 which, although necessarily selective in both presentation and description of motives and so forth, offers an invaluable guide to some of the key elements in the way the council was organised and orchestrated. See the discussion and literature below.

[99] Lamberz 2004, 33f.; Thümmel 2005, 95f., 123.

[100] For example, Mansi xii, 1022D–E (*ACO* III, 1, 70.7–72.2). See Speck's summary of Tarasios' method, 1978, 156–7. For Petronas and John: *PmbZ*, no. 5920; *PBE* Petronas 4; *PmbZ*, no. 3055; *PBE* Ioannes 18; and more detailed on John (with corrections to *PmbZ* and *PBE*), Brandes 2002, 468–70 (and see 465–6).

and to their sees.[101] It is also important to note that the term 'iconoclast' is used only very occasionally, those hitherto loyal to the official dogma being described generally as 'accusers of Christians' (χριστιανοκατήγοροι), for they had for the most part nothing to do with breaking or destroying images, since in theory at least there were none to destroy.[102]

In the first three sessions, therefore, the chief topics for debate were of an ecclesiastical disciplinary nature: in session one, the iconoclast bishops who had been involved in the disruption of the synod held in 786 were brought forward to acknowledge their heresy, account for their actions, and present their confessions of orthodoxy. The three metropolitan bishops Theodosios of Amorion, Basil of Ankara, and Theodore of Myra were re-admitted to the church after a relatively brief discussion; seven other bishops, however, were the subject of a more heated debate, with the legates of the eastern patriarchs and the papacy, as well as a vociferous monastic element, being opposed to their readmission. Particular objections were voiced against a further iconoclast, Gregory of Neocaesarea, and it is likely that all these had been active supporters of imperial iconoclasm in their provinces, and possibly appointees of Constantine V. They may equally have numbered among those who had helped in the breaking-up of the council at its original meeting in Constantinople in 786. In the end, Tarasios' policy of reconciliation won and, after reading aloud their confessions of orthodoxy, they too were readmitted.[103] This was a significant achievement, since the bishops and metropolitans in question can be understood as representative speakers for the majority of the iconoclast bishops: their decision publicly to accept the

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[101] See Auzépy 1988, 11–12, for detailed discussion.

[102] For example Mansi xii, 990C; 1010E, 1051B (*ACO* III, 1, 12. 19; 52.21).

[103] See Mansi xii, 999D–E, 1018–1051 (*ACO* III, 1, 38.12–20; 48.25–116.18), and the discussion in Auzépy 1988, 13ff.; Thümmel 2005, 128–180. The first three bishops: Theodosios of Amorion (*PmbZ*, no. 7846; *PBE* Theodosios 14), Basil of Ankara (*PmbZ*, no. 869; *PBE* Basileios 21); Theodore of Myra (*PmbZ*, no. 7596; *PBE* Theodoros 83). The seven bishops in the second group were: Hypatios of Nicaea (*PmbZ*, no. 2615; *PBE* Hypatios 1), Leo of Rhodes (*PmbZ*, no. 4307; *PBE* Leo 52), Gregory of Pisinos (*PmbZ*, no. 2410; *PBE* Gregorios 39), Leo of Ikonion (*PmbZ*, no. 4314; *PBE* Leo 51), George of Antioch, in Pisidia (*PmbZ*, no. 2163; *PBE* Georgios 68), Nicholas of Hierapolis (*PmbZ*, no. 5555; *PBE* Nikolaos 10) and Leo of Karpathos (*PmbZ*, no. 4315; *PBE* Leo 53). While he was prepared to accept the re-admission to the church of the iconoclast bishops, the abbot of the Stoudion monastery, Sabas, was one of the hardest critics of reconciliation (e.g. 1022A, 1031A, C), although it is also probable that everyone was aware that there had been, and still were, monks who had done nothing to oppose imperial iconoclasm until the general atmosphere began to shift in the years immediately preceding the council: see Mansi xii, 1039D (*ACO* III, 1, 96. 24f.), where Tarasios remarks on the unexplained absence of many monks; see also Speck 1978, 603–4 (n. 87a). For Gregory of Neocaesarea: *PmbZ*, no. 2405; *PBE* Gregorios 38.

'mistakes' of the previous dogma and to accept the definition of orthodoxy of the council would undoubtedly have won over any waverers.

The second session heard Hadrian's letter to the emperors, his *synodika*, and his letter to Tarasios, which were acclaimed and approved.[104] The question of the return of the sees of Illyricum, Calabria and Sicily to papal jurisdiction was also raised, along with the question of Tarasios' claim to the title ecumenical patriarch, as well as his lay origins.[105] Changes to the Greek version of these letters were almost certainly undertaken later, during the patriarchate of Photios, and in particular reflect his conflict with pope Nicholas in the 860s, partly in response to the papal demands for the return of the papal patrimonies and the sees of Illyricum, Calabria, and Sicily.[106]

In the third session, after Gregory of Neocaesarea had finally been re-admitted (and after a public warning from Tarasios about the genuineness of the former iconoclasts' admission of their sins and willingness to renounce their iconoclast position),[107] the confession of faith of Tarasios to the eastern

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[104] Mansi xii, 1055–76 (1073A–1076D = section preserved in Latin only) (*ACO* III, 1, 118–73 [163–73]); Mansi xii, 1078–83 (*ACO* III, 1, 174–86). See esp. Lamberz 2001. Some sections were added to in the Latin translation: for example, at Mansi xii, 1060 (*ACO* III, 1, 127.6ff.), Hadrian quotes Gregory the Great when he notes that images permit those who cannot read to comprehend the truth of Christianity through visual means; 1060A (*ACO* III, 1, 127.23ff.), where Hadrian notes that popes from Zacharias I had appealed to the emperors for the restoration of images, as the tradition of the church (in the West as well as the East). In the Greek version, see, e.g., Mansi xii, 1057C (*ACO* III, 1, 123: Latin version) and 1058C (*ACO* III, 1, 122: Greek version), the issue of the primacy of Rome is alluded to merely by reference to the position of the sees of Peter and Paul.

[105] Mansi xii, 1073D (*ACO* III, 1, 165. 9–14); 1078Df. (*ACO* III, 1, 174.17ff.). Although the Illyrian bishops appear as a group only in the list of signatories to the fourth session, it has been pointed out that a group of bishops described as the 'most pious Illyrian bishops' state during the first session of the council that they had been sinners (Mansi xii, 1034C = *ACO* III, 1, 88.3–4). Whether this means that their presence, necessary from the point of view of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, needed to be toned down for the papal delegation, remains unknown: see Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 88, and n. 125, 96–7.

[106] See Mansi xii, 1073A–1076D (*ACO* III, 1, 163–73) for the Latin section later omitted from the Greek version. For the older literature, see Wallach 1966. Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 90–1, summarise the traditional views. See now the analyses in Lamberz 1997, 2001. Lamberz' arguments render irrelevant the traditionally accepted suggestion that, since both letters were available to those present at the council, the differences between the two versions must have been apparent to the papal legates themselves as well as the translators, the bishops from Sicily, and must have been part of a strategy agreed in advance and, presumably, with the connivance of either or both the pope and Tarasios himself.

[107] Importantly, however, after a plea from one of the presiding imperial officers, John the military logothete: Mansi xii, 1118B (*ACO* III, 1, 228.25ff.). Gregory's case was introduced at the end of the second session and deferred until the third, when he presented his written confession. Along with Theodosios of Amorion he had been present at the synod of 754, and is noted as one of the *exarchoi* of the said heretical council: Mansi xii, *loc.cit.*, (*ACO* III, 1, 232. 8–10) and cf. Mansi xiii, 37A–B, 173D.

patriarchs, along with their purported response and a synodal letter from the patriarch of Jerusalem, were read out, although no discussion on their theological content took place.[108] The unity of the five patriarchates – the pentarchy – was confirmed as the foundation of orthodoxy, the *Horos* of 754 was condemned,[109] and all the participants to the session countersigned this conclusion. As we have noted already, it is significant that the theological content of iconoclast belief was not yet challenged: the main aim of these opening sessions appears to have been to establish a degree of agreement on the fact that images could be honoured, and that the prohibition on this, as well as the (purported) destruction of images, was fundamentally misguided.

The fourth and fifth sessions were devoted to the recitation of proofs of the efficacy of images and of the wickedness of iconoclasm. Patristic texts, hagiographical and miracle collections, theological treatises and a host of eye-witness accounts, as well as documents associated with the opening phases of iconoclasm, such as the letters of Germanos to the bishops Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Klaudioupolis, were adduced to demonstrate the points at issue. Importantly, the authentication of such texts was a prominent aspect of the meetings, with considerable effort devoted to clarifying the context from which texts were drawn and, particularly in respect of texts which had been used by the iconoclasts themselves, their re-contextualisation since, it was argued, the heretics had misled many by taking passages out of context and attributing them thereby with a meaning which they should not bear. The whole debate was carefully led by Tarasios, and even the imperial officials had come prepared to read from appropriate texts to support the general argument.[110]

The sixth session was concerned with a detailed refutation of the *Horos* of 754, and took the form of a section by section reading and refutation, in which no open debate took place, and which concluded with an official statement justifying the veneration of images and summing up the

[108] Mansi xii, 1119–27; 1127–46 (*ACO* III, 1, 234–44; 244–68). The latter was written originally to denounce the synod of 754, and a version was sent to Rome in 767. This version, purportedly despatched from Jerusalem, seems in fact to have been prepared in Constantinople and was brought up to date for 787. See Lilie 1996, 66–8; Auzépy 1999, 218–25; and n. 79 above.

[109] Mansi xii, 1146B–C, 1154B (*ACO* III, 1, 268.8–18; 280.9–11). On the pentarchy in this period, see Herrin 2004b, and Thümmel 2005, 107–9, who stresses the political importance to the patriarchate at Constantinople of a pentarchic validation of the decisions taken at the council.

[110] Mansi xiii, 1–156 (fourth session) and 157–201 (fifth session). See Mango 1975, esp. 31ff.; Speck 1978, 175f.; Van Den Ven 1957. For the imperial officers: Mansi xiii, 173D. It should be noted that the *Libri Carolini* accused the authorities at Nicaea of similarly manipulating and taking out of context theological and other texts in order to disprove the iconoclastic argument: see below, and *LC* I, 5; 9; 10; II, 5; 14.

theological arguments and practice in favour of images which had evolved in the course of the controversy. Crucially the Council of 754 was shown not to have been ecumenical, in contrast with that of 787, partly on the grounds of the absence from the 754 meeting of papal delegates. Once more, the organisational hand of Tarasios is evident, producing a conclusion entirely consistent with Constantinopolitan policy and intentions.[111] In the seventh session, the *Horos* of the Council of 787 was read and signed by all those present.[112] And it becomes clear from this document that the council had in effect established a formal cult of images for the first time: images were to be accompanied by candles and incense, and all Christians were to adore them. Whoever refused to obey these prescriptions was anathematised and declared a heretic.[113] There should be no doubt that this marks a major development in the way in which images were regarded henceforth in the eastern Roman world. Letters were sent to the emperors informing them of the results of the council which they had caused to meet in order to reunite the church; and to the clergy of Hagia Sophia and the churches of the city, regretting that they could not be present, and summarising the results of the council, the re-establishment of unity, and the casting out of innovations.[114]

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[111] Mansi xiii, 202–364; the sections of the *Horos* of 754 were read out by Gregory of Neocaesarea, one of the leading former iconoclasts who had been present in 754, chosen not in order to humiliate the iconoclasts (as suggested by Alexander 1958a, 12), but rather to emphasise the authenticity of the texts in question, a point already raised at the council by the legate John of Jerusalem: Mansi xii, 1118C (*ACO* III, 1, 230.3–6). In session six all the specific claims or assertions of the *Horos* of 754 were taken up and dealt with: thus, for example, the contention that painters of images worked for purely mercenary gain (248E). See Auzépy 1999, 242–56; Krannich *et al.* 2002, 40/1.

[112] Mansi xiii, 364–413 (364–73 list of those present, 373–80 the *Horos*, and 380–97 the list of signatories).

[113] Mansi xiii, 377D–E. See Auzépy 1999, 229–35; Thümmel 2005, 180–4.

[114] Letter to the emperors: Mansi xiii, 400D–408A; to the clergy of Constantinople: 408D–413A. See Grumel, *Regestes*, no. 358. The reason for the absence of the Constantinopolitan clergy is given as lack of transport, in particular boats and beasts of burden. But this seems a rather weak and certainly somewhat unlikely reason – some of the clergy must have had access to the necessary funds or transportation – and the question arises as to whether they were in fact deliberately excluded for political reasons. In fact, some members of the city clergy were present: during the fourth session, the priest Elias from the church of Blachernai (*PmbZ*, no. 1488 – not the Elias we met in Chapter 3 who described the mosaic decoration at the Chalkoprateia) was present, signing the declaration of faith in iconophile dogma and admitting that he had himself been most active in the persecution of image veneration (Mansi xiii, 41A). Two possibilities suggest themselves: perhaps, given the close supervision which the iconoclast emperors had been able to devote to the clergy of their capital city, there was a greater than average number of conservatives among them; and perhaps they were also implicated in the anti-conciliar meetings and disruptive actions of the days before the abortive council in 786. The presence of Elias suggests that those who were present had been 'screened' in advance to ensure their adhering to the official line. While this must remain hypothetical,

As we have noted already, there was no eighth and final session, although the later reports of such a convocation may reflect an event which actually did occur and which had been pre-arranged (its location is mentioned already in the *Horos* of the council). It took place some ten days after the close of the seventh session in the Magnaura, in the great palace, with the emperors presiding. The *Horos* was in fact probably read out at the seventh session of the council;[115] it may have been repeated at this meeting, and according to the reports acclamations and anathemas were pronounced, key texts were briefly cited once again, and the emperors signed the record of the meeting, apparently in the presence of (representatives from) the army and the palatine regiments, the leading officers of state and the population of Constantinople.[116] The monks had not been invited.[117]

Reactions

The results of the council confirmed Eirene's political authority and her position as regent (a point emphasised by the fact that she now appears on the imperial coinage for the first time), and provided in addition a rich source of material for later embellishments on her good character and her beneficence; as we have seen, it also made it necessary to portray her thereafter as an iconophile from the very beginning.[118] The whole affair was very carefully orchestrated – an analysis of the role of the different groups of participants, in particular the important role given to the former iconoclast bishops in readings from scripture and other texts intended to discredit both iconoclast theology and iconoclast methods, shows this very clearly. Yet in spite of this effort the less welcome claims of the see of St Peter were also heard out and thus acknowledged, even if not acted upon – clear evidence of the determination of patriarch and emperors to forge a

the complete absence of the Constantinopolitan clergy is otherwise very difficult to explain, and may well be yet another indication of the imperial and patriarchal response to the disruption of 786.

[115] See Ulphus 2004. For a detailed analysis of the *Horos* from the point of view of style, genre, and structure, see Thümmel 2004.

[116] Mansi xiii, 413–39; Theoph., 463.5–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 637). Speck 1978, 162, and nn., suggests that the emperors had not been present beforehand in order to avoid giving the impression that the meeting and its decisions had been subject to imperial pressure or steering; hence the final meeting, at which a précis of the whole council was produced for their benefit and their agreement. See Lamberz 2004, 26–9.

[117] Mansi xiii, 414–18.

[118] See above, and Speck 1978, 105ff. For a detailed discussion of the significance of Nicaea II for the later iconophile tradition, and in particular the way it was treated in the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, see Auzépy 1999, esp. 207–41.

reconciliation between Rome and Constantinople.[119] The involvement of the monastic establishment shows that both Tarasios and Eirene recognised their importance – there were some 132 present, something over half the number of bishops.[120] They formally accepted, verbally, the *synodikon* sent by the pope, read out at the end of the second session; and they signed – after the bishops – a dogmatic tract at the end of the fourth session; some of the abbots intervened with texts during the debates of the fifth session. But their presence was otherwise confined to the heated debates of the first three sessions and the issue of whether or not former iconoclast bishops – which was all the bishops, by definition – should be re-admitted and should keep their sees, or not. We will return to the role of the monks below. Yet their exclusion from the eighth session suggests that this should not be over-emphasised, and in any case monks were not usual participants at such councils (even if, as in the Councils of 680 and 754, occasionally present): the whole tenor of the council was the assertion of patriarchal authority and the re-establishment of an orthodox episcopate.

The extent to which there remained any serious sentiment hostile to image devotion within different sectors of the population, palatine bureaux, the army or the church, remains unclear. Later writers refer to the existence of persons of originally 'iconoclast' sentiments, including members of the 'older generation' of palatine officials (who could be identified by the fact that they shaved themselves very closely[121]) as well as of the population at large.[122] Similarly the existence of some iconoclast sentiment within the guards units is likely; although it is probable that the soldiers were more closely tied to the memory of the iconoclast emperors, especially Constantine V, whom they associated with military success and victory as well as their own institutional establishment, than to iconoclasm as

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[119] For the letters to Tarasios and the emperors in which Hadrian makes the claims of Rome explicit, see above and esp. Lamberz 2001. Note also the important points made by Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 95–7, who observe in addition the key mediating role played by the Sicilian bishops, for example.

[120] On numbers, Darrouzès 1975; but see below, and Lamberz 2004, 34.

[121] See *V. Steph. iun.*, 137. 21ff.: according to the *Vita*, Constantine V had ordered court officers to shave closely, in contradiction, according to the *Vita*, to the prescription of Moses in Leviticus 19.27 (and cf. Ps.-Athanasios, *Quaestiones in Scripturam sacram*, in *PG* 28 [*CPG* II, 2260], qu. 28 [720]). See *V. Steph. iun.*, comm., 233. That this was a style through which supporters of imperial iconoclasm could be identified is borne out by a later hagiography, in which the imperial officer Kallistos is disciplined, while at his post in the palace, by the emperor Theophilos for his unkempt appearance and unshaven beard: *De XLII martyribus Amoriensibus Narrationes et carmina sacra*, no. 2, 22–6: de Callisto, see 24.30–25.2.

[122] The author of the *V. Steph. iun.*, Stephen the Deacon, refers on several occasions to such persons: see Speck 1978, 603f. (n. 87a); Ševčenko 1977, 116 and n. 18.

such.[123] And since all members of the church as well as the court establishment and imperial military and civil administrative bureaux had also been technically iconoclast,[124] it is equally likely that large numbers of them might still have harboured doubts about the changes in policy ushered in by the seventh council.

But these people, whose chief concern was loyalty to the administration which employed them and through which their careers were secured, would be unlikely actively to oppose the change unless a situation arose which favoured such action. There is thus no evidence for any serious iconoclast opposition forming as a consequence of the council.[125] Indeed, had such a faction or grouping existed, it would certainly have shown itself long before the preparations for the council in 786, since it must have been apparent for some time that neither Leo IV nor his successors were interested in enforcing the more rigorous policy of Constantine V.[126] The episcopal and Constantinopolitan military hostility to the abortive council of 786 was, as we have seen, a highly localised, clearly last-minute, and relatively unplanned response on the part of some of those who felt they might be adversely affected by any decisions to introduce changes in imperial and ecclesiastical policy. We will return to the issue of who was and who was not iconoclast or iconophile in Chapter 9.

The monastic community was represented at the council by the abbot of the Stoudios monastery, Sabas, and by Plato, the leader of the monks of the monastery of Sakkoudion.[127] Plato clearly supported the line pursued by Tarasios; but Sabas – whose name regularly appears first among the abbots present – and his followers remained dissatisfied with the re-admission of the formerly iconoclast bishops, although they had not been able to muster a particularly convincing argument when the issue was discussed, and had been outmanoeuvred by Tarasios. Their dissatisfaction stemmed

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[123] Compare the events of 786, referred to already (see Theoph., 461.19ff. [Mango and Scott 1997, 635]; *V. Tarasii*, 404, 207B.37f.), as well as the sentiments ascribed to soldiers and officers during the reign of Constantine VI in the legendary *V. Cosmae et Ioannis Damasc.*, 294; and during the reign of Michael I, described in Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* iii, 504; Theoph., 501.8f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 684) (and Rochow 1991, 314f.). See the discussion in Speck 1978, 222 and n. 9 (and note Brandes 2002, 382f.).

[124] Discussion in Speck 1978, 604 (n. 87a).

[125] Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* iii, 597D: between the council of Nicaea and the iconoclast synod of 815 'everyone' was orthodox. Nikephoros would surely have mentioned known iconoclast opposition to what had thus become the norm.

[126] This is the plausible argument of Speck 1978, 190–3. Speck also shows that the stories of Constantine VI's threat to Tarasios (that he would re-introduce iconoclasm unless the patriarch permitted his second marriage) is a fabrication: *ibid.*, 189.

[127] See *PBE*, Sabas 4; *PmbZ*, no. 6442; and *PBE* Plato 1; *PmbZ*, no. 6285.

from a twofold assumption: in the first place, that the bishops ordained by iconoclasts were ordained uncanonically and would have to be replaced (they complained especially that these bishops were guilty of simony); in the second, that they would benefit from such appointments, which would give them a greater influence over both the moral and the ecclesiastical life of the empire. Tarasios was able to secure their passive agreement to the Acts of the council, partly by letting it become apparent that if the bishops were not re-admitted, then the council could not meet and the church could not return to orthodoxy.[128] We have seen that they adopted a somewhat contradictory stance with regard to certain bishops, presumably on personal grounds. Sabas certainly was personally hostile to Tarasios, and he, along with those who agreed with him, afterwards took up once again the issue of episcopal simony. There was also a third group, which refused to participate in the council, and to one of whom Tarasios directed a letter.[129] This was led by the monk and *hegoumenos* John, who also objected to the episcopal simony of which many of the formerly iconoclast bishops were accused. But the intention of the emperors and Tarasios was clearly to avoid a schism within the church by further embarrassing the episcopate, which the privileging of the monks present would have involved. Although the solution was not accepted by some of the monks, the simony issue was resolved by a decree issued by Tarasios early in 788, by which those who had been shown to be guilty were ordered to do a year's penance before being re-admitted to their positions.[130]

The result was that, although the monks numbered a total of 132 compared with, at the most, some 343 bishops, they appear always in a relatively subordinate position in the proceedings, kept largely in the background, not permitted to vote, and involved chiefly in the debates over the re-admission of formerly iconoclast bishops in the first and third sessions.[131]

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[128] Mansi xii, 1031A–1034C (*ACO* III, 1, 84.6–88.6).

[129] Mansi xiii, 471E–479B. See Speck 1978, 199f., and Auzépy 1988, 18f.

[130] Speck 1978, 202–3, 624 n. 126; Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 99; see Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 38.47ff.

[131] On the number of participants: see above, and Lamberz 2004, 34 (rectifying earlier higher estimates and based on a detailed critical analysis of the textual tradition of the subscription and presence lists); followed by Thümmel 2005, 123. The appointment of a number of monks to episcopal positions by Leo IV must have encouraged fears among Tarasios and his supporters that these along with certain monks would pursue a disruptive and politically embarrassing line in this respect, and there is some evidence from a letter of Theodore of Stoudion from the year 809 that the monks had, immediately prior to the Council of 787, turned to the papacy, or its representatives in Constantinople, for support in their position with regard to formerly iconoclast bishops: *Ep.*, 38. For an excellent analysis of the role of the different monastic factions at this time based on a careful analysis of the Acts of the council, see Auzépy 1988, 10ff.

And it is important to note that in the next few years Tarasios is recorded to have consecrated an unusually large number of priests, bishops and other members of the clergy, perhaps in an attempt to establish a clearly loyalist presence in the body of the church which could be relied upon in any attempt to challenge the results of 787.[132]

Outside the empire, the reception of the council's decisions proved to be less satisfactory. The papacy had not received the assurances requested by Hadrian regarding its ecumenical position; the issue had been effectively passed over.[133] The issue of the papal patrimonies and the diocese of Illyricum had been entirely ignored, although both matters were clearly presented in the two letters from the pope – to patriarch and emperors – read out at the council (and as far as can be seen from the subscription lists and Acts, the bishops from the Illyrian sees attended the council only from the fourth session, not earlier). At the same time, the rupture between Eirene and Charlemagne and the abandonment of the betrothal between Rotrud and Constantine brought further complications for Eirene's western policy. The Greek Acts of the council were translated into Latin at Hadrian's order in 788/9; the translation was not always entirely accurate, but a copy was already available at Charlemagne's court by 789/90,[134] although it is unclear whether it was sent directly from Constantinople or whether the pope was responsible for forwarding it to Charlemagne.[135]

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[132] Noted and discussed by Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 99–100, with a list of examples and comparison with the reigns of other patriarchs.

[133] The patriarch emphasised instead the role of Christ as head of the church; the council affirmed the emperor as '*isapostolos*', 'equal with the apostles', a position first accorded to Constantine I. See the discussion in De Vries 1967; and Thümmel 1997; 2004, 215–17.

[134] On the Carolingians and iconoclasm, see now Noble 2009. The history of the Acts of the 787 council and their transmission in Latin to the west has now been clarified in a series of penetrating analyses by Lamberz: 1997, 2001, 2002, with detailed summaries of the complex arguments and the extensive literature, and 2004 for an analysis of the subscription lists and number of participants; see also *ACO* III, 1, XXXII–LVI. For the traditional views, see Wallach 1966; Maccarone 1988. Gero 1973b has suggested that the Frankish theologians were working from a *florilegium* rather than a detailed translation of the Acts, and draws up a catalogue of errors committed by their author: see *ibid.*, 10–12. For alternative views, Lamberz 1997 and esp. 2001; Thümmel 2005, 218ff. The Acts of 787 were in any case extremely difficult to use, being both very complex and confusingly set out, with the result that the context or moment from which a text was derived is often misunderstood or misattributed (to the extent that quotations in the Acts of Nicaea II from the *Horos* of 754 are taken as quotations from Nicaea II as such), leading to further misunderstandings. The fact that the missing parts of the Greek version of the letter from Hadrian to the emperors can be shown to be part of a much later process of editing – under Photios in the 860s – does not alter the fact that the Latin translation does not always do justice to the distinction between certain Greek technical terms, such as 'honour' and 'worship', terms which retain in any case a good deal of ambiguity in the Greek: see esp. von den Steinen 1929/30, 11–28; Thümmel 1991b; 2005, 219ff.; Auzépy 1997a.

[135] A Northumbrian source records that the Acts were sent directly from Constantinople: see *MGH SS*13, 155 (this seems on the face of it unlikely: Thümmel 2005, 219, n. 1059); the

Hadrian regarded the Acts as a clear indication of the falseness of the iconoclast position and as a record of the re-establishment of orthodoxy. The Frankish theologians and intellectuals who examined the copy sent to them seem to have had a much less favourable view. Indeed, a document entitled the *Capitulare contra synodum* was prepared (although it does not survive), the arguments of which are known from Hadrian's point by point refutation, a treatise known as the *Hadrianum*.[136] In this, the Frankish theologians presented a series of criticisms of the decisions taken at Nicaea and of the way in which the council had been run. They challenged much of the evidence adduced in support of icon veneration as an old-established Christian tradition, and pointed out that nowhere in the Testaments was there any evidence to support the making or veneration of images; they challenged Eirene's right, as a woman, to convoke and preside at a council; and they questioned the orthodoxy of Tarasios' elevation to the patriarchate. They challenged the way in which texts were used to support the iconophile argument, accusing the authors of the Council of 787 of the same crimes of which the latter had accused the organisers of the Council of 754. Perhaps in response to Hadrian's own refutation of their critique, Charlemagne ordered a detailed review of the issues raised, an analysis of both the imperial and papal arguments, which presented in effect an independent and autonomous Frankish theological position.[137]

This was the *Libri Carolini*, produced in the name of the Frankish king, compiled by the leading theologians at the Frankish court, primarily Theodulf of Orleans and Alcuin.[138] The *Libri Carolini* sum up in an extended

ninth-century account of Hincmar of Rheims makes the papacy responsible: *PL* 126. 360. See Freeman 1985, 75–81; with further literature in Lamberz 2002, 1059, and notes. The arguments adduced by Lamberz (summarised in *ACO* III, 1, XXXII–XXXV) would support a papal transmission to the Frankish court.

[136] *MGH, Epp.* III (*Epist. Meroving. et Karol. Aevi* III), 5–57 (*JE* 2483).

[137] See Auzépy 1997a, esp. nn. 85–91 and references to the *LC*. The question of whether the Frankish response took Hadrian's response to the original *Capitulare* into account at all, and indeed whether the papacy was ever sent a copy of the *Libri Carolini* (originally entitled *Opus Caroli Regis contra synodum*), remains under discussion. See von den Steinen 1929/30, 60ff., 76; Freeman 1985, 91–2; Lamberz, in *ACO* III, 1, XXXIII–XXXV with literature.

[138] See Freeman 1957; 1965/71; Herrin 1987, 427f. and n. 104 for further literature; Thümmel 2005, 219–20; Lamberz, in *ACO* III, 1, XXXIII–XXXIV with literature and discussion. Speck has argued that the extant version of the *Libri* was based upon a Latin translation of a version of the Greek Acts of the Council of 787, which was in its turn the result of a series of interpolations made after 843. See Speck 1998. The consequences of this line of reasoning is that the *Libri Carolini*, the *Capitulare adversus synodum*, the response of pope Hadrian to this latter document, as well as the documents cited in the Paris synod of 825, are all to be seen as the result of this later interpolation, and thus represent not the original documents but later products which bear no relation to the original debates or texts. This ignores the evidence of the manuscript tradition as well as resting on a very problematic methodology: see Lamberz 2002 and n. 18 with literature.

version the objections to Nicaea voiced in the earlier *Capitulare*, and incorporate also the Frankish response to Hadrian's arguments. But they include also a number of deliberately altered passages, in which the meaning of the original Greek text is changed, even reversed in some cases, partly a result of the crude translation of the Acts circulated by Hadrian immediately following the council, partly a result of a deliberate attempt to sharpen the arguments presented by Theodulf against the decisions of the council.[139] The *Libri* raised also the issue of the relative status of Rome and Constantinople (and challenged the east Roman representation of that relationship).[140] They raised also for the first time the question of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the other elements of the Trinity by challenging the formulation in Tarasios' *synodika* that the Holy Spirit derived from the Father through the Son. For this, it was suggested, undermined the concept of the Holy Spirit as both co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son. From the point of view of the theology of images, it has been pointed out that the *Libri Carolini* actually adopt a position not very distant from that of the *Horos* of 754, in which the emphasis is on the traditions of the Old Testament;[141] but the emphasis is on the image as the text of the illiterate, a tradition which was supported by the remarks of Gregory the Great, and which served to differentiate the western position from that exemplified at the Council of 787. According to the *Libri Carolini*, and the synod of Frankfurt which followed, the image held its status by virtue of its ability to recall, remind and instruct.[142] But there should be no cultic practices associated with it: these were a novelty of recent times, an argument which is very close to that of the iconoclast Council of 754.[143]

In short, the *Libri Carolini*, although composed in a palatine context, present nevertheless substantial evidence of a new confidence and independence of mind among the theologians of the Frankish kingdom, a development which represented a challenge both to papal intellectual hegemony in the west and to an intellectual division of the orthodox Christian world into a papal and an imperial camp. They informed the proceedings relevant to the issue of images at the synod of Frankfurt held in 794, and with the altered

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[139] See the demonstration in Lamberz 2002, 1060ff., with further literature.

[140] Indeed, the status claimed by the eastern rulers for their empire, as the universal Roman empire, was challenged, insofar as the *Libri Carolini* recall the pagan origins of the Roman empire, and especially the tradition of *proskynesis* before the emperor; remarking also on the partial nature of east Roman political authoriity, extending as it did over only some of the provinces of the former Roman state. See *LC* III, 15–19, IV, 5 and 28.

[141] Gero 1973b 16f. and cf. *LC* II, 30.

[142] See *LC* II, 22; 27; 30 for example. Discussion with literature: Thümmel 2005, 221–6.

[143] See Chapter 3; and *LC* I, 3; II, 16; IV, praef.

passages included by Theodulf led to a series of refutations of arguments not appearing in the original (Greek) version of the Acts themselves, and thus to the elaboration of a position independent of both the papal and imperial arguments. Although the question of images and the fact of the debate which had developed around them do not seem to have played a key role at this meeting, which was concerned with a much wider range of issues concerning the Frankish church (in particular the issue of Adoptionism),[144] the summary of decisions taken includes a statement that images of the saints do not receive the same quality of devotion as the Trinity, a view which, while by no means disagreeable to the papal position, which in its turn was in agreement with the decisions taken at Nicaea, nevertheless expresses the Frankish effort to present a distinctive theological 'third way'.[145] For at Frankfurt, and although the meeting of 787 was by no means the dominant theme, Nicaea was condemned on two major grounds, both well prepared in the *Libri Carolini*: its insistence on the adoration of images;[146] and its claims to be the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and thus bind the actions of the western church.[147]

The Frankish objections to this assumption, in the context of the growing aspirations of the Frankish king Charlemagne, and in the light of the results for his rule of any attempt to impose the prescriptions of the Council of Nicaea on the Christian church of his own lands, can be readily grasped. What has been termed the Carolingian defence of the Isaurian emperors thus reflected both a Frankish assertion of parity with the east Roman state (and its claims to universality) and an attempt to create an element of continuity between the rule of Charlemagne in the West and that of the eastern emperors before Eirene. In setting out to challenge, at both the theological and the political levels, some of the decisions of the council convoked by Eirene, Charlemagne was challenging both her rule and the claims of the empire she represented.[148] The papal legates present at Frankfurt concurred with the decisions taken there, which put Hadrian in the awkward position

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[144] Ganshof 1946. For the implications of Theodulf's 'interpretation' of the arguments elaborated at Nicaea for later Frankish theological discussion, see McCormick 1994a, 144; Lamberz 2002, 1065ff. On the synod at Frankfurt, see the essays in Berndt 1997a; Thümmel 2005, 227ff.

[145] For an excellent survey of the key issues, see Herrin 1987, 432ff.; and note also Classen 1965, 28–9. Note that of 55 sections, only one dealt specifically with images.

[146] Cf. the summary of the Council of 794: *MGH, Conc. aevi Carolini* I, 165. Since the Acts do not survive and the relevant sections of the *Annales regni Francorum* for the years after 802 are interpolated, it is difficult to situate the discussion of the decisions of Nicaea in its proper context.

[147] *LC* III, *passim*.

[148] See the important discussion in Auzépy 1995c, 60ff.; Thümmel 2005, 229–30.

of having to reconcile acceptance of both councils' decisions. His death in
795 left a difficult situation for his successor, pope Leo III.

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It is difficult to assess the effects of the Council of 787 for the east Roman
world. For the relaxation, or perhaps abolition of, the prohibition on show-
ing devotion to images was accompanied also by the creation, for the first
time (although this is nowhere explicitly stated in the iconophile litera-
ture, which naturally assumes the existence of such a 'cult' in pre-iconoclast
times), of a systematic cult of images.[149] Henceforth, images officially occu-
pied a specific place in the visual panoply of eastern orthodoxy, and the
various practices associated with the adoration of images became an inte-
gral element of Christian devotion. Every Christian was henceforth to per-
form *proskynesis* before holy images and to kiss them; and images were to
be illuminated and accompanied by the burning of incense.[150] But impor-
tantly, the council spent relatively little time on the theology of images as
such, except where this was relevant in the refutation of the *Horos* of 754,
prepared in sessions four and five and carried out in session six. There is
no explicit reference at all to the work or thought of John of Damascus,
although several of the texts also employed in his writings appeared in *flo-
rilegia* from which extracts were read out.[151] In the *Horos* of 787, in fact,
while the practices to be observed by believers were carefully prescribed, the
theological legitimation of images is based on a simple – indeed, simplistic –
dual argument, drawn from tradition: sacred images had always been
thus treated and, by analogy with Christological arguments, denying the
possibility of visually representing Christ was tantamount to denying the
incarnation.[152]

What Tarasios succeeded in doing was to demonstrate, or convince, that
the innovations which he was introducing into orthodox practice were in
fact age-old tradition going back to the time of Christ (which, as we have
seen, was not the case), and that in contrast it had been the iconoclasts who
had innovated and abandoned the traditions of the church.[153] His coun-
cil did not merely permit the public adoration of images, it went several
stages further – indeed, the innovations which it introduced in the guise
of tradition qualitatively transformed the orthodox perspective on sacred
images and completely reversed the practices associated with them, as we

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[149] See the older but still apposite discussion in Beck 1975.
[150] Mansi xiii, 377D–E. 'Iconoclastic' objections to such practices were challenged by Germanos
already in his letter to Thomas of Klaudioupolis: Mansi xiii, 124B–C.
[151] See van den Ven 1957; Alexakis 1992.   [152] See Auzépy 1987, 1998.
[153] For more examples of the invention of tradition at Nicaea II, see Gwynn 2007.

have seen. From this time on all those practices for which anathema had been meted out under the provisions of 754 were actively inscribed into Christian devotional practice in respect of images. And to achieve these ends, and in the absence of appropriate scriptural testimony (which had been carefully deployed in the traditional manner by the iconoclasts in 754), Tarasios had invoked oral tradition, custom and hagiography, which made it quite clear that it was the iconoclast who had innovated and mis-led the church. This is clear from the *Libri Carolini*, which criticises the Acts of 787 on precisely the grounds of the absence of the correct sort of evidence.[154]

Perhaps more significant in the short term were the implications for rela-tions between the secular and ecclesiastical powers: Tarasios placed enor-mous emphasis on the tradition of the church as the basis for the coun-cil's decisions. In effect, he challenged the historic role of the emperors in their direct involvement in such matters, by explicitly contrasting the pious attitude of Eirene and Constantine with that of the iconoclast emperor Constantine V, whose synod of 754 could thus be rendered illegitimate, and whose 'interference' in matters of faith could be shown to be unwar-ranted. This was an important departure: while Maximos Confessor and his supporters, including the papacy, had condemned the emperor Constans II for his interference in matters of dogma, orthodoxy had been restored by an emperor, Constantine IV, when the Sixth Ecumenical Council was convoked; and it was the emperor who both instigated the arrangements, determined the key issues to be debated, and made his presence felt at the sessions, with the patriarch playing a relatively minor and formal role.[155] In 787 the reverse was the case. At the same time, great emphasis was placed upon the change in policy as a return to old-established tradition (which, as we have seen, seems by no means to have been the case), with the implica-tion, clearly embodied in the Acts of 787, that the church and its hierarchs, rather than the emperors, were responsible for matters of faith and dogma. Eirene's absence from the council's proceedings, and the freedom granted to Tarasios to orchestrate the proceedings as well as the record of the council's deliberations, reinforced this view. Tarasios succeeded brilliantly in present-ing what was in effect a fairly dramatic rupture with the recent past as a return to an age-old tradition, as a purifying moment, rather than as the substantial innovation in practice that it really was.[156]

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[154] van den Ven 1957; Mansi xiii, 377.   [155] See Haldon 1997a, 304–17.

[156] This position is well-summarised by Auzépy 1998, with sources and literature, who also emphasises the importance of the propaganda generated to reinforce the patriarchal position. See Chapter 12.

What was actually achieved, therefore, was neither the restoration of a traditional practice, nor indeed the triumph of long-standing tradition. On the contrary, Nicaea marked the establishment of a formal and official cult, the observances associated with it, and thus of a new phase in the history of Christian devotional practice in the east Roman world. It marks also a new demarcation of spheres of authority between rulers and church, secular and spiritual, which was to have important implications for the empire's history in the following half-century.

The reigns of Constantine and Eirene: 790–7; 797–802

It has been argued that the result of the second Council of Nicaea and the synod of Frankfurt which, as we have seen, set an independent tone for the Frankish church in the West, was to signal the end of a universalist conception of the Christian *oikoumene*. The increasing self-awareness of the Frankish church during the second half of the eighth century, the growth in importance of intellectuals and theologians associated with the court of Charlemagne, men familiar with Greek and other languages of the eastern Christian tradition, able to evolve critical and independent judgements on issues of dogma and theology, and able to challenge the papacy on its own intellectual ground, signified a radical shift in the balance of cultural authority in the early medieval West.[157] But for Byzantium, still embroiled on its eastern front with the Arabs and with the Slavs and Bulgars in the Balkans, the West remained a distant and increasingly alien world, half-understood and barely relevant to the concerns of either the imperial government or the literate elite of the empire.

Between September 789 and February 790, two years after the break with Charlemagne, the abandonment of the marriage plans between the young Constantine VI and Charlemagne's daughter Rotrud, and the unhappy marriage of Constantine to Maria of Amnia, tensions which had been building between the young Constantine and his mother seem to have come to a head. Eirene's position was somewhat weakened by defeats at the hands of the Bulgars in November 788 and the failure of the expedition to Italy at about the same time;[158] and although – some time between November 788 and 791 – a marriage between Grimoald of Benevento and a sister

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[157] This has been well charted by Herrin 1987, 390ff.; and see also Wickham 1998.

[158] See Theoph., 463.28–464.2; 464.2–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 638); Rochow 1991, 250–1; Speck 1978, 187–8, 184–5. For Maria of Amnia, see *PmbZ*, no. 4727; *PBE* Maria 2.

of Constantine's empress Maria cemented the alliance between the two powers, the former was able to pursue a fairly independent policy in Italy due both to the recent Byzantine defeat and the relative lack of interest in Benevento displayed by the Franks.[159] In Constantinople, however, for reasons which remain unclear, Constantine seems to have been planning to move against the immediate advisers upon whom Eirene relied, notably the eunuch Staurakios, who was to be removed and exiled to Sicily; that Constantine was himself supported by 'iconoclasts' is unlikely, although at least one of the three leading plotters, Peter the *magistros*, had been a confidant of Constantine V. At any rate, Eirene was informed of Constantine's plans and decided to pre-empt them. In early 790, and perhaps as a result of the confusion caused by an earthquake which struck the capital in February, Staurakios discovered the plot and informed Eirene. The plotters were arrested and punished, and Constantine was reprimanded and confined to his quarters. Eirene then demanded an oath of allegiance from the army, extracted through officers despatched to the provinces for the purpose. The oath demanded that the army would not permit Constantine to take power as long as she lived; and that henceforth they were to be acclaimed as 'Eirene and Constantine', thus giving Eirene rather than Constantine precedence.[160]

All went well until the imperial officials reached the *Armeniakon* forces. Here, the soldiers agreed only to accept a compromise oath in which Constantine's name still had precedence over that of Eirene. When Eirene sent Alexios Mousele, the Armenian commander of the *Arithmos* to persuade them to agree, however, they deposed their commander Nikephoros and acclaimed Alexios *strategos* of their army, an indication of the ties which existed between the family of Mousele (Musheg) and the *Armeniakon* region.[161] Troops from other Asia Minor armies seem soon to have heard what was going on, and followed suit, deposing their commanders (all Eirene's appointees, and in two cases involved in a recent defeat at Arab hands[162]) and marched into the *Opsikion* district, where they assembled at Atroa. Eirene was compelled to release Constantine, who was proclaimed

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[159] See Speck 1978, 207–8; also Classen 1965, 561; Herrin 1987, 425f., with further literature.

[160] Theoph., 464.10–465.12 (Mango and Scott 1997, 638f.); Rochow 1991, 251–3; Speck 1978, 209–17. For Peter: *PmbZ*, no. 6020; *PBE* Petros 8. The oath: Theoph., 465.9–12 (Mango and Scott 1997, 639). See Winkelmann 1987a, 54. For a useful survey of the relations between Constantine and Eirene see Lilie 1996, 220–31, 236–53.

[161] For local elites see Chapter 8; and for Alexios: *PmbZ*, no. 193; *PBE* Alexios 1.

[162] See Theoph., 465.12–26 (Mango and Scott 1997, 639): an Arab raiding fleet had defeated the Byzantine forces at sea in the Gulf of Attalia in the summer of 790. The commander of the Kibyrrhaiot fleet was captured; the other commanders were suspected or accused of failing to support him. See Rochow 1991, 253; Speck 1978, 218–19.

sole emperor at Atroa by the combined armies, and formally in Constantinople in November 790.[163]

Once firmly established in the capital, Constantine recalled those of his supporters banished or sidelined by Eirene, including the general Michael Lachanodrakon, perhaps suggestive of his desire to win the support of the troops by bringing back some of the famous generals of the time of Constantine V. Staurakios was punished and exiled to the *Armeniakon* region, along with another close supporter of Eirene, the *protospatharios* Aetios.[164] Eirene herself he confined to her palace (the Eleutherios[165]), but she was not deposed: on the contrary, her name and portrait continued to appear on imperial coins.[166] Constantine then embarked upon an independent foreign policy, marching indecisively against first the Bulgars in April 791 and then the Arabs in September. But by 792 Eirene was once more confirmed as co-ruler, and Constantine even recalled Staurakios from his exile. Only in the *Armeniakon* was there firm opposition to this change and, when they demanded that Alexios Mousele be returned as their commander, Constantine had him tonsured and imprisoned on the pretext that he had fomented the Armeniak rebellion.

To reinforce his authority, Constantine then marched north to add to the defences of the Thracian frontier, rebuilding the fortress of Markellai, lying between Beroea (Eirenopolis) and Anchialos, which Eirene had herself refortified in 784. But in June 792 his army was unexpectedly surrounded by the troops of the Bulgar khan Kardam and, relying on the advice of his astrologer, Constantine attacked and his army was soundly defeated.[167] The emperor managed to escape to Constantinople, where he had to deal with a plot of officers to depose him and place Nikephoros the son of Constantine V on the throne. Probably with the advice and help of Eirene and Staurakios, Constantine had his uncle Nikephoros and Alexios Mousele blinded, and

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[163] Theoph., 465.32–466.22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 640f.). See Winkelmann 1987a, 54f.; Lilie 1996, 84, with the survey of his sole rule, 254–73.

[164] For Aetios: *PmbZ*, no. 106; *PBE* Aetios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 6880; *PBE* Stavrakios 1.

[165] Theoph., 467.1–4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 641); on the Eleutherios, see Janin 1964, 131; Berger 1988, 588–90.

[166] Theoph., 466.23–467.4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 641); Speck 1978, 226–35 (note that the *Armeniakon* troops were asked to swear a further oath specifically to Constantine): Theoph., 466.24–5 (Mango and Scott 1997, 641) and Speck 1978, 226–8. For the coinage, see 352–4 below.

[167] For these events: Theoph., 467.6–468.6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 641–3) and the literature and parallel sources in Rochow 1991, 256–8; Lilie 1996, 85, 180–3. For Kardam: *PmbZ*, no. 3626; *PBE* Kardamos 1. Among the dead at the battle was the general Michael Lachanodrakon: Theoph., 468.1–2 (Mango and Scott 1997, 643). On astrology at court – this is the first mention of a dedicated court practitioner – see Magdalino 2006.

the tongues of the other four sons of his grandfather cut out. In response, the Armeniak troops deposed their *strategos* and marched against the force which the emperor had sent to pacify them, and defeated it, capturing and blinding the imperial commanders. But in May 793 Constantine marched against them himself with a force made up from the remaining armies, and crushed the revolt.[168]

Relations with the empire's northern and eastern neighbours remained hostile. Arab raids in the summer of 793 resulted in the capture of the important fortresses of Kamachon in the Armeniak region (surrendered by the garrison) and of Thebasa to the south of Amorion. A larger force attacked again late in 794, accompanied by the former *strategos* of Sicily, Elpidios, who had deserted to the Arabs in 782. But the expedition was hindered by the early onset of winter, and retired without achieving anything. And although Constantine was able to defeat an Arab army in the frontier regions in 795, Arab raids continued to trouble the Anatolian provinces of the empire throughout the remaining years of the decade: reaching Amorion in 796, Ankara and Malagina in 798, and Ephesos in 799. An expedition launched under Constantine's personal leadership marched to meet forces under Harun in 797, but the emperor was given false information (by agents of Eirene, who was by this time plotting to remove her son from power) that the Arabs had retired, so he marched back to the capital without accomplishing anything. Eirene was forced to sue for peace, encouraging a perception in the Islamic leadership of a clear Byzantine political and military weakness. Only with the death of Harun al-Rashid in 809 and the ensuing factional conflict within the caliphate did things improve.[169]

The situation on the Bulgar front was marginally better. In 796 Constantine refused the continued payment of the subsidy or tribute which had been extracted from the Romans following the defeat at Markellai in 792; but the ensuing confrontation ended in a stand-off near Versinikia on the frontier, with both armies retiring without a battle. Over the period from the mid-780s Byzantine efforts succeeded in stabilising a Balkan frontier between the empire and the Bulgars accompanied by a line of fortified posts

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[168] Theoph., 468.7–469.15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 643f.); Rochow 1991, 258–60; Lilie 1996, 85–7. For Nikephoros: *PmbZ*, no. 5267; *PBE* Nikephoros 5 (with references to the other sons of Constantine V). The headquarters unit of the *Armeniakon* division was taken in chains to the capital, paraded and then sent into exile in Sicily and the West: Theoph., 469.11–15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 644). Discussion: Winkelmann 1987a, 55.

[169] See Theoph., 469.15–17; 19–21; 27–9; 470.21–3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 644–6); Rochow 1991, 260–1, 264, 267; Lilie 1976, 177–8; for Harun's policy on the Byzantine frontier, see Kennedy 1981, 115ff.; Haldon and Kennedy 1980, 107ff., 114; Brooks 1900, 740f.; 1901, 88.

(Philippoupolis, Beroea, Markellai, and Anchialos), as well as setting in train the process of Christianisation of the southern Balkans and those parts of Greece most affected by earlier Slav settlement.[170]

But the real problems faced by Constantine and Eirene stemmed from the factional struggles which evolved between them, exacerbated no doubt by the (indefinable) interests of different groupings at court focused on different palace officials and partisan interests. In 795 Constantine had forced his wife Maria to enter a convent, having accused her, probably unjustly, of trying to poison him. The patriarch Tarasios had been persuaded to concur with this, but Constantine was not free, of course, to marry his mistress Theodote, a member of Eirene's retinue and a relative of Plato and Theodore of Sakkoudion (later of Stoudion). After his successful campaign against the Arabs in April and May 795, he announced his betrothal to Theodote and crowned her *augousta* (a title she now shared with Eirene and which Maria had not held). A few weeks later the wedding was celebrated in the imperial palace of St Mamas in the suburbs by the abbot of the Kathara monastery, Joseph, who also held the post of *oikonomos* of the Hagia Sophia. Although the marriage was adulterous, Tarasios did little except impose a light penance on the emperor and Theodote (according to the slightly later source tradition because Constantine threatened to re-introduce an imperial iconoclast policy), as well as on the priest who had performed the service, and there was little public opposition.[171] But the leaders of the monastery of Sakkoudion, Theodote's relatives Plato and Theodore, who clearly adhered to a strictly canonical line (regardless of the possible advantages to them of a member of their kin establishing a close connection with the imperial family), denounced the union and excommunicated the patriarch for his willingness to tolerate it. After fruitless efforts at reconciliation, the emperor closed the monastery of Sakkoudion, imprisoned the abbot Plato in Constantinople, and banished Theodore of Stoudion and other companions to Thessaloniki. Theodore's treatment was not simply a reflection of the emperor's annoyance at his opposition, however, for the former belonged to an important Constantinopolitan family with a long history of government service, especially in the fiscal apparatus of the capital. To be challenged by an individual belonging to – and undoubtedly still maintaining plenty of connections with – the socially prestigious and influential metropolitan elite posed a particular threat to the emperor, and it was undoubtedly his perception of

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[170] Lilie 1996, 183–9.

[171] Theoph., 469.23–7; 470.1–7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 645f.); Speck 1978, 251–63; further literature and sources: Rochow 1991, 260–3; see Henry 1969; Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 102–4; and *PmbZ*, no. 7899; *PBE* Theodote 1.

this that encouraged such a rapid and effective imperial response.[172] The so-called moechian controversy (from the Greek *moicheia*, adultery) which followed was to simmer well into the early years of the ninth century.

Exploiting the hostility which the marriage had aroused, and having bribed some of the leading palatine officers to remain neutral or to support her, Eirene began to prepare the ground for deposing her son. She may have encouraged the monastic opposition to the imperial marriage, which was only increased by Constantine's actions in arresting and punishing Theodore and Plato in February 797. At length in mid-August the plotters made their move, attempting to seize the emperor as he returned by boat from Constantinople (where he had attended the chariot races in the hippodrome) to his summer residence at the palace of St Mamas. The emperor was able to elude the first attempt, fleeing with some supporters to Pylai, where a number of soldiers from the *scholai* soldiers joined him. But Eirene was able to persuade those of her supporters who found themselves at Pylai with the emperor to hand him over to her men, which was done. On Saturday 19 August (probably[173]) Constantine was blinded, although he survived and was confined for several years thereafter. Eirene became sole ruler of the east Roman state, and immediately set about re-establishing her relationship with the banished or imprisoned members of the Sakkoudion monastery. An official reconciliation between Plato and Theodore and their supporters, on the one hand, and the patriarch Tarasios, on the other, was achieved, although Joseph of Kathara, who had consecrated the marriage in 796, was made the scapegoat and punished. Shortly afterwards Theodore was made abbot of the Stoudion monastery.[174] He became a warm supporter of the empress.[175]

Eirene's sole rule lasted until 802.[176] In the four and a half years of her reign she was able to renew diplomatic contact with the Franks and solicit

[172] Detailed discussion with sources and literature in Pratsch 1998, 83–114: see Theoph., 470.24–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 646f.); also Lilie 1996, 71–6; Ludwig and Pratsch 1999, 104–5; and esp. Cheynet and Flusin 1990. See *PmbZ*, no. 6285; *PBE* Platon 1; *PmbZ*, no. 7574; *PBE* Theodoros 15.

[173] The sources disagree on the date, and the date given by Theophanes does not compute: see Brooks 1900; Speck 1978, 306ff.; Lilie 1996, 273–7.

[174] Theoph., 470.24–472.22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 646ff.); detailed analysis of the events in Speck 1978, 265–74, 287–309; Speck 2000d; further sources and literature in Rochow 1991, 264–9; Lilie 1996, 88–97; Pratsch 1998, 115–23; and discussion in Winkelmann 1987a, 55–6. For Joseph: *PmbZ*, no. 3447; *PBE* Ioseph 2. It is important to note, however, that Tarasios did not abandon Joseph altogether. In 803 he was commissioned by the emperor Nikephoros I, almost certainly (although it cannot be proved) recommended by the patriarch, to lead the negotiations between the emperor and the rebel Bardanios Tourkos: discussion in Pratsch 1998, 147–9; Rochow 1994, 281, for sources.

[175] On Theodore, see esp. Leroy 1958; and *V. Theod. Stud.* (*PG* 99) 260A–265B.

[176] Useful short survey in Lilie 1996, 277–91 with literature.

the return of the *patrikios* Sisinnios, brother of the patriarch Tarasios (in 798),[177] attempt to buy peace from Harun al-Rashid following the raid of September 798;[178] avert a half-hearted plot on behalf of the five sons of Constantine V (798), crush an attempted rebellion in the region of Hellas again focused around them, and have the remaining four of whom who still possessed their sight blinded (March 799).[179] Her rule was popular due to fiscal and other concessions,[180] was fragile, but was threatened by factional rivalries which evolved around her two key advisers, Staurakios and Aetios. The factionalism at court came to a head during an illness of Eirene in 800, when Aetios and his supporters, including the *domestikos* of the *scholai* Niketas, denounced Staurakios for a purported plot against the empress. Having initially accepted the accusations, she was persuaded by Staurakios to hear his view, whereupon she held a meeting to sort the matter out. Staurakios became very ill, however, and although he had the support of a group of officers in the district of Kappadokia, in the *Anatolikon* region, their revolt came to nothing when he died shortly afterwards.[181]

Matters were complicated as a result of two developments in the West. In the first place, pope Hadrian had died in 795, and in his place was elected Leo III. Leo was faced with a particularly difficult situation, in which his predecessor's support for the decisions reached at Nicaea in 787 had aroused the opposition of the Frankish church, expressed clearly enough at the synod of Frankfurt in the previous year, and as a result of which he was potentially isolated politically between the two great secular powers which had interests in Italy. In 796, in consequence, when Leo was able to renew the traditional alliance between Frankish king and pope, he was no longer in the position of a senior partner. On the contrary, and partly resulting from

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[177] Eirene's embassy followed an earlier mission despatched under Constantine in 797: see Herrin 1987, 453; Speck 1978, 330ff. Sisinnios: *PmbZ*, no. 6794; *PBE* Sisinnios 86.

[178] Theoph., 473.7–11; 24–32 (Mango and Scott 1997, 650f.); Rochow 1991, 270f.; Lilie 1976, 177–8. There is some disagreement as to whether or not the attempt resulted in a treaty: see Brooks 1900, 742f.

[179] Theoph., 473.11–22; 473.32–474.5 (Mango and Scott 1997, 650f.). The first 'plot' – more probably merely a panic reaction of the sons of the former emperor and their supporters to the blinding and death of Constantine VI – was defused by the eunuch Aetios, and the five were exiled to Athens; in the second case, the rebels in Hellas seem to have been joined in their plot by a neighbouring Slav chieftain named Akamir. See Rochow 1991, 270–2; Speck 1978, 532; Lilie 1996, 99–101. See also Winkelmann 1987a, 56–7.

[180] See Theoph., 475.15–18 (Mango and Scott 1997, 653); Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 7, dated 801 (see Fatouros, comm., 150 and n. 39); Rochow 1991, 274f., and the discussion in Chapters 6 and 8.

[181] Theoph., 474.11–475.9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 652f.); Winkelmann 1987a, 57–8; Lilie 1996, 102–5, 283–5 (and cf. 142–4). For Niketas (Triphyllios): *PmbZ*, no. 5426; *PBE* Niketas 11.

the decisions and the relative intellectual autonomy expressed at Frankfurt, Charlemagne was now in the position of a ruler who could clearly identify himself as defender and guardian of the Christian church in the West. Eirene continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Charlemagne, for example, and the evidence of the so called 'Cologne notice' for the year 798 suggests an active imperial policy in the West, especially in an effort to isolate the papacy.[182] But pope Leo was deposed for a short period in 799 (he had been confined to a Greek monastery but was able to escape and flee to Charlemagne at Paderborn); and although the role of imperial influence in these events remains obscure, it seems hardly a coincidence that, during a planned visit to Rome to celebrate Christmas in the year 800,[183] Charlemagne was crowned emperor by the pope in a ceremony which owed much to the east Roman tradition.[184] Although the news of the coronation seems first to have reached Constantinople only unofficially, the claims to Roman imperial authority on the part of a king of the Franks were clearly resented, and Eirene's failure to take up the challenge, as well as her possibly compromised position in respect of earlier negotiations over the title of emperor in the West, must have further weakened her position.[185] Finally in 802 the empress sent a legation under Leo the *spatharios* to avert the reported Frankish threat to Sicily; the Frankish plan was abandoned, and a return embassy sent to Constantinople, supposedly bearing a proposal from Charlemagne of marriage to Eirene.[186]

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But opposition to Eirene's continued rule had by now gathered momentum and, combined with the anxiety that clearly existed regarding the proposed

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[182] See Herrin 1987, 452f. For the 'Cologne notice' see Krusch 1880, 197 (we thank Wolfram Brandes for this reference).

[183] For a brief account with literature and sources, see Herrin 1987, 457–9; Fried 2001.

[184] See the careful analysis in Hagenader 1983.

[185] Detailed account in Herrin 1987, 454ff. Speck 1978, 327ff., following a hypothesis proposed by Bury 1893, argues that Eirene was directly involved in the plan to make Charlemagne emperor in the West, a logical continuation of her earlier policy in Italy and in attempting to ally herself with the Frankish king (whether or not discussions over a marriage between Constantine VI and Rotrud actually took place and are reported accurately). While this argument has, on the whole, met with little support (see Herrin), it is not implausible, given the longer-term strategic planning which Speck believes the evidence reveals. See the comment in the 'Cologne Notice' for 798 which reports that imperial ambassadors were involved in just such negotiations (Krusch 1880, 197).

[186] Theoph., 475.11–15; 27–32 (Mango and Scott 1997, 653–4). See Rochow 1991, 273f., 275f.; Bury 1912, 320. The marriage proposal as it is reported is, on the face of it, somewhat improbable, and may represent a subsequent attempt by the usurper Nikephoros, incorporated by Theophanes into his *Chronographia*, to justify the imperial position vis-à-vis the Franks – see the detailed discussion in Speck 1978, 357–68; and Hageneder 1983.

marriage alliance and all its implications, led to her deposition in October 802, not at the hands of her former supporter Aetios, *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* and *komes* of the *Opsikion*, who had himself been planning to replace her with his brother Leo (for whom he had also secured the commands of the Thracian and Macedonian regions), but by a different group of officers, both civil and military, acting with Nikephoros, the general *logothetes*, who were anxious that Aetios be forestalled.[187] Whether the patriarch Tarasios was involved is unknown, although he crowned the new emperor himself on 31 October 802 in the church of Hagia Sophia. Eirene was banished to the nearby isle of Prinkipo, but, suspected of plotting with the general Aetios shortly afterwards, was then banished to Lesbos, while Aetios was removed from command.[188]

Artisanal production

In terms of material culture, the 'iconophile intermission' did not see an unconditional 'triumph of tradition': though there was certainly some production that recalled past formulae, the financial upswing orchestrated by Constantine V also generated the introduction of new features. The most important of these were the development of minuscule, the invention of the cross-in-square ground plan, and, probably, the improvement of loom technology, all of which coalesce around the year 800. These shifts had more to do with the favourable economic climate than with ecclesiastic and political manoeuvring, but the latter, as we shall see, was not wholly irrelevant.

Architecture and architectural decoration

The only surviving architectural project associated with the imperial house during the reigns of Constantine VI and Eirene is at Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki which, like the Koimesis church in Nicaea, is apparently a seventh-century building decorated in mosaic – either for the first time or with such rigour that no vestiges of earlier mosaic work remain – in the late eighth: at Hagia Sophia, the bema vault incorporates a cruciform monogram of Eirene and Constantine VI (780–97), similar in

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[187] See Theoph., 476.3–477.18 (Mango and Scott 1997, 655f.); Rochow 1991, 276–8; Winkelmann 1987a, 58–9. Nikephoros: *PmbZ*, no. 5252; *PBE* Nikephoros 8.

[188] Theoph., 476.23–5; 479.4ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 655, 657); Speck 1978, 305 and nn. 145–6; Lilie 1996, 105–11, 286–91.

Fig. 26. Thessaloniki, Hagia Sophia: apsidal vault mosaic, cross surrounded by stars

disposition to that at the roughly contemporary Archangel church at Sige.[189]

The vault mosaic is well preserved (Figure 26). A gold cross surrounded by sixteen stars, set – like the crosses inserted in the *sekreton* at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople a decade or so earlier (Figure 12) – against concentric circles of blue, occupies the apex of the vault against a gold ground; on either side, above the cornice that marks the springing point of the arch, the lower third of the vault contains rectangular carpets of ornament above an inscription that incorporates the imperial monogram and invokes the bishop Theophilos, a signatory at the 787 council.[190] The ornament is arranged in six rows of small squares containing crosses and five-lobed leaves, divided by bands decorated with simulated jewels and pearls. Both the crosses and the leaves find numerous roughly contemporary parallels;

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[189] Cormack 1968, 34–64; Cormack 1977a, 36, 40; Krautheimer 1986, 290–5; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 323; Ruggieri 1991, 261; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1993, 192, 196–7; Ousterhout 2001, 10; Ruggieri 1995, 145–50. For Sige, see 297 below.

[190] *Ch[rist]e boethe theophilou . . . tapeinou episkopou* ('Christ, help Theophilos, humble bishop'), a formula familiar on contemporary seals, on which see 435 below. For the *sekreton* in Constantinople, see 201–3 above.

the former is especially close to examples at Hagia Eirene (Figure 16) and Hagia Sophia (Figure 12) in Constantinople.[191]

In the eleventh century, a Virgin and child replaced the original decoration of the apse, a cross with, as at Hagia Eirene (but not Nicaea), arms made to curve downward so that they appeared horizontal from floor level.[192] The Thessalonikan apse mosaic also followed Hagia Eirene in its inscription, a quotation from Psalm 64 (now disrupted by the Virgin). Unlike Hagia Eirene, however, the backdrop for the vault mosaic contains no admixture of silver amongst the gold tesserae.[193]

Nonetheless, both the architecture and the decoration of Hagia Sophia fit within a tight matrix of other buildings, all dating to the late seventh or eighth centuries. Like the churches at Nicaea and Sige, and like Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, the dome sits on, and is supported by, four barrel vaults that form a cross-shaped naos. Like the Koimesis church, Hagia Eirene, and the eighth-century decoration of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the favoured motif here is a cross (and the crosses are all configured in the same way), smaller versions of which, in the two churches dedicated to Holy Wisdom, are backed by concentric blue circles.

Two points must be made here about the attitudes toward images expressed in the mosaic decoration of Hagia Sophia. Whenever in the joint reign of Eirene and Constantine VI the mosaics were added, their non-figural decoration continued the pattern established by Hagia Eirene under Constantine V. Whether the work was commissioned before or after 787 is unknown, but it is clear that whatever pro-image feelings Eirene and Constantine may have had – inchoate or already realised – did not effect the decoration here. One could, just, see this as the triumph of a tradition established by the Justinianic decoration of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, but the closer parallels remain the iconoclast decoration of that church and, especially, of Hagia Eirene. We do not see a mad scramble to reintroduce religious portraiture here, whatever iconophile texts may want us to believe, but the perpetuation of 'iconoclast' motifs. Indeed, though it is not of pressing concern to us in this context, the cross decoration of the apse remained in place for over 200 years before being replaced by a

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[191] See 201ff. and 213–15 above. For the leaves, see Brubaker 1991, 33–4.

[192] The cubes outlining the cross were removed and replaced by gold tesserae to create a seamless background; a faint outline of the cross remains visible, even in reproductions, a particularly clear example of which appears in Cormack 2000, pl. 53. See further Underwood 1959, 239.

[193] See Pelekanidis 1973; Cormack 1980/1; and Theoharidou 1998, 31, all with extensive earlier bibliography.

representation of the Virgin: the urge for figural imagery was evidently not that strong.

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Non-imperial patronage during this period is surprisingly extensively preserved. The building project closest to Constantinople is on the island of Prinkipo (modern Büyük ada), largest of the Princes' islands in the sea of Marmara, which served as a convenient place of exile from at least the sixth century, when patriarch Eutychios was sent there by Justinian.[194] A female monastery is attested in the eighth century; it was joined by Theophanes' wife when the couple took monastic vows around 780.[195] This was presumably the monastery that Theophanes tells us was built by Eirene, to which she was exiled by Nikephoros before being sent on to Lesbos; she was returned to this monastery for burial after her death.[196] Mamboury described the ruins of what was probably this monastery in 1920: a large basilica with three apses, originally built in or just after 573/4 on the evidence of the brickstamps, was reconfigured and apparently expanded, with extensive living quarters and a garden, in the eighth century.[197] Ruggieri reported in 1991 that the remains were now almost totally destroyed, and under modern tennis courts.[198]

Across the Sea of Marmara, along the southern coast between modern Bandırma and Gemlik (Kios), the remains of six churches belong to the years on either side of 800. All are in the general vicinity of Mount Olympos (Bithynia), which saints' lives claim to have been a hive of monastic activity throughout the period of iconoclasm.

At Sige (modern Kumyaka), an early nineteenth-century inscription (now lost) identified a large, domed basilica as the Church of the Archangels and dated the building to 780.[199] Cruciform monograms on the capitals – one of which has been deciphered as Eusebios – are of a type most common in the eighth and ninth centuries, as both Weigand and Foss have demonstrated, with specific reference to the examples at Sige.[200] The first and major phase of construction is therefore almost universally accepted to date to the late eighth century.[201] The structure is very similar to that of

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[194] See the listing of important exiles in Janin 1975, 68.

[195] See Theodore the Stoudite's enkomion on Theophanes, ed. Efthymiadis 1993, 272; discussed also in Mango and Scott 1997, xliv–xlv; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 230–1.

[196] *Theoph.*, 478, 480; Mango and Scott 1997, 657–8; *V. Irenae*, ed. Treadgold 1982, 245; trans. 247. On the *Vita*, compiled in the twelfth century, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 217.

[197] Mamboury 1920. See also Janin 1975, 69; Thomas 1987, 123–4; Herrin 2006, 11.

[198] Ruggieri 1991, 209–10.   [199] Foss 1967.   [200] *Ibid.*; Weigand 1931.

[201] Buchwald 1969; Krautheimer 1986, 288–9; Ruggieri 1991, 214–15; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1993, 196–7; Ousterhout 2001, 10; Ruggieri 1995, 70–1.

Constantine V's Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, with a dome resting on four arches, which spring from massive corner piers;[202] it is, however, considerably smaller, with a dome diameter of *c.* 6.5 metres, less than half that of the Constantinopolitan building's nearly 15 metre circumference. Janin suggested that this is the church dedicated to St Michael that, according to his *Vita*, was restored by Nikephoros of Medikion at the end of the eighth century.[203]

Scattered fragments of two churches, perhaps once part of monastic complexes, were recorded in the early 1970s by Cyril Mango and Ihor Ševčenko on sites now occupied by the modern towns of Malkara Üstü and Timanyo.[204] Too little remains of either site to attempt a reconstruction, but Mango and Ševčenko tentatively identified the latter as Polichnion (or Polychronia), a monastery on land owned by Theophanes the Confessor, who took the habit there in 781; shortly thereafter, Theophanes gave the monastery to the seventy-odd monks already living there and moved on to found Megas Agros six miles away.[205] The remains are restricted to a column, a capital and a chancel slab,[206] but – if the identification with Polichnion is correct – the number of inhabitants indicates a large and prosperous complex, comparable with other major monasteries in the region, Sakkoudion and Medikion.[207]

Ruins of a monastery west of Kurşunlu have been identified as Megas Agros, the monastery founded by Theophanes the Confessor before 787. Theophanes stayed here for over a quarter century, until he was recalled to Constantinople by Leo V in 814; he died in the capital in 818, after which his body was moved to Hiereia, where it worked miracles for a year before being returned to Megas Agros for its final burial in 819.[208] If the identification and dating to the mid-780s is correct, the church preserves one of the earliest known examples of a cross-in-square plan which will become the standard formula followed by Middle Byzantine churches (Figure 27).[209] Columns, surmounted by reused Roman capitals, supported a dome of *c.* 4 metres in

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[202] The comparison is developed by Buchwald 1969, 37–9; he included Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki and the Koimesis church in Nicaea, among others, in his grouping of related monuments.

[203] Janin 1975, 183–4.   [204] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 267–8.

[205] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 262–3, 268–70, present the textual evidence. See also Thomas 1987, 123; Janin 1975, 202, 207–9; Ruggieri 1991, 224.

[206] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, figs 137–8.

[207] As noted by Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 270. On these two monasteries, see 314 and 418 below.

[208] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 253–67; Janin 1975, 195–9; Thomas 1987, 123–5.

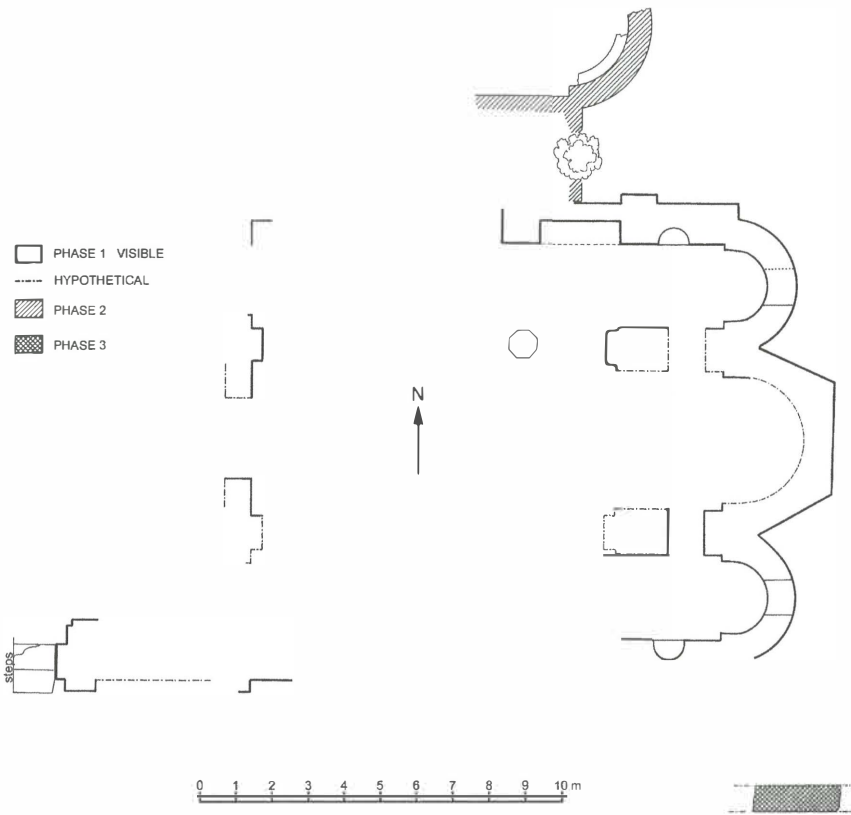[209] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, fig. 108.

Fig. 27. Megas Agros monastery: cross-in-square plan

diameter; the apse is three-sided on the exterior and curved on the interior; and the masonry is composed of bands of bricks and stone rubble – all features that are found in other churches of the inter-iconoclast period. Fragments of mosaic flooring, in simple geometric patterns, remain, as do the dividers that originally held the now-lost marble revetments on the walls. Bits of reused earlier sculpture either survive or have been described by early twentieth-century visitors, while panels apparently contemporary with the church are incised with crosses, rinceau, palmettes and, in one case, a hunting animal.[210] The monastic gate house, with six interior niches, survives, as does a considerable length of retaining wall along the seafront, which supports the terrace on which the church is built.[211] Though small,

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[210] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, figs. 106, 107, 120–32.
[211] Full and detailed description in Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 253–8, figs. 78–135; followed by Ruggieri 1991, 219–20; Ruggieri 1995, 96–100; Ousterhout 2001, 14.

this was innovative in plan, and elaborately decorated, but there is no indication of human representation.

The oldest of the Byzantine churches remaining in Trilye (Zeytinbağı) has recently been dated by dendrochronology to just after 799.[212] It has been tentatively identified as the Trigleia monastery, an abbot of which, Stephen, is said to have been persecuted by Leo V.[213] Monograms on the capital imposts have been variously deciphered, most plausibly as 'Lord help your servant Stephen *patrikios*' and 'Manuel *patrikios*'.[214] The church is the earliest datable cross-in-square church known (Figure 28), though, as noted above, if the identification of the Kurşunlu monastery as Megas Agros holds, it would provide an example roughly fifteen to twenty years earlier. The central dome, not quite 5 metres in diameter, is relatively modest in size, and carried on four columns; the crossarms are barrel vaulted; and the rather irregular corner areas are covered with domical vaults.[215] Fragments of mosaic survive, as does considerable architectural sculpture, some of it reused sixth-century work.[216] The church is small, but its innovative construction technique and apparently lavish decoration recall the church tentatively identified as Megas Agros, and once again indicate that, first, the economic prosperity of the period was not confined to the capital and, second, that contemporary enthusiasm for communal monasticism associated with the Stoudites was in practice more wide reaching.

The remains of the monastery of St John the Divine of Pelekete ('axe-hewn', after the rocky height on which it was built; modern Ay Yani) lie four kilometres west of Trilye, and repeat the cross-in-square plan on a somewhat smaller scale, with a dome diameter of about 4 metres.[217] The monastery figures prominently in iconophile literature, though much of the detail is highly suspect. The earliest reference appears to be in the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, a notoriously unreliable source, where we are told that Stephen met Theosteriktos of Pelekete in prison and heard from him that Michael Lachanodrakon (governor of the *Thrakesion*) had burnt the monastery after subjecting the monks to various horrors and burning their

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[212] On the dating, see Ousterhout 1998, 127–8.   [213] *PmbZ*, no. 7072.

[214] See Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 237–8.

[215] Ousterhout 2001, 12–13, figs. 5–6, provides the most recent, and most accurate, plan and elevation, based on the recent study of Sacit Pekak.

[216] Hasluck 285–308; Buchwald 1969, 56–7; Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 235–8; Janin 1975, 185–7; Cormack 1977a, 40; Ruggieri 1991, 227–9; Ousterhout 1998, 127–8; Ousterhout 2001, 6–7, 12–13; Ruggieri 1995, 128–31.

[217] Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 242–8; Janin 1975, 170–2; Ruggieri 1991, 224; Ruggieri 1995, 105–7; Ousterhout 2001, 14.
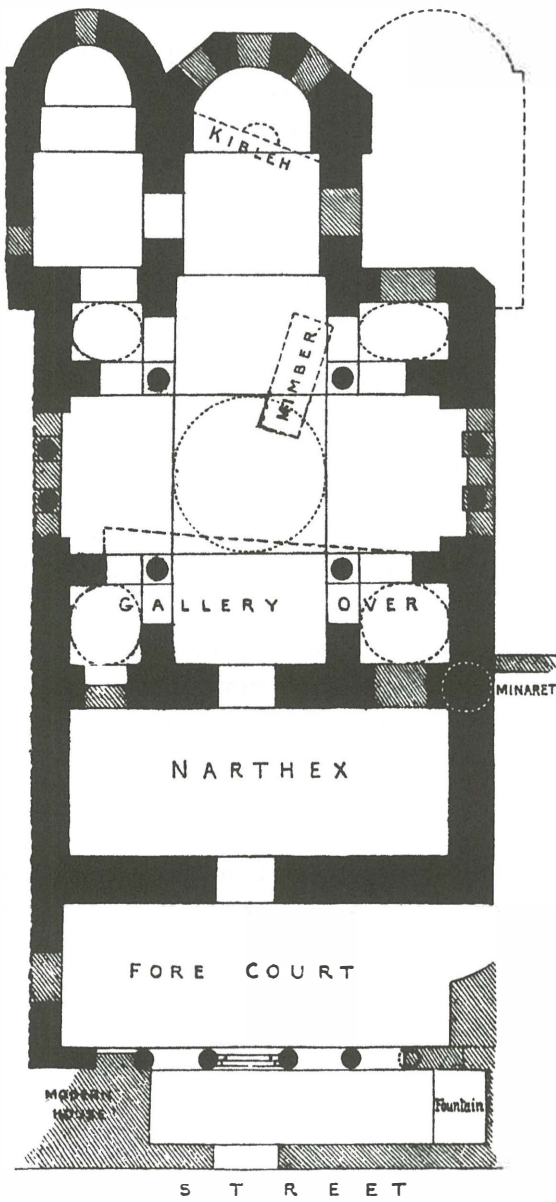
Fig. 28. Trilye, Trigleia monastery: cross-in-square plan

icons.[218] The story is certainly inaccurate: Lachanodrakon was not named *strategos* of the *Thrakesion* army until after Stephen the Younger's death, and he had anyway no jurisdiction over Pelekete, which was in the *Opsikion.*[219] The next certain references to the monastery concern Makarios, who, his *Life* informs us, came to the monastery as a youth and, while learning about the monastic rule, was set the task of copying books; he rose swiftly to the post of *oikonomos,* and then became abbot from some time in the late eighth century until he was exiled during the patriarchate of John the Grammarian (*c.* 815); during his exile he received five letters from Theodore of Stoudion, written between *c.* 815 and 818. Theodore's correspondence with Makarios and, later, others make it clear that Makarios's successor at Pelekete had favoured iconoclasm but that subsequently, under the abbacy of Sergios during the reign of Theophilos, Pelekete had again become a bastion of the iconophile cause.[220]

On the basis of this literature, it has been supposed that the monastery of Pelekete was rebuilt following its destruction during iconoclasm.[221] The documents cannot sustain this assumption but, while the tale of the destruction is implausible, it remains possible that the monastery may nonetheless be associated with Makarios, for architectural similarities between the remains at Ay Yani and the 799 church at Trilye support a date in the early ninth century.[222] A final point of interest concerns the scribal activity of the monastery. Ruggieri singled out for special notice the reference to copying manuscripts in the *Life* of Makarios,[223] and if the *Vita* is accurate here it provides another indication that activities conventionally associated with the Stoudites were in fact more widely practised.

* * *

The remaining architectural fragments from the period are more distant, and suggest that the upsurge in Byzantine prosperity implied by the building projects we have just discussed was confined neither to imperial patronage nor to the regions around Constantinople. An inscribed stone from Siphnos in the Cyclades was found, reused as part of a wall, in the remains of a Byzantine settlement with at least two churches, both later rebuilt, near

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[218] *Life* 59: Auzépy 1997b, 161 (trans. 259); Michael is vilified elsewhere in the *Life*: see *Life* 40, where he participates in the attack on Stephen's own monastery: *ibid.*, 140, 236 n. 272. On the problems with the text, which we have noted frequently already, see *ibid.*; Auzépy 1999; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 226–7.

[219] These points have already been made by Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 244; Janin 1975, 170–1; and Auzépy 1997b, 259.

[220] See Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 244–6, and on the *Life* of Makarios, see further Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 218.

[221] E.g. Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 246.   [222] Ousterhout 2001, 14.   [223] Ruggieri 1991, 224.

the modern town of Exampela.[224] It records the foundation of a church by Eustorgios and Kosmou and their three children (Leo, Niketas, and Lampousa) in the year 787, using the formula familiar from the period: 'Lord help your servants...'. Unfortunately we know nothing about the church itself.

Side, in Pamphylia on the south coast of Asia Minor, was a prosperous town in the Roman and late antique periods; in the mid-seventh century a new wall bisected the older city, then or slightly later the lighthouse was rebuilt,[225] and later still two small churches – one inside and one outside the walls – were erected within the foundations of earlier buildings. Both have been dated to the ninth century, and preserve cross-in-square plans. The smaller of the two (roughly 12 × 9 metres) is within what was probably the old episcopal palace, and may date to around the year 800.[226] Four columns supported the small dome (3.3 metres in diameter), which no longer survives; the stepped synthronon recalls Hagia Eirene in Constantinople. The second church, known as church H, is outside the walls, and apparently belonged to a monastic complex. It is closely related to the church in the episcopal palace, but is somewhat larger (16.7 × 11.2 metres) though with a smaller dome (3.05 metres in diameter) and no synthronon.[227] Once again, the use of the cross-in-square plan, along with the construction of both a church and, probably, a monastery, indicates that the economic revival of the ninth century was widespread, and that masons were receptive to new forms and monasticism flourished even far from the capital.

On the basis of the slipshod construction technique and 'the historical development of the gulf', Ruggieri has dated the remains of a small, perhaps cross-in-square, church on Söğüt adası, an island in the gulf of Simi near Rhodes in the Adriatic, to the late eighth or early ninth century.[228] Ousterhout is less certain that the building was domed,[229] and the date

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[224] Politis 1983; Ruggieri 1991, 262. *Pace* Ruggieri, the stone is now in the museum associated with the monastery of Vrysi.

[225] On the city see Foss 1996b; for the walls and lighthouse, *ibid.*, 43–4.

[226] Mansel 1963, 168–9 gives a date in the seventh century while Ruggieri 1991, 140–1, 157–8 and Ruggieri 1995, 110–14, gives 750–850 as the range; this has been tacitly accepted by Foss 1996b, 44, and Ousterhout 2001, 14.

[227] Eyice 1958; Ruggieri 1991, 140–1, 242; Ruggieri 1995, 108–10; Foss 1996b, 44; Ousterhout 1998, 127; Ousterhout 2001, 13–14. Ruggieri 1991, 140–1 argues for the second half of the ninth century; Buchwald, in a review of Ruggieri, for the seventh (*JÖB* 43 1993, 473); Foss and Ousterhout opt for the ninth without specifying which half.

[228] '[D]ello sviluppo storico che il golfo': Ruggieri 1995, 116. See also Ruggieri 1989, 351–4; Ruggieri 1991, 242.

[229] Ousterhout 2001, 15.

remains uncertain. If it were in fact a ninth-century structure, the building would provide yet another example of an island church, presumably attached to a monastery, such as those that proliferated on the Princes' Islands in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

Finally, in the vicinity of the area associated with the Bulgarian capital at Pliska, columns inscribed with the names of towns in Thrace conquered by Krum in 812/13 – for example, Kastron Didymoteichon – either have been assigned to their find spots and identified as plunder or, more likely, were produced in Pliska shortly after the military campaign to signal Krum's triumph;[230] while in the Tur Abdin, remains of the Deir Za'faran monastery, refounded sometime between 793 and 811, survive, while a number of other churches are attested in documents.[231]

* * *

This leads us to three monuments even further outside the empire that have sometimes been associated with Byzantium: the now badly mutilated Lateran triclinium in Rome (798/9), Theodulf of Orléans' oratory at Germigny-des-Prés (*c.* 800), and the aniconic frescoes at Santullano (San Julián de los Prados, just outside Oviedo), associated with the court of Alfonso II (791–842).

The Lateran triclinium, a three-apsed hall, was added to the papal palace in Rome by pope Leo III. All but the main apse was demolished in 1589; this, decorated in marble and mosaic, was restored in 1625, and the mosaic was subsequently removed and relocated in 1743, suffering so badly in the process that old drawings are our most reliable witness to the apsidal representation (Figure 29).[232] The mosaic in the conch of the apse showed the mission of the apostles, presumably a reference to the missionary activity of the church. In the spandrels to each side of the arch, Christ hands the *pallium* to Peter and the *labarum* to Constantine (viewer's left) while Peter hands the *pallium* to pope Leo and a flag on a long staff to Charlemagne (viewer's right). The left side has been so thoroughly reconstructed that its original form is uncertain, but it seems likely to have been meant to provide a parallel to the right-hand image, and so Christ recognising the first 'pope' and the first 'Christian' emperor was an appropriate choice. The right spandrel is in better condition, and shows a nimbed Peter enthroned between the kneeling figures of Leo (in the preferential position on Peter's right, viewer's left) and Charlemagne; both have been given square nimbi, an

[230] See Asdracha and Bakirtzis 1980, 263–5, with additional bibliography.
[231] Several churches built after 793 in Edessa, destroyed in 825; five churches destroyed and rebuilt *c.* 813; and the church of St Thomas in Amida rebuilt in 848: Bell and Mango 1982, 163.
[232] Davis-Weyer 1966; and see Nilgen 1999 for discussion and further bibliography.
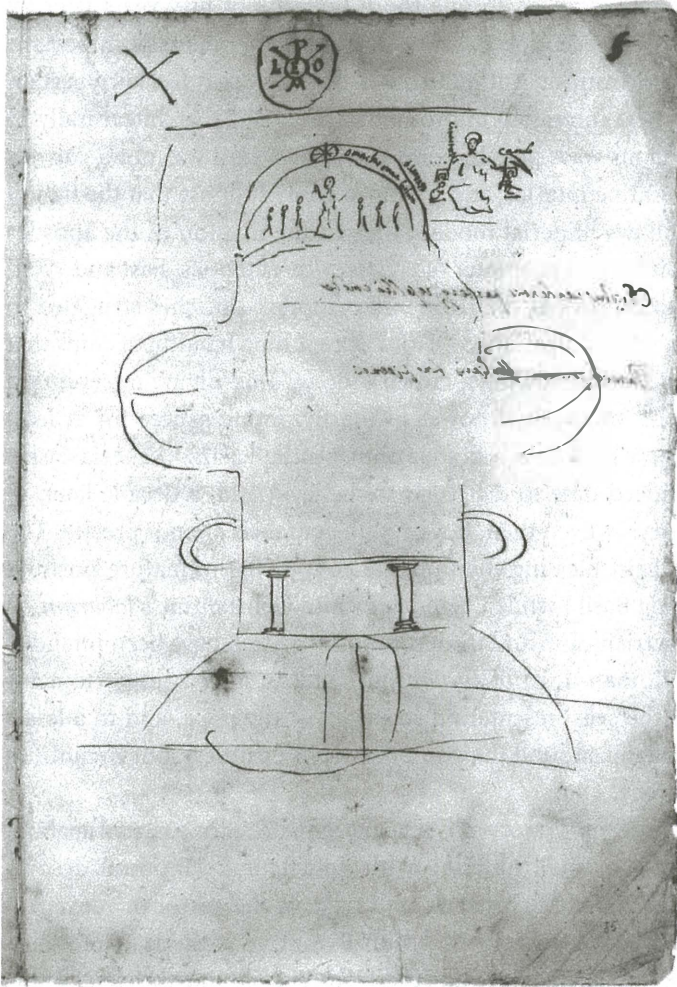
Fig. 29. Rome, Lateran triclinium: apse drawing (Barb.lat.2160, f.55r)

indication that they were living when the mosaic was set, and Charlemagne is identified as king rather than emperor: hence the dating before Christmas 800, when the pope crowned Charlemagne *caesar augustus*.

Richard Krautheimer, followed by Bryan Ward-Perkins, interpreted the Lateran triclinium, along with the entrance built sixty years earlier by pope Zacharias, as conscious attempts by the papacy to compete with the imperial palace in Constantinople.[233] Krautheimer compared the triclinium with

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[233] Krautheimer 1980, 115–17, 121–2; Ward-Perkins 1984, 174–6; for Zacharias, see Brubaker 1999a, Haldon and Ward-Perkins 1999.

the *chrysotriklinos*, an apsed throne room built about fifty years later by Michael III. Apsidal reception halls are familiar components of important estates and palaces from late antiquity onward, and we may feel fairly certain that the popes were interested in promoting their status architecturally in the most efficacious ways possible. But Leo's triclinium was not a copy of any known Byzantine interior, and we can scarcely suppose that the figural iconography follows imperial models, though the mission of the apostles became a familiar visual promoter of *ecclesiastical* activities, East and West, across the ninth century as the Latin and orthodox churches struggled to convert the Slavs and Bulgarians.[234] Nor – except for a handful of coins that show a hand of God bestowing a crown – do we find divine intervention in the promotion of imperial power in the Byzantine sphere for at least another seventy years, when it first appears on the Palazzo Venezia casket (if that does indeed date to *c.* 870, as we believe) and, a decade later, in the Paris Gregory.[235] Even then, however, the parallels are not precise. The casket shows Christ blessing the imperial couple; the miniature portrays Gabriel crowning Basil I while Elijah hands him Constantine's *labarum*. In short, while the triclinium and its decoration may well have been intended to evoke the 'Roman-ness' of Byzantium, and as such is important for understanding the self-presentation strategies of the pope, and to a lesser extent Charlemagne, around the year 800, it tells us little about Byzantium in the age of Eirene.

Theodulf of Orléans' oratory at Germigny-des-Prés, constructed at about the same time, is a small building with non-figural sculptural decoration and an apse mosaic focused on an image of the ark of the covenant (Figure 30) that has been compared with Byzantine versions of the same subject.[236] The similarities are, however, superficial, and the details surrounding the ark differ markedly from Greek examples. Byzantine representations normally show the two cherubim that decorated the ark as if they were relief sculptures, canted toward each other at forty-five degree angles, and placed in or on top of the ark (Figure 31). Theodulf's mosaic shows two angels, mimicked by two smaller cherubim, actively gesturing toward the empty ark and, below that, toward the altar itself; while a hand of God in the centre of the composition is marked by the stigmata of the risen Christ. Unlike Greek images, which show the ark of Exodus, Theodulf's version demonstrates how the prophecies of the Old Testament, represented by the

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234 Grabar 1957, 224; Brubaker 1999a, 243–5.
235 Discussion in Brubaker 1999b, 158–9, 186.
236 The extensive bibliography on this image is summarised and cited in Freeman and Meyvaert 2001.

Fig. 30. Germigny-des-Près, Oratory: apse mosaic, ark of the covenant

ark, have been replaced by the historical reality of Christ, whose incarnation fulfilled the promises of the old laws, and whose death and resurrection superseded them. The ark is now empty; Christ is present at the altar in the form of the eucharist.[237]

The impetus behind Theodulf's image stems from his *Opus Caroli Regis contra synodum* (the *Libri carolini*), written between 791 and 793 in response to the bad Latin translation of the Acts of Nicaea II. Soon thereafter, the Carolingians either realised that the Latin translation was flawed, learned that pope Hadrian I had endorsed the council, or both; whatever the reason, the text never circulated,[238] though, as we have seen, it resonated at the Frankfurt Council of 794. It managed nonetheless to survive, and comparison of Theodulf's and Byzantine understanding of the meaning of the ark

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[237] For development of this interpretation, see Freeman and Meyvaert 2001. As we have seen, the concept of the eucharist as an image of Christ was also familiar in Byzantium (see e.g. Gero 1975b), though it was not visualised in this way.

[238] Ganz 1995, 773–5; Freeman 1985; Freeman and Meyvaert 2001.

Fig. 31. *Christian Topography* (Vat.gr.699, f. 48r): ark of the covenant

of the covenant clearly shows that, whatever superficial similarities there are
between Latin and Greek images, the meanings could scarcely have been
more different.[239] This divergence grew out of contrasting interpretations
of God's order to Moses, despite the second commandment forbidding
graven images, to decorate the tabernacle, recorded in Exodus 25:18–20. To
the Byzantines, God's command to produce and decorate the ark and the
tabernacle was the ultimate defence of Christian imagery.[240] Theodulf, in
contrast, argued that the ark did not justify the mundane production of
religious images because it was not a human commission: God commanded
Moses to have it made.[241] Against the orthodox belief that the ark supplied
a rationale for Christian representation, this led Theodulf to understand the
ark as a pale Old Testament prefiguration, now surpassed by the realities

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[239] This issue is developed in more detail in Brubaker 2004b, 178–82.

[240] E.g the Acts of the 787 council (Mansi XIII, 285A–B; trans. Sahas 1986, 110); John of
Damascus, *Against those who attack holy images* II, 9 (= III, 9) (Kotter 1975, 96–7; trans.
Anderson 1980, 56–7). See also Dufrenne 1965, 89; and esp. Corrigan 1992, 34–5.

[241] *Libri Carolini*, 175; trans. and discussion in Freeman and Meyvaert 2001, 127.

of the New.[242] There is, in short, neither an ideological nor a formal relationship between Theodulf's mosaic and Byzantine representations of the tabernacle.

The early ninth-century Santullano frescoes are equally unrelated to Byzantine practice. They depict a series of unpopulated buildings that probably represent a version of heavenly Jerusalem.[243] They are sometimes associated with another work from Spain, the so-called Bible of Theodulf, a Visigothic manuscript with entirely aniconic decoration that has been linked with Theodulf of Orléans, whose attitudes toward imagery we have just discussed.[244] As usual with Christian aniconic decoration, both have been seen as exceptional responses to schismatic debate: in Theodulf's case, the *Libri Carolini*; in the case of the Santullano frescoes, the Adoptionist controversy. There is, however, no reason to connect aniconic ornament with the anti-Adoptionists, who followed the standard Chalcedonian line.[245] Rather than providing a parallel to Byzantine iconoclasm, the Santullano buildings – like the fifth-century architectural mosaics at the Rotunda in Thessaloniki – seem meant to evoke a world beyond this one; unlike the Rotunda mosaics, however, the Santullano buildings are unoccupied so that, as we have argued elsewhere 'worshippers need not mentally displace existing residents, but can aspire to inhabit the otherworldly space themselves'.[246]

These three examples are not particularly useful for understanding material culture during the period between the two iconoclasms in Byzantium, but they are instructive nonetheless. In their general, rather than specific, evocations of ideals familiar in Byzantium, the triclinium and Santullano in many ways exemplify the survival of the visual vocabulary of the Roman empire across the Mediterranean. Theodulf's oratory, however, hints that this homogeneity is ending, and indeed the mutual incomprehension of East and West is well attested by the end of the century.[247]

Documentary evidence: Constantinople

A number of other monuments are known from documentary sources, most famously the image of Christ that Eirene (and Constantine VI?) installed

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[242] See esp. *Libri Carolini*, 193; trans. and discussion in Freeman and Meyvaert 2001, 131.

[243] Dodds 1990, 27–46; Arbeiter 1992; Bonet Correa 1987, 102–21.

[244] Biblioteca della Badia, La Cava dei Tirreni, MS memb. 1: see Williams 1993, with earlier bibliography, and, for Theodulf, Freeman 1994.

[245] For discussion, see Dodds 1990, 27–46.   [246] Brubaker 2004a, 584–8, quotation at 587.

[247] See Fögen 1998 and Wickham 1998, both with extensive bibliography.

over the Chalke Gate that, the so-called *Scriptor incertus* ('writer unknown') of *c.* 815 claims, was removed by Leo V around Christmas 814.[248] We know nothing further about this portrait, though it may have resembled the bust of Christ over the portico on the Trier ivory (Figure 7), which seems to depict a procession associated with the imperial palace and may date to the ninth century.[249] The important point is that Eirene – whose other known patronage was steadily conservative – was here making a highly visible statement that she had reversed imperial policy. As in earlier centuries, the Chalke broadcast imperial practice and was used to signal socio-political change.[250]

Another monument associated with Eirene is the Church of the Virgin of the Source, where she is said to have taken shelter during an earthquake (*c.* 790) and to have been healed of internal bleeding by drinking the miraculous water for which the shrine had been famous since at least the sixth century.[251] A tenth-century account records her donations after the healing: 'In gratitude for which she, together with her son [Constantine VI], dedicated veils woven of gold and curtains of gold thread . . . as well as a crown and vessels for the bloodless sacrifice decorated with stones and pearls. She also ordered that, as a lasting memorial, their portraits should be executed in mosaic on either side of the church, handing over the offerings that have been enumerated so as both to express their faith and to proclaim for all time the miracle . . . '.[252] Though neither the church nor its furnishings remain, the pattern of Eirene's other known commissions suggests that this may well be a reasonably accurate inventory of her donations: as we shall see, silk production appears to have flourished during her reign; and we have already considered the aniconic mosaics dedicated by Eirene and her son at Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki. The crown, which was presumably votive and intended to hang over the altar, recalls Eirene's donation to Hagia Sophia in 780/1 when, Theophanes tells us, the empress gave to the church her deceased husband's crown, 'which she had further adorned with pearls'.[253] The portraits are otherwise unparalleled, but we know that

[248] Ed. Bonn, 354–5; see Mango 1959, 121–3; Auzépy 1990, 455–6. On the text, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 179–80; the relevant passages are translated in Mango 1972, 157; commentary in Brubaker 1999a, 278–9.

[249] See 133–5 above.

[250] On the Chalke, see further Mango 1959 and, for the issues discussed here, Brubaker 1999a.

[251] See Janin 1969, 223–8; Cormack 1977a, 40; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 322.

[252] *De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem*: in *AS* Nov. III, 880C; trans. Mango 1972, 156–7. On later donations to this shrine, see Talbot 1994.

[253] *Theoph* 454; trans Mango and Scott 1997, 627. Theophanes tells us that Maurice did the same in 600/1: *Theoph* 281; trans Mango and Scott 1997, 406–7.

imperial portraiture continued throughout iconoclasm – and was widely distributed through the medium of coinage – so this aspect of the decoration, too, is unexceptional. In contrast to her commission of a portrait of Christ on the Chalke Gate, our tenth-century source presents Eirene here as following conventions established by her immediate predecessors, the iconoclast emperors.

Various sources associate civic monuments with Eirene as well. As we have seen, Theophanes tells us that in 790 Constantine VI placed Eirene under house arrest 'in the palace of Eleutherios, which she had built and where she had hidden a great deal of money'; and, when Nikephoros ousted Eirene in 802, she asked him 'to spare my weakness and to allow me the mansion of Eleutherios that I have built to console me of my incomparable misfortune'.[254] We know from other sources that the palace served charitable functions during Eirene's lifetime, and continued to be used for various purposes – including as a prison – after Eirene's death, but none indicates anything about its appearance or structure.[255] The *Patria* also ascribes a cemetery and a bakery for the poor, along with a hospice, to Eirene.[256] Even if only partially accurate, these commissions demonstrate that Eirene and – as we shall see – her circle continued the consolidation and augmentation of the urban infrastructure of Constantinople that began under Constantine V.

The patriarch Tarasios's possible involvement with the decoration of the church of the Virgin of the Chalkoprateia has already been discussed, and his larger commissions seem to have been outside of the capital.[257] Within Constantinople, we are told by his *Vita* that he built houses 'for the sake of our brothers, whether strangers in need of hospitality or the poor',[258] though this is attributed to the empress Eirene by Theodore of Stoudion and Methodios.[259]

The monastery of St John the Baptist of Stoudion, a fifth-century foundation,[260] was revived during the reign of Eirene, who in 798/9 apparently gave it to Theodore, at that time the *hegoumenos*, with his uncle Plato,

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[254] *Theoph.* 467, 478; trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 641, 656.

[255] See Janin 1964, 131; and on Eirene's charitable foundations, see Chapter 4.

[256] Ed. Preger, 246. See also Magdalino 1996, 23–4. Whether this association of a woman with 'domestic' commissions – a pattern that is sometimes, though not invariably, found earlier – is accurate is uncertain. Efthymiadis in *V. Tarasii*, 21–2, believes that several commissions associated in the literature with Eirene should actually be credited to Tarasios.

[257] See 207 above and 314f. below.   [258] *V. Tarasii*, 21 (ed. Efthymiadis, 94–5, 180 [trans.]).

[259] Theodore, *Ep.* 7 (ed. Fatouros, 25); *V. Theophanis* 14 (ed. Latyshev – on the text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 230).

[260] Peschlow 1982; Mango 1978; Janin 1969, 430–40.

of the monastery at Sakkoudion.[261] Theodore and his uncle had already begun the process of reforming Byzantine monasticism, and the move to the capital brought these changes – which Theodore presented as restorations of past practice – to a wider forum. The so-called Stoudite reforms had three main planks: the institution of a *Rule of the Fathers* intended to restore the traditions of the church fathers to monastic life; the elevation of coenobitic (communal) over eremitic monasticism; and the importance of monastic poverty and charity.[262] Theodore encouraged reading and the copying of texts, and, as we shall shortly discuss, this apparently led more or less directly to the development of minuscule, a new and more economical form of writing.[263] Theodore was also, of course, a very vocal champion of the iconophile cause, and it is possible that this was made manifest in the decoration of the monastery. Although the now-roofless and dilapidated katholikon of the monastery remains, no significant evidence of any late eighth- or ninth-century modifications and additions has been preserved. Theodore's iambic epigrams have, however, been interpreted as referring to a series of wall paintings within the monastery depicting its patron saint John the Baptist, a collection of saintly theologians (John the evangelist, Paul, Zacharias, Dionysios, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzos, Gregory the miracle-worker, Epiphanios, Ignatios, Athanasios, John Chrysostom, Cyril, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodore of Sykeon) and the saintly monks Antony, Hilarios, Euthymios, Sabas, Dalmatos, Pachomios, Arsenios, Theodosios, and Dios.[264] A similar emphasis on individual saints is found in the mosaic decoration of the *sekreton* at Hagia Sophia, which probably dates to around the year 870; and most of the figures praised by Theodore appear in later ninth-century contexts such as the *sekreton* and tympanum mosaics of Hagia Sophia, the *Sacra Parallela*, and the Paris Gregory.[265] These examples may give a faint idea of what Theodore's commission – if indeed the epigrams record actual paintings in the monastery – may have looked like.

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[261] This may indicate that the monastery had come under imperial control, possibly during the reign on Constantine V: Miller 2000, 67–8. On Sakkoudion, see 314.

[262] See esp. Morris 1995, 13–19; Leroy 1961a; Leroy 1961b; Leroy 1954, all with earlier bibliography. Theodore's *Testament* and the Stoudion *typikon* have appeared in English trans. with commentary in Miller 2000.

[263] See 317, 447 below.

[264] Speck 1964b; Speck 1968, 211–39; followed by Ruggieri 1991, 195–6 and more cautiously by Cormack 1977a, 40, and Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 322.

[265] For the comparanda, see Cormack and Hawkins 1977; Mango and Hawkins 1972; Weitzmann 1979b; Brubaker 1999b.

A number of other epigrams written by Theodore concern the commissions of Leo the *patrikios* and his wife the *patrikia Anna*.[266] These included an icon of Christ, given by Leo (to the Stoudion monastery?), and at least one monastery: Theodore refers to the monastery of Ignai, and to a monastery dedicated to the Theotokos, where Anna was nun and *hegoumene*.[267] The location is uncertain.[268]

Other monastic foundations are mentioned even more briefly. The patriographic literature, the *Book of Ceremonies*, and other later sources associate a monastery of Euphrosyne *ta Libadia* (in the fields) with Euphrosyne the younger daughter of Constantine VI and Maria of Alania: this was apparently in the sparsely populated area near the church of the Virgin of the Source, discussed earlier.[269] The monastery of the Theotokos of Psicha was founded by the *patrikios* Michael during the reign of Eirene, and placed under the leadership of John the Psichaite, who moved there from the Pege monastery in Constantinople at Michael's request and with Eirene's permission. According to his *Vita*, John rebuilt the monastery following damage by the Bulgarian army under Krum in 813.[270] Another series of restorations noted in the sources concerns the monastery of Isidoros, after the patrician believed to have built the original building during the time of Constantine I.[271] This was apparently renovated, converted to a female monastery, and renamed Metanoia (penitance) by Theodote, second wife of Constantine VI, after Constantine's death in 797.[272] We will see that Bardanes retired in disgrace to a monastery he had built on the island of Prote after 803; his wife founded a (house?) monastery on some of the family lands in the city that were not alienated after Bardanes' fall.[273] Finally, after the deposition of Michael I in 813, when he and his sons were exiled to the Princes' Islands, his wife Prokopia moved to a private monastery she had evidently constructed (?) earlier in Constantinople.[274]

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[266] *PmbZ*, nos 457, 4432. Anna was also one of Theodore's numerous female correspondents: see Kazhdan and Talbot 1991, 396–400.

[267] Epigrams 93, 106–9, 114–5 and 120: Speck 1968, 249–50, 282–6, 292–6, 303–4, with overview at 310–14.

[268] Janin 1969, 257–8; Ruggieri 1991, 212.

[269] Janin 1969, 130–1; Ruggieri 1991, 190; *PmbZ*, no. 1705.

[270] On the *Vita*, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 216; on John, see *PmbZ*, no. 3053; and on the monastery, see Janin 1969, 242–3; Thomas 1987, 124; Ruggieri 1991, 199.

[271] Possibly the *praefectus vigilum* 324–37. See *PLRE* I, 465.

[272] Around 840, this was again repaired and converted to a *xenon* by Theophilos: see 426 below, with references to both campaigns.

[273] See the discussion in Herrin 2006, 7–8.

[274] Janin 1969, 442–3; Janin 1975, 212; Thomas 1987, 130; Ruggieri 1991, 195. On Michael's place of exile, see Janin 1975, 70–2.

Documentary evidence: Byzantine hinterlands

As we saw in the last chapter, the eighth century saw the construction of numerous monasteries that no longer survive. One of the more notable of these was founded around 783 by Plato and his nephew Theodore, later to become canonised as Theodore of Stoudion. In 759, while still in his 20s, Plato retired from a post in the imperial treasury to enter the monastic life on Mount Olympos, where he ultimately became *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Symbola; he was joined by Theodore there in 781. Shortly thereafter – probably around 783 and certainly before 787 – the pair built the monastery of Sakkoudion on family lands that were nearby and evidently underused.[275] The main church was dedicated to John the Baptist, and we know from the *Vitae* of Theodore and one of his epigrams that it was domed and decorated in mosaic.[276]

The same pattern was followed, at roughly the same time (early 780s), by Tarasios and Theophanes the Confessor, both of whom built monasteries on family land, the former dedicated to All Saints at Stenon just outside of Constantinople, the latter on Kalonymos Island (Imralı adası) in the Marmara, north-west of Mount Olympos, and at Polichnion, discussed earlier in this chapter.[277] Little is known about Theophanes' island monastery,[278] but the *Vita Tarasii* locates the Stenon site on the European side of the Bosphoros in Thrace and appears to describe aspects of its decoration.[279] The *Vita*, which was probably written around 845 and thus about forty years after Tarasios's death,[280] concentrates on the patriarch's admiration for martyrs, whom he 'crowned . . . with the victorious diadems of his speeches. And imploring their salutary interventions before God and asking their assistance, he reverently set up before the eyes of all an available picture and a spontaneous book by depicting their struggles in holy churches'.[281] It is the lengthy catalogue of martyrdom scenes that follows that has been associated with Tarasios's monastery, though this location is nowhere specified in this section of the *Vita*.[282] The passage provides an excellent example of the emotive use of *ekphrasis*, as Ignatios (the author of the *Life*) never names the martyrs whose tortures he graphically describes in the first section, but instead poses a series

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[275]   *PmbZ*, nos 6285 and 7574.

[276]   Speck 1968, 244–6; Janin 1975, 177–81; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 322; Ruggieri 1991, 225–6.

[277]   See 298ff. above.

[278]   Discussion of the material that can be extracted from the sources appears in Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 264; Janin 1975, 202; Thomas 1987, 123–5; Ruggieri 1991, 210.

[279]   *V. Tarasii* 24, 50–2 (ed. Efthymiadis, 98–9, 136–42 [trans. 181, 195–7]). See further *ibid.*, 12, 25–6, 222, 240; Janin 1964, 480–1; Janin 1969, 481–3; Thomas 1987, 123–5; Ruggieri 1991, 202–3.

[280]   Efthymiadis, in *V. Tarasii*, 46–50.   [281]   *V. Tarasii* 49 (ed. Efthymiadis, 135–6 [trans. 194]).

[282]   See Wolska-Conus 1980; Walter 1980.

of rhetorical questions that effectively instruct the listener/viewer on how to respond to the scenes pictured.[283] The opening sentence illustrates this well: 'For who would see represented in colours a man who is sorely tested for the sake of truth, disdains fire, is surrounded by the blur of whips and because of them has courageously given up the ghost to the creator, and would not burst into warm tears and groan with compunction?'.[284] Following a long sequence in this vein – which has been associated with images of the martyr-dom of the Makkabees[285] – Ignatios becomes more specific, and describes female martyrs, the deaths of Thekla and Stephen, and the Crucifixion.[286] This is unlikely to respond to, or record fully, the decorative programme of a monastic church, as its concentration on martyrdoms and omission of all gospel scenes save Christ's own death finds no comparisons in Byzantine church decoration.[287] It does, however, recall smaller programmes familiar from the eighth and ninth centuries, such as that preserved in the Theodotus chapel at Sta Maria Antiqua in Rome,[288] which – if Ignatios was faithfully recording a coherent programme of decoration – may approximate to the interior evoked by the *Vita*.

The concentration of individuals also recalls the epigrams of Theodore of Stoudion that have been linked to the decoration of his monastery in Constantinople; however, in the *Vita Tarasii*, the rhetorical requirements of the genre, and the needs of the author, reinforced the desirability of the limited subject matter: Ignatios's main goal was not to provide a complete description of a decorative scheme, but to praise Tarasios by association and, we suspect, to reinforce a familiar iconophile trope.

Contemporary pro-image polemic often invoked martyrs – usually unnamed, as in the *Vita Tarasii* – in part, one assumes, because the iconophiles portrayed themselves as modern sufferers for a religious cause.[289] The Acts of the 787 council, which is of course closely associated with Tarasios, instructed the orthodox to accept 'the reproductions of the labours of the martyrs', and repeated the old sentiment that images of

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[283] See Brubaker 1989b and, more generally, James and Webb 1991.

[284] *V. Tarasii* 50 (ed. Efthymiadis, 98 [trans. 195]).

[285] Walter 1980; for a comparison with a slightly later visual counterpart, see Brubaker 1989b.

[286] *V. Tarasii* 51–2 (ed. Efthymiadis, 138–42 [trans. 196–7]).

[287] The closest comparable programme was painted in eighth-century Rome, at Sta Maria Antiqua and its adjacent chapel of the forty martyrs, but even here there are extensive narrative sequences and numerous scenes from the gospels.

[288] See Teteriatnikov 1993, with earlier bibliography, and 228–30 above.

[289] See, e.g., the *Life* of Stephen the Younger, where martyrs are mentioned often, and the epilogue addresses Stephen as a martyr: ed. Auzépy 1997, 176 (trans. 276). For iconophile women identified with martyrs in the letters of Theodore of Stoudion, see Kazhdan and Talbot 1991, 400. For additional examples, see Ševčenko 1977, 129 n. 122; Gouillard 1960; Alexander 1977, 259–62.

martyrs supply excellent examples to imitate;[290] when Tarasios's successor on the patriarchal throne Nikephoros condemned the eradication of religious images, he specified pictures of the martyrs in manuscripts, icons, and churches.[291] The idea of picturing martyrdoms clearly rang ideological bells for the iconophiles, and a wide range of martyrdom scenes continued to be portrayed, or singled out for mention in descriptions of decorative programmes, through the ninth century.[292] The emphasis on a martyrdom sequence, and especially a cycle in which the individuals involved are anonymised, in the *Vita Tarasii* is, under these circumstances, unexceptional. Whether the images imagined in the *Life* actually existed is more problematic, but the parallels with later monuments suggest that they certainly could have[293] – the imagery described was clearly thinkable in ninth-century Byzantium.

The *Life* of Tarasios also claims that scenes from the gospels were 'depicted in churches all over the land by means of material colours, according to the ancient tradition of the Fathers' but provides no further specificity.[294]

Tarasios is not the only iconophile patriarch credited with monastic foundations. According to his *Vita*, Nikephoros, exiled in 815, travelled first to the monastery of Agathos (*ta Agathou*) which he had previously founded. This has been located by Janin on the eastern shore of the Bosphoros, just north of the Golden Horn, near Chalcedon; he identified it as the place mentioned in a letter of Theodore of Stoudion and later given to the future patriarch Euthymios by Leo VI, a thesis rejected without explanation by Ruggieri.[295] Nikephoros was then transferred to a monastery that he had also founded earlier, further from the capital and dedicated to the martyr Theodore.[296]

Finally, in Nikomedeia, the *Life* of bishop Theophylact (*c.* 800–15) credits him with a church, poorhouse and monastery; the *Vita* is probably of the late

[290] Mansi XIII, 240B, 301E–304D; trans. Sahas 1986/8, 75, 125–6. For earlier examples, see e.g. Mango 1972, 36–9.

[291] PG 100: 477B. More generally, Travis 1984, 100–4.

[292] E.g. an unnamed sequence is noted in the descriptions of the Nea Ekklesia contained in the *V. Basilii* 86 (*Theoph. Cont.*, 328–9) and of the church of the Theotokos of the Pharos, probably completed in 864 (Photios, Homily 10, 6: ed. Laourdas 1959, 102; trans. Mango 1958, 188). Several more specific cycles or scenes are preserved in the Paris Gregory of *c.* 880 (Brubaker 1999b, 239–80).

[293] *Ibid.*   [294] *V. Tarasii* 56 (ed. Efthymiadis, 147 [trans. 198]).

[295] *V. Niceph.*. 201; Eng. trans. by Fisher in Talbot 1998, 108 (on the text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 222). Janin 1964, 482–3; Janin 1975, 23; Ruggieri 1991, 199–200; all with additional bibliography.

[296] *V. Niceph.* 201; Fisher 1998, 108. x-ref to cap 5.

ninth or tenth century, however, and its reliability about early ninth-century material culture is thus problematic at best.[297]

Manuscripts: the introduction of minuscule

The most important shift in medieval writing technologies occurred around the year 800, when – in both Greek and Latin manuscripts – majuscule began to be replaced by minuscule.[298] Greek minuscule letters are in 'lower case' (A becomes α, B becomes β, Γ becomes γ, and so forth), are often joined together forming ligatures, frequently resort to abbreviations (such as κ/ for καὶ = and), and start to be augmented by both accents and punctuation. This process is associated with the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople,[299] which as we have noted was a fifth-century complex which came to prominence in the late 780s, in particular under its leader between 798–9 and *c.* 815, Theodore, who wrote a set of rules that privileged book reading and writing,[300] and the Stoudios scriptorium (writing studio) is one of the few that can be at least tentatively reconstructed. The invention of minuscule made books considerably cheaper to produce: it was faster to write than majuscule, and smaller, so that more letters could be written on a page. It soon supplanted majuscule for all but deluxe manuscripts and presentation scripts (for example, inscriptions on icons), thereby demonstrating that the archaic was recognised as a marker of status. The two manuscripts that can be relatively firmly dated to the period between 787 and 815 are, however, neither products of the Stoudite scriptorium nor written in minuscule, but retain the older majuscule script.

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 1666: *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great

Pope Zacharias translated the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great from Latin into Greek in the mid-eighth century, and this copy was prepared in 800, certainly in Italy and probably in Rome.[301] The majuscule text includes headings and rubrics in red-orange until f. 47r (of 185 folios); other decoration

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[297] See Foss 1995, 188; and on the *Vita*, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 231.

[298] The relationship between eastern and western writing systems has been noted for some time, but whether the developments were independent of one other or whether one system influenced the other is not clear: see, e.g., Mango 1977c.

[299] Fonkič 1980/2; Kavrus 1983; Fonkič 2000.

[300] For the Rules, see Thomas and Hero 2000, I, 97–115. Further discussion in Leroy 1954.

[301] Weitzmann 1935, 77, figs 520–1; Giannelli 1950, 408–9; Grabar 1972, 9–10, 18, 30–1, 36, 47, 82, figs 64–67; Cavallo 1977, 107, 111–12; Leroy 1978, 30; Cavallo 1979; Cavallo 1982, 505–6,
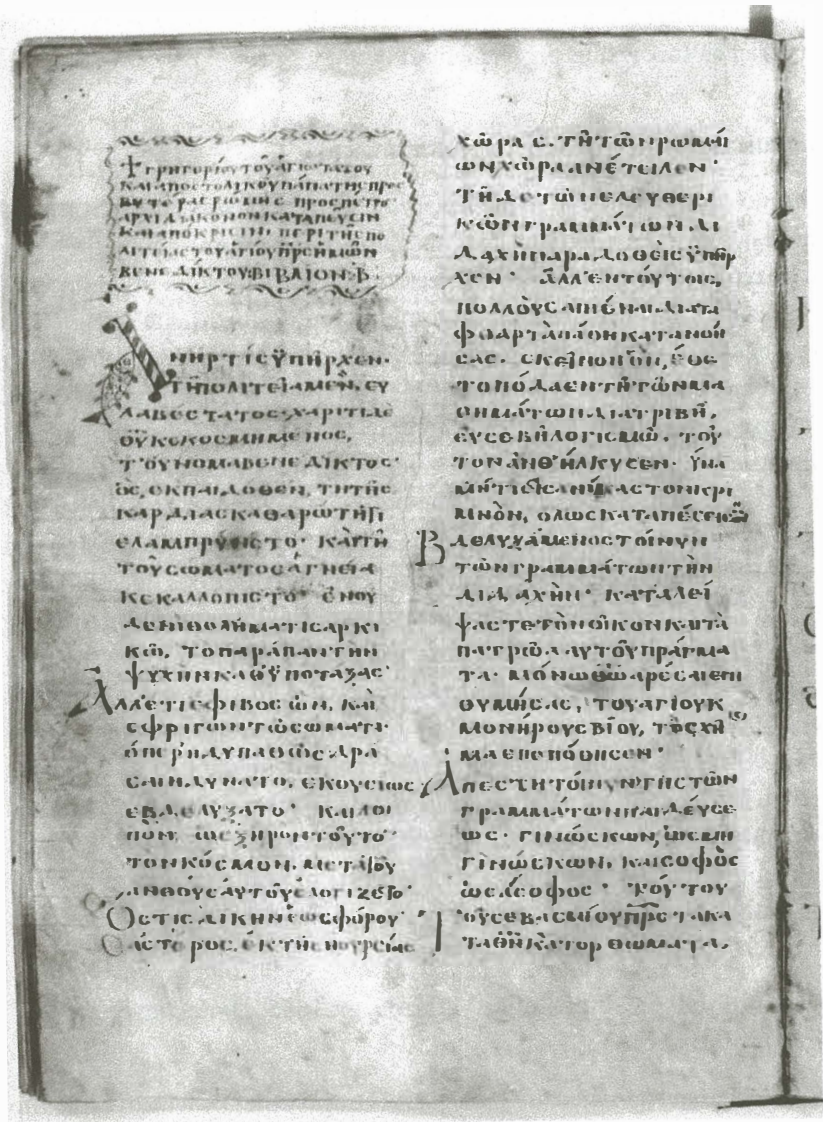
Fig. 32. *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great (Vat.gr.1666, f. 42v)

is restricted to enlarged initial letters, which include the earliest painted letters preserved in a Greek manuscript (Figures 32 and 33), division bars and frames formed of geometrical shapes. In the first three 'books' of the text, only the opening initials and division bars or headpieces are painted.

fig. 450; Osborne 1990, 77–80, figs. 1–4; Brubaker 1991, 39, 43; Brubaker 2000b, 517–18, figs. 2–3; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 40–1, all with additional bibliography.
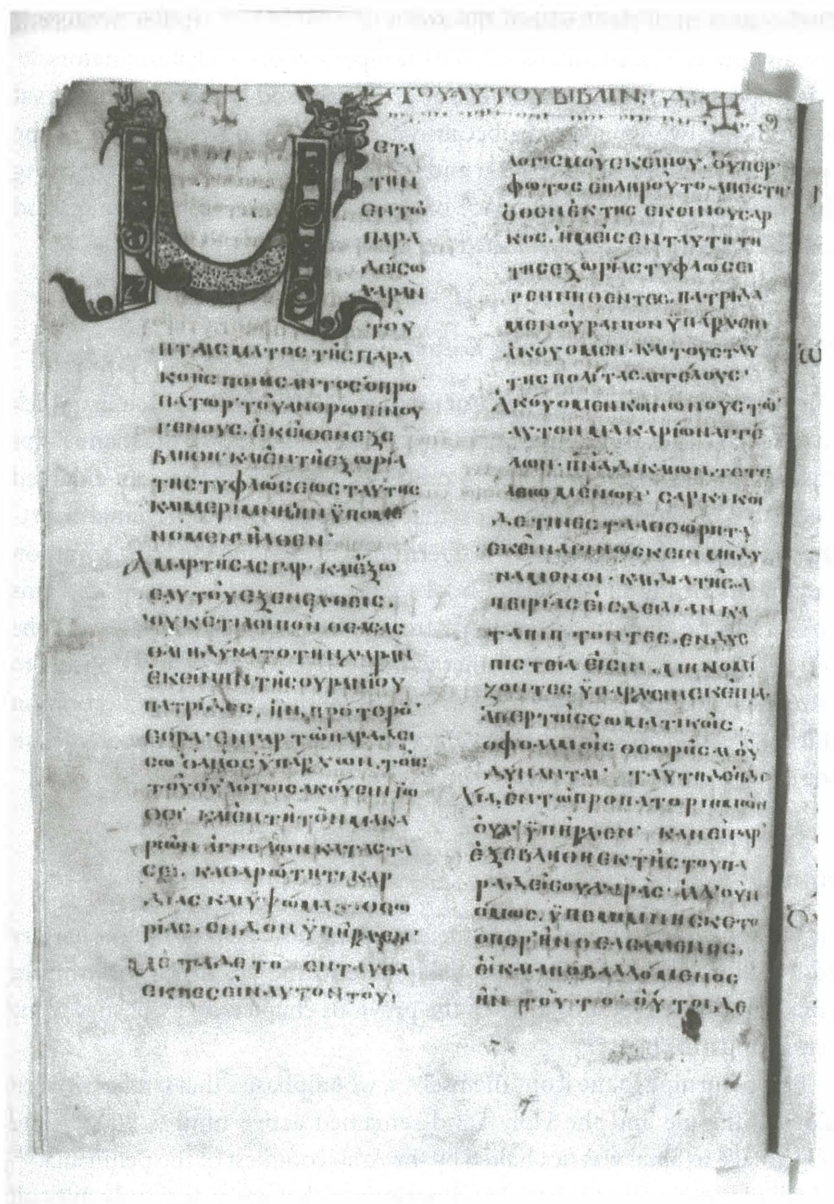
Fig. 33. *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great (Vat.gr.1666, f. 136v)

A different scribe prepared the fourth and final section (f. 136v onward), and inserted more, and more elaborately decorated, initials that introduce a new ornamental vocabulary that includes interlace, palmettes, snakes and dog-heads. These are based on Latin models: even the interlace, a common Byzantine motif, reproduces a 'celtic' rather than Greek pattern. The Vatican

Dialogues is important within the arena of manuscript studies because it reveals how decorated initials entered the repertory of Greek illuminators;[302] it is important within the context of artisanal production in the interval between the two iconoclasms because it provides another example of the symbiotic relationship of eastern and western culture while demonstrating that the Greek-speaking populace of Rome was very much aware of, and influenced by, patterns established for Latin usage.

Mount Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine: Menaion

The readings for the fixed liturgical feasts for January are written in a thick majuscule with a pronounced slant to the right (Figure 34); the manuscript has been dated by Linos Politis to *c.* 800.[303] The text includes an enlarged initial *chi* of the hollow-bar type that is striped, with a terminal heart-shaped ivy leaf. Stripes and ivy-leaf terminals are among the most common ornaments in the oldest Greek books with decorated letters,[304] and this appears to be the earliest example from the Greek east. Along with the introduction of minuscule, in other words, the decorated initial appears to have made its first tentative inroads into Byzantine manuscript decoration during the interim between the two iconoclasms though not, apparently, in the same workshops.

Icons

As we argued in our earlier volume, ten icons now held at the monastery of St Catherine on Mt Sinai probably date to the era of iconoclasm; we considered the earliest of these in the previous chapter, and will survey the remaining nine here.[305]

Before turning to the icons themselves, we emphasise that traffic between Constantinople and the Holy Land remained active until *c.* 800,[306] and pilgrimage to Sinai was not halted by the Arab conquest of the peninsula.[307] Much of our evidence is based on inscriptions that are notoriously difficult

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[302] On which see esp. Osborne 1990 and Brubaker 1991.   [303] Politis 1980, 10, pl. 3.

[304] See Brubaker 2000b.

[305] For full details, and a consideration of the problems surrounding the dating of these panels, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 55–74.

[306] See Griffith 1998; Auzépy 1994; Mango 1991.

[307] For the routes, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 57. More recent discussions include brief comments in Kuelzer 2002 and Jacoby 2006, esp. 79–82.
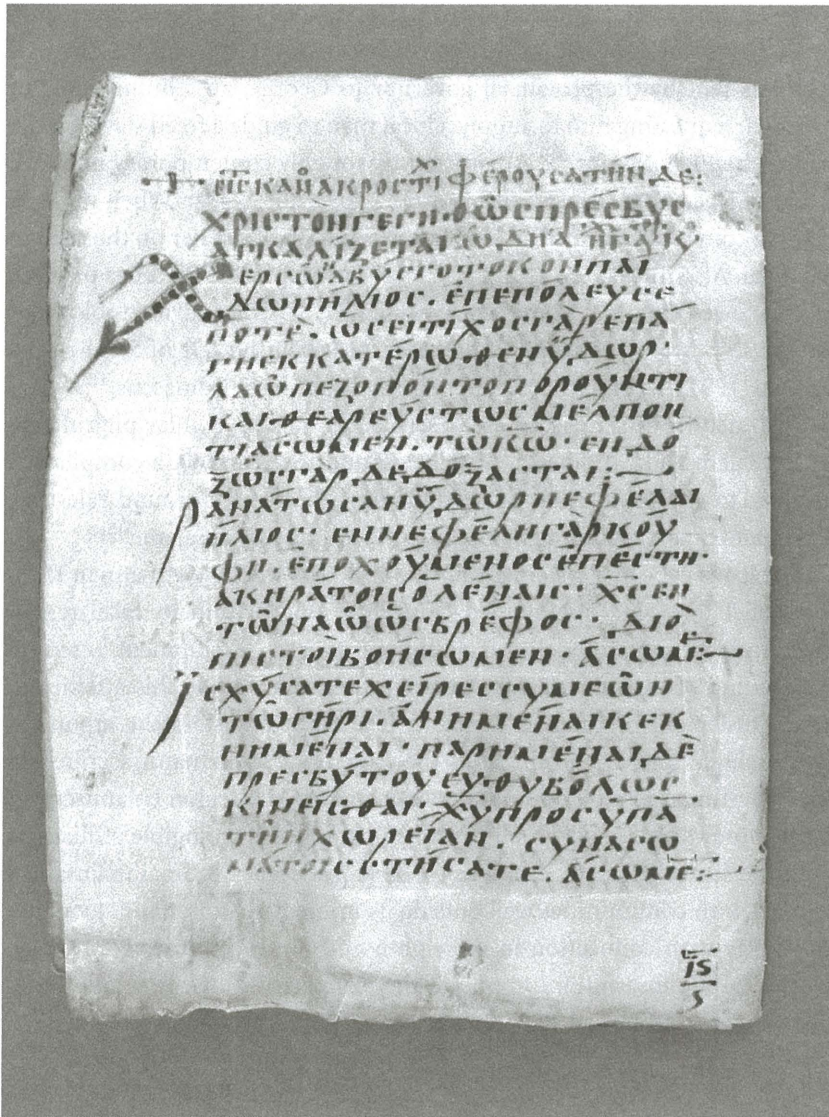
Fig. 34. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Menaion: enlarged initial *chi*

to date,[308] but four written accounts of the journey fall into the late seventh, eighth and early ninth centuries. The first is a papyrus, tentatively dated

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[308] For a survey of the Greek epigraphic evidence see Stone 1982, 25–52, who surveyed the Armenian Christian inscriptions on the Sinai peninsula, and observed that 'most of the Armenian inscriptions stem from the period after that conquest' (*ibid.*, 52); for inscriptions from the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, see the list in *ibid.*, 16 and H Arm 15, dated 852 (*ibid.*, 8, 109). For more epigraphic evidence, see Gatier 1992; and for monastic remains on the Sinai peninsula, see Finkelstein 1985.

to 684, from Nessana (modern Nitzana), a village in the Negev conquered by the Arabs in 636 that lay on the route between Gaza and Mt Sinai,[309] that was sent by the provincial governor to George, an administrator of Nessana, requesting him to supply a local man to guide a freed slave 'on the trip to the Holy Mount'.[310] An apparently roughly contemporary papyrus, dated to December 683 (?), also from the governor, reads: 'When my wife Ubayya comes to you, furnish her a man bound to direct her on the road to Mt Sinai. Also furnish the man's pay.'[311] According to the Piacenza pilgrim, who followed the route from Gaza to Mt Sinai *c.* 570, the journey took about ten days.[312] More female pilgrims are recorded in the *Life* of Stephen the Sabaite (†794), written shortly after 807 by Leontios of Damascus,[313] where two women from Damascus are described as making regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Mt Sinai.[314] Finally, around the year 800, a compilation ascribed to one Epiphanios Hagiopolites described travels around Palestine, Egypt and Sinai, beginning in Cyprus and ending in Jerusalem.[315]

The icons were first systematically published by Kurt Weitzmann in 1976. His belief that Sinai maintained close links only within its local region led him to devise a model of 'Palestinian' stylistic development based on his reading of the relationships between the icons. While this attempt to create order out of chaos is laudable, it is hard to sustain the argument that a single formal current links the icons that Weitzmann ascribed to the 'Palestinian school', and other evidence from the region (manuscripts, floor mosaics and secular wall paintings) supplies few tangible affiliations with the icons.[316] In any event, as we have just seen, Mt Sinai maintained contact with communities well outside its immediate hinterland. Evidence of an Egyptian connection in the eighth and ninth centuries is provided by the Coptic inscription on one of the icons itself.[317] George and Maria Soteriou in fact argued that the strongest stylistic influence on the Sinai

[309] On the site and its documents, see Shereshevski 1991, 49–60.   [310] Kraemer 1958, 205–6.

[311] Kraemer 1958, 207–8. The guide system is attested already in the pre-Islamic period: *ibid.*, 256–7 (lines 22–4).

[312] Wilkinson 1977, 85–7.   [313] See Auzépy 1994, esp. 184–204.

[314] *AASS* July III, 557, col. 133.

[315] On Epiphanios, see *ODB* I, 714. For the text, see Donner 1971; Wilkinson 1977, 117–20. A similar route was followed by the Piacenza pilgrim in the sixth century: *ibid.*, 88–9.

[316] For the manuscripts, see Leroy 1964; for the mosaics – notably at the church at Quwaysmah near Amman (717/18), the Church on the Acropolis at Ma'in (719/20), St Stephen's at Umm al-Rasas (719/20 and 756) – see 106–14, 230ff. above; Donceel-Voûte 1988b and Piccirillo 1992; for the frescoes from the Umayyad palaces of the first half of the eighth century (Qasr al Hallabat, Qastal, Qusayr 'Amra and Khirbat al-Mafjar), see e.g. Hamilton 1959.

[317] Sinai B.49: see below.

icons came from Egypt rather than Palestine.[318] However, the frescoes from the Egyptian monastic communities that the Soterious invoked – chiefly Bawit and Saqqara – provide only generic similarities, and they are not firmly dated in any case.

A problem with the approaches taken by both Weitzmann and the Soterious is that they assumed a single formal current, a sort of 'Sinai house style'. But while it is plausible – even likely – that many of the icons now preserved at the monastery were made there, the monastic community was not self-replicating, and the monks had of necessity to come from elsewhere, as, even more obviously, did the pilgrims who visited. Residents and pilgrims alike presumably included artisans capable of painting icons *in situ*, perhaps as votive gifts to the monastery, who brought with them the hallmarks of training from across the Christian world. Cross-fertilisation no doubt occurred, especially between icon painters who lived at the monastery for some time, and is perhaps evident in a handful of panels that share one specific motif. But the stylistic diversity of the Sinai icons points strongly toward the immigrant population base that one would rather expect in a monastery that was the site of significant pilgrimage.

Sinai B.32: Crucifixion[319]

The badly abraded icon, broken into two parts, depicts the crucified Christ flanked by 'the blessed Mary' (*hē hagia Maria*) and John the evangelist; above, half-figures of angels emerge from the crossarms, and the sun, moon and a third disk too damaged to identify are superimposed on an arc of heaven (Figure 35). Christ's long purple garment (the *kolobion*) has flaked, to expose the original loincloth beneath it. The overpainting of the more revealing loincloth by the *kolobion* is recorded in the sixth-century west by Gregory of Tours,[320] and a Byzantine example appears in the Paris Gregory of *c.* 880.[321] Though morphologically virtually identical to the late ninth-century manuscript, however, the way in which the drapery is painted is far closer to that in an earlier book, the Vatican Ptolemy of *c.* 754, and is also broadly comparable to the modelling of fabric in frescoes dated to the second

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[318] Soteriou and Soteriou 1956–8.

[319] Weitzmann 1976, 57–8, pls. XXIII, LXXXIV; fuller discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 62–3. The Virgin's epithet is the usual pre-iconoclast formula that will not be conclusively replaced by 'mother of God' (*meter theou*) until the second half of the ninth century.

[320] *Glory of the martyrs*, 22: Krusch, 51; trans. Van Dam, 41.

[321] Brubaker 1999b, 293–4, fig. 7.

Fig. 35. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.32: Crucifixion

half of the eighth century at Sta Maria Antiqua in Rome.[322] The decoration of the Virgin's robe also points to an earlier date. The two red stripes that run from her waist to the bottom of her robe are amplified by four red dots at thigh, calf, and hem level, a motif that is absent from surviving seventh- and eighth-century works from Constantinople, Rome, or Thessalonike,[323]

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[322] On the Vatican Ptolemy, see 220–4 above; on Sta Maria Antiqua, see esp. the frescoes attributed to the reigns of Popes Zacharias (741–52) and Paul I (757–67): Grüneisen 1911; Romanelli and Nordhagen 1964.

[323] E.g. the Kalenderhane Presentation mosaic in Constantinople, the mosaics at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki, and the frescoes of Sta Maria Antiqua in Rome: Striker and Dogan Kuban 1997, pls 148–9; Cormack 1969; and references in the preceding note.

but is found on wall paintings in, and icons probably from, Egypt that have been assigned – rather impressionistically – to the seventh century; it also appears on three other Sinai icons that we will consider shortly. The combination of the altered iconography and this formal detail suggests a date in the eighth century, and probably the second half of the eighth century.[324] It is thus possible – though not necessary – that Sinai B.32 dates to the iconophile intermission, but it may equally well date to the reign of Leo III or Constantine V. We are considering it here primarily because of its loose affiliation with the three icons just noted that share with it the 'dotted stripe' motif.

Sinai B.37: Sts Chariton and Theodosios[325]

Framed in wide red bands, half-figures of two monks, identified by inscription as Sts Chariton (probably the fourth-century founder of the Old Laura, or Souka, in Palaestina Prima) and Theodosios (seemingly the sixth-century founder of another Palestinian monastery, at the site of the Magi's cave), stand with hands raised before their chests in prayer (Figure 36).[326] On the reverse appears the right half of a cross; dowel holes suggest that the panel was the right wing of a triptych, so that the cross would be revealed when the triptych was closed. If so, the monks gazed away from the centre panel, toward the (viewer's) right. Unless this rather strange feature signifies something no longer apparent to us, presumably the painter made a mistake and, rather than repainting the cross, simply allowed the monks to retain their anomalous glances outward. It remains possible, however, that, as on many Sinai icons, the dowel holes date from a later rehanging of the panel, and that Chariton and Theodosios formed part of a diptych or even a single panel with the cross on the reverse. Weitzmann argued for an origin in Palestine, and the portrayal of two Palestinian monks may confirm this suggestion.[327] The double-line fold running across the chests of both figures broadly indicates an eighth- or, more usually, ninth-century date.[328]

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[324] Weitzmann argued for an earlier date and an origin in Palestine, but his *comparanda* have been relocated and redated: full discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, esp. nn. 39–41.

[325] Weitzmann 1976, 64–5, pls. XXVI, XCI; additional discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 63–4.

[326] On the monastic sites, Schick 1995, 283, 373. Both names also appear amongst the sixty martyrs of Jerusalem, said to have died during the reign of Leo III: see *BHG*, 106, 288–9.

[327] Weitzmann 1972, 74; K. Weitzmann 1974, 50; Weitzmann, 1976, 65.

[328] See, e.g., Weitzmann 1972, 74–7.

Fig. 36. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon
B.37: Sts Chariton and Theodosios

Fig. 37. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.33: Sts Paul, Peter, Nicholas, and John Chrysostom

Sinai B.33: Sts Paul, Peter, Nicholas, and John Chrysostom[329]

Two panels are joined in a single frame. Each is divided into two horizontally, creating four rectangular quadrants framed with thick red bands reminiscent of those on the icon of Chariton and Theodosios that we have just discussed. Like that icon, this one shows saints, though here they are standing, nimbed, and located in front of a wall set against a dark ground (Figure 37). The upper tier portrays Paul, holding a red book, on the

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[329] Weitzmann 1976, 58–9, pls. XXIV, LXXXV–LXXXVII; additional discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 64–5.

(viewer's) left, and Peter, carrying a scroll and keys; both wear the standard apostolic chiton and himation. Below, Nicholas and John, clad as bishops, carry books. The drapery covering the squat figures – Paul and Peter are particularly short-legged – is formed of unmodulated base colours overlaid with shadow lines and white linear highlights.

Nancy Ševčenko has convincingly dated the icon to the early ninth century.[330] The cult of St Nicholas remained local and centred in his home town of Myra until *c.* 800; it developed in Constantinople only during the first half of the ninth century, apparently inspired by Joseph the Hymnographer.[331] Nicholas' portrait finds a general parallel on the ninth-century Fieschi-Morgan enamelled reliquary, and John Chrysostom's facial type recurs in the ninth-century *Sacra Parallela.*[332]

Sinai B.34 and B.35: St John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary (?)[333]

The pair of triptych wings showing a man (identified by inscription as St John) and an unidentified female (the Virgin Mary?) is too badly damaged to permit detailed description, though the extended forefinger, grey hair and beard of the male figure suggests that John the Baptist, rather than the evangelist John, is intended (Figure 38).[334] The reverse of each panel shows a cross, best preserved on icon B.35. This is inscribed IC XC NIKA (Jesus Christ conquers) and, rather oddly, CTAVPO[C] XPICTI[ANOC?] (Christian cross). The former, as we have seen, suggests a *terminus post quem* of *c.* 720, when the legend is first securely documented, though a possibly Justinianic example may indicate that it is considerably older.[335] Be that as it may, IC XC NIKA does not become common until the eighth century and, as technical details, such as the restriction of gold to the tituli and haloes, suggest that B.34 and B.35 were produced by the artisan responsible for B.33,[336] a date in the early years of the ninth century seems likely.

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[330] Ševčenko 1983, 19–20 and note 14. In his initial publication of the Sinai icons, Weitzmann 1976, 58–9, dated B.33 to the seventh or eighth century; but he later listed it amongst the icons of the eighth and ninth century that exemplified for him the 'provincial style' characteristic of Sinai in those years: Weitzmann and Galavaris 1990, 10, n. 16.

[331] Ševčenko 1983, 19–21; Ševčenko 1998, esp. 107–12.

[332] On the reliquary, see Evans and Wixom 1997, no. 34, and for a good image of Nicholas, see Kartsonis 1986, fig. 24e; for Chrysostom, see Weitzmann 1979b, figs. 698–711.

[333] Weitzmann 1976, 60–1, pl. LXXXVIII; additional discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 65–6.

[334] *Pace* Weitzmann 1976, 60. On early images of the Baptist, see Corrigan 1988, esp. 10–11. If our identification is correct, Weitzmann's postulation of a now-lost central image of the Crucifixion is unlikely.

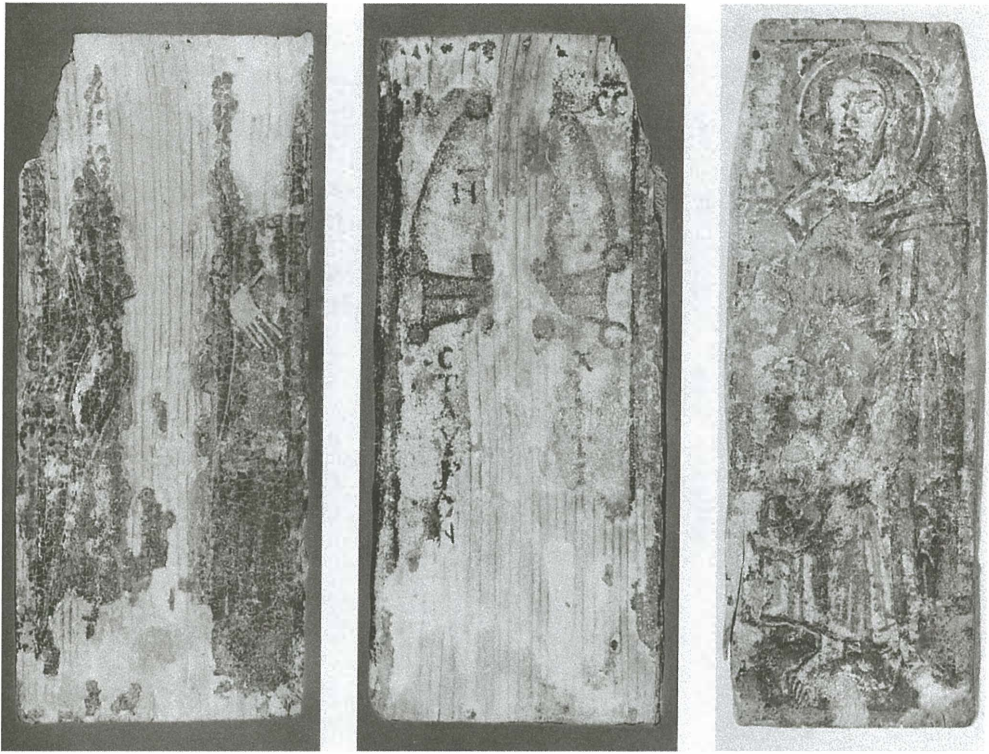[335] See 148 above.   [336] Weitzmann 1976, 60.

Fig. 38. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.34–35: Sts. John the Baptist and Mary?

Sinai B.39: St Eirene[337]

The full-length portrait of St Eirene, identified by inscription, shows her facing front, holding a cross and a folded piece of cloth, and apparently unaware of the much smaller bearded man, identified as Nicholas of the Sabas monastery, who kneels at her feet (Figure 39). Eirene stands against a shoulder-high green wall; her halo is gold, bordered with simulated pearls. We have already observed Eirene's top-heavy figural proportions, and the linear drapery decorated with narrow stripes that are edged with dotted patterns running down each leg in the Sinai icon of Peter, Paul, Nicholas, and John Chrysostom (B.33) that seems to date to *c.* 800; while the restriction of gold to Eirene's halo also recalls both Sinai B.33 and the related

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[337] Weitzmann 1976, 66–7, pls. XXVI, XCIII; additional discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 66.

Fig. 39. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.39: St
Eirene

triptych wings of St John and the Virgin (B.34–B.35). A date of *c.* 800 seems
reasonable.[338]

The format of the panel, with its large saint standing on a narrow ground-
line against a wall, is anticipated by other images that join human and divine

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[338] Weitzmann dates the panel to the eighth or ninth century; Belting 1994, 78–80, to the seventh,
based on certain parallels with panels from Egypt, notably the Louvre icon of Christ and St
Menas, and wall paintings from the Jeremias monastery at Saqqara, which also include a
prostrate figure at the feet of, in this case, St Apollo. However, as Weitzmann has already
observed, the linearity of Eirene's drapery and facial features find closer parallels in the Sinai
icons attributed to the eighth and ninth centuries than to the seventh-century (?) Egyptian
paintings.

personages, for example the seventh-century mosaics at Hagios Demetrios at Thessalonike, where human figures are sometimes roughly to the same scale as saints, and sometimes much smaller, as on Sinai B.39.[339] The latter formula ultimately prevails: Eirene's larger scale and her obliviousness to the prostrate Nicholas at her feet, foreshadow Middle Byzantine developments.[340]

Sinai B.41: Nativity[341]

The Virgin, on a mattress, lies before a cubic structure into which a niche is set, on the top of which lies the swaddled Christ child with a gold cruciform nimbus (Figure 40). Two shepherds and their sheep enter from the left. At the bottom of the panel, a midwife identified as Salome sits on a rock in front of a basin in which a larger, nude Christ child (retaining his gold cruciform nimbus) reclines and is inscribed IC XC. Another midwife pours water into the basin. Joseph (also identified by inscription) sits on a stool in the lower right corner in his characteristic pose, chin resting on his hand.

With its blocks of undifferentiated colours articulated by white striations and hatchings, B.41 is visually quite distinct from the icons we have considered thus far. Weitzmann, however, observed a number of shared details. The dotted stripes running along the Virgin's legs recall Sinai B.32, B.33 and B.39 (figs 35, 37, 39), and the restriction of gold to nimbi also evokes icon B.39. The red contours of flesh areas, the heavy upper eyelids and brows, and the pursed lips with dark slashes at either side and below all call to mind Sinai B.33, an icon that we have ascribed to *c.* 800. While Weitzmann's description of the Nativity icon as 'a later product of the same workshop' as Sinai B.33 is – given the surface patterning of B.41 – problematic, the points of comparison nonetheless support a date in the early ninth century for the Nativity icon as well.

Sinai B.47: St Kosmas[342]

A badly rubbed standing male saint holds a book under his left arm while his hand grasps an object that Weitzmann identified as a scalpel (Figure 41). He therefore identified the figure as Kosmas, and suggested that he once

[339] Compare Cormack 1969, figs. 76 and 77.
[340] See Ševčenko 1993/4, 157; Ševčenko 1994, esp. 283 note 12.
[341] Weitzmann 1976, 68–9, pls. XXVII, XCV; additional discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 67.
[342] Weitzmann 1976, 77, pl. CII; additional discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 67.

Fig. 40. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.41: Nativity

formed part of a diptych, joined by his brother-physician Damian. This is certainly possible, for Kosmas is normally represented as the figure appears here, with a closely trimmed dark beard and short dark hair.

The drapery over Kosmas' right shoulder reveals traces of the double-fold style, suggesting a date in the eighth or, more likely, ninth century; his eyebrows, nose, and mouth recall Chariton and Theodosios (Sinai B.37) and Eirene (Sinai B.39), both of which we have located around the year

Fig. 41. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.47: St Kosmas

800. Kosmas' large eyes, gazing resolutely forward, are however markedly different from those of Chariton, Theodosios, and Eirene, and may hint at Egyptian connections.

On the back, three dotted roundels contain crosses with rounded ends and with nail-like spikes protruding on the diagonal at each of the four angles of the cross bars. These are quite distinct from the crosses associated with Sinai B.35 and B.37 and, like Kosmas' eyes, suggest an artisan with somewhat different training.

Sinai B.49: St Merkurios[343]

St Merkurios, on horseback, slays Julian the Apostate with a lance (Figure 42) below a hand of God proffering a crown and an angel extending a cruciform staff toward the saint. As Leslie MacCoull noted, Merkurios is identified in Sahidic Coptic.[344] She thus argued for an Egyptian origin and, on the basis of Merkurios' popularity there immediately after the Islamic conquest, a date in the eighth century. We are tempted to push it slightly later because the lack of attention to physiognomy and Merkurios' ovoid face find parallels with a miniature of the Virgin and child with angels in a synaxary from Hamouli, dated 893, which displays an identical mouth and nose-eyebrow definition but was painted by an artisan even less interested in modelling the figures three-dimensionally than was the icon painter.[345] A date during the late eighth or early ninth century seems reasonable.

The painter of icon B.49 – or at least whoever penned the inscription – was an Egyptian Christian who wrote in Sahidic Coptic. Whether the icon was painted and inscribed at the monastery by a monk originally from Egypt or produced in Egypt and then transported to Mt Sinai is uncertain.

Three other icons at Mt Sinai – Sinai B.40 and B.48, both showing the Virgin enthroned with the Christ child on her lap, and Sinai B.50, an icon of the Crucifixion – have been attributed to the period of iconoclasm. As argued in our earlier volume, however, we believe that Sinai B.48 dates well before iconoclasm and that Sinai B.40 and probably B.50 as well date to the second half of the ninth century.[346]

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If we are correct in our attributions, the Sinai panels demonstrate that icon production continued during iconoclasm, at least in areas outside of

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[343] Weitzmann 1976, 78–9, fig. 30, pls. XXXI, CIV; further discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 68.

[344] MacCoull 1982.   [345] Friedman 1989, 221, with earlier bibliography.

[346] Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 68–70.

Fig. 42. Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, icon B.49: Merkurios

Byzantine imperial control.[347] These are not, however, 'luxury icons': there is little use of gold leaf and no evidence that they ever had elaborate revetments (the surface abrasion of most of them argues against this as well). This suggests either that they are not products of a wealthy urban centre, or that they were produced for clients of restricted means. They may well have been local products; but wherever they were made, no consistent stylistic pattern appears and only rarely are technical details similar.

[347] So, too, Weitzmann 1974, 50–1.

Only one motif – narrow stripes edged with dotted patterns – recurs on more than two panels. As we have already observed, however, Sinai did not exist in a vacuum and the population of the monastery was mobile: monks cannot reproduce themselves and pilgrims from all over the Mediterranean regularly appeared. The artisanal pool was therefore variable and eclectic.

This makes it all the more interesting that the subject matter of the icons is restricted to three themes: the Crucifixion, the Nativity and holy portraits. The three examples of the Crucifixion and the single image of the Nativity, all focus on Christ's human nature, a topic of particular interest during iconoclasm as we have repeatedly seen. Anastasios of Sinai's late seventh-century writings on the former scene have been interpreted as especially significant, and underscore the frequency with which the scene appears on the Sinai icons.[348] The icons of Peter, Paul, Nicholas, and John Chrysostom, John and the Virgin, Chariton and Theodosios, Eirene, and Kosmas visualise the cult of saints and exemplify the emerging role of the icon as sites of divine presence and mediators between saints and their clients that crystallised during iconoclasm. Visual practice and textual theory here coincide and coalesce.

* * *

Before leaving this section, we note that, if the later ninth-century patriarch Photios was reporting accurately, the iconoclast patriarch John the Grammarian (837–43) 'had been a worshipper of the venerable images, and actually exercised the art of the painter as his life's profession'.[349]

Silks

No concrete examples of Byzantine textiles can be definitively assigned to the years between 787 and 815. As we have already seen, however, Eirene is known to have donated 'veils woven with gold and curtains of gold thread', presumably silk, to the Church of the Virgin of the Source some time between 780 and 797;[350] there are frequent mentions of 'Byzantine silks' in the West during the interim period,[351] and recent studies have grouped a number of fabrics around the year 800, most notably the well-known fragments with interlaced medallions enclosing scenes of the Annunciation

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[348] See 220 above.   [349] Trans. Mango 1958, 246.   [350] See 310 above.
[351] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 80–9, 104–8; Brubaker 2004b, 189–94, both with earlier bibliography.

and the Nativity (Figures 45–46, below).[352] The arguments for this dating are technical and documentary, though the written evidence is suggestive rather than conclusive. This is largely provided by the *Liber Pontificalis*, or *Book of the Popes*, which provides summaries of papal achievements across the early medieval period. The compilers of the *Liber Pontificalis* were not consistent, but in many instances they included lists of the gifts donated by the popes to various churches. One of the major gift categories, especially during the second half of the eighth and first half of the ninth century,[353] was silk, which may have been particularly significant to note as it was not then produced in the West and therefore represented an 'exotic' import from either the Byzantine or the Islamic world.[354] The silk is often specified as 'Byzantine' or 'Tyrian', the latter referring to Tyre, in Syria, famous for its purple-dyed cloth; depending on context, the adjective may be a generic reference to purple silk or refer to silk imported from Syria.[355] We – and others – have discussed the descriptive terms used for silks in the *Liber Pontificalis* elsewhere,[356] and will not repeat that material here except to note that on representational silks, the figures were not always integral with the backing silk. A standard formula reads *vestem holosericam, habentem in medio tabulam de ... cum historia...* ('an all-silk cloth, with a panel of ... in the centre representing...'); and the central panels often show specifically Roman iconography. In 819/20, for example, the church of Sta Caecilia was given a 'cloth of Byzantine purple, with a gold-studded panel in the middle representing an angel crowning St Caecilia and Valerian and Tiburtius, with a gold-studded border'.[357] In these cases, we must assume that the representations were separately produced, then appliquéed to a silk backdrop. Unless the central panel is specifically described as silk, it is therefore unwise to assume that the figural panels described in the *Liber Pontificalis* were eastern: most were probably Roman products attached

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[352] See esp. King and King 1986, in association with Martiniani-Reber 1986. The latter believed that the silk either immediately predated or post-dated iconoclasm, without considering the possibility of the interim period, which the former then argued in favour of. The most recent specialist citation, Regula Schorta in Stiegemann and Wemhoff 1999, no. IX.38, gives a date of late eighth or early ninth century. We are not convinced by Muthesius 1997, 67, who argues for the late ninth century.

[353] As noted in Muthesius 1997, 125, with earlier bibliography.

[354] The earliest production of silk in the West was in Islamic Spain, where it is first recorded in 823: see Constable 1994, 173–81, esp. 177–8.

[355] Muthesius 1997, 66; on Tyrian as a generic reference to purple, see Niermeyer 1976, 1028.

[356] Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 82–9, with earlier bibliography.

[357] *Vestem de blatin bizantea, habentem in medio tabulam de chrisoclabo cum storia qualiter angelus beatam Caeciliam seu Valerianum et Tyburtium coronavit, cum periclisin de chrisoclabo*: *LP* II, 57; trans. Davis 1995, 20.

to imported silk backings. In the entire period of eastern iconoclasm, only twenty-seven silks are described in the *Liber Pontificalis* as portraying human figures, and all but six of them were recorded between 793/4 and 813/14 (the remainder appear between 815/16 and 834/5; none are earlier than 793/4).[358] Two appear in the entry for 793/4, though both of these are specified as *de chrisoclabo*, which presumably means that the scenes were embroidered in gold thread rather than integrally woven, and they may therefore be Roman rather than Byzantine products; eight in 798/800; six in 812/13; and five in 813/14. All but three – one portraying the Virgin, two picturing Daniel – present scenes from the life of Christ, predominantly the Annunciation, Nativity, Crucifixion, Ascension, Resurrection, and Pentecost.

As already noted, the various compilers of the *Liber Pontificalis* were erratic in what they chose to include, but the pattern of silk distribution is nonetheless striking, and appears to reflect substantial Roman importations of figural eastern silks in the years immediately preceding 798 and 812. The Christian iconography of the figural silks argues in favour of Byzantine rather than Islamic production for these silks; and the date in the interim period between the two iconoclasms suggests that either figurative silk production in Byzantium resumed after 787 or that stores of figural silks were opened and distributed then.

Further precision is difficult. Henry Maguire has observed that Christian ornament on domestic textiles disappeared after iconoclasm, a victim of new attitudes toward imagery,[359] and indeed we would argue that the canons of the Council in Trullo already pointed strongly in this direction at the end of the seventh century.[360] And most preserved silks are not, in fact, woven with Christian scenes: hunters, charioteers, and mythological scenes or creatures are far more common. Beyond speculation that the silks with specifically Christian iconography were probably produced – or at least publicly distributed – only when association with such materials was acceptable to the reigning ruler, the iconography of representational silks tells us little. Secular imagery that promoted imperial ideology, such as images of the hunt or portraits of charioteers, has been associated with iconoclasm,[361] but imperial themes were always appropriate to produce in Byzantium, no matter what period; furthermore, some of the silks with secular subject matter that have been associated with iconoclasm are closely associated with silks showing Christian scenes: the hunter silk from Saint Calais (Figure 43), for example, shares the sporadic insertion of brocaded

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[358] This material is presented in tabular form in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 108.

[359] Maguire 1996, 100–6, and esp. 137–45.   [360] See 114 above, and Brubaker 2006.

[361] So, e.g., Muthesius 1997, 2, 60, 68–72, 146.

Fig. 43. Cologne, Cathedral treasury: Sasanian hunters silk

Fig. 44. Musée Bossuet, Abbaye de Faremoutiers: Amazon silk

threads – a rare feature – with the Annunciation and Nativity silks in the Vatican (figures 45 and 46 below) which, in turn, are very closely related to a silk fragment showing Europa and the bull, and share a border pattern with a group of silks apparently depicting the Amazons (Figure 44).[362] In short, while the evidence of the *Liber Pontificalis* and other texts that document the export of Byzantine silks confirm the assumption that Byzantine silk workshops remained active during iconoclasm, subject matter alone remains an insufficient indicator of date.

Provenance is also usually unhelpful. A great many of the silks preserved were found wrapped around relics in western church treasuries,[363] and the

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[362] On the Calais silk, see Vial 1964; on the Vatican silks, Martiniani-Reber 1986; on the Europa silk, King and King 1992, 59–61; and on the shared border decoration, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 90–1.

[363] See Sabbe 1935 for a fairly exhaustive listing, and Martiniani-Reber 1992, followed by Metzger 2004, and Brubaker 2004, 193–4, for further discussion.

date of the reliquary is sometimes used to date the material within. This is, however, extremely problematic. This fabric could have been inserted at any time in the history of the reliquaries in question, so it need not be as ancient as its casing; and it was not necessarily new when it was first used in any case – there are often indications of reuse[364] – so neither need it be as young as the reliquary in which it was found. Silk used in books can sometimes be slightly more reliably dated. Unfortunately, the best example from the period between the two iconoclasms – the silks acquired by Theodulf of Orléans at Arles to use in his Bible (*c.* 810), where some fragments are still preserved – is of Arab rather than Byzantine origin.[365]

We have described and compared the individual silks now tentatively ascribed to the inter-iconoclast period elsewhere. Here we are more concerned with an analysis of the group as a whole, and will concentrate on the silks with New Testament subject matter, the Sens lion-strangler and the Durham earth goddess.[366]

The most impressive silks from the period are the two fragments in the Vatican already mentioned, one showing the Nativity in a medallion (Figure 45), the other two representations of the Annunciation in interlaced medallions (Figure 46).[367] As Martiniani-Reber has noted, the format here, with interlaced medallions, is extremely unusual;[368] but the pair – along with another fragment of the Annunciation, now in Baume-les-Messieurs[369] – are normally associated with the larger so-called red-ground group, all of which were assigned by Donald King to the years around 800.[370]

Two entries from the *Liber Pontificalis* are habitually cited in connection with this set of silks: 'In the church of St Paul the apostle, teacher of the gentiles, this prelate [Gregory IV] presented a gold-interwoven curtain, hanging on the triumphal arch, with the Annunciation and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the middle'[371] and another, even more relevant, notes a curtain 'with disks and wheels of silk' – presumably medallions, as seen on the Vatican fragments – that showed the Annunciation and Nativity along

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[364] See, e.g., Schorta 2000.   [365] Sabbe 1935, 816; Pfister 1950; Viseux 1993.

[366] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 80–108. Additional silks are considered in Chapter 5.

[367] BAV, Museo Sacra, inv. 1231 and 1258. Bibliography in notes 352 and 353 above, with Starensier 1982, 571–6.

[368] Martiniani-Reber 1986, 13, cites only two other examples, to which may be added a fragment now in Maastricht (St Servatius, inv. 5.2): Muthesius 1997, 169 (M13), pl. 55b. Martiniani-Reber stresses that the technical similarities between the two Vatican silks outweigh the significance of the use of two different dyes for the colour red (cochineal for the Nativity and the more common *kermes* for the Annunciation).

[369] *Byzance* 1992, 192, fig. 1.   [370] King 1966, 47.

[371] *... in ecclesia doctoris gentium beati Pauli apostoli cortinam fundatam, pendentem in arcum triumphalem, habentem in medio Adnunciatio et Nativitatem domini nostri Iesu Christi:* entry for 835–7, *LP* II, 79; trans. Davis 1995, 62. See Beckwith 1974, 347–8; Muthesius 1997, 125.

Fig. 45. Vatican, Museo Sacro: Nativity silk

with other scenes from Christ's life.[372] The latter was given to St Apollinare in Classe (the port of Ravenna) in 813/4 and, though almost certainly not a reference to the silks now in the Vatican, confirms the availability of similar silks in early ninth-century Rome.

A final point worth noting here is the colour of the Virgin's garment. Though the surface of the silk is badly abraded, Marielle Martiniani-Reber observed that the Virgin's purple garment was originally overlaid with

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[372] *LP* II, 32; trans. Davis 1992, 228. See Schorta in Stiegemann and Wemhoff 1999, no. IX.38.

Fig. 46. Vatican, Museo Sacro: Annunciation silk

grey-blue.[373] The unusual detail may find a parallel in the mosaic of the Virgin annunciate in the sixth-century basilica at Poreč, whose transparent grey-blue veil has recently been connected by Henry Maguire with the mantle of the Virgin housed as a precious relic in Constantinople.[374] If correct, this is an important indication that the cult of the Virgin's relic remained strong in late eighth- and early ninth-century Constantinople.

The Annunciation and Nativity silks are weft-faced twills, which means that the pattern is formed by the weft – the silk drawn through the loom – rather than by the warp (the silk attached to the loom itself); in both the warp is composed of single threads. A slightly heavier fabric, following this same basic system but with the warp formed of paired threads, usually twisted together, was developed toward the end of the eighth or early in the ninth century, and Anna Muthesius believes that 'This was probably because wider looms were being developed . . .'.[375] The Sens lion-strangler (Figure 47) may be an early example, as despite the high quality of the silk – sufficient that Hero Granger-Taylor speculated that it was sent from the

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[373] Martiniani-Reber 1986, 12–13.

[374] Maguire presented this material in a paper delivered at a conference on 'Relics, icons and the cult of the Virgin' in August 2006; it will appear in the forthcoming conference volume, edited by Leslie Brubaker and Mary Cunningham (Brubaker and Cunningham 2011).

[375] Muthesius 1984, 245–6; Muthesius 1997, 145–8. For the non-specialist, the most easily understandable discussion of the drawlooms used for producing figured silks is Flanagan 1919.

Fig. 47. Sens, Cathedral treasury, inv. TCB140: Lion-strangler silk

imperial workshops to Charlemagne in 812[376] – the repeats are uneven, resulting in both round and oval connecting roundels.[377] These roundels link oval medallions with guilloche borders, each of which encloses a male

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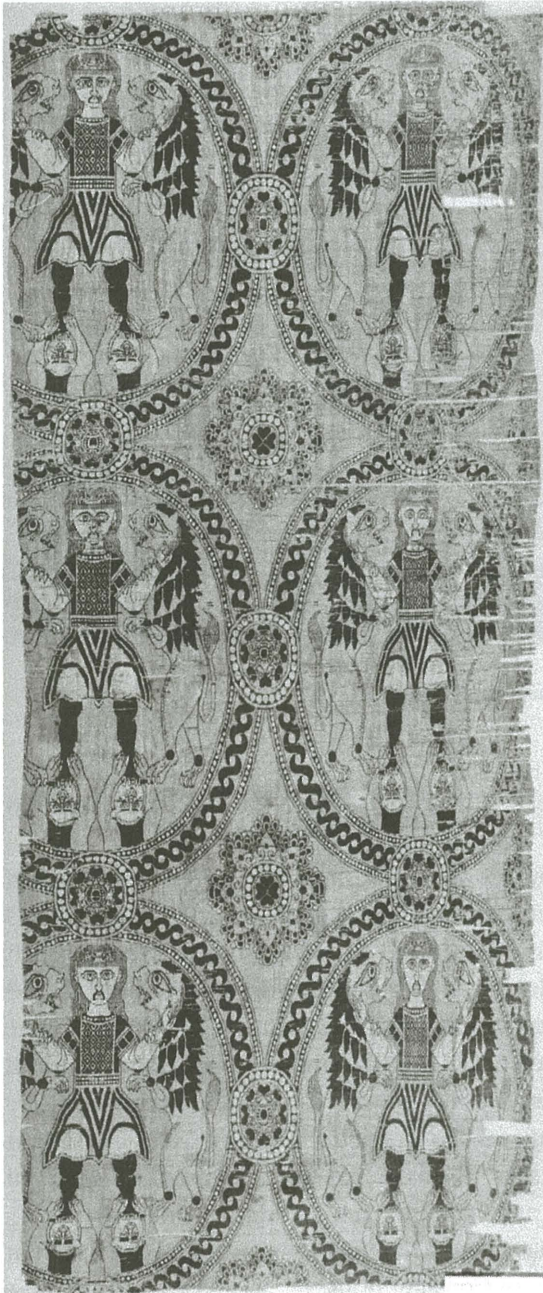[376] Granger-Taylor in Buckton 1994, 128.   [377] Muthesius 1997, 58–9.
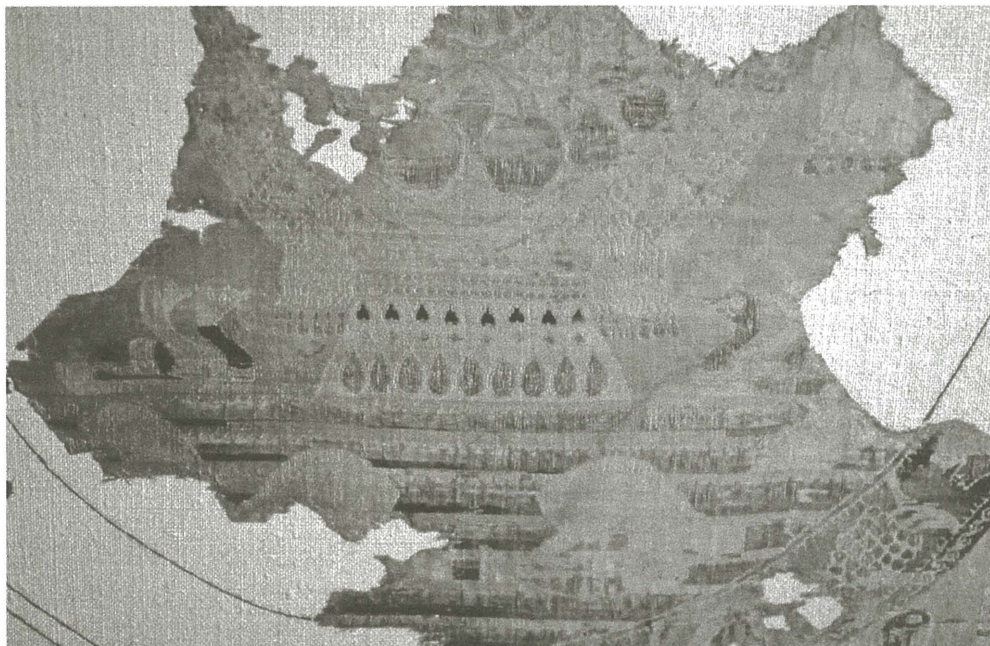
Fig. 47. (*cont.*)

Fig. 48. Durham, Cathedral chapter: Nature goddess silk

figure holding a lion by the throat in each hand while two further lions hold his feet.

Clare Higgins has compared the Sens silk with another paired main warp twill silk, the so-called earth goddess at Durham, and her arguments have been amplified by Granger-Taylor, who dates both to the first half of the ninth century.[378] Numerous fragments of the Durham silk, found in the tomb of St Cuthbert in 1827, survive (Figure 48).[379] Within large medallions, a personification of Gaia (earth) emerges from water filled with fish and ducks; she displays a cloth filled with fruit, and holds what may be two short sceptres.[380] Fragments of a now-indecipherable Greek inscription appear at the edge of the silk.[381] This anticipates the 'inscribed' imperial silks dated to the tenth century and, in conjunction with the remarkably high quality of the piece, has suggested to most commentators an origin in the imperial silk workshops of Constantinople.[382]

[378] Higgins 1989; Granger-Taylor in Buckton 1994, 126–8.
[379] *Ibid.*; and Muthesius 1997, 59–62, 68–9, 177–8, all with earlier bibliography.
[380] Granger-Taylor 1989a; for earlier textiles with Gaia, see Maguire 1987, 73–5.
[381] See Granger-Taylor 1989b.
[382] Granger-Taylor in Buckton 1994, 126–8; Muthesius 1992, 239–40; Muthesius 1997, 60.

This consideration of silks from around the year 800 tells us a number of things. First, a reasonably large selection of figural silks appears to date from the period between the two iconoclasms. Second, the subject matter ranged from fairly complex religious scenes, through the sorts of traditional images of the hunt often associated with the imperial house, through mythological narratives and personifications.[383] Other silks that probably date from this period show strong 'Sasanian' influence (Figure 43), and are indicative of cultural – and perhaps technological – exchange between the caliphate and Byzantium.[384] A taste for Islamic motifs has long been attributed to Theophilos;[385] the silks produced *c.* 800 suggest he was not unusual in this. The issue of cross-cultural exchange between Islam and Byzantium is also raised by a group of silks showing Amazon women hunting (Figure 44), some of which incorporate crosses while others include Koranic inscriptions.[386] This may, as Muthesius believes, indicate 'that practically identical Amazon silks were being woven simultaneously in Islamic and Byzantine centres of the eastern Mediterranean',[387] in which case we must assume that pattern books were exchanged between different weaving centres.[388] It may also, however, simply indicate that patterns were adapted to different sets of clientele, as with, for example, a group of fabrics from northern Persia which, if for local use, were embroidered with a Muslim inscription but, for export, with an invocation to the Trinity.[389]

The Trier ivory

As noted in our discussion of the Chalke Gate, the Trier ivory (Figure 7) shows a fifth-century imperial procession, focused on the *augousta* Pulcheria, translating a relic of St Stephen to Hagios Stephanos in Daphne, the church in the imperial palace where Eirene and Leo IV 'received the marital crown' in 769.[390] It was almost certainly produced in Constantinople, was probably part of a reliquary (presumably for a relic of St Stephen), and was

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[383] For additional examples in all of these categories, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 90–103.
[384] Starensier 1982, 554–6; Vial 1964; Shepard 1997, esp. 253–4; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 91, 95–6; Compareti 2004, esp. 870–90.
[385] See 404ff. below.   [386] Starensier 1982, 545.
[387] Muthesius 1997, 71, and for a similar pattern amongst the so-called Akhmim silks, *ibid.*, 81. For comparison of the different groups of Amazon silks, see Stauffer 1992.
[388] For examples of such pattern books from an earlier period, see Stauffer 1996 and her remarks in 1992.
[389] Lopez 1943, 23, who notes the same phenomenon on papyrus from the ninth century.
[390] Holum and Vikan 1979; on the church see Kalavrezou 1997. For Eirene and Leo's wedding, see *Theoph.* 444 (Mango and Scott 1997, 613). Hagios Stephanos was characteristically used for weddings; the ceremony is described in the *Book of Ceremonies* 50, ed. Vogt II, 16–23.

most likely housed in the church so prominently depicted on it. We argued in Chapter 2 that the ivory dates at the earliest to the years around 800, and is more likely to be from the later ninth or early tenth century,[391] a thesis supported by John Wortley's suggestion that the event depicted never happened but was invented in the first decade of the ninth century.[392] The unusual prominence of an empress on the panel hints that it may, however, be worth entertaining a date during the reign of Eirene for the panel, as does her known association with Hagios Stephanos. Lack of comparable material unfortunately does not allow this speculation to be taken further.

Metalwork

The *staurotheke* (container for a relic of the True Cross) known as the Fieschi-Morgan reliquary, probably the oldest surviving Byzantine cloisonné enamel (Figure 49), has been dated to the first half of the ninth century.[393] The cloisonné technique was imported to Byzantium from the West in the late eighth or early ninth century;[394] and, as the western enamel closest to it in terms of technique and style dates to between 780 and 799,[395] the Fieschi-Morgan *staurotheke* may perhaps be ascribed to the period between the two iconoclasms.[396] It is believed to have been made in Constantinople.[397] On the cover, an image of the Crucifixion, with a *kolobion*-clad Christ flanked by the Virgin and St John, is surrounded by busts of fourteen saints; busts of fourteen more ring the sides of the box. The lid slides off to reveal the compartment that once housed the relic of the True Cross, and four additional scenes in niello – a technique in which black (usually silver sulphide) is inlaid in silver[398] – appear on the reverse: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion (again), and the Anastasis. A cross appears on the back.

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[391] Brubaker 1999a and 132–5 above.   [392] Wortley 1980.

[393] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Its name derives from two of its former owners, Sinibaldo Fieschi (pope Innocent IV, 1243–54) and J Pierpont Morgan, who gave the the box to the Metropolitan Museum in 1917; it is also sometimes known as the Oppenheim reliquary after another of its owners. Wessel 1969, 42–4; Evans and Wixom 1997, 74–5. For the date: Buckton 1982, 35–6; Kartsonis 1986, 94–116; Buckton 1988, 242–3. For an overview, see Buckton 1996.

[394] See previous note.

[395] Kartsonis 1986, 111–12; Buckton 1988, 243. It is also technically and iconographically – but not stylistically – related to the enamel cross of Paschal I, made in Rome between 817 and 824: Stiegemann and Wemhoff 1999, 650–1 (cat. no. IX. 32), with earlier literature.

[396] David Buckton, however, writes: 'I have never considered that there is any real evidence for a date earlier than the eventual end of iconoclasm' (personal communication, January 2000).

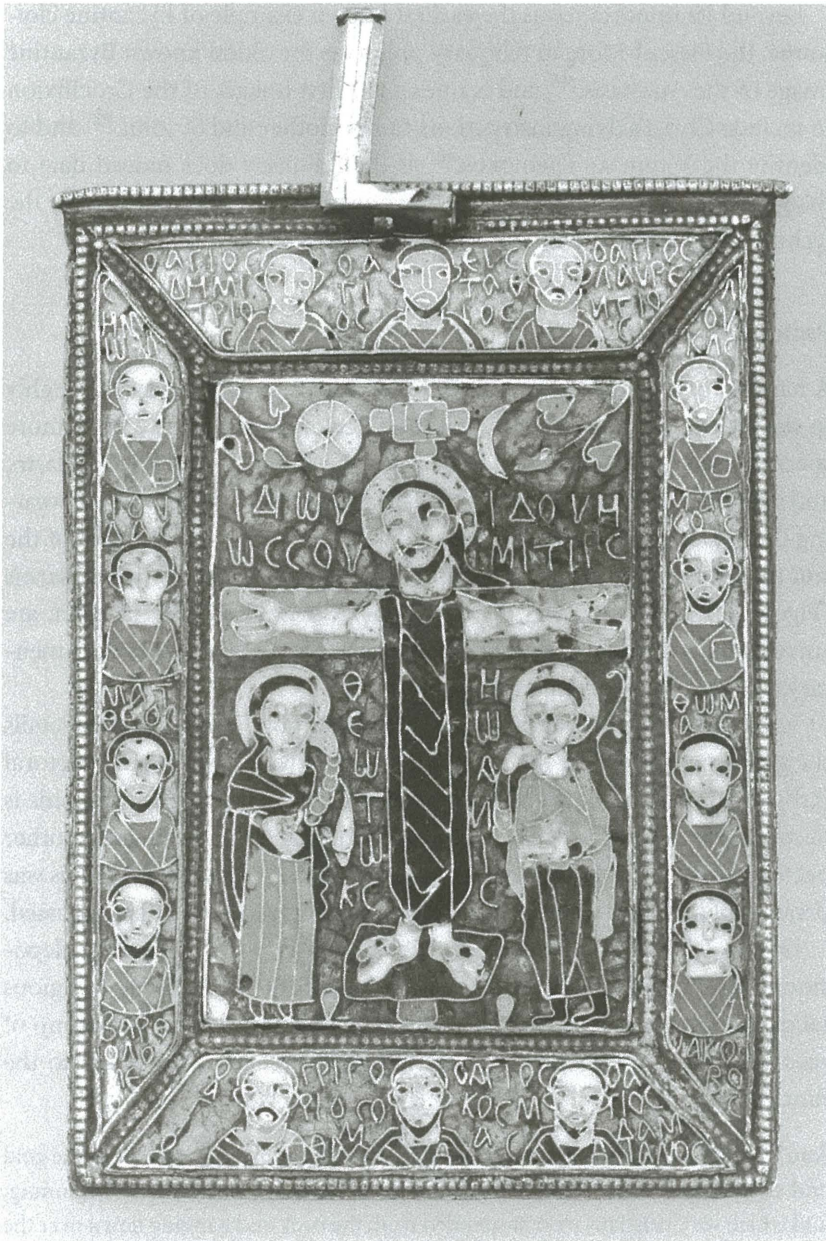[397] Kartsonis 1986, 118; Buckton 1996.   [398] Kartsonis 1986, 109–10.

Fig. 49. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art: the Fieschi-Morgan *staurotheke*, lid

Beyond its importance as the earliest known example of Byzantine cloisonné, the Fieschi-Morgan reliquary preserves the oldest known Byzantine image of the Anastasis,[399] and is one of the first images of the Crucifixion to include Christ's dying instructions to his mother and St John,[400] and to identify the Virgin as Theotokos.[401] If the reliquary does indeed date to the years around 800, it would provide one more piece of evidence for the technological and artisanal innovations of the period.

Pectoral crosses

A handful of aniconic reliquary pectoral crosses have been dated roughly to the eighth or ninth century.[402] Other pectoral crosses have been more specifically assigned to the period between the first and second iconoclasm, and attributed to Constantinople.[403] These show the crucified Christ, wearing the *kolobion*, in relief on the front, usually with personifications of the sun and moon above, and Mary and John to either side in the crossarms (Figure 50); on the reverse, the Virgin and Christ child, also in relief, are surrounded by two or four archangels on the arms of the cross. Documentary evidence supports this attribution.

A letter sent by the patriarch Nikephoros to pope Leo III in 811 details the gifts it accompanied, the most important of which was 'a gold pectoral [cross], whose one side is entirely enclosed in crystal, while the other side is decorated in the encaustic [= niello] technique, and this has inside another pectoral [cross], in which particles of the true cross are inserted'.[404] This was presumably a deluxe version of the reliquary pectoral crosses just discussed.

In one of his passages against the iconoclasts written after his deposition in 815, Nikephoros wrote a passage about phylacteries (religious talisman, usually worn around the neck) that sound similar to a group of preserved reliquary pectoral crosses that have recently been dated to the ninth century:[405]

And what do these impious men think of the so-called phylacteries, that is, the gold and silver objects which have been made for Christians from the very beginning, and which we Christians wear suspended from the neck and hanging down over the breast for the protection and security of our lives … and upon which the passion and miracles of Christ and his life-giving resurrection are often represented, which

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[399] Kartsonis 1986, 94–125.   [400] See Kalavrezou 1990, 168–70.
[401] Kalavrezou 1990; Kartsonis 1986, 108–9.   [402] Pitarakis 2006, cat. nos. 580–1.
[403] Pitarakis 1998b; Pitarakis 2006, 55–7.
[404] *PG* 100: 200; trans. and discussion Kartsonis 1986, 118–19.
[405] Pitarakis 2006, cat. nos. 1–9; see also cat. no. 206 and supp. 1–2.

Fig. 50. Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum, BXM 1139: Pectoral cross

objects are found in countless number among Christians? Instead of preserving them, they abominate them; instead of seeking them, they avoid them.[406]

It is noteworthy that Nikephoros does not claim that the iconoclasts were destroying phylacteries: by second iconoclasm, the iconoclast faction – at least as it was represented by the former patriarch – merely 'abominate' and 'avoid' them. Why the rhetoric has been toned down here is unclear. Perhaps Nikephoros saw no mileage in claiming desecration in this instance; perhaps he was responding to the change in the political climate that soon thereafter allowed the iconoclast emperors Michael II and Theophilos to admit that they had left images visible high on church walls;[407] perhaps iconoclast policy actually distinguished between objects for private use and 'official' or public monuments. Whatever the rationale, the parallels between this description and preserved crosses suggest that Nikephoros was referring to actual objects, and that figural pectoral crosses were manufactured and worn during the period between the two iconoclasms.[408]

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[406] *Antirrhetikos* III, 36: *PG* 100: 433; trans. Mango 1972, 176.   [407] See 369–70, 413 below.

[408] The *Life* of St Theodora mentions another figured medal used to comfort the dying Theophilos; this is part of the rehabilitation of the last iconoclast emperor and is presumably

Fig. 51. Gold *nomisma* of Constantine VI (780–97), mint of
Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4598: busts of
Constantine VI and Eirene (obverse), seated figures of Constantine V,
Leo III, and Leo IV (reverse)

Coins[409]

Constantine VI (780–97): four features distinguish the coinage produced
during the reign of Constantine VI: the disappearance of the half *follis*;[410]
the re-appearance after over two centuries of seated imperial figures; the
appearance of his mother Eirene, the first woman to be portrayed on the
coinage of Byzantium for over 150 years; and the absence of any evidence
that the coinage played into the ongoing iconoclast debates.

Eirene appears on three of the four major *nomisma* types struck under
Constantine VI, but her relative importance varies. Traditionally, the coins
with Constantine and Eirene on the obverse and with their ancestors Con-
stantine V, Leo III and Leo IV seated together on the reverse (Figure 51) have
been ascribed to the years between 780 and 790. It has now been argued on
the basis of a careful die analysis that this series should be placed in fact in
the period 787–93, thus after the meeting of the Council of 787; while the
series portraying two seated figures (Leo IV with a beardless Constantine VI)
originally ascribed to Leo IV should in fact be seen as Eirene's first issues
from 780–7, issues from which she was herself absent.[411] On the second
series, issued from 787, Constantine remains unbearded. This made sense
in 780, when he was only nine; but by 787 he was sixteen and has still not

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fictitious. It is also late – *c.* 900 – and so of little use to us here. See Vinson 1995; Vinson in
Talbot 1998, 372–3.

[409] For seals, see Chapters 2 and 5. Here we simply note the apparent upsurge of seals with images
of the Virgin and child in this period, though this is problematic, as we shall see: see Cotsonis
2005, 404.

[410] *DOC* III, 1, 68.   [411] See Füeg 2007, 18ff.

Fig. 52. Gold *nomisma* of Constantine VI (780–97), mint of
Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4597: busts of
Eirene (obverse) and Constantine VI (reverse)

been visually promoted by being shown bearded. The inscriptions follow
the basic formula 'Constantine and Eirene his mother', with Constantine
given the titles C', b', and Δ', which Grierson interprets as *caesar, basileus,*
and *despotes,* and Eirene designated *augusta.* The inscriptions begin on the
reverse and continue on the obverse, so that Constantine's name is on the
back and Eirene's is on the front of the coin.[412]

On the third group of *nomismata,* the inscription begins on the obverse,
thereby highlighting Constantine rather than Eirene (who has also been
denied her earlier attribute, the *globus cruciger*). Grierson dates this issue
to the years between 790 and 792 when, as we have seen, Theophanes
tells us that Eirene was banished to a palace that she had built called the
Eleutherios.[413]

The final group is distinguished by its higher quality and Eirene's recla-
mation of status: labelled *augusta* and again with the *globus cruciger,* she
appears on the obverse while Constantine, called *basileus* and still beardless,
has been relegated to the reverse, where he replaces the ancestors (Figure 52).
This issue is dated to 792/3–7.[414]

This sequence suggests that a considerable drama was played out on the
nomismata struck between 780 and 797. This throws two details into sharp
relief. First, Eirene as regent was clearly in no position to break with tradition

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[412] *DOC* III, 1, 337–8. The silver *miliaresion* continued the pattern established by Leo III, while
the copper essentially followed the lead of the *nomismata* but without inscriptions.

[413] *DOC* III, 1, 338; *Theoph.* 467; trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 641; Füeg 2007, 21; 63–6.

[414] *DOC* III, 1, 338–9; Füeg 2007, 22.

Fig. 53. Gold *nomisma* of Eirene (797–802), mint of Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4609: busts of Eirene (obverse and reverse)

before 787 and put her own bust on the imperial coinage. Second, Leo III, Constantine V, and Leo IV, the younger two assuredly staunch iconoclasts and the eldest by now credited as such, remain on the obverse of the coins well after the Council of 787 that restored the veneration of icons. Third, even when the ancestors disappear, no Christian image – such as the bust of Christ that appeared on the coinage of Justinian II (and was later imitated by Michael III to signal the triumph of orthodoxy) – heralds the change.[415] With the exception of the Chalke Christ, Constantine and Eirene's official productions, at least as we know them today, signally fail to promote the sacred image.

Eirene (797–802)

Two notable features characterise the *nomismata* minted during Eirene's rule: she is titled *basilissa*, the first time this identification appears on coins; and, on the *nomismata* struck in the capital, she appears on both the obverse and the reverse (Figure 53).[416] After his blinding and deposition, Constantine VI could obviously no longer appear on the reverse, and, without him, Eirene (or her mint master) evidently did not want to revert to the earlier rulers who appeared on the reverse of the 780–92 coins. It is possible that the five years that had passed since then had made it more politic for Eirene to avoid representing herself with iconoclasts, but why the double

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[415] On Michael's copying of Justinian's coins, see *DOC* III, 1, 454–5.
[416] *DOC* III, 1, 181, 347–8.

portrait was favoured rather than a portrait backed with a cross – the pattern followed on Eirene's *folles* – is unclear. The rationale was, however, apparently understood by Leo V and Michael II, who later revived the double portrait *nomismata*.[417] The economic recovery that has been postulated throughout this chapter receives support from the weight of Eirene's *folles*, twice that of those struck under Constantine VI.[418]

Nikephoros I (802–11)

The *nomisma* type changes once more under Nikephoros I, presumably in order to distance the current from the previous ruler. Before elevating his son in 803, Nikephoros is shown on the obverse holding the cross and the *akakia*, with a stepped cross on the reverse; after 803, the cross is replaced by a portrait of Nikephoros's son Staurakios.[419] No coins are known from the two-month reign of Staurakios in 811.[420]

Michael I (811–13)

Michael ruled alone for three months, but the numismatic record only begins after his son's coronation in 811, after which the *nomismata* show Michael on the obverse and Theophylact on the reverse. Michael I also revived the *miliaresion*, apparently last struck under Constantine VI, with one telling alteration of the previous pattern: apparently in a somewhat belated response to the coronation of Charlemagne in 800, the imperial designation *basileis* was expanded to *basileis romaion* ('emperors of the Romans').[421]

Artisanal production during the 'iconophile intermission': conclusions

The period between the two iconoclasms was extremely productive, and saw the introduction of new technologies of writing, construction, and probably silk weaving. These were accompanied by continued spending on both urban infrastructure and new monuments, the reclamation of

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[417] *DOC* III, 1, 347; descriptive lists and plates at 349–51, pl. XV.   [418] *DOC* III, 1, 347.

[419] No *miliaresia* are known. *DOC* III, 1, 352–4, with descriptive lists at 355–61, and pls. XVI–XVII. Füeg 2007, 23f.

[420] *DOC* III, 1, 362.

[421] *DOC* III, 1, 64, 178, 363–5, with descriptive lists and reproductions at 366–70, pl. XVII; Füeg 2007, 420.

lands that had evidently either fallen into disuse or had not previously been cultivated, and, in the early years of the ninthcentury, a revaluation of at least the *follis*. The works preserved show little evidence of any consciously 'anti-iconoclast' backlash, and only rarely do we find religious figural decoration – the silks and reliquary crosses are the notable exception – or even hear about examples that no longer survive (if they ever actually existed). This cannot be because skilled artisans were not available to produce religious imagery: there is ample evidence for non-religious figural representations across the entire iconoclast period, and Eirene and others certainly commissioned elaborate mosaic decorations both within and outside of the capital, some of which, as at Thessaloniki (Figure 26) or at Trilye (Figure 28), still survive at least in part. Rather, it recalls the time lag between the introduction of iconoclasm in the first place and any evidence of its effect that we have noted in earlier chapters; and it anticipates the twenty-four year interval between the end of iconoclasm in 843 and the inauguration of mosaics in Hagia Sophia in 867.

It is of course possible – even likely – that religious wall paintings were produced in the churches commissioned by, for example, Tarasios and Theodore of Stoudion. But it is surely significant as well that the religious imagery that is preserved is all small scale work. In part this is due to the vicissitudes of survival: the silks that survive were imported to the West, and all were found there. The provenance of the metalwork that survives, how-ever, is largely unknown.[422] While the Fieschi-Morgan reliquary (Figure 49) was a high status piece, the pectoral crosses (Figure 50) on the whole were not. We would probably not be too far off the mark were we to speculate that, as was in fact largely true across the Middle Byzantine period, most large-scale and expensive sacred imagery was restricted to Constantinople and its environs, and sometimes, as with silks, to imperial workshops. Smaller scale and less costly products, such as the pectoral crosses, were apparently more widely produced.[423] Because they were less expensive and involved sim-pler production techniques, crosses with religious figural imagery could be brought back into production fairly quickly, and as we have seen such indeed appears to have been the case. Nonetheless, it remains notable that Eirene, who had all the resources of the state at her disposal and was a reasonably active patron, restricted herself to aniconic decoration at Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki (Figure 26) and on her coinage (Figure 53). The protocol of state patronage apparently favoured such conservative approaches.

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[422] Only 20 per cent of the pectoral crosses that survive (from all periods) come from known archaeological excavations: see Pitarakis 2006, esp. 123–43.

[423] Pitarakis 2006, 145–77.

Nikephoros I and the consolidation of the state: 802–11[424]

Nikephoros began his reign vigorously by interrogating a number of officers associated with Eirene and, in particular, with her fiscal policies. He sent the Frankish embassy back accompanied by his own ambassadors informing Charlemagne of his accession, and assuring the Franks of his goodwill and respect. The issue of Charlemagne's new imperial title was tacitly ignored, however, and conflicting Frankish and Byzantine claims to Venetia and Dalmatia remained a point of dispute.[425] He also immediately effected a number of fiscal changes, cancelling several of the concessions granted by Eirene, since the state finances seemed – in his view, at least – to have been in need of better management. He also cancelled the payments made to the Abbasid caliph Harun. He proceeded to introduce a whole range of major fiscal and financial measures, which earned him the unpopularity recorded by Theophanes, but which seem to have been welcomed by many.[426] He unified the command of the Asia Minor armies under his supporter Bardanios Tourkos who, as a result of a riding accident suffered by the emperor in May 803, was left in charge of the campaign to oppose the expected Arab invasion launched in July. Nikephoros' fiscal policies had already made him unpopular with the troops, however; and on 19 July 803 Bardanes, willingly or unwillingly, (the accounts vary) was proclaimed emperor, one of the aims of the rebellion being given as the restoration of Eirene.

But she died in August; and although the rebel force was encamped opposite Constantinople, Nikephoros continued to collect support (including one of Bardanes' own command, the *Armeniakon*); several of Bardanes' chief supporters deserted him (including Leo the Armenian and Michael of Amorion, both later to become emperors); and eventually he voluntarily surrendered, eluded his supporters at his base at Malagina in Bithynia, and entered the monastery he had himself founded on the island of Prote. The revolt was over, the rebels were punished through fines and confiscations only, and the emperor was able to arrange a temporary truce with Harun, who withdrew his forces in return for a smaller tribute than had been originally paid.[427]

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[424] The political history of this period has been well treated in a number of recent and not-so-recent studies: still extremely valuable is Bury 1912, 8–15; see also Niavis 1987; Treadgold 1988, 126–95.

[425] Theoph., 478.28–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 657); see Speck 1978, 359; Herrin 1987, 465.

[426] Theoph., 478.29ff. and 486.10–488.13 (Mango and Scott 1997, 657, 667f.). See Chapter 10.

[427] For Bardanes' rebellion, see the sources and literature in Kountoura-Galaki 1983; Rochow 1991, 279ff.; *PmbZ*, nos. 766 and 759–61, 765, 771; *PBE* Bardanes 3.

While Muslim raids continued in the following year, Nikephoros was eventually able to reach another agreement which freed his forces to take action in the Balkans.[428] In 805 Byzantine forces recovered most of the Peloponnese, partly in response to a revolt or attack on imperial territory from the indigenous population, a conquest which was consolidated through the re-populating and garrisoning of towns such as Patras.[429] In 805 and 806, and while Muslim forces took several important Byzantine fortresses, Byzantine forces in their turn raided the Muslim border regions, besieging Melitene and Mopsouestia, and taking Tarsus, although they did not hold it. A rebellion in Cyprus threatened the equilibrium between the two powers, which had exercised a peaceful shared rule on the island since the later seventh century. Further Byzantine incursions occurred in 807, while the Muslim response involved raids on the coast of Lycia and the island of Rhodes in 807/8. Thereafter the raids seem to have subsided on both sides, although in 811 an Arab force was able to surprise Leo, the commander of the *Armeniakon*, at Euchaita and capture the military pay chest, while the same Leo, now commander of the *Anatolikon*, is recorded as conducting a successful offensive against the Arabs in 812.[430]

In the Balkans the conflict with the Bulgars became more pronounced: Nikephoros campaigned without achieving very much in 806–7 and again in 807–8, although at the beginning of this campaign he had to deal with a plot and then return to Constantinople. But in that year the Bulgars defeated a Byzantine force at Strymon, and were able also to capture and destroy the fortress of Serdica. It was in the course of Nikephoros' major expedition of 811, and after successfully brushing aside initial Bulgar resistance and taking the khan's capital at Pliska, that the imperial forces were surprised and trapped, and the emperor and his leading officers killed or captured. The military disaster was a major blow both to Byzantine morale and to the political stability of the empire.[431]

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[428] Theoph., 479.11–481.10; 482.1–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 657ff., 661f.) (although Theophanes places the truce with Harun in 805/6). See Rochow 1991, 279–84, 285–7, for detailed discussion, parallel sources and literature. See also Kennedy 1981, 123ff.; Lilie 1976, 178; Brooks 1900, 744.

[429] Curta 2006, 111–15.

[430] Theoph., 482.25–483.15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 662–3). It is unclear whether the rebellion on Cyprus occurred before or after the Arab attack on the Byzantine population of the island: see Brooks 1900, 745–7. For the pay of the *Armeniakon*, see Theoph., 489.17–22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 672) and the literature and sources in Rochow 1991, 297; on Leo as *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* in 812: Theoph., 497.6–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 680); Brooks 1900, 747. For Leo – later Leo V – see *PmbZ*, no. 4244; *PBE* Leo 15.

[431] Theoph., 484.24–486.8, 489.22–491.28 (Mango and Scott 1997, 665ff., 672–4), with Rochow 1991, for parallel sources and literature; and the commentary by Dujčev in *Chronicon ad 811*.

Nikephoros seems to have been an efficient but severe ruler. If it was not already in existence as a result of the 783 campaign of Staurakios (see above), it was probably he who was responsible for the formal establishment of the army of the Peloponnese, as well as the reorganisation and expansion of the region of the army of Hellas (part of which was transferred to the new Peloponnesian district). He may have established an army of Kephallenia in the west, from which Dalmatia and the Veneto could be covered, and he may also have established a new army of Thessaloniki, covering the districts from the Chalkidiki peninsula across to the borders of the region of Kephallenia in Epiros. The army of Macedonia likewise may have been established at this time, although again it probably existed before Nikephoros' reign. In the Balkans, in consequence, he created the basis and infrastructure for a much stronger Byzantine presence, from which imperial authority could be extended outwards to recover and re-incorporate previously lost territories and resources.[432] As we will argue in Chapters 10 and 11 below, it was probably Nikephoros who established the *themata* as fiscal-administrative and military units and revised the system of recruiting and maintaining provincial armies, transferring much of the burden of their maintenance to the provinces themselves.

Much of his internal politics was predicated upon the need to maintain a firm hand over the various factions in the palace and church which he had inherited from Eirene' reign. To secure a degree of stability and the succession, his son Staurakios was crowned co-emperor at Christmas in 803, and probably with the same purpose in mind Staurakios was married to Theophano, a relative of the former empress Eirene, and like her, from Athens.[433] He appears to have relied on support from advisers and soldiers drawn from the area of his own upbringing in Lykaonia, which earned him likewise a certain degree of unpopularity, especially as these people were suspected of heresy.[434] His creation of the palatine unit of the *Hikanatoi*

In general on Byzantine-Bulgar relations at this time see also Bury 1912, 339–45; Browning 1975, 49ff.; Runciman 1930, 52–9; Curta 2006, 147–50.

[432] For all these developments, see Chapter 8; and Oikonomidès 1972, 349 (Macedonia); 350 (Peloponnese), 351 (Hellas), 352 (Kephallenia and Thessaloniki). Byzantine presence or influence in Dalmatia and along the eastern Adriatic coast: Goldstein 1996.

[433] Theoph., 480.11–15, 483.15–23 (Mango and Scott 1997, 659, 664); Rochow 1991, 282, 288–9; *PmbZ*, no. 6866; *PBE* Staurakios 2 (and for Theophano: *PmbZ*, no. 8163; *PBE* Theophano 1). To what extent the reality of the 'bride-show' which Theophanes reports (and others mentioned in Byzantine sources for the eighth and ninth centuries) actually occurred is debated: see the references in n. 51 above, with Rydén 1996, 506–7; Speck 1999.

[434] Theoph., 480.16 (Mango and Scott 1997, 659) and Rochow 1991, 283. Nikephoros was reportedly descended from the leading family of the Ghassanids, some of whom had joined with the Romans after the defeats of the 630s in Syria and Palestine: see the literature and sources detailed by Rochow 1991, 276–7.

may have been intended to strengthen his position in Constantinople.[435] His appointment of the layman and former patriarchal secretary Nikephoros to the patriarchate shortly after the death of Tarasios in February 806 earned him the hostility of the Stoudites, who under their abbot Theodore and Plato of Sakkoudion had recommended a monk or an already ordained candidate – with Theodore himself as a prime candidate; but he was able to outmanoeuvre them, an event which strongly influenced Theodore's reaction to imperial ecclesiastical and religious policies in the years that followed.[436] In the same year, the emperor convoked a synod at which Joseph of Kathara was rehabilitated, and Constantine VI's second marriage pronounced lawful, although Theodore and his supporters did not dissent during the synod itself.[437] This served to revive the moechian controversy, for shortly afterwards Theodore did raise objections, and not only refused to take communion with the patriarch, but persuaded his brother, Joseph, recently appointed to the position of archbishop of Thessaloniki, to refuse to celebrate the Christmas liturgy with the patriarch and the emperor.

This led to an immediate confrontation with the patriarch. In spite of fierce criticism from Theodore and his immediate supporters, the decisions were confirmed at a second synod in 809, at which bishops were henceforth permitted to grant dispensations from canon law, at which it was declared that the emperor was not bound by canon law, and at which in addition the rehabilitation of Joseph was confirmed. The archbishop of Thessaloniki, Joseph, was reduced to the status of simple priest, and along with Theodore and Plato, who were anathematised, banished to the Princes' Islands. There is little evidence that Theodore's position found much support among the monks of his own community, although there is no doubt that his reputation was greatly enhanced as a result of the position he adopted.[438]

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[435] Haldon 1984, 245ff.

[436] We have already noted (see above) that Joseph seems to have been on the way to rehabilitation, probably through Tarasios' good offices, when in 803 he served as imperial intermediary between the rebel Bardanios Tourkos and Nikephoros I. It is generally agreed – in particular on the basis of the *Laudatio* written by Theodore in honour of his uncle later – that Plato had proposed Theodore himself as an alternative (and better) candidate for the patriarchal throne. For the election of Nikephoros and the position of Theodore and Plato, see Pratsch 1998, 135–9; and for Nikephoros himself: *PmbZ*, no. 5301; *PBE* Nikephoros 2. As a result of a second attempt to persuade the emperor to appoint Theodore (or at least, not to appoint Nikephoros), Plato and Theodore were imprisoned for just over three weeks before being released just after the enthronement of the new patriarch.

[437] Pratsch 1998, 147–9 with sources and literature.

[438] Pratsch 1998, 139–46; 153–73; Pratsch 1999a, 109–47, with modern literature; Theoph., 481.15–32; 484.19–28 (Mango and Scott 1997, 661, 665); Rochow 1991, 284f., 289f.; Bury 1912, 32–9; Alexander 1958a, 54–64, 87–96 (still the basic standard account). Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 5–9, 11–19, 40–2, has argued convincingly that the author of the *Life* of Stephen

But political opposition came also from other sources. In February 808 the *patrikios* and *kuaistor* Arsaber was chosen to represent a group of rebels including both elements from the administration and the church and monastic circles; and although the attempted coup failed, Arsaber was himself punished only very mildly, perhaps since he belonged to the leading elements of the state elite. The combination of plotters – Theophanes lists 'secular dignitaries, . . . holy bishops and monks and the clergy of the Great Church, including the *sygkellos*, the *sakellarios*, and the *chartophylax*, men of high repute and worthy of respect' . . . suggests opposition both to the emperor's fiscal as well as his religious/ecclesiastical policies, although no other details have been recorded. The patriarch Nikephoros remained loyal. An attempt on the emperor's life in October 810 may be connected with similar opposition.[439]

Nikephoros' death in battle in 811, the accession to the throne of his badly wounded son Staurakios, and the political unrest which ensued reveal some of the tensions within the army and central administration which Nikephoros' rule had papered over. Staurakios was proclaimed emperor by Stephen, the commander of the imperial *scholai*, at Adrianople.[440] There was, however, a faction which preferred Michael *kouropalates*, the brother-in-law of Staurakios, a faction which included the *magistros* Theoktistos, but which was unable to persuade Michael to let himself be proclaimed emperor on the grounds of his loyalty to Staurakios. Again, the patriarch Nikephoros seems to have acted as intermediary between the factions.[441] That there were some anxieties among both the soldiers and the clergy that Staurakios might continue the strict fiscal policies of his father seems probable from the fact that Theophanes reports that the new emperor tried to distance himself from his father's policies in a speech to the army at the time of his acclamation.[442] But he was unsuccessful, and seems to have

the Younger was a deacon of the Great Church, an important official and close to patriarchal policy-making, and that the *Life* was written with patriarchal approval. The fact that the *Life* was written in 809, and the nature of the views it presents, have suggested that it was written with both an iconophile but also an anti-Stoudite purpose, and is thus a document intimately connected with, and inspired by, the conjunctural concerns of its author and his circle in the patriarchate of Nikephoros. Kountoura-Galaki 1998 greatly overestimates, in our view, the political support received by Theodore in this affair.

[439] Theoph., 483.23ff.; 488.13–22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 664, 671); see Alexander 1958a, 74; Winkelmann 1987a, 61–2; Bury 1912, 14; for Arsaber, see *PmbZ*, no. 600; *PBE* Arsaber 1. He appears to have been the father of Theodosia (for literature and sources cf. *PmbZ*, no. 7790; *PBE* Theodosia 1), the wife of the emperor Leo V: Theoph. cont., 35.

[440] Theoph., 492.2–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 674); see *PmbZ*, no. 7057; *PBE* Stephanos 11.

[441] Theoph., 492.8–13 (Mango and Scott 1997, 674). See Pratsch 1999, 122–3. For Theoktistos: *PmbZ*, no. 8046; *PBE* Theoktistos 2; and for Michael: *PmbZ*, no. 4989; *PBE* Michael 7.

[442] Theoph., 492.5–8 (Mango and Scott 1997, 674).

paid little heed to the patriarch's advice. Within a short while, both Stephen and Theoktistos, possibly in order to pre-empt alternative proposals on the part of the empress Theophano, and with the support of the patriarch, had Michael proclaimed emperor before the senate and the *tagmata*.[443] Staurakios was unable to resist the coup, confined as he was to his sick-bed; and indeed, having been tonsured as a monk he died within three months of the transfer of power.[444]

Michael I Rhangabe ruled for just under two years, from October 811 until July 813. Apart from minor successes against the Arabs (achieved by the general Leo, commander of the *Anatolikon* region, to which he had been appointed by Michael after his recall from exile at the beginning of the reign), his reign is notable for three sets of events. The first was the recall of the exiles banished by Nikephoros I, including military officers and the various Stoudite and other monks of the opposition to Nikephoros' ecclesiastical appointments. While a formal reconciliation between the patriarch Nikephoros and the Stoudites appears thus to have been established, the tensions which lay beneath the surface soon revealed themselves, in particular as Theodore of Stoudion himself seems to have become a close confidant of the new emperor.[445]

The second was the series of defeats at the hands of the Bulgars which followed upon the emperor's refusal to hand over to the Bulgar khan the Christians who had fled from Bulgarian territory, a decision taken by the emperor with a range of high-ranking advisers, leading members of the senate, clergy and monastic establishment, including Theodore of Stoudion. The establishment was divided: the emperor, apparently supported by the patriarch and several high-ranking members of the clergy, were in favour of a peace treaty, the handing over of the fugitives, and thus the end of the fighting; the leading members of the senate, supported by Theodore and others, were against this deal, and eventually the emperor was won over to this point of view. Although softened by occasional Byzantine successes (such as the surprise attack on Krum's troops at Adrianople in February 813), the renewed attacks by Krum resulted in the loss of the chain of fortified towns covering the Byzantine-Bulgarian frontier, which had been built up under Eirene and Constantine VI and strengthened by Nikephoros.[446] The soldiers appear to have had little respect for the new

[443] Theoph., 493.5–14 (Mango and Scott 1997, 675, 677). See Rochow 1991, 302–4.

[444] For the details of the events of 811, see Winkelmann 1987a, 63–4; Bury 1912, 16–21.

[445] Theoph., 494.19f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 678); Rochow 1991, 305f.; Pratsch 1998, 180–4. Further literature on the moechian controversy in *ODB* 2, 1388–9.

[446] Theoph., 497 (Mango and Scott 1997, 681–2); cf. discussion in Pratsch 1999, 193–4 and Rochow 1991, 310–12.

emperor as a military commander; a mutiny in June 812 forced the cancellation of a campaign against Krum. In the capital, there followed a plot to release the blinded sons of Constantine V, in which there is some evidence of at least token iconoclasm being expressed, and in which an iconoclast monastic element is clearly discernible. But it was discovered and crushed; popular legends among the soldiery of the military successes of the Isaurian emperors and the sacking of a number of palatine soldiers for their part in the plot meant that the city remained the focus of considerable discontent and ill-feeling, even though Michael was able to pacify and reassure the guards units.[447]

The third was Michael's recognition of Charlemagne's imperial title: in 812 Michael returned the embassy which had arrived from the Frankish court in 811. It was accompanied by Byzantine ambassadors who were to recognise Charlemagne as emperor (although not 'of the Romans') and seek a marriage alliance between Michael's son Theophylact and a Frankish princess.[448] They were then to proceed to Rome bearing a letter from the patriarch Nikephoros and his confession of orthodoxy, accounting for the long delay in their transmission to the pope, and asking for papal arbitration in the matter of Joseph of Kathara (Michael suggested this as a means of resolving the conflict between the Stoudites and the patriarch). The results were favourable: the Franks were pleased at the recognition given to Charlemagne as emperor; the latter ratified Byzantine rights in Venetia and Istria;[449] and the pope resolved the issue of Joseph by finding in favour of the Stoudites. Joseph was removed from his position, and the moechian affair was closed.[450]

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[447] Theoph., 495.20–499.15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 678–83); Rochow 1991, 309–13; Bury 1912, 40–1; Auzépy, *V. Steph. iun.*, 9. See Curta 2006, 151f.

[448] For Theoktistos, see *PmbZ*, no. 8336; *PBE* Theophylaktos 9.

[449] For the background, see the account in Bury 1912, 321ff. There had been continuous rivalry over these regions since before the beginning of the reign of Nikephoros I; indeed Istria had been under Frankish control since the 780s although this was not recognised by Constantinople until 798. In about 804 factional strife within Venetia resulted in the establishment of the brothers Obelerius and Beatus as *duces*, their appeal to the Franks for assistance, and the despatch of a small fleet to compel the commanders and leaders of Byzantine Dalmatia to join them (see Bury 1912, 323). Since Nikephoros had not yet recognised Charlemagne, the latter appointed his son Pippin to be their overlord, the two regions being regarded as part of Frankish-controlled Italy. The Byzantine response was to send a fleet under the *patrikios* Niketas (see *PmbZ*, no. 5465), who recovered several of the lost towns in 810. See Bertolini 1965, 665–9; Classen 1965, 598–604: Krahwinkler 1992; Curta 2006, 135. For the embassy and the relevant sources, see Rochow 1991, 306 (for Theoph., 494.20ff. [Mango and Scott 1997, 678]); Bury 1912, 324–6.

[450] Theoph., 494.22–25 (Mango and Scott 1997, 678); Rochow 1991, 306 (Theoph., 494.12–20 [Mango and Scott 1997, 678]), 307; see Pratsch 1988, 180–3.

Michael seems to have had neither the ability nor the confidence to take matters firmly in hand. His policies reacted simply to the pressures he perceived to be operating on him, either on the part of elements within the church and monastic community (for example, for the punishment of heretics, either real – such as the Paulicians – or imagined – such as the *Athigganoi* – who seem to have been favoured, or at least not persecuted, under Nikephoros),[451] or in respect of a variety of other vested interests (his issue of gifts and donatives both to the church and to the soldiers and civilian population in Constantinople).[452] The case of the persecution of heretics, or at least those with heterodox beliefs, however, seems to represent more than just the advice of the patriarch and his supporters to impose orthodoxy more rigorously than had been the case during the previous decades, as many of the sources present the issue. On the contrary, and since the emperor Nikephoros I had relied upon Lykaonian guards and soldiers who appear to have shared such heretical beliefs (especially the unit of the *Phoideratoi*, based for a while in Constantinople), there was probably a strong political motive for this move, even if it was represented at the time as a general persecution of heretics.[453] At last, in June 813 Michael assembled a large force including thematic and tagmatic units and advanced to Versinikia to meet the Bulgars. After some weeks' delay, the Byzantines attacked, but the centre, under the emperor, was slow to follow up the advance of the wing under John Aplakes, consisting of the Thracian and Macedonian units; and when the other wing, under Leo the Armenian, commander of the *Anatolikon thema*, began to withdraw (although the reasons remain unclear and the later accusations of treachery may well be politically motivated), the centre fled and the advancing forces under Aplakes were surrounded and cut to pieces.[454] Michael returned to the capital leaving the remaining

[451] See Theoph., 494.33–495.15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 678) and the literature and sources discussed by Rochow 1991, 307–8; Pratsch 1998, 184–91; and esp. Turner 1990b, 176–80. The *Athigganoi* – literally 'untouchables' – were almost certainly not a heretical sect, and it is unclear whether they were even Christians with somewhat different practices and of somewhat different appearance and language. The Byzantine sources, upon examination, tell us virtually nothing about their religious beliefs, merely about the fact that ordinary Byzantines were highly suspicious of them: see Speck 1997. It is most probable, in fact, that they are to be identified with the *Tsigganoi*, the Jats of the eighth- and ninth-century Islamic sources, and thus with the gypsies, who had migrated westward from the Indian subcontinent after the seventh century. See Soulis 1961.

[452] Theoph., 494.3ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 677); *Script. incertus*, 335.8–336.5. See Bury 1912, 23f.; Rochow 1991, 305.

[453] See Haldon 1984, 247–51; Turner 1990b, 176ff.; Pratsch 1998, 191. But for a slightly different account of the *Phoideratoi*, see Scharf 2001, 113ff.

[454] Theoph., 500.2–501.2, 501.27–502.7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 683f., 685). See Rochow 1991, 314–16, and Winkelmann 1987a, 65. For John Aplakes: *PmbZ*, no. 3197; *PBE* Ioannes 19.

sections of the army, which had regrouped, under Leo, whom the sources say was suspected of treachery, although he was never publicly accused of such. Under pressure from his closest associates and the soldiers, however, Leo accepted his acclamation by the soldiers as emperor, wrote to the patriarch expressing his orthodoxy, and explaining his actions in terms of the needs of the state. Michael abdicated when Leo and his soldiers arrived outside the city in July, and went into a monastery, as did the rest of his family. Leo was crowned by Nikephoros on 12 July 813.[455]

While the period from the early 790s to 813 reflected a certain weakness in respect of military failures and a deterioration in the standing of the east Roman state in the eyes of its closest neighbours – the caliphate and the Bulgars – it was also, and paradoxically, a period during which the imperial government was able to exploit the successes of the Isaurian emperors in these respects by consolidating Byzantine authority and power in its border regions and laying the foundations of a major transformation in imperial fortunes during the course of the ninth century. That the successes of the Isaurians were tangible is evident in the attitudes expressed in the literary sources which, while hostile to Leo III and Constantine V, cannot ignore their achievements in respect of the way in which they seem to have been reflected in popular attitudes and the assumptions about imperial power made by emperors and their advisers in determining foreign policy, military strategy, and financial matters. As we will see in the appropriate chapters dealing with urban life and the economy in general, and with the fiscal and military structures of the state, as well as in our treatment of the cultural life of the Byzantine elite, the failures in foreign policy, the internal conflicts, and the military disasters in fact mask a structural flexibility and strength which gave the state the resources with which to recover surprisingly rapidly from such apparently punishing blows.

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Turner 1990b, 189–93, basing his argument on both Theophanes and Genesios, suggests that Leo was not responsible for the disaster, which was blamed on him in works which no longer survive of the patriarch Nikephoros, for ideological reasons. Given the fact that Michael appears to have left Leo to defend Thrace (Theoph., 502; Mango and Scott 1997, 685; cf. Skylitzes, 7; Flusin and Cheynet, 7) – unlikely if he had betrayed the emperor in battle – this is plausible. Leo may thus not have been the treacherous plotter he has been taken to be by the modern historiography.

[455] Theoph., 502.7–502.30 (Mango and Scott 1997, 685f.); Rochow 1991, 316–20; Bury 1912, 21–30, for an account of Michael's reign; Turner 1990b, 194–7; Pratsch 1998, 197–200; commentary in Flusin and Cheynet 2003, 5–7. In general on the origins and background of Leo V: Turner 1990; *PmbZ*, no. 4244; *PBE* Leo 15.

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5 | The second iconoclasm

Leo V and the re-imposition of imperial iconoclasm: 813–20

Leo ruled from 813 until his murder at the hands of Michael of Amorion in 820. His first task was to secure his political position, which he did by appointing his associates to key military commands; and to deal with the Bulgar threat: between the time of his accession and the spring of 814, the khan Krum totally devastated the districts of Macedonia and northern Thrace, carrying off thousands into captivity and massacring many thousands more, reducing and destroying fortresses and eventually re-organising substantial tracts under a new Bulgar administration. He then planned a major attack on Constantinople, but died in April 814 before the plan could be realised. In the meantime, Leo sent an embassy to the Franks requesting assistance, but Charlemagne died before it reached the Frankish court and his successor Louis merely received it and confirmed existing agreements between the two powers. Krum was succeeded by two rulers in rapid succession, possibly close relatives, but the momentum of the strategy had been lost at his death and the emperor was able to capitalise on the relatively peaceful state of the frontier regions to consolidate his regime and implement his own policies.[1]

Leo's reign is, of course, best known for the emperor's decision to re-impose an imperial policy of iconoclasm. The reasons are, on the whole, generally understood, and the sources give a reasonably plausible – if frequently polemical and exaggerated – account of the events. Unlike the origins of the first imperial iconoclast policy, which are still very much debated, as the discussion above has shown, it seems fairly clear that Leo V, like Philippikos Bardanes with his re-introduction of monotheletism in 711, was seeking both an explanation for the catastrophic defeats that the

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[1] See Theoph., 502.31–503.25 (Mango and Scott 1997, 686); *Script. incertus*, 49.1–55.151; Theoph. cont., 216.12ff.; and Bury 1912, 359ff.; Curta 2006, 153ff. For the embassy to the Franks, see *V. Hludowici*, 619; *Annales Regni Francorum*, 140–1. For Leo's reign see Treadgold 1988, 196–225; and the detailed discussion and analysis in Signes Codoñer 1995, 13–174; also the commentary to the text of Skylitzes for this period, in Flusin and Cheynet 2003, 7–23; and sources and literature in *PmbZ*, no. 4244; *PBE* Leo 15.

Byzantines had suffered at the hands of the Bulgars, and a means of bolstering his own position and authority. Popular support for the 'return' of the great emperor Constantine V to save the city had been acted out by ex-soldiers in June 813 at the tomb of Constantine V. Some iconoclast sentiment, however much based on military and ideological, as opposed to purely theological, considerations, clearly did exist in some tagmatic units; and, if we accept Theophanes' account, iconoclasts were still active on occasion, as the examples of the iconoclast monk and his followers protected by the emperor Nikephoros, and the monk who defaced an image of the Virgin under Michael, show.[2] However legendary, the story that Constantine VI threatened Tarasios with a revival of imperial iconoclasm suggests that it remained a real possibility; while pope Hadrian wrote to the king of the Franks in 791 noting that the possibility remained that the rulers of the eastern empire might 'return to their sin'.[3] Popular cries of 'let the bones of the icons be dug up' – a modified version of the Constantinopolitan call to exhume the bones of an unpopular ruler – were heard, according to Nikephoros himself.[4]

And Leo seems to have exploited this. In the context of an impending attack on Constantinople, the defeat of imperial armies, and the laying waste of the empire's Thracian hinterland, Leo seems to have reasoned, understandably, that the iconophile rulers had all been either deposed or had died in battle, in contrast to the successes of their Isaurian and iconoclast predecessors. But there is no evidence to think that Leo was an iconoclast from the start, or that he had planned to re-introduce iconoclasm at his accession, the view presented in the later sources. The contemporary *Chronographia* of Theophanes, a broadly iconophile source, continues its narrative up to the end of the year 813, but treats Leo as an orthodox and pious ruler. Other contemporary evidence supports this view. But neither would it be reasonable to suggest that his move was cynical – we should not assume that pragmatism and ideological conviction are somehow mutually exclusive, and there is no reason to doubt his own conviction that the overt devotion shown to images may have been idolatrous in practice, if not in intent, particularly because he had himself employed an image of the Virgin Mary on

[2] See Theoph., 488.33–489–8; 496.23ff.; 501.3–27 (Mango and Scott 1997, 671f., 679f., 684f.); Rochow 1991, 296, 310, 314f.; Alexander 1958a, 111–23 (although his interpretation of the composition of the soldiers involved in the iconoclastic agitation requires revision): see Haldon 1984, 233 with nn. 600, 601; 345 with n. 1050; Speck 1978, 222 with n. 9; Lombard 1902, 10ff.; Thümmel 2005, 235f.

[3] For Constantine's threat, see the *Narratio de ss. patriarchis Tarasio et Nicephoro* (*PG* 100, 533–834), 1852D. For Hadrian's letter: *MGH Epp* v, 56f.

[4] See Alexander 1958a, 125 with nn. 1 and 2.

one of his earliest imperial seals. His initial enquiries on the matter would bear out the anxiety he felt about the issue.[5]

There were other motives, too. As will be seen below, one of the key objections voiced by the iconophile party at the outset, and in particular by the patriarch Nikephoros and by Theodore of Stoudion, was that the emperor should leave matters of dogma to the church, and confine himself to the secular sphere. Such arguments were not new – exactly the same objections to imperial interest and intervention in such matters was voiced by Maximos Confessor and his allies in their criticism of the monothelete policies of Constans II.[6] But here there was an additional factor, insofar as the Council of 787 had itself strongly emphasised the tradition of the church as the basis for its decisions and as the key legitimating principle upon which issues of dogma were to be resolved, in conscious antithesis to the conduct of the Council of Hiereia in 754, a meeting orchestrated by a heretical ruler. The clear implication, expressed more or less openly in the Acts of 787, was that it was not the emperor, but the church and its hierarchs who were responsible for such matters, a position tacitly accepted by Eirene both through her absence from the council and through the leeway granted to Tarasios to orchestrate the proceedings, the membership, and the results of the council's deliberations. In acting as he did, Leo V was merely re-asserting imperial authority, an authority which had been part of the relationship between state and church since the time of Constantine I and the convocation of the synod of Nicaea in 325 (this was itself an argument used by Constans II in the mid-seventh century).[7]

Leo's first move was to establish an enquiry or commission to report on the theological basis for an iconoclast policy. The enquiry was led by a young and learned abbot, John, later known as 'the grammarian', who was a reader in the Hodegon monastery, later made abbot of the monastery of Sts Sergios and Bakkhos next to the imperial palace, and included also the later patriarch Anthony Kassymatas (821–37). The initial results were hastily presented to Leo after only a few weeks and, when the emperor passed them on to the patriarch for his reaction, the latter pointed out

[5] See Theoph., 502.3–5, 19–22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 685); *Script. incertus*, 55.154–65; 58.236–59.257. For discussion Gero 1976; Speck 1978, 402; Pratsch 1998, 206–7. The ways in which a range of iconophile legends were transmitted through this text has been analysed by Speck 1990a, 252–61. For the seal of Leo V and his son Constantine bearing an image of the Virgin, see *ZV* 48.

[6] See Haldon 1997a, 304–12. Delouis 2005, 82–230, provides a recent and detailed study of Theodore's impact. We thank Rosemary Morris for providing us with the *thèse* prior to publication.

[7] See Chapter 4.

quite simply that the selected passages dealt with idols and idolatry, but not holy images. Rather than alienate Nikephoros, Leo went back to his group of advisers and, having invited several others to join it, asked it to produce a more carefully researched document. The leading member of the group was now Anthony, bishop of Syllaion (in south-west Anatolia), and with imperial support and based in the imperial palace itself, the team now produced a second document, using the Acts of the Council of 754, which was presented to Leo. The patriarch was this time told that, because the soldiers were blaming images for their defeats at Bulgar hands, the patriarch and the emperor should compromise; Leo proposed to remove those icons hung low down (τὰ χαμηλά).[8] But Nikephoros objected again, with the result that Leo invited him to refute the document by citing his own proof texts. Nikephoros fell back on the classic iconophile argument, that the use of images was confirmed by long-standing tradition, rather than by specific textual affirmation, precisely the point challenged, of course, by the first iconoclasts and the Council of 754. The emperor invited Nikephoros to debate the issue with his commission; instead, Nikephoros despatched a number of bishops and abbots to affirm their belief in the correctness of the decisions of 787; but they refused to enter into a debate.[9]

Two points are worth emphasising about this initial stage. The first is that Leo proposed to introduce a relatively mild form of iconoclasm, removing only those images which might be objects of popular anger, and attempted to win over the leaders of the church by rational argument. In this context, the argument that images which were 'low' down and within reach of insult was not simply a pretext, but probably conceals a real desire to remove images which might unwittingly receive the veneration due to God alone: the same argument, as we have seen, which was made during the reign of Constantine V, and centred on the issue of *proskynesis*. Significantly, the argument is expressed more clearly in the letter of Michael II and Theophilos to Louis the Pious in 824, where a whole list of such malpractices is given. Images are said to have been introduced to replace the life-giving crosses; lights and incense are set up about them; they are praised and honoured and asked for divine aid; they are surrounded with hangings; some members of the clergy scrape the colours from the images and mix them with the sacraments; and it is explicitly stated that, in order to prevent the simpler and less educated

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[8] *Script. incertus*, 59.258–62.341. On John, see the entry in *ODB* 1052f.; see also *PmbZ*, no. 3199; *PBE* Ioannes 5; and for Anthony, *PmbZ*, no. 550; *PBE* Antonios 3.

[9] *Script. incertus*, 62.341–64. 391; detailed account of the events which follow in Alexander 1958a, 125–35; Bury 1912, 59ff., and Ostrogorsky 1929, 52ff.; Pratsch 1998, 208–18 for an examination of the various sources; 1999, 131ff.

members of the Christian congregation from lighting candles and burning incense around images, and the clergy from celebrating the eucharist with them, the synod of pious emperors and learned priests (i.e. that held in 815) decreed that those images placed low down should be removed, and only those which were not subject to such misdirected veneration were to remain.[10]

The second point is that Leo presented himself as arbitrator in a debate between two points of view within the church, hence the emphasis he placed on the need for a discussion. The patriarch Nikephoros notes that the bishops and other clergy had been tricked or seduced by the arguments of the iconoclasts, with the implication that iconoclasm was a secular and imperial dogma imposed upon the church, with secular motives behind it. This was certainly also the perception promoted by the hagiographies of the second period of iconoclasm. A considerable volume of correspondence between the emperor and various monks and churchmen then developed, each side attempting to persuade the other of the superiority of its argument.[11]

In spite of Leo's efforts to win over those who opposed his policy – he is reported even to have offered the patriarchal throne to Euthymios of Sardis, one of the emperor's leading critics – the refusal of many bishops and abbots to engage in the debate brought on a stalemate.[12] Whether by design (according to the later tradition, at Leo's command) or out of genuine sentiment, some soldiers of the imperial guard are reported to have hurled stones and mud at the icon of Christ on the Chalke gate, shouting at the same time iconoclastic slogans. Leo then ordered the image to be removed in order to protect it from such abuse.

The iconophile sources are unanimous in attributing this to Leo's planned strategy for re-introducing iconoclasm. Whether this is really the case is impossible to determine, especially in view of the remarkable similarities between this tale and the account of the removal of the image on the Chalke during the reign of Leo III; what is clear is that the symbolism involved in the removal of an icon of Christ from the Chalke, an image which Eirene had set up to replace the cross erected by an iconoclast emperor, in its turn believed, whether accurately or not, to have replaced an image of Christ,

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[10] The *Script. incertus* specifically notes that Leo proposed to remove icons that were lower down in the church (62.337–9; 67.473–4). For the letter sent by Michael II (and Theophilos) to Louis the Pious in 824: Mansi xiv, 417–22, see 419–20 (Eng. trans. in Mango 1972, 157–8). The Slavonic *Life* of Stefan of Surozh makes a similar point: Ivanov 2006, 113–14.

[11] Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos 3*, 488A–533A, esp. 501C. See the useful summary of hagiographers' views in Kaplan 1999; and cf. Grumel, *Regestes*, nos. 389–91, 394–7, for example.

[12] For a survey of Euthymios' role, see *V. Euthymii episcopi Sardensis*, §9, 158ff.; and the editor's comment, 6–7; and *PmbZ*, no. 1838; *PBE* Euthymios 1.

must have been very apparent to all who knew of the emperor's action.[13] The iconophile churchmen reacted to this by meeting in the patriarchal palace; one later source suggests as many as 270 were present, from Constantinople and nearby provinces. The patriarch read out the document produced by the commission, refuted or denounced various arguments, ascertained the unanimous rejection of the argument by all present, and signed a pledge to oppose iconoclasm to the death, before adjourning to pray in the adjacent church of Hagia Sophia.[14]

These events took place on 24 December in 814. The next day – Christmas morning – Leo called the participants at the meeting to the palace and – having discussed the issue in private with the patriarch, and averring that he had no intention of dismissing him – requested that they participate in a debate with the members of his commission. The more outspoken iconophiles – including Theodore of Stoudion – protested that he should leave theological matters to them and that he had already shown his support for the iconoclast position. But Leo is reported to have demonstrated his desire for compromise by kissing a small image he wore around his neck, and in venerating an altar cloth in the Great Church during the Christmas liturgy.[15]

In the following weeks both Leo and the patriarch Nikephoros wrote a number of letters, Leo to persuade separately some of those who were at first opposed to his views to accept the proposal to remove icons that were placed low in churches, Nikephoros to two sympathetic supporters in the emperor's entourage – the empress Theodosia and a fiscal official – requesting their help to change Leo's mind.[16] Nikephoros was unwavering in his opposition, however; Leo then dismissed the patriarchal staff at the Hagia Sophia and appointed the *patrikios* Thomas as logothete and *skeuophylax*, the leading official. Nikephoros became ill, as a result of which Leo was able to place Thomas in charge of the patriarchate temporarily.[17] But Leo

[13] See *Script. incertus*, 64.393–411; and the discussion of the question, with literature and sources, in Chapter 2; and the account in Alexander 1958a, 129–33.

[14] *Script. incertus*, 65. 415–32; the figure of 270 is given in the later spurious letter originally attributed to the three eastern patriarchs: *Epistula ad Theophilum imperatorem*, ed. Gauer, 112.10–14; ed. Munitiz *et al.*, 118 (alt. ending 2, §48) (also in: *PG* 95, 345–85, see 373B–C). Cf. Grumel, *Regestes* i/2, 31 (no. 393). But see also Afinogenov 2003–4, who suggests that on the basis of the Slavonic manuscript tradition the latter is, in its basic elements, genuine.

[15] *Script. incertus*, 66. 446–59 (the text then records that shortly afterwards, during the Festival of Lights, the emperor refused to show honour to the altar cloth: *ibid.*, 66.461–4); *V. Nicetae Medicii*, xxiv–xxv. See Alexander 1958a, 128ff. On the altar cloth, see Speck 1966, and 1987c.

[16] See *Script. incertus*, 67f.; *V. Niceph.*, 189f.; Alexander 1958a, 130–2. Theodosia: *PmbZ*, no. 7790; *PBE* Theodosia 1.

[17] *Script. incertus*, 68. 501ff.; *V. Nicetae Medic.*, xxv. Thomas: *PmbZ*, no. 8461; *PBE* Thomas 6.

continued to press the patriarch on the issue of removing icons. Eventually, after refusing at the beginning of Lent to discuss the issue yet again or appear before a panel of iconoclast bishops at the patriarchate, Nikephoros abdicated his position, and was taken eventually to the monastery dedicated to St Theodore near Chalcedon which he had himself founded.[18] Within a few days the emperor had decided upon the appointment of his replacement: Theodotos Melissenos, related distantly, through his father, who was a brother-in-law of Constantine V, to that emperor, and thus with a suitable social and political background. In spite of the solid and vocal opposition of Theodore of Stoudion and his monks (and it is significant that public opposition was now clearly monastic), there seems to have been only limited resistance to the changes. Theodotos was enthroned at Easter 815.[19]

The synod of 815 and the second iconoclasm

The new patriarch called a council to resolve the issue of images, which Theodore refused to attend, claiming at the same time to write on behalf of all the other monastic communities within the empire. The synod met in the Great Church (Hagia Sophia), presided over by the new patriarch and with Leo's young son Constantine (Symbatios) representing the emperor himself. The deliberations had been carefully managed in advance: the first session recognised the council of 754 as the Seventh Ecumenical Council and rejected the validity of the Council held in 787; iconoclasm was formally endorsed. In the next sessions, orthodox bishops who had not yet recanted the veneration of icons were examined; those that refused to conform to the new dogma were deposed and anathematised, and then placed in the power of the state for further punishment. In a final session, the meeting drew up a decree proscribing the veneration of holy images. But there was no order issued regarding the destruction of icons, nor was the veneration of images referred to explicitly as idolatry. The *Horos* thus formulated supported the decisions taken by a series of citations from patristic and other writers; and all those present added their signatures.[20]

[18] See Alexander 1958a, 147–8; Pratsch 1998, 220–31; 1999a, 143–7; and 000 below.

[19] *Script. incertus*, 69. 527–71. 573; *V. Nicetae Medic.*, xxv; *V. Theod. Stud.*(a), 185B–188C; Alexander 1958a, 133–6; Pratsch 1999b, 148–53. For Theodotos: *PmbZ*, no. 7954; *PBE* Theodotos 2. Stories that Leo and his supporters attempted to have Nikephoros murdered are probably later legendary accretions: see *V. Niceph.*, 197. The iconophile tradition dismisses Theodotos as a 'voiceless fish': Genesios 13 (§14); Theoph. cont., 28–9; *V. Nicetae Medic.*, xxx.

[20] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* 71; *V. Nicetae Medic.*, xxv; Alexander 1958a, 137–40; and on Symbatios, see *PmbZ*, no. 3925; *PBE* Konstantinos 29. For an edition of the *Horos*, see Alexander 1953, at

The second iconoclasm was not simply a repetition of the first, however, either in its form, in respect of the theology of images and the debates which revolved around issues of dogma; or in the reaction it provoked from those who remained hostile to the new imperially imposed dogma. On the contrary, and as Alexander has clearly demonstrated, the debate moved in some respects on to relatively untrodden ground in theological and theoretical terms. The emperor and his supporters clearly made a great effort to present a conciliatory position, and they thus exploited the existing major source of iconoclastic and patristic authority for their case which was available, namely the *Horos* of the Council of 754. A key concept occurs at the end of the *Horos*, where the following statement (explicitly following the sentiments of the Council of 754) can be found: "we determine that the making of images is neither venerable nor useful, but we refrain from calling them idols, because even in evil exist different degrees".[21] In addition, it is clear that the main argument in respect of the 'ordinary' observer was focused on the unsuitability of holy images placed in situations which would earn them, implicitly or explicitly, the devotion and adoration which should properly be reserved to God alone.

Again, there is no reference to idolatry as such, merely the folly and reck-lessness of offering to lifeless images what should properly be God's alone, and the fact that the empress Eirene dared to attribute divine grace to such material objects.[22] No reference is made to the destruction of images (except in the most unreliable and rabidly iconophile propaganda, of later date); on the contrary, blame is ascribed to the successors of Leo (III) and Constan-tine, with emphasis on the womanly weakness of Eirene, who introduced again the veneration of images which circumscribe the uncircumscribable or separate the human from the divine in the indivisible divinity (but no specific reference is made either to monophysitism or to Nestorianism).[23] Henceforth the church was to ensure that images did not receive the venera-tion due to God. It was likewise to avoid their misuse or abuse by prohibiting their association with the burning of candles and incense (as prescribed by the Council of 787), practices which were seen to mislead the worshipper into treating them as though they also possessed divine grace, as did their archetypes (as explained in the letter of Michael and Theophilos to Louis the

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58–66; Alexander 1958b; see also Serruys 1903; Ostrogorsky 1929, 48–51. For discussion, see Thümmel 2005, 237–9, 247–55.

[21] See Alexander 1953, 60 (frg. 16). Alexander, with whose general argument the present writers are in broad agreement, thus disagrees strongly with the position outlined by Ostrogorsky 1929, 55–7.

[22] Alexander 1953, frgs. 8–10, 15,   [23] *Ibid.*, frgs. 7, 8, 9.

Pious referred to already).[24] The manufacture of the 'falsely-named images' was also outlawed.[25]

It is generally agreed that the *Horos* of 815 was a fairly conciliatory document: by avoiding accusations of heresy it must have been hoping to win over many of those who had been opposed to the change in policy. Although recalling the synod of 754, there seems to have been no insistence that the devotion shown to icons was tantamount to idolatry: merely that such devotion should be shown to God alone, and that the association of incense and candles with images was misleading and confusing. But the *Horos* was accompanied also by a *florilegium* of texts designed to reinforce the position stated therein, and it is clear that from this collection the iconoclast thinkers at the Council of 815 had taken a step forward in elaborating their claim that images were misleading. As mentioned already, the *Horos* explicitly refers to the images, which are henceforth no longer to be produced, as spurious, or 'falsely-named';[26] a definition which seems to refer back to the arguments elaborated by Constantine V and the Council of 754 regarding the fact that the eucharist is the true image of the divine. Passages from the Fathers which had not been cited in earlier iconoclastic collections or at the Council of 754 include several which refer to the idea that pictures of Christ or the saints are false images, since the only true image is the true Christian in whose heart Christ dwells. In other words, the *Horos* of 815 changes the emphasis from the eucharist as the true image of God, to the pious Christian, a human being made in God's image, basing the interpretation on a text from the works of Basil of Caesarea.[27] The premise underlying both positions was that a 'true' image had to share in the essence of the original, from which it is clear that the argument had moved away from christological debate into new territory – a general theory of religious representation that encompassed images of saints alongside the hitherto emphasised portraits of Christ. The thrust of the position was that, since a genuine representation of Christ or a saint had by definition to share the essence of the original, pictorial images were clearly not genuine, but rather falsely so named, and thus not admissible. They certainly could not be endowed with divine grace.[28]

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[24] *Ibid.*, frgs. 2–7.   [25] *Ibid.*, frg. 14.   [26] *Ibid.*, frg. 14.   [27] *Ibid.*, frg. 23.

[28] The details of this argument are set out by Alexander 1953, 41–5. Ostrogorsky 1968, 170 and n. 2, believes, in contrast, that the argument was not original and its implications were not followed through. In the latter respect he is right, for the intellectual stalemate which followed the opening discussions gradually opened the field to the elaboration of a more sophisticated set of iconophile arguments, while those of their opponents do not seem to have been developed beyond the point set out in Alexander's anlaysis (although it is unclear how much

The former patriarch Nikephoros polemicised against the *Horoi* of 754 and of 815, and the arguments set out therein; in doing so, he cited the texts used by the iconoclasts themselves in the *florilegium* assembled for the meeting of 815, from which it has been possible to reconstruct the main lines of the innovation in iconoclast thinking as well as the counter-arguments put by Nikephoros. Nikephoros deployed Aristotelian logic in his refutation, the application of which to the image question Alexander has demonstrated took place within iconophile circles in the early years of the ninth century, and the general tenor of which seems to have been familiar to many writers on the issue of images by the end of the reign of the emperor Nikephoros I.[29] A version of Aristotelian logic, the details of which are largely unclear to us, formed part of Byzantine higher education, but had not hitherto been applied to issues of representation. Its use now allowed Nikephoros, and others in the pro-image camp, to argue that since an image is bound to its archetype, as a likeness, by the logical connection of 'relation', and since that which is represented is bound to its representation in form, to condemn an image as false is to condemn the archetype as false, too. Thus to condemn the image of Christ as a false image is to condemn Christ similarly.[30] By the same token, Nikephoros argued on the basis of the Aristotelian category 'cause' that, since the virtues of the saints can be reproduced in humans as their true image, so their bodies, which gave rise themselves to these virtues, are both prior and active causes, thus more deserving of honour, and able to be represented as true images of the very saints themselves.[31] In this context, and in order to underline his argument, Nikephoros also stresses the priority of the sense of sight among the senses, a point to which we will return in Chapter 12.

Although these points presented an alternative foundation for a theory of images, they did not address the issue of the 'falseness' of material

iconoclast writing was destroyed or ignored after 843). In the former respect, however, Ostrogorsky ignores Alexander's point that while the argument was itself not new, the way in which the iconoclasts turned it to their own use did indeed mark a departure in the traditional direction of the argument. See Featherstone, in Nikephoros, *Refutatio*, xviii–xix. Working independently, Barber 2002 has come to similar conclusions.

[29] See the remarks of Schwarzlose 1890, 183; and in detail, Alexander 1958a, 189ff.; and esp. Featherstone, in Nikephoros, *Refutatio*, xx–xxi.

[30] In fact, this crude essentialism hardly does justice to Aristotle's logic, ignoring, for example, the issues of distortion, misrepresentation and so on, but preserved documentation gives no indication that it was questioned at the time.

[31] This argument is based on the premise that if the effect or result is 'false' so must the 'cause' be, which to modern minds would seem to apply too rigid and mechanical an understanding of Aristotle's logic, but, again, it apparently went unremarked by contemporaries.

visual images as it was understood by the iconoclasts.[32] And although both Theodore of Stoudion and Nikephoros were able considerably to expand and improve their arguments on the basis of Aristotelian thought, including an exchange of correspondence between Theodore and John the Grammarian, the two sides continued to fail to grasp the essential point of each other's reasoning, primarily because, it appears, they continued to maintain different conceptions of the image.[33] What is at issue here is not the power, or lack of power, of images – both sides at least tacitly accepted the force of religious portraiture, though they disagreed on whether or not this had positive or negative implications for orthodox belief – but about what constituted a representation. This is a critical issue, and we will treat it separately in the final chapter of this book.

The initial success of Leo's policy in respect of winning over to his side those who had hitherto sided with the patriarch or with Theodore of Stoudion seems to have been considerable, and resulted in the relative isolation of the main opponents of the emperor. The emperor and John the Grammarian devoted some considerable effort to reasoning with their opponents, and it seems clear even from the most hostile contemporary or near contemporary accounts that they had significant success.[34] The letters of Theodore of Stoudion make grim reading for the iconophile camp. Virtually the whole Constantinopolitan clergy adopted the imperial position; Theodore remarks that almost all the monastic communities of the city similarly supported or at least raised no public objection to the 'new' dogma. Indeed, in one of his letters he comments that most people did not see the critique of the veneration of images as wrong at all, even in his own day. Provincial bishops in Bithynia, Thessaly, Lydia, Cherson, Phrygia, Isauria, and the Aegean islands, as well as in southern Italy, supported or actively promoted the iconoclast cause.[35] Several more-or-less contemporary writers of hagiographies of the period assert that the imperial policy was widely

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[32] Detailed account of the argument in Alexander 1953, 48–9; 1958a, 198–213. For the use of Aristotelian categories in the iconophile arguments of Theodore of Stoudion, see Alexander 1958a, 191–6, 200–8, followed by Barber 2002.

[33] For Theodore's exchange with John, see Theod. Stoud., *Epp.* 492, 528, 546 and Grumel 1937. On different conceptions of the image, see the remarks of Ostrogorsky 1929, 40–5, and Alexander 1958a, 209–10.

[34] See Nikeph., *Apologetikos*, 569A; Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 151; 222; 332. John's renown as a persuasive speaker is frequently noted in the iconophile hagiographies, in the form of accounts of confrontations between the saintly protagonist and the iconoclast (who fails to convince the heroes of the tales, of course).

[35] Alexander 1958a, 141–4 and Martin 1930, 174f., for sources and details. Theodore's comment: *Ep.* 393. 28–37

and generally accepted; and that those who refused to take communion with the patriarch (Theodotos) or with other iconoclasts were forced into exile, or went into hiding, or were otherwise punished.[36]

Many monasteries conformed with imperial policy, too, so that there was no 'monastic' opposition of the sort which it was believed had occurred under Constantine V (although, as we have now seen in Chapter 3, this too was largely the result of later iconophile myth-making). The monastery of Sergios and Bakkhos became under its abbot, John the Grammarian, a centre for the dissemination of iconoclast ideas, and iconophiles who refused to conform to the new dogma were confined there for re-education. Indeed, members of Theodore's own monastery of St John took up the official policy and were appropriately rewarded – one of them was made abbot of the monastery of Sakkoudion.[37] Ignatios, later metropolitan of Nicaea under Theophilos, was probably typical of the vast majority of churchmen, accepting the imperial position regardless, changing his position as that of the capital changed, accepting his wrongdoing, taking the punishments meted out by whichever ideology was in power, and offering no opposition when change came.[38] Theodore of Stoudion found his oppositional stance increasingly isolated, the more so as he adopted a rigorist position that condemned all those who had any contact at all with the iconoclasts. He condemned as 'fallen' anyone who held communion with the official church, an approach which involved a range of associations, from actually taking holy communion to exchanging pleasantries, establishing thereby a hierarchy of heresy ranging from those who had signed the iconoclast subscription introduced at the synod of 815 to those who simply communicated.[39]

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[36] Alexander 1958a, 145–7; Martin 1930, 175–82; Pratsch 1998, 235–43, for examples and discussion. Most recently, Kaplan 2006 has stressed the bishops' acceptance of iconoclast policy. See Chapter 9, sections vii–viii.

[37] See Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 222; 333; 377; *V. Greg. Decapol.*, 48f. Among the monastic communities which conformed were also those of Medikion and Kathara, for example. In *Ep.* 190 Theodore notes that some of the Stoudite monks who had been whipped or threatened with whipping had succumbed to the threat and changed sides.

[38] Mango 1981, esp. 408–10; *PmbZ*, no. 2665; *PBE* Ignatios 9.

[39] Theodore's views are repeated in many of his letters. See, for example, nos. 60, 136, 294 (for those who signed the subscription of 815 or communicated with the iconoclasts), 340, 384 (six canons regarding the inadmissible nature of even slight association with the iconoclasts), 386, 388 (need for written repentance), 446, 500, 525, 550. Letter 549 includes a significant collection of canons, requested by two abbots, Hilarion (of Dalmatos?) and Eustratios (of Agavron?), the importance of which is indicated by their attribution to the Patriarch Nikephoros in several later manuscripts (e.g., Rhalles-Potles, *Syntagma*, vi, 431), although some may be genuinely by Nikephoros: see Grumel, *Regestes*, nos. 403, 405, 406, 407; and Leroy 1958. An associated factor was the stress Theodore placed on the penance that 'iconoclasts' would have to make to return to the fold of orthodoxy. Note the example of Gregory of the

Theodore's criticism was equally directed at laypeople, although they are frequently treated more leniently than monks, and he praised laypeople who consciously avoided communion with the iconoclasts despite mixing with them in everyday life.[40] Yet in his letters he constantly complains about the 'unfeeling indifference' that had marked the people of Noah's day, and with whom he drew parallels with his own times.[41] He recognised that many people were forced in one way or another to associate with the official church, with the result that his definition of 'iconoclast' included a vast number of people who were in fact either neutral or iconophile.[42] Theodore refers to 'orthodox' churches where the name of the iconoclast patriarch is still commemorated, meaning, no doubt, churches where icons were still venerated within the framework of allegiance to the official regime in Constantinople.[43] Methodios, freed from prison by amnesty at the death of Michael II in 820, found – according to his *Vita* – 'no monastery free of the heresy'.[44] Part of the problem may have been the simple fact that, as Theodore himself informs us, most people just did not see iconoclasm as especially wrong and certainly not heretical.[45]

There remained an unrepentant group of opponents of the iconoclastic position. Many of these are known from the correspondence of Theodore of Stoudion – the former patriarch himself, as well as the bishops of Thessaloniki, of Sardis, of Synnada, for example – and many of Theodore's letters are addressed to iconophiles among both the secular clergy and the monastic communities.[46] Monastic communities which actively objected to the new

Adelphion monastery recorded in *Ep.*, 386. Gregory had apparently requested to be brought back into the Stoudite fold, but Theodore insisted that he make his commitment in writing and abjure all contact with 'iconoclasts'. See also *Ep.* no. 474, a similar case regarding the abbot of the Photeinoudion monastery, and *Ep.* 99, 127, 154, 155, 167, 178, 225, 230, 254, 255, 267, 269, 289, 333, 340, 388, 389, 394, 432, 487, 531, 543.

[40] See e.g. *Ep.* 95. Some of these people took care to have their own private iconophile chaplain on their estates, a practice Theodore understood as necessary but did not approve of, especially as it had been denounced by canon 10 of Nicaea II (see *Ep.*, nos. 180, 453, 525; *V. Gregorii Decapol.* 55, 62–3; *Acta Davidi et. al.*, 231, 236; *V. Petri Atroae*, 139). Peter of Atroa was also supplicated by repentant 'iconoclasts', see *V. Petri Atroae*, 131 ff., cap. 28, on the recantation of the hegumen Patermouthios. The canonical questions arising from the granting of dispensations was to prove a point of controversy between the Stoudites and the patriarchate after 842: see Darrouzes 1987.

[41] Cf. *Ep.*, 151, 162, 500, 549, for example.

[42] In *Ep.*, 437 he complains that a certain Niketas mixed openly with 'iconoclasts' while at the same time decorating his private chapel with images.

[43] *Ep.*, 446 (dated to the reign of Michael II).   [44] *V. Methodii*, 1249C.

[45] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* 393, 546.

[46] On Euthymios of Sardis, one of the most vigorous opponents of iconoclasm, see Gouillard 1987, esp. the historical survey, 2–19. For the iconophile bishops and archbishops, see

dogma were dispersed (although there does not seem to have been a great number of these); leading figures in the opposition were generally sentenced to the lash, sustaining injuries from which some died – although Thaddaios the Stoudite is the only one known to have died as a direct result of the beatings. Another Stoudite monk, James, died some time later, also having been severely whipped; but it is not clear that his punishment led to his decease.[47] Some state officers remained hostile to iconoclasm – an imperial fiscal official, for example, to whom Nikephoros addressed a letter before the synod of 815 convened, asking for support in persuading the emperor to abandon his new policy[48] – but most of these must have conformed at least publicly: the general *logothetes* Democharis, who is praised by Theodore of Stoudion for his orthodoxy, remained in post until late in the reign of Michael II, for example.[49] Theodore of Stoudion wrote letters to several state officers who clearly were securely in post throughout this time. It is unlikely that they had publicly compromised themselves by openly sympathising with Theodore. And it is entirely possible that the emperors were kept informed by the officers themselves of the correspondence, as a means of maintaining some degree of surveillance over Theodore's activities. It is also apparent from Theodore's letters that even within the iconophile monastic camp there were real differences of opinion both in respect of how to oppose imperial policy as well as in other facets of monastic life. Indeed, in hagiographies of the first half of the ninth century there are traces of such differences – as in the earlier version of the *Life* of St Ioannikios (who remains aloof from the whole iconoclast controversy), for example, whose author states that the monks of the Stoudion monastery are arrogant troublemakers who think themselves better than others.[50] Such hints are found in several other texts of the period.[51]

Those who stood out as opponents of the iconoclast council understandably received harsher treatment, precisely because they were setting out very

Alexander 1958a, 144, and Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 275. On the letters in general, see Efthymiadis 1995.

[47] See van de Vorst 1912; see Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 186–8. For James, *Ep.*, 189 and 441.

[48] *V. Nikephori*, 189f.

[49] See Winkelmann 1987a, 137f.; Brandes 2002, 193–4; *PmbZ*, no. 1322; *PBE* Democharis 1.

[50] For the officers in question, see Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 419, to Stephen, an *asekretis* (*PmbZ*, no. 7034; *PBE* Stephanos 130); 420, to Stephen, *magistros* (*PmbZ*, no. 7063; *PBE* Stephanos 136); 424, to John, *logothetes* (*PmbZ*, no. 3214; *PBE* Ioannes 457); 425, to Pantoleon the *logothetes* (*PmbZ*, no. 5702; *PBE* Pantoleon 13); 426, to the general *logothetes* Democharis; 400, to Leo the *sakellarios* (*PmbZ*, no. 4417; *PBE* Leo 260). For differences in opinion among iconophiles, see Alexakis 1994, for example, on the possible disagreements between Theodore of Stoudion and Niketas of Medikion. The comment in the *Life* of Ioannikios: *V. Ioannicii* (*a Petro*), 404C.

[51] See the discussion in Karlin-Hayter 2001 and the detailed analysis in Von Dobschütz 1909.

publicly to challenge imperial authority. Their rejection of imperial policy had as much to do with a rejection of the emperor's right to be directly involved in matters of dogma and belief as it had to do with the actual content of the emperor's and his supporters' theological views. The emperor, at the same time, was as interested in avoiding schism and maintaining order as he was in forcing everyone to agree with him, something he must have recognised to be unattainable. It appeared more effective to isolate the most entrenched opponents of imperial policy and to persuade the rest that there was no real wrongdoing in merely taking communion from the iconoclast patriarchate. To this end, Leo was concerned less that his opponents and detractors agreed with him than that they agreed to disagree and not pursue the matter – a remarkable similarity to the policies pursued by Constans II and his senior advisers in the later 640s and 650s with regard to the anti-monothelete opposition.

In effect, the iconoclast emperors and patriarchs of the 'second iconoclasm' were more concerned to assign the sacred image to the realm of economy, rather than to banish it outright which, even within Constantinople, may be assumed to have been impossible.[52] Public confessional unity was everything. Indeed, it might be said that it was not really iconoclasm that the emperors wished to impose: in several cases the sources indicate that it was the maintenance of a single communion of faithful that the iconoclasts wanted, rather than the imposition of a strictly iconoclast policy. While the veneration of sacred images was not tolerated in prominent public places, people were permitted effectively to do whatever they wished in private, as long as they recognised the legitimacy of the iconoclast patriarchate.[53] Michael II largely ceased to harass iconophiles, as long as they remained within the bounds of imperial law. Indeed, he seems to have forbidden the

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[52] See in particular the discussion in Kaplan 1999, with examples from the sources illustrating the ways in which Leo V tried to persuade his opponents simply to accept the imperial position publicly.

[53] For example, in the *Life* of Niketas of Medikion, xxxi: after a long period of cajoling, threats, and bribes, the iconoclast patriarch Theodotos gave communion to the hegumens of the so-called 'illustrious monasteries' (monasteries which had been most closely associated with imperial and patriarchal patronage during the iconophile period from 787 to 815). The participants proclaimed "Anathema to those who do not venerate the icon of Christ" (!) while they received communion, and the walls were "still decorated [with images] as before". In the *Life* of Makarios of Pelekete, 153ff., John the Grammarian is reported to have told the saint that he had nothing against the icons but simply wanted to see Makarios in communion with the church and the emperor. See also Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, no. 215. On the bribing of iconophiles, see also: *V. Theophanis conf.*, 29–30 (§xxvii, 46); *V. Michaelis syncelli*, 69 §13; *V. Nikeph. Seb.*, 24 ff.; *V. Ioannis Psichaita*, 114 ff.; *V. Hilarionis Dalmatae*, 731ff. There are other examples and, although this may have become a *topos*, the recognition that the emperors were after public conformity rather than absolute agreement is apparent.

public use of sacred images only within the walls of Constantinople[54] And while Leo V did implement some extreme measures against iconophiles, it is notable that this occurred only when they refused to accept what were taken as his moderate and innocuous demands. There is no plausible reference to anyone being executed for image veneration during the reigns of either Leo V or Michael II. Theodore of Stoudion notes the case of the Bulgarian monk Thaddaios, mentioned already, although this death resulted from a whipping rather than the application of a formally pronounced death penalty.[55] Floggings, harsh conditions of confinement, and other punishments are mentioned, yet importantly actual execution was never employed. Possibly Leo was anxious to avoid encouraging unwanted martyrs. But none of this is sufficient to support the notion that the iconoclasts had any intention of executing iconophiles during the years 815 to 829, a fact which helps to explain why Theodore had to go to great lengths – but not, it would appear, to deliberate lies – to foster a sense of harsh iconoclast persecution in his letters.[56]

Their prominence and the public nature of their views and role meant that Theodore of Stoudion and Nikephoros were treated somewhat differently. Theodore received a much more severe series of punishments – several beatings, and an exile (with several changes of location) lasting until Leo's death in 820 – primarily because of his capacity and perseverance as an organiser and agitator, his appeal to the papacy directly to take action

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[54] Michaelis imp., *Epistula ad Ludovicum Imperatorem*, 420 (Mansi xiv). Cf. *V. Theod. Stud.*, *c.* 317 C–D; *V. Nicolai Stud.*, *c.* 889, 892; *V. Nikeph.*, 209–10; *Acta Davidi, Symeonis et Georgii*, 230; Theoph. cont., 47–9, for example. Theodore of Stoudion had initially been positive about Michael's accession, see *Ep.*, 418, 429. But *Ep.*, 419, 420, 424, 425, and 429 are less optimistic. *Ep.*, 532 was addressed to Michael and his son Theophilos. See also *Ep.*, 417, 421, and 423 on the death of Leo V.

[55] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, nos. 186, 187, 188, 194, 195.

[56] Theodore does speak rhetorically about killings, but only rarely, and mentions no names or details (e.g. *Ep.*, no. 277, to the monks of the St Sabas monastery in Palestine, and no. 432). Only in one letter (no. 275 to the Patriarch of Alexandria) are more specific charges made of iconophiles being tied in sacks and drowned (cf. ll. 53–4). See also *Ep.*, 432. But this charge is made in a highly emotive letter (like all those written by Theodore to iconophile communities outside the empire), and yet Theodore chooses to justify his remarks by the hearsay of a few monks. That this rumour had indeed spread appears to be corroborated by passages in other sources, amongst them the *Script. incertus*, 71–2: first, that accusations had been spread about the drowning of monks, and second, that many iconophiles had been expelled in 815 and then called back very shortly afterwards to undergo re-interrogation. See Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 222 (summer–autumn 816, according to Fatouros, 287–8, confirmed in the *V. Nicetae Medicii*, xxx–xxxi, and Theoph. cont., 33). Another reference to the drowning of iconophiles appears in the Patriarch Nikephoros' *Contra Epiphaniam et Eusebiam* cap. 5 (in Pitra, *Spicilegium* 1, 377–8) which contains a general account of persecution, and by which time the topical repertoire of punishments was becoming well-established.

to restore orthodoxy and – very probably – his social connections and influence, as on the occasion of his first exile in the 790s.[57] But on the whole it is reasonable to conclude that, in spite of the claims of some of the iconophile sources, the persecution was a relatively moderate one, and in addition was fairly limited in scope, chiefly because there seems to have been only a limited public opposition to the new policy and dogma. This is not to suggest that a considerable number of individuals, especially members of the monastic community inspired to resist by Theodore, did not suffer at the hands of the imperial authorities, nor does it mean that the iconoclasts should be seen as well-meaning but misunderstood philanthropists. But it does seem to us that Leo V cannot be portrayed as the fierce and vicious persecutor of the contemporary and slightly later iconophile stories; and given the lack of any substantive evidence for destructive iconoclastic activity, it does mean that the stories of mass burnings and removal of icons, church plate and furniture bearing images, and the deaths of iconophile martyrs must on the whole be treated with extreme scepticism, just as we have seen is the case with much of the iconophile writing on the first iconoclasm.[58] Indeed, as is clear from the letter of Michael and Theophilos to Louis the Pious, the icons were still for the most part present, only those placed in particularly exposed, lower positions having been removed.

There seems little reason to doubt that the iconoclasm re-introduced by Leo V was the result both of a genuine belief that holy images were still an issue, reflecting serious anxieties among the soldiery and, probably, elements of the population of Constantinople at least; and, at the same time, and given the context of defeats at the hands of the Bulgars and the catastrophe of the death of the emperor Nikephoros I, the belief that the successes of the Isaurian emperors were founded upon the iconoclastic dogma which they had furthered, insofar as their policies were understood in 814.[59]

But there is an additional element that may well also have played a significant role, namely the stories of Constantine V as a hero, as a legendary figure whose deeds were worthy of imitation. This image of Constantine is

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[57] See the detailed account in Bury 1912, 71–3; Alexander 1958a, 145–7. For Theodore's letters to pope Paschal I, see *Ep.*, 271, 272; and for his exile, see Pratsch 1998, 247–61. For a sensible discussion of Theodore's position, pointing up the contradictions in his own written opinions over the period, see Karlin-Hayter 2001, 179–80; and esp. Karlin-Hayter 1994.

[58] See the material cited by Martin 1930, 179f., for example, and the discussion in Bury 1912, 74–6, who remains sceptical about the accuracy of Theodore's description of the nature of the persecution.

[59] The patriarch Nikephoros clearly alludes to the belief among many that iconoclasm had brought victory over the empire's enemies: *Antirrhetikos* iii, 70–2 (504–8); cf. Theoph., 496, 501 (Mango and Scott 1997, 679, 684).

clearly present in the minds of the *scholarioi* or tagmatic soldiers (as well as the non-military persons present?) who disrupted the first meeting of the council at Constantinople in 786.[60] Evidence from later hagiographies, albeit iconophile in tendency, similarly shows strains of an originally pro-Isaurian attitude widespread among the soldiers in the reign of Constantine VI: in the eleventh-century *Life* of Kosmas of Maiuma, which certainly employed much older material, the less deferential attitudes and values of Constantine V are contrasted (albeit unfavourably in this later version) with those of Constantine VI, who had no hesitation in casting himself down at the feet of a monk.[61] Similar pro-Constantine sentiments were expressed by soldiers, as we have seen, in 812 and 813, and vestiges of such attitudes which clearly had a wider currency than among soldiers alone, are reflected in a range of other sources, including the clearly iconophile *Antirrhetikoi* of Nikephoros and the so-called 'Letter to Theophilos'. Even in the tenth century the chronicler Leo the Deacon could assert that the Bulgars had been defeated by Constantine alone.[62] Although they have left no traces in the Greek sources, both the Latin (Neapolitan) and Armenian traditions preserved stories about Constantine V as a slayer of dragons and lions, clearly derived from Constantinopolitan originals (connected with the repair of the aqueduct of Valens, for example) and from his reputation as a fearless soldier in the wars with Bulgars and Arabs. Further, Constantine was also credited with a generous and open-handed character as regards money matters, quite the reverse of the picture favoured by the Byzantine iconophile tradition. It is even possible that his heroic deeds and legend found their way into the medieval German epic tradition.[63]

Unfortunately, these positive elements have been largely buried by the much more powerful flood of anti-Isaurian and anti-iconoclast propaganda which can be traced already from the early years of Constantine V, which was already well-established by the time the Acts of the Council of 787 were compiled, and which was then extended to be associated also with Leo V and his immediate iconoclastic successors; although again, positive

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[60] *V. Tarasii*, §26, and cf. Theoph., 461.20ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 635); Haldon 1984, 233.

[61] See *V. Cosmae et Ioannis*, 294 (and from a different and slightly variant ms. tradition Detorakes 1974, l. 815–16). For the date of the *Life*, see Beck 1959, 504–5; for the context, Haldon 1984, 233 and n. 601 (504).

[62] See Nikeph., *Antirrhetikos* iii, 508B–509A, 512B; *Epistula ad Theophilum imp.*, §35.20ff. (Gauer, 107.8–14); Leo diac., 104.17f.

[63] For a useful brief survey of these positive aspects of the Constantine tradition, see Rochow 1994, 123–31 and the literature cited there; as well as Gero 1973a, 183ff.; and Adontz 1933/4. On the dragon motif, see further Gero 1978; Zuckerman 1988, 200; Auzépy 2002; and 162 above.

images of, for example, the emperor Theophilos, survived in the Byzantine tradition.[64]

Through the re-introduction and apparent acceptance across the empire of an imperial iconoclasm, Leo was able to stabilise the empire's political fortunes, although there can be little doubt that this was based to a not inconsiderable extent on the fiscal reforms undertaken during the reign of Nikephoros I. As a usurper, however, Leo was also aware of the possibility of a challenge arising to his own rule. His successes included a relatively effective policy on the Bulgar front and a successful demonstration of imperial force against the caliphate in 817. The small but very significant victory over the Bulgar forces won in 816 was understood as showing divine support for the imperial policy, and encouraged several iconophiles to abandon their opposition and to take communion with the patriarch Theodotos; a thirty-year peace with the Bulgar khan Omurtag was agreed, involving also the establishment of a clear frontier line and the restoration to Byzantine authority of several towns which had been lost to Krum.[65]

Less successful was his attempt to resolve continued Frankish encroachments on Byzantine authority in Dalmatia, and the patriarch Theodotos' efforts to establish amicable relations with the papacy: an original mission to pope Leo III (d. 816) was finally presented to pope Paschal I (817–24) after the death of Stephen III (816–17), but the new pope rejected it. Theodore of Stoudion had effectively pre-empted this through his own letters and anti-patriarchal propaganda, at the same time placing firmly on the agenda for the future of Byzantine-papal relations the issue of the role and claims to priority of the papacy in resolving disputes within the Byzantine

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[64] See Rochow 1994, 131–46; for the original hostile legend, which itself evolved out of partly pro-Isaurian material and first appears in the so-called *Narratio* of John of Jerusalem incorporated into the Acts of 787, see Speck 1981, 75ff.; and 1990a, 25–113, 131–3. The later elaboration and extension of this initial phase is discussed *ibid.*, 115–38 (in Theophanes); 139–90 (in the *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*); and 191–253 (in the *Epistola ad Theophilum*). For the transfer of elements of the hostile legend to later iconoclastic emperors, see *ibid.*, 238ff., 255–61. For Theophilos, see below. The iconophile sources and the ways in which they portrayed the events of the second as well as the first iconoclasm have exercised a powerful influence on modern writing on the nature of iconoclast persecution. See, for example, the otherwise learned essay of Alexander 1977, which more or less accepts the iconophile version of events. For comments on the nature of iconophile distortions, see Brandes 2004.

[65] See Treadgold 1985; Bury 1912, 360ff.; Oikonomidès 1988a; Shepard 1998a, 234–7; Curta 2006, 154–6. The treaty also involved the Byzantines' recognising the independence of the Slav groups previously conquered in the corridor connecting Thrace with Greece, and the construction by the Bulgars of the 'great fence', a ditched frontier line which can still be traced (see Bury 1912, 361–2; Beševliev 1980, 476–7). For the campaign in Anatolia, see Bury 1912, 251–2 and n. 1. On Omurtag: *PmbZ*, no. 5651; *PBE* Omurtag 1.

church.[66] Relations with the papacy remained strained into the reign of Michael II. Relations with the eastern patriarchates are less clear: Theodore of Stoudion wrote a series of letters to the patriarchs and various churchmen and abbots in the east, decrying the persecution and heretical beliefs which swept the empire and punished the orthodox. Most of his addressees replied positively, but there is no evidence that this encouragement was taken up at an official level in letters from the eastern churches to the emperor or the patriarch, although the *Epistola ad Theophilum imperatorem*, at the core of which there does seem to lie an original letter of some sort from the eastern patriarchs, shows that at a somewhat later date an official stand was taken by the latter.[67]

Leo's successes did not do away with opposition, however, and in spite of the initial successes of the imperial party in winning over to their side a large number of clergy and monks, during 816 a reverse tendency can be detected, most particularly among the leadership of monastic communities in and around Constantinople and their followers. As we have noted already, for the first time the opposition to imperial iconoclasm appears to be firmly based in a monastic milieu, with Theodore playing a key role. It may have been the more oppressive and violent imperial treatment of the opposition which encouraged it, although this remains unclear.[68] For in spite of the favourable judgement reported to have been pronounced on his achievements and abilities as emperor by the former patriarch Nikephoros, and the reputation for justice which he seems to have attained,[69] the emperor feared possible coups directed against his rule. On the basis of clear evidence of being involved in such a plot, his friend Michael of Amorion, whom he had appointed to the post of commander of the *exkoubitores*, one of the imperial *tagmata*, was imprisoned at Christmas 820. Supporters of Michael were able to gain entry to the palace, where they murdered Leo in the chapel of St Stephen. Michael was released and hailed as emperor. Leo's four sons were castrated and banished with their mother, the empress Theodosia.[70] Michael was crowned the same day by the patriarch Theodotos.

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[66] For the embassies to Louis, see Lounghis 1980, 163–4; for the patriarchal mission to the papacy, see Grumel, *Regestes*, 410. On Theodore's relations with the papacy: van de Vorst 1913; and Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 271, 272.

[67] See Alexander 1958a, 146–7. On the *Epistola ad Theophilum*, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 279.

[68] This has been noted and discussed in particular by Pratsch 1998, 245–7, where the evidence cited is chiefly in the letters of Theodore of Stoudion.

[69] Genesios, i, §19; Bury 1912, 47–8.

[70] The whole affair is recounted in detail, with relevant sources, in Bury 1912, 48–55; Winkelmann 1987a, 77–8. For Michael: *PmbZ*, no. 4990; *PBE* Michael 10.

Michael II: 820–9

Although apparently held in some contempt by the more learned at court
and in the city on account of his lack of education and literary culture,
Michael proved an effective and capable ruler.[71] Theodore of Stoudion
appealed to him and to a considerable number of palatine officials to return
to the orthodoxy of 787, but without success. Indeed, Theodore's initially
hopeful views on the new emperor were made explicit in his assertion that
Michael would leave the church alone, to deal with its own affairs.[72] Thus
while Michael was no committed iconoclast, neither did he see fit to intro-
duce any radical shift in imperial policy, perhaps a result of the strength of
the association between imperial success and iconoclasm. And in an effort
to reconcile the two camps he recalled from exile those who had been ban-
ished by his predecessor. But he was faced with a more immediate problem
in the rebellion of his erstwhile comrade in arms Thomas the Slav, like both
Leo and Michael, a former retainer and supporter of Bardanios Tourkos
whose reluctant revolt against Nikephoros I had occurred in 803. There was
also opposition further afield: the commander of Sicily (a certain Gregory)
and its fleet appear to have rejected the new emperor and remained loyal
to Leo's memory. But Gregory was himself killed by elements favourable to
Michael, led by the *tourmarches* Euphemios, and it may be that the Sicilian
fleet played a role in Michael's eventual victory.[73]

Leo V had made Thomas *tourmarches* of the Federates, a command based
in the *Anatolikon* region, and on Leo's assassination he raised the standard
of revolt against Michael, although the grounds of avenging Leo which
he is said to have claimed probably conceal other motives.[74] He took the

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[71] See the remarks of Rosser 1972, 37ff., on what is known from the sources about Michael's
background and character; and for his reign, the commentary with additional literature in
Flusin and Cheynet 2003, 25–46; Treadgold 1988, 225–62; and especially the detailed treatment
in Signes Codoñer 1995, 175–357; *PmbZ*, no. 4989; *PBE* Michael 7.

[72] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 418, 429, for Theodore's appeal to re-establish good relations with the
papacy, and Bury 1912, 113. Note that Theodore styles Michael as a 'new David': 418.13. The
failure of these original appeals becomes apparent in *Ep.*, 420, 424, 425, and 429, and is
emphasised in letter 532 (dated to 826) where Theodore repeats and strengthens his argument.

[73] On Thomas, Leo, and Michael and their previous history, see Bury 1912, 10–13; also Bury
1892; Köpstein 1983, esp. 65–72 for a recent analysis of the sources relevant to Thomas' origins
and social background, which are extremely problematic: see, for example, Barisic 1958; 1961;
Lemerle 1965; *PmbZ*, no. 8459; *PBE* Thomas 7; *PmbZ*, no. 766; *PBE* Bardanes 3; and Signes
Codoñer 1995, 217–87. For Gregory and Euphemios, see Prigent 2006a, 280–97.

[74] Köpstein 1983, 73; and for full discussion of the sources and literature, *PmbZ*, no. 8459; cf. also
PBE Thomas 7. Given the contradictory source tradition (see Lemerle 1965 and discussion in
PmbZ), however, Afinogenov (1999, 446–7) has argued that the revolt actually began under
Leo, although this seems unlikely.

imperial name Constantine, perhaps to recall Constantine VI, and soon had the bulk of the Anatolian troops behind him. Only the *Opsikion* division, commanded by a certain Katakylas, a relative of Michael, remained loyal, along with the *Armeniakon* troops under their general Olbianos. Thomas was joined by many Paulicians, who had been persecuted by Leo; soldiers of all sorts of ethnic origin, both within and without the empire, are reported to have flocked to his standard; he succeeded in gaining caliphal support in the form of his official recognition by Baghdad as emperor of the Romans (and possibly for some territorial concessions); and he was given permission to be crowned emperor by the patriarch of Antioch.[75]

Having assembled an army of considerable size – an improbable 80,000 according to some sources – Thomas and his second-in-command Konstantios (who was also his adoptive son) marched in a pincer movement on Constantinople. But while Konstantios was defeated at the hands of Olbianos of the *Armeniakon*, and his forces scattered, Thomas had won the support of the Kibyrrhaiot and Aegean fleets, and was able to land his troops on the Thracian side of the Bosphoros and besiege Constantinople. From December 821 the city was closely invested, although imperial troops sallied out to defeat Thomas' forces in the spring; and in spite of Thomas's defeat of a revolt among his own followers and the arrival of the ships of the regions of Hellas and the Peloponnese to support him, imperial vessels armed with liquid fire destroyed the rebel fleet in a naval action in the summer of 822. In the spring of 823, however, the rebels raised the siege when it was learned that a large Bulgar force was marching against them (conflicting traditions exist as to whether Michael requested help from Omurtag or whether the latter intervened regardless, and to his own advantage).[76] The Bulgars defeated and scattered the rebel forces; Michael's pursuit resulted in a further defeat for Thomas' forces, many of whom changed sides; and the remnants of the rebel army were blockaded in the towns of Thrace with their leaders. Thomas himself took refuge in Arkadioupolis, but was eventually handed over to the emperor by his own supporters, and put to death. Remaining resistance, in Thrace and elsewhere, crumbled, and by the end of 823 Michael had firmly established his power. In spite of their raiding and

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[75] For analysis, see Köpstein 1983, 73f.; Winkelmann 1987a, 66–8; Kaegi 1981, 261f.; for a full account, see Bury 1912, 84–9; and Vasiliev 1950, 22–49, on the results of which this brief summary is based. For Katakylas: *PmbZ*, no. 3639; *PBE* Katakylas 1; Olbianos: *PmbZ*, no. 5646; *PBE* Olbianos 3.

[76] Köpstein 1983, 82ff. For Thomas's 'sons', both members of his retinue whom he adopted: *PmbZ*, no. 4056; *PBE* Konstantios 1; and *PmbZ*, no. 317; *PBE* Anastasios 23.

pillaging while 'assisting' Michael against Thomas in Thrace, peace with the Bulgars was firmly established.[77]

Whether Thomas presented himself for or against the restoration of image worship remains entirely unclear.[78] It has been suggested that the support and encouragement he clearly received from much of the provincial rural population in both Asia Minor and Greece, and in particular from the provincial forces, both maritime and land troops, reflected the unpopularity of imperial fiscal pressure, and that Thomas probably allowed both iconophiles and those who preferred the iconoclasm of the synod of 815 to believe he would favour their cause.[79] It is clear that the warfare between the two sides must have damaged the rural economy of the regions most affected, in particular the region around Constantinople, which had had to support Thomas' forces for more than eighteen months,[80] but there is no real evidence that this had any longer-term significance for the pattern of social relations in the countryside and the relationship between the nascent landowning elite of the empire and the producing population.[81] The political consequences of the war are more obvious: a casting off of east Roman authority by many of the Dalmatian coastal towns (some of which were not brought back under imperial authority until the reign of Basil I);[82] much more significantly, the attack from Egypt by Andalusian raiders who, having been expelled by the Umayyad emir, had seized Alexandria, only to be driven out in 825, sailed north to attack and capture Crete (between 826 and 828);[83] and the Arab invasion of Sicily, initiated by a Byzantine rebel in 827.

Although the Byzantine fleets did respond, the response was inadequate to the task of two naval operations requiring considerable resources at the same time. The result was that the invaders were able to consolidate their position on these islands, so that Crete was lost until its eventual recovery

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[77] Bury 1912, 90–110; Lemerle 1965, 290f.; Mango 1983; Curta 2006, 156.

[78] See *V. Theod. Stud.*, 320, for the iconophile position which Thomas was reported to have; and cf. the somewhat unreliable *Acta Davidi, Symeonis et Georgii*, 232, for his 'pretending' to support the restoration of image worship.

[79] See Köpstein 1983, 74–80. In the letter of Michael and Theophilos to Louis the Pious of 824 there is no direct suggestion that Thomas was not an iconoclast, for example; in contrast, the *Life* of Theodore of Stoudion suggests that Theodore was recalled from exile by Michael in order to pre-empt the possibility of his supporting Thomas who, it was thought (according to the *Life*), was a defender of orthodoxy: see *V. Theod. Stud.*, 317D–320A.

[80] See Theoph. cont., 49.20–50.3; 53.12–21.

[81] See Bury 1912, 109–10, who argued for major disruption in the pattern of landowner-peasant relations; and more sceptically, Lemerle 1965, 296 and n. 141.

[82] Theoph. cont., 84. 2–3; Signes Codoñer 1995, 349.

[83] See Kennedy 1981, 169–70; Christides 1984; Signes Codoñer 1995, 289–316, 323–40.

in 961 (and after two previous and extremely costly failures in 911 and 949), serving from Michael's time as a base for corsairs and raiders into the Aegean and east Mediterranean basin, while the recovery of Sicily was only begun during the reign of Basil II. Loss of control of much of Sicily also resulted in Arab attacks into the Italian peninsula and the further reduction of imperial authority along both the western and eastern coasts, and, as we will see, Bari, Brindisi, and Tarentum were all taken and held for various periods by Saracen raiders.[84] Yet in spite of these setbacks the state was still able to field effective forces when necessary: in 829 a special corps was fitted out to drive the Arabs from Crete out of the Cyclades; and although, following Byzantine successes in a raid on Sozopetra (Zapetra) and on the Syrian coast in 824, a combined naval and land raid was mounted by the caliph Ma'mun in 825, it seems to have done little long-term damage, and – perhaps in view of his other preoccupations, perhaps also because it was simply a wiser move – Michael did not respond, so that the eastern frontier remained in a condition of hostile equilibrium.[85]

As noted already, Michael's policy with regard to imperial iconoclasm was to maintain the situation he had inherited. At the commencement of his reign he recalled from exile those whom his predecessor had banished, primarily the monks and other churchmen who had refused communion with iconoclasts. On Theodore of Stoudion's request that he once more restore the images and take up relations with the western church, which should be permitted to fulfil the role of arbiter of the dispute as head of all the churches, he noted that he would permit the iconophiles freedom to

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[84]   Bury 1912, 287–92; 294–308; 478–80; Christides 1981; Prigent 2006a for a detailed re-assessment of the whole Sicilian affair. The Muslim conquest of Sicily was inaugurated by the rebellion of the *tourmarches* of the island, Euphemios, who had been on campaign, raiding the North African shore, but rebelled on discovering that he was to be arrested for a minor misdemeanour, killed the *strategos* Constantine, but was in his turn defeated by one of the other garrison commanders. He fled with his ships to the Aghlabid emir Ziadat Allah, and the attack on the island in 827 thus became a combined operation. At first the Byzantines were able to hold on to only a few strongholds and Syracuse. But the death of Euphemios and the arrival of a new *strategos* in 829 resulted in a series of Byzantine successes, so that by the time of Michael's death the Byzantines had the upper hand once more, although Arab raiders from Sicily attacked Rome in 846. See also Signes Codoñer 1995, 341–6; Kislinger and Seibt 1998, 21–3. The conquest of Crete was achieved much more rapidly, and although the Kibyrrhaiot fleet and army were able to register some successes on the island in 828, carelessness left them open to surprise attack, with the result that the expeditionary force was destroyed and the thematic commander captured and killed.

[85]   See Vasiliev 1950, 269 (Baladhuri's account of the Byzantine attack and the later proposal made by Michael in 825 for a treaty between caliphate and empire); Bury 1912, 251; *CMH* iv, 1, 100; 709.

follow their conscience outside Constantinople, but would go no further. In a speech he supposedly gave to those bearing a letter from the former patriarch Nikephoros he refused to change anything, and at the same time banned all discussion of the councils of 754, 787, and 815. Realising that Theodore and his followers would not compromise, however, the emperor appointed Anthony, the bishop of Syllaion, to the patriarchal throne (Theodotos had recently died), thus terminating the negotiations and putting an end to the aspirations of the iconophile monks and churchmen.[86] There is no evidence at all to support the idea that Theodore and the other leading iconophiles supported the rebel Thomas during the civil war: indeed, it is clear that Theodore himself had no sympathy with him, and saw the civil war as a punishment for the sins of the Romans (he had fled to the Marmara region and then to the capital as Thomas' rebel forces approached his place of self-imposed exile in the monastery of Kreskentiou in Bithynia).[87]

Michael made a second attempt at reconciliation after the war with Thomas was over, but again was rebuffed by Theodore as the spokesperson of the iconophiles, who suggested rather that the whole matter should be settled either by a council, at which the former patriarch Nikephoros should preside, with or without representatives from the other patriarchates, or before the pope, as final arbiter, in Rome.[88] Nikephoros himself was equally determined in his rejection of compromise, and penned his *Refutation* of the *Horos* of 815 at about this time. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that anyone other than already committed iconophiles were at all familiar with it, and even after the restoration of images after 843 it received little attention.[89] Michael could not accept the idea that the pope had the right to intervene directly in the affairs of the eastern church, of course, and indeed when Methodios (later patriarch) arrived at Constantinople bearing a definition of orthodoxy from pope Paschal I, he was dealt with as a traitor who had intrigued with a foreign power and imprisoned. This was the only measure of oppression ascribed to Michael in the contemporary sources.[90]

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[86] See Leo Gramm., 211.13–17; *V. Nikeph.*, 209; Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 429; and commentary in Pratsch 1998, 264–72; 1999c, 162–3.

[87] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 478.26–30. For an account of his self-imposed exile, with sources and literature, see Pratsch 1998, 272–91.

[88] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* 478.78–97.

[89] As Featherstone points out, in Nikephoros, *Refutatio*, xxiv (noting that even Photios seems to have been unfamiliar with the text).

[90] *V. Method.*, 1248, and Bury 1912, 114–16; Zielke 1999, 200, 202–4, who emphasises the fact that the reason for Methodios' arrest was almost certainly nothing to do with the image question. There is a good deal of confusion over Methodios's punishment and the dates of his various activities at this time: see Gouillard's discussion *V. Euthymii episcopi Sardensis*, 8, 12–16. But see also the comments of Treadgold 2004.

In contrast, the emperor persevered with suggestions for a conference of both parties, at which he hoped that the iconophiles would be converted to the imperial point of view.[91]

As a direct response to these difficulties, Michael turned to his fellow ruler in the West, the emperor Louis, addressing a letter to him in his own name and that of his son and heir apparent, Theophilos, in which he set out the background to the affair, justified the imperial position in respect of the synod of 815, and affirmed their belief in the six ecumenical councils, as well as their veneration of the relics of the saints. He also recounted the history of his war with Thomas the Slav, and appealed to the western ruler to deal with the eastern monks in Rome who were conducting anti-imperial propaganda there.[92] Louis' response was to continue the policy of his father Charlemagne: as outlined at the synod of Frankfurt in 794, the western rulers rejected the position taken by both the iconoclast Council of 754 and the Council of Nicaea in 787. The new pope, Eugenius (Paschal died in early 824) agreed to allow Louis to convoke a synod to resolve the issue (although he also reserved the right not to be instructed on matters of theology by the Frankish clergy), and at Paris in November 825 the removal of icons from church buildings was condemned, likewise the worship of icons was condemned, as was pope Hadrian for approving the dogma of Nicaea.[93] It is not known how the papacy responded to this – exchanges in 826 between Rome and the Frankish court and between the latter and Constantinople followed, but the contents of the discussions are not known, although it has been suggested that they dealt in part at least with the question of the see of Grado and the Istrian bishoprics, regulated at the synod of Mantua in 827.[94]

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Michael maintained his policy of neutrality between the two religious camps until his death, supported throughout by the patriarch Anthony. His desire to maintain a compromise is evidenced in his marriage shortly after the war with Thomas to Euphrosyne, a daughter of Constantine VI. Some outrage was expressed, not only at a second marriage, and so soon after the emperor had been widowed (his first wife Thekla, the mother of Theophilos, had

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[91] Pratsch 1998, 277.

[92] The letter is dated April 10 824: cf. Mansi xiv, 420; Dölger, *Reg.*, nos. 408, 409. See Lounghis 1980, 164f. For a partial translation, see Freeman 1985, 100; also Bury 1912, 117.

[93] The background to the synod, the Frankish request to the pope, and the pope's reply, as well as the results of the synod, are to be found in the *Libellus synodalis Parisiensis*. Translated extracts in Freeman 1985, 101ff. For the synod and its history, see Martin 1930, 251–7; Freeman 1985, 100–5; Boureau 1987; Hartmann 1989; and Thümmel 2005, 287–9.

[94] See Bury 1912, 330; Lounghis 1980, 165–6; and for the general context of Frankish-papal-Byzantine relations, Herrin 1987, 469–73.

recently died), but also at the fact of his marrying a nun. But by marrying her Michael also lent his rule a degree of legitimacy through connecting his family with that of the Isaurian dynasty as well as with the offspring of an iconophile emperor. Whether these motives were expressed publicly by Michael is not known, but the union seems to have done him no political harm, and may well have strengthened and stabilised his authority.[95] His moderation remained with him until his death (from kidney failure) in October 829, when he ordered the release of prisoners.[96] He was succeeded peacefully by his son Theophilos, ruling at first with his stepmother Euphrosyne.

Theophilos: 829–42

Theophilos began his reign by punishing those who had been involved in the assassination of Leo V, in an effort both to distance himself from his father's involvement therein and to establish a reputation for justice. In this he clearly succeeded, for even the hostile and partial chronicles which portrayed all the emperors of the Amorian dynasty in a negative light retain many traces of stories concerning his justice and fairness. But in his dealings with foreign powers, in consequence of this otherwise hostile tradition, it is the negative which dominates the narrative histories, in spite of the successes of the reign: the capture and sack of Amorion in 838 is the *locus classicus* in this tendency. This is repeated also in respect of his religious policies, for he was a more committed iconoclast than his father, with whom his relationship can be compared with that between Leo III and Constantine V: the father a soldier of relatively humble origins, the son brought up and educated in the more sophisticated and intellectually challenging context of the imperial household.[97]

Be that as it may, and with the support of the patriarch Anthony and the learned John the Grammarian, who became patriarch in 837 but who had

[95] Theoph. cont., 78.9–79.12; Genesios, ii, §14.70–2; Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 514; Bury, *ERE*, 111; Pratsch 1998, 278–81; and for the patriarch Anthony, Pratsch 1999c, 162–5.

[96] Theoph. cont., 83.16ff.; Genesios, ii, §15; Leo Gramm., 213.24f.; *V. Methodii*, 1249B.

[97] For accounts of the reign of Theophilos, see Rosser 1972; Bury 1912, 120–43; for his early years, Rosser 1972, 34–42; Treadgold 1988, 263–329; complete analysis of the sources with discussion in Signes Codoñer 1995, 359–601. On his justice and the evidence for it, Rosser 1972, 54–9, 62f. See *PmbZ*, no. 8167; *PBE* Theophilos 5; and the commentary in Flusin and Cheynet 2003, 47–72. We will not deal with the supposed bride-show that reputedly led to Theophilos' marriage to Theodora, of which we are highly sceptical: see Vinson 1999, 2001, 2004 with De Jong 2004.

been made patriarchal *sygkellos* in 829–30 as a result of a long-term illness of the patriarch Anthony,[98] it seems that the emperor decided to adopt a more severe policy with regard to image worship than that which he had inherited from his father and maintained at the beginning of his reign.[99] Exactly when this occurred, and why, remains disputed, but it has been suggested that the loss of Panormos in Sicily and the emperor's own defeat at Muslim hands in Cappadocia in 831, combined with evidence for treasonous plotting on the part of certain iconophiles in the capital, forced his hand. Towards the end of the year 831, Euthymios of Sardis and Joseph of Thessaloniki were arrested, both purportedly for distributing or writing pamphlets foretelling the death of the emperor.[100] They were beaten, and Euthymios, who was in his 70s, died from his injuries. Their associates were also sought out and punished: Joseph of Thessaloniki was imprisoned in the imperial hospice of St Samson, for example, while Theophilos of Ephesos, an old associate, had to go into hiding: all were suspected of essentially political crimes. It is clear, however, even from the hagiographies, that political concerns were Theophilos' prime motive – the circulation of pamphlets defaming the emperor was a treasonable act.[101] There are a number of other examples of persecution at this time, although largely limited to exiling individuals who challenged imperial authority to a variety of rural or provincial locations. The monk Niketas Monomachos, for example, a distant relative of the

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[98] There is some disagreement as to this date, since the Byzantine sources are contradictory: an earlier date of 832 was proposed by Bury 1912, 135; Martin 1930, 207. 837 is now generally accepted: see the argument in Grumel, *Regestes*, i, 42; Pratsch 1999c, 165; Lilie 1999c, 176. John had played an important role in persuading many senior clergy to support Leo V's 'iconoclast' position in 814 and during the synod of 815 in particular, and seems to have been a close confidant of the imperial household under Michael II. See Gero 1974/5; Lilie 1999c, 171–6.

[99] See *V. Nicetae patricii et monachi*, 323ff.: Niketas was ordered to accept communion with the patriarch or be exiled. For Theophilos' iconoclasm, see Signes Codoñer 1995, 403–45.

[100] *V. Euthymii*, §§13–14; *Acta Davidi, Symeonis et Georgii*, 238; note at *V. Methodii*, 1248C, the saint's cell-mate was in prison on account of political crimes. This was the third such prophecy, the earlier ones predicting the end of Leo V and Michael II. See Gouillard 1987, 43ff.; Zielke 1999, 212–13; Treadgold 1988, 276–7; and Brandes 2000. Methodios' name also was directly associated with the prophecies, and in turn with prophecies attributed to Methodios of Olympos: see Alexander 1985, 13–72. On Methodios, see Pargoire 1903; Gouillard 1987, 11–16; Zielke 1999, 204–14. Pargoire discusses in detail the two conflicting traditions about Methodios' life, one of which maintains that he was not persecuted under Michael II at all, but rather under Theophilos. See now Zielke 1999.

[101] See Gouillard 1987, 8–10, 12ff., for a summary of these events in the *Life*; and Gouillard 1960, 39–40; Thümmel 2005, 265f. See on Joseph: *PmbZ*, no. 3448; *PBE* Ioseph 3 (with incorrect date of death, given as 824 instead of 832); further, Gouillard 1987, 8 and n. 47; and on Theophilos of Ephesos: *PmbZ*, no. 8209; *PBE* Theophilos 15. Gouillard suggests that Theophilos of Ephesos is otherwise unknown, but in fact he conducted the funeral of Niketas of Medikion together with Joseph in 824 (*V. Nicetae Medicii*, 48). For the hospice of Samson, see Janin 1969, 561f.

empress Eirene and a former *strategos*, was repeatedly moved on from one place to another, both under Michael II and Theophilos, forced to leave the residence in which he had taken refuge in Bithynia in 836 because the local bishop insisted that he take communion with him, before eventually establishing a small monastic community shortly before his death in the same year.[102]

For the most part, the sources are rather vague about the extent of the persecution which followed and the role played by Theophilos before he became emperor. General remarks to the effect that the emperor ordered the taking down of images, that many monks were banished or tormented, or that he sought to outdo his predecessors in persecuting the orthodox, even if they are not largely iconophile propaganda, are of little assistance in determining what Theophilos' iconoclasm was really like.[103] That he was of a more radical bent than his father seems fairly clear, however, and one source repeats that he followed such a policy throughout his reign.[104] It is clear that he forbade the painting of religious images, and he is accused of removing images and replacing them with pictures of birds and animals; and that the grounds for his policy were similar to those expressed in the *Horos* of 815.[105] And it is certain that, in 833, the emperor began a more comprehensive persecution directed against iconophiles who were not in communion with the official church, and ordered the sequestration of the property of all those who helped or sheltered such persons.[106] John, the

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[102] See *V. Nicetae patricii et monachi*, 314, 320–7: as noted above (n. 98) Niketas had first been ordered to accept communion with the patriarch or be exiled. He had been a high-ranking military officer in his early career, appointed as *strategos* of Sicily from 797–9, and became a monk in 811. He was favoured by Michael I, but thereafter seems to have been regarded as a threat, perhaps because of his secular career and family connections as much as because of his hostility to imperial iconoclasm. See *PmbZ*, no. 5424; *PBE* Niketas 160.

[103] See Theoph. cont., 99.7ff.; Genesios, iii, §19; G. mon. cont., 791.16–20. Rosser 1972, 67, notes that the only contemporary source is George the Monk, whose polemic is plagiarised from the work of Gregory of Nazianzos against the pagan emperor Julian: *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, ii, 797–801. Some traditions record that Euthymios of Sardis died at the hands of Theophilos, but before he had succeeded to the throne: see, e.g., Theoph. cont., 48.13–15 and Gouillard 1987, 10.

[104] Theoph. cont., 87.2–6; 106.12–17.

[105] Theoph. cont., 99.16–100.2 and cf. Alexander 1953, frg. 15.

[106] Theoph. cont., 99.20–100.5ff. Whether a formal edict was issued is unclear, but an explicit command was clearly given: see *V. Petri Atroae*, 187; *V. Nicetae patricii et monachi*, 327f. Much greater doubt surrounds a synod supposedly convened under Theophilos, for which there is evidence only in the *Epistola ad Theophilum*, a twelfth-century compilation based on ninth- and tenth-century models, although Grumel 1930, 99, argues in favour, as does Alexander 1958a, 223, and 1953, 57 with n. 42. On the *Epistola*, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 279–80. That the emperor also sold off or burned sacred vessels and furniture seems unlikely, in view of the *Horos* of 754 (followed by that of 815) with which he was clearly very familiar: see Theoph. cont., 100.2–3.

abbot of the monastery of the Katharoi, Makarios of Pelekete, Hilarion of the monastery of Dalmatos, Symeon, a stylite from the island of Lesbos, and several others were banished to the isle of Aphousia, while Michael, the *sygkellos* of the patriarchate of Jerusalem, was jailed in the *Phiale* prison in Constantinople. Niketas the monk and former *strategos* of Sicily, mentioned already, was banished for refusing to take communion with the patriarch Anthony in 830.[107]

Two of the best-known victims of this persecution were the Palestinian monks, Theophanes and Theodore, close associates of Michael the *sygkellos*. They had arrived in the time of Leo V, had already been imprisoned during his reign (probably not on Aphousia the first time), and were so recalcitrant in their attitude that the emperor is said to have had verses branded upon their foreheads advertising their crimes.[108] Neither were powerful connections a hindrance to punishment for iconophile sentiment: the *spatharios* Sergios (father of the later patriarch Photios), who had married a certain Eirene, whose brother had himself married a sister of the empress, was punished and, together with his family, exiled, and his property confiscated, possibly because he had been writing a history critical of the reign and policies of Michael II. As has already been noted, therefore, much of the 'persecution' of iconophiles is in fact directed at those who, for one reason or another, were in effect challenging the emperor's God-given authority.[109]

The decree, if such it was, was observed outside Constantinople, too. According to one source, iconophile monks were forbidden access to cities, monasteries, and public places; as a result of the persecution, many forsook their calling, although many fled to the mountains and caves where they could escape imperial attention. A well-known example is provided by the abbot Peter of Atroa, who had initially moved to Prousa in the Hellespont, and around whom a small following had assembled, but who was then compelled by the local bishop to leave his monastery. He eventually found safety elsewhere in Bithynia, but was compelled to flee later as the imperial

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[107] For John, see *Synax. CP*, 631–4; *PmbZ*, no. 3139; *PBE* Ioannes 460; for Hilarion: *Synax. CP*, 731–4; *PmbZ*, no. 2584; *PBE* Hilarion 1; for Makarios: van den Gheyn 1897, 158; *PmbZ*, no. 4672; *PBE* Makarios 9. For Symeon, see *Acta Davidi, Symeonis et Georgii*, 239; *PmbZ*, no. 7178; *PBE* Symeon 13; and for Michael, see *V. Michaelis syncelli*, 78.7ff.; *PmbZ*, no. 5059; *PBE* Michael 51. On Aphousia see Janin 1969, 200f.

[108] See Vailhé 1901; Bury 1912, 137ff.; *V. Theodori Grapti*, 669 with the commentary of Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 151 (n. 107) and the critical remarks of Sode 2001, 215–36. See also Rosser 1972, 83–5; and *PmbZ*, no. 7526; *PBE* Theodoros 68;. *PmbZ*, no. 8093; *PBE* Theophanes 6.

[109] See *Synax. CP*, 681ff., and Mango 1977b, 135–9. *PmbZ*, no. 6665; *PBE* Sergios 16.

authorities caught up with him in Lydia.[110] According to the later chronicles, the prisons were full of those who fought for the cause, who painted images, who wrote in their defence, whether monks, bishops or others.[111] Gregory the Decapolite was similarly forced to go into hiding, finding a safe haven in a peasant household, though he essentially accommodated iconoclasm.[112]

But, as earlier, many monks and the majority of the clergy accepted the change and continued as before, so that supporters of the iconoclast dogma could be found in all the monasteries.[113] Famous churchmen of the period could also be found making no challenge to the imperial policy – St Ioannikios, already mentioned (and criticised for his attitude by Theodore of Stoudion), for example, or the later patriarch Ignatios, who had been abbot of a monastery which officially accepted the imperial policy and was in communion with the imperial church.[114]

That Theophilos had targeted all monks as a particular object of his wrath is clearly not the case, nor is it correct that monks as a body were defenders of image worship. In the first place, the emperor clearly had nothing against monasteries as such. Theophilos granted certain imperial monastic houses – that at Chrysopolis, together with those of Bursis and Elaia – as a gift to the *caesar* Alexios Mousele, for example;[115] and just as, under Leo V, the monastery of Sts Sergios and Bakkhos had served as a place of confinement for iconophiles, so the monastery of St John the Baptist of Phoberon (at the northern end of the Bosphoros) was used as a place of confinement for hostile critics of the imperial policy: the three monks of the monastery of the Abraamites (near the Golden gate) who are said to have remonstrated with the emperor were banished there, before being beaten so badly that they died.[116] According to a tenth-century source, the painter

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[110] See Laurent in *V. Petri Atroae, La vie merveilleuse de Saint Pierre d'Atroa*, 186–7; 207.

[111] Theoph. cont., 100.5–23.

[112] *V. Greg. Decapolitae*, 53; and 58 for the role of the (pro-imperial) bishop of the region. On Gregory, see Dvornik's commentary; and Mango 1985b, 635–46; *PmbZ*, no. 2486; *PBE* Gregorios 79; Malamut 2004.

[113] *V. Methodii patr.*, 1249.   [114] Karlin-Hayter 1977, 142; 2001, 178.

[115] Theoph. cont., 109.2–4. On architectural patronage under Theophilos, see 419ff. below.

[116] See Genesios, iv, §4.34f. (for the monastery of Sergios and Bakkhos under John Hylilas, the Grammarian); Theoph. cont., 101.1–18; 102.19–103.18. For Lazaros' later activities, see *LP* II, 147, 150; and the commentary in Rosser 1972, 81–2, 85–6. For the monastery of the Abraamites, see Janin 1964, 455; 1969, 4–6. On the monastery at Phoberon, Janin 1975, 7f. Rosser 1972, 82f., suggests that the monastery of Phoberon was used as a place of refuge by iconophiles, and that this shows that 'monasteries were willing to hide such persons, even though it was illegal to do so'. But the sources do not say this much, and it seems far more likely that – as under Constantine V and Leo V – certain (probably pro-imperial, or at least

Lazaros was similarly confined there after being punished by having his hands burned (although not so badly that he could not continue to paint and, later, serve as an imperial emissary to Rome under Michael III).[117] The monastery of Sosthenios, on the European shore of the Bosphoros, was the place of confinement of the brothers Theophanes and Theodore, the *graptoi*, before their exile to Aphousia and interrogation at the hands of the emperor in 836.[118] Eustratios, the companion of Ioannikios, became abbot of the monastery of Agauroi under Theophilos, but was expelled and replaced by an iconoclast. The community thereafter seems to have accepted the imperial policy and continued to function. After 843 Eustratios was reinstated as abbot.[119] And as the reference in the *Life* of Methodios makes clear, plenty of monks supported the imperial line.[120]

And yet, paradoxically, Theophilos made an exception in the case of Methodios. Methodios was, like those already mentioned, a staunch opponent of the imperial policy with regard to images. The public and provocative nature of his opposition – just as with Theodore of Stoudion – inevitably attracted harsh reprisals. He was initially imprisoned and beaten; but on discovering that Methodios' interests were in many respects close to his own, the emperor released him, and Methodios became a close associate and discussant of Theophilos. In fact, it is probable, although not clear from his *Life*, that Methodios had closer connections with members of the imperial family and household than this account would suggest, and that family connections may have played a role in saving him from further persecution.[121] It may also be that Theophilos was generally in awe or afraid of Methodios' prophetic powers.[122] The story that he was later confined in a monastery, that of Elaiobomoi (on the shore of the Gulf of Gemlik),

not openly anti-imperial) monastic houses were used as places of banishment and supervision for opponents of the official policy. Equally, this example can hardly be used to generalise and claim that monasteries (which? some or all?) were willing to hide refugees. No doubt some were; but the examples of iconoclastic persecution that are known suggest that the imperial authorities were fairly effective in locating them (the example of Peter of Atroa, for example: see above).

[117] On Lazaros, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 72–3; Rosser 1972, 81–2, 85–6; and 427–8 below.

[118] *V. Theod. Grapti*, 665, 668 (and on the monastery, see Pargoire 1898). Thereafter they were imprisoned in the Praitorion in Constantinople until their release after the death of Theophilos: *V. Michaelis syncelli*, 98.25ff. For the date of the punishment, see Cunningham, in *V. Michaelis syncelli*, n. 162 (160).

[119] For the *Life* of Eustratios, see *V. Eustratii*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, in: *Analekta* iv, 367–400.

[120] *V. Methodii patr.*, 1249.

[121] *V. Methodii*, 1249–52; Theoph. cont., 116.11ff.; Genesios, iii, §21. See Zielke 1999, 214–15; Karlin-Hayter 2001, 177–8; Treadgold 2004.

[122] And compare his attitude with that reported of Leo V, who became fearful when he discovered in the imperial library a book with illustrations and predictions about future emperors:

after his stay in the palace, from which he was recalled following advice from Ioannikios, seems not to be plausible in the light of the other evidence for his life, and he must still have been at court when Theophilos died in 842.[123] Neither the imperial palace nor its administration was uniformly iconoclastic. It is possible that some of the women members, including the empress Theodora and her mother, remained attached to images, and succeeded in maintaining their attachment in spite of the emperor's wrath – if the tales told in the mid-tenth-century chronicles are believed.[124] Both pseudo-Symeon and the continuator of Theophanes claim that Theodora worshipped icons in the privacy of her bedroom, and took her daughters either to her mother, Theoktiste, or to her stepmother-in-law, Euphrosyne, for secret instruction in how to venerate icons.[125] Symeon the Logothete also records that Theodora secretly worshipped icons before Theophilos' death in 842;[126] and two later tenth-century texts (associated with the 'rehabilitation' of Theophilos) continue to link Theodora with icons.[127] These accounts are problematic. While Theodora's approval of the Council of 843 that ended iconoclasm assures us that the empress was not actively hostile to icon veneration, her *Vita*, which was probably composed in the late ninth or early tenth century, fails to mention the anecdotes related by the later compilers; at best, as Vinson has already observed, it portrays Theodora as an 'iconophile sympathizer'.[128]

Perhaps more significantly, key figures in the imperial administration who were related to the empress retained iconophile sympathies: her brothers Bardas and Petronas, her uncle Manuel, and also the *patrikios* Sergios, the father of the later patriarch Photios, who had been more open in his refusal to accept the imperial policy and who was, as noted already, punished by exile and having his property confiscated. But he, too, was a relative of the empress through the marriage of one of her sisters, Kalomaria, to the *patrikios* Arsaber, his wife's brother. This family group was to play a key role after Theophilos' death in 842.[129]

Theoph. cont. 35. 20–36.11 (and cf. Signes Codoñer 1995, 159–65). We thank Wolfram Brandes for this suggestion.

[123] See *V. Michaelis syncelli*, 104.10–12, and for the monastery, Janin 1975, 142ff., and Mango 1968a; Zielke 1999, 216.

[124] On which see Bury 1912, 141–3; Rosser 1972, 90–3; and below, 448–50.

[125] Theoph. cont., 89–91, 628–9. See also Kazhdan and Talbot 1991/2, 391.

[126] *Leo.Gramm.*, 228.   [127] See Markopoulos 1998, 37–49.

[128] Vinson 1998, 496. For the *Vita* in Eng. trans., Talbot 1998, 353–82.

[129] See *Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii*, 245f.; Theoph. cont., 148.12ff.; Genesios, iv, §ii.67ff.; and Mango 1977b, 134f. For the individuals: Bardas: *PmbZ*, no. 791; *PBE* Bardas 5; Petronas: *PmbZ*, no. 5929, 6056; *PBE* Petronas 5; Manuel: *PmbZ*, no. 4707; *PBE* Manuel 6; Sergios:

The evidence reviewed briefly thus far seems to indicate a carefully tar-geted campaign of persuasion, coercion, punishment and repression in Constantinople and the provinces around it in Europe and Asia Minor (Bithynia and Lydia are specifically mentioned, for example); and although there is no explicit evidence for it, it was probably not simply confined to these regions alone: as in the time of Leo V, when the state was clearly able to make its policy effective across most of the provinces, even as far away as southern Italy, there is no reason to doubt that this was not also the case under Theophilos.[130] It suggests that Theophilos' policy met with tacit but general acceptance among the officers of the state and the army, and among the population at large. No doubt large numbers of people compromised for the sake of their position: the letters of Ignatios of Nicaea make it clear that he conformed with imperial policy without demur, even though he claimed afterwards never to have accepted the theological arguments of the iconoclasts. The powerful *logothetes tou dromou*, Theoktistos, seems to have been equally flexible, although more fortunate in his position;[131] and we have mentioned other examples. Those individuals who were sympa-thetic to image worship remained silent, although many may have connived at hiding the more radical or militant iconophiles, especially the monks about whom most of the evidence is concerned.[132]

It is generally recognised that the central role of monks in the opposition to the emperor is thus partly a reflection of the sources: the *Lives* of many of those persecuted inevitably give a particular emphasis to their protagonists. And while it is clear that both under Leo and under Theophilos the distribu-tion of opposition was more or less evenly spread across the clergy and the monasteries (bishops, monks, painters of images are listed together without emphasis as victims of Theophilos), the actual number which thus opposed the emperor's policies was tiny.[133] Many of the key figures in the monastic world, such as Ioannikios, retired into seclusion and played no part in the public opposition.[134] There is no evidence to suggest that Theophilos saw

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PmbZ, no. 6665; *PBE* Sergios 16; Arsaber: *PmbZ*, no. 601; *PBE* Arsaber 6; Kalomaria: *PmbZ*, no. 4738; *PBE* Kalomaria 1.

[130] See Alexander 1958a, 141–4.

[131] For Ignatios, see Mango 1981, 408ff.; on Theoktistos, see *ODB*, 2056; *PmbZ*, no. 8050; *PBE* Theoktistos 3. That Theoktistos was an active iconoclast under Theophilos has been suggested by Gouillard 1967, 120f., 126 and n. 51.

[132] See already the comments of Beck 1975.   [133] Theoph. cont., 100.6–7.

[134] Ioannikios, for example, lived on the slopes of Mt Olympos in Bithynia together with his follower Eustratios, and seems to have played no role in the conflict after his flight from the persecution under Leo V. According to one of the two *Lives*, by his disciple Peter, he was in conflict with the monks of Stoudion as a consequence of his support for the nomination of Methodios to the patriarchate in 843. See Mango 1983; and in general Dobschütz 1909.

monks as a specific object of his repression and persecution. On the contrary, persecution of those who voiced opposition reflects rather the fact that monks were often the most obviously militant opponents of his policy: it was particular individuals (and not monasteries or communities) who were punished, and this is what the chronicles and hagiographical literature reflect.[135]

A further important consideration in the ways in which opposition was perceived, and even evolved, is the role of the existing hagiographical literature of the period. The first version of the *Life* of Stephen the Younger was certainly available in the 820s.[136] It gives particular prominence to an individual monk who struggled against an oppressive tyrant. Together with the image of fearless opposition which the monastic community should present to oppressive rulers cultivated in the letters and actions of Theodore of Stoudion, it is clear that by the time of Theophilos' more radical iconoclastic policy a particular image of the opposition and its protagonists had evolved, which was itself an important contributory factor in the nature and make-up of the acts of individual opponents of the imperial line: members of the monastic community who identified strongly with the iconophile position now had a clear image with which to identify, and it is no accident that the *Life* of Stephen served as an exemplar for several other hagiographical compositions at this time.[137]

Whether it is correct to suggest that iconoclasm by this time was 'in decline' is difficult to judge. Iconoclasm had never been, at any time, a mass popular movement: it had begun as a debate between churchmen, but by the mid-eighth century had become an instrument of imperial policy and a reflection of Constantine V's beliefs and interpretation of his own times; it continued under that form, with variations in emphasis and coherence, through the reigns of Leo IV and Constantine VI. It was revived as an instrument of imperial policy – in the context of a usurper seeking a form of justification and legitimation of his power – by Leo V, applied only lukewarmly by Michael II, and more strictly under Theophilos. If the tendentious accounts of later historians and the hagiographical tradition

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[135] See, e.g., Theoph. cont., 106.8–11 (Michael the *sygkellos* was imprisoned together with 'many other' ascetics).

[136] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 226–7, for dating and literature.

[137] The *Lives* of Germanos, of the 'martyrs of Constantinople' (in 730), of Paul of Caiuma, of Andrew in Crisei, for example. See Ševčenko 1977, 115–16; although the point at which these elements were borrowed depends upon which version of the *Life* of Stephen in question was employed. Elements of the *Life* of Stephen are also to be found in the chronicle of George the Monk: see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 226; Huxley 1977, 97ff.

can be trusted, it is possible that Theophilos returned more directly to the inheritance of 754 and insisted on the removal of images, banned the production and painting of icons, and attacked also images on church furniture and liturgical plate.[138] As we have seen, however, while there is no reason to doubt his iconoclast sympathies, the extent of Theophilos' actions against images seems to have been limited.

But by the same token, and in spite of the testimony of the iconodule literature, it is worth asking whether the cult of icons, as established by the decisions of the Council of 787, was also a 'mass popular movement' in the sense that it has usually been taken to be. It is notable, for example, that neither in the time of Leo III and Constantine V, nor in the time of Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilos, is there any evidence for large numbers of ordinary people or members of the regular clergy and the state administrative apparatus jeopardising their lives, freedom or positions in order to defend images. On the contrary, resistance and opposition was actually limited to a remarkably small group of monks and clergy, with a more indefinable group of state officials and others who supported them but clearly maintained public adherence to the establishment position. Until his death in 826, Theodore of Stoudion, with one or two close supporters and associates, including Methodios and the former patriarch Nikephoros (d. 828), had been at the core of opposition – a very small opposition, in fact, and one in which there was not always complete harmony and agreement.[139] Support from outside the empire, from the eastern patriarchs, seems not to have been particularly strong – affirmations of support were received, but little else.[140] Before the end of Theophilos' reign John of Kathara, Peter of Atroa, Niketas *patrikios*, and Makarios of the Pelekete monastery had all died.[141] Methodios was safely ensconced at court; Michael the *sygkellos* was in prison, as were the two *graptoi*, Theodore and Theophanes. Along with them, Joseph of Thessaloniki (brother of Theodore of Stoudion), represented the focus of opposition, but they were imprisoned, and they were not organisers like

[138] Theoph. cont., 99.20ff.

[139] In particular, the tensions between Theodore and Nikephoros were an important factor: see Alexander 1958a, 148–54; Karlin-Hayter 2001.

[140] Alexander 1958a, 146f.

[141] As Gouillard notes (1987, 8), the text of the *Vita Euthymii* gives the impression that the opposition was exhausted by the beginning of the reign of Theophilos. For those who died see *Synax. CP*, 634; *PmbZ*, no. 3139; *PBE* Ioannes 460 (John, d. 836); *V. Petri Atroae*, 223 (d. 837); *PmbZ*, no. 6022; *PBE* Petros 34; *V. Nicetae patric.*, 345f. (d. 836); *PmbZ*, no. 5424; *PBE* Niketas 160; for Makarios: van den Gheyn 1897, 162–3 (d. 834); *PmbZ*, no. 4672; *PBE* Makarios 9. Hilarion of Dalmatou outlived Theophilos in exile: *Synax. CP*, 734; *PmbZ*, no. 2584; *PBE* Hilarion 1.

Theodore. The emperor seems to have been able to silence any effective opposition by the middle of the 830s. Even relatively late displays of opposition such as that of the brothers *graptoi* (in 836[142]) do not seem to have served as a focus for further opposition.

It is exceedingly difficult to appreciate the history of the period from the reign of Leo III to that of the 'final' restoration of images in 843 without falling under the spell of the iconophile sources and the propagandistic picture they present. Even where iconoclast texts of one sort or another did survive, they did so disguised as iconophile.[143] But given the exaggeration, invention and falsification of the history of the period and demonisation of the iconoclast emperors, it is possible to suggest that the reality of the changes in imperial policy which took place in 787 or 815 affected only a relatively small number of individuals, and affected the religious-devotional practice of the mass of the population only occasionally and patchily: the strict enforcement of imperial policy in Constantinople, for example, or in certain provinces for short periods under particular governors – perhaps Michael Lachanodrakon in the 760s in the *Thrakesion* region, for example, or the iconoclast bishops of whom we read in the *Life* of Peter of Atroa in Bithynia and Lydia. In some respects, it is possible to see the period from 787 until 815 as marking less of a radical break with the past than has sometimes been assumed. Of course, at the level of official dogma there was a real change, as the cult of images was invented and made into a formal public and imperial ecclesiastical policy. But there are many continuities, too. Eirene may well have placed an image of Christ on the Chalke (whether or not the cross which it replaced really did replace an earlier image removed in its turn by Leo III); but neither she nor her immediate successors did anything to re-establish the pattern of pre-iconoclastic coinage, which continued to bear the cross and the imperial bust, but no religious figure.[144] And while Eirene and Constantine VI commissioned figural images, we have also seen that they followed iconoclast precedent in placing a cross in the apse of the church of the Virgin in Thessaloniki, built between 780 and 797, which was not replaced with a figural motif until the twelfth century. Whether this cross preceded or followed the official reintegration of icons in 787, the fact that it was not replaced for four centuries suggests that replacing decorative schemes associated with iconoclast emperors was not a priority

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[142] See *V. Theod. Grapti*, 669; and Cunningham, in *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 15–16 with n. 51; 160, n. 162.

[143] Ronchey 2001.

[144] See Grierson, *DOC* III, 181, 347f.; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 123–4; Füeg 2007, 18–23.

for iconophile rulers.[145] Of course, it has been pointed out that the cross was a perfectly valid element within orthodox symbolism, and that its presence must not be over-interpreted. Nevertheless, the failure of Eirene in particular to introduce propagandistic changes of this sort is significant. As we have seen in Chapter 4, she did attempt to present her reign as a new beginning, a return to a better time, although the extent to which this succeeded is difficult to say.

* * *

Theophilos' iconoclasm thus represents a somewhat personal interpretation of the political theology he grew up with, no doubt influenced by the learned John the Grammarian and by John's own understanding of the issue of images, the role they played in popular belief, and the theological debate within which they were to be understood.[146] But it can be argued that imperial iconoclasm served the valuable function of acting as a focus for imperial authority and providing emperors who wished to deploy it with a means of enforcing a degree of conformity and of political awareness on the population of the state and the position of the emperor, even if this awareness was largely negative (at least according to the representation we have of it). Theophilos broke with tradition by naming his son not Michael, after the child's grandfather, but rather Constantine, recalling both Leo V's renaming of his son Symbatios and that of the great emperor Constantine V (as well, of course, as Constantine I himself), again illustrating the antecedents which he wished to emphasise and the ways in which he tried to legitimate his own policies.[147] It is probably accurate to suggest that Leo V and Theophilos in particular adopted (or re-introduced) an imperial iconoclasm on the grounds of a genuine belief tempered by opportunism and the exigencies of their own particular political situations. Their commitment to the discussions involved and to the resolution of the issues it raised seems genuine enough, and it is equally reasonable to suggest that opportunism was in this case closely allied to personal conviction and faith. But whether the reintroduction of iconoclasm was, with hindsight, 'right'

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[145]   Grabar 1957, 154f., 168f.; Spieser 1973, 159.

[146]   It is also worth noting here that, unlike Leo III and Constantine V, Theophilos is never accused of attacking relics or maligning the cult of saints or the Virgin – indeed later sources claim he visited the Blachernai weekly to venerate the Theotokos (Kedrenos 2, 101; Glykas in *PG* 158: 537) and note his procession round the city walls with a relic of the True Cross and the Virgin's veil during Thomas the Slav's siege of Constantinople (Theoph. cont. 59; Kedrenos 2, 81). Further, it is clear that relics continued to work miracles across second iconoclasm, even relics of iconophiles: See Efthymiadis 2006.

[147]   For the children of the emperor, see Treadgold 1975; *PmbZ*, no. 8167; *PBE* Theophilos 5.

or 'wrong' in respect of its longer term consequences,[148] the results were important for Byzantine society and culture as a whole. It created both the context for important changes in the structure of the state across the period from Leo III to Theophilos, as well as an historical inheritance which was to have wide-ranging consequences for the evolution of literature, the orthodox church and Byzantine society and self-identity in the centuries that followed.

829–42: the broader context

The reign of Theophilos was marked out by important developments in several respects other than iconoclast repression, of course. He was a learned and intellectually lively ruler, keenly interested in various aspects of learning, and invested considerable effort in expanding his horizons and those of his court. Even though he was an iconoclast, his reputation as a learned and just ruler was well-established in later years, although subject to a certain amount of politically motivated rehabilitation in the tenth century.[149] His chief advisers – men like John the Grammarian and the later patriarch Methodios – were equally learned. Leo the Mathematician, a relative of John the Grammarian, was famous for his knowledge of geometry and astrology. According to one story, the caliph Mu'tasim heard of the skill of one of Leo's former pupils who had been captured at the sack of Amorion in 838, and invited Leo to Baghdad, an invitation which caused Theophilos to offer Leo greater privileges than he had hitherto enjoyed, and an appointment to the position of teacher in an imperially funded school, with salaried assistants, in the Church of the Forty Martyrs. Whether the story is true or not, it illustrates the moment. Leo was later appointed to the archbishopric of Thessaloniki; and eventually, under the *caesar* Bardas during the reign of Michael III, he was placed in charge of an imperial school in the Magnaura palace.[150]

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[148] It is not a particularly helpful way to express the issue; Bury 1912, 57, saw the actions of Leo V in resurrecting iconoclasm as 'a mistake in policy'.

[149] See in particular Diehl 1931; Markopoulos 1998.

[150] On John, see esp. Gouillard 1966; *ODB*, 1052–3; *PmbZ*, nos. 3199, 3304; *PBE* Ioannes 5; Methodios: *ODB*, 1355; D. Stiernon, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 10/2 (1979) 1108–9; Darrouzès 1975; *PmbZ*, no. 4977; *PBE* Methodios 1, and the useful survey of the relevant literature and sources in Gouillard 1987), 11–16. For Leo, see *ODB*, 1217; Hunger 1978, ii, 18–19; ii, 227, 237f.; Lemerle 1971, 167–76; *PmbZ*, no. 4440; *PBE* Leo 19; and on the reign of Theophilos in general from this perspective, Lemerle 1971. Leo was credited with the invention of the synchronised clocks and system of fire-signals from the frontier to

Cultural contacts with the Abbasid court seem to have been frequent, if not regular: John the Grammarian went on an embassy to Baghdad in 829 after Theophilos' accession, and his experience was put to use when Theophilos embarked in about 837 upon the construction of a new 'Abbasid' style palace at Bryas on the Asia Minor shore, opposite Constantinople.[151] For Theophilos was by the same token a major builder and administrator: the improved financial stability of the empire enabled him to invest far more in the construction of palaces and other buildings, lavishly furnished with an eye to impressing foreign visitors to the imperial court, designed with the intention of rivalling the great court at Baghdad, from which, it has plausibly been argued, emanated an important stimulus behind the revival of Hellenic learning in the Byzantine world from this time. Indeed, it has been argued that Theophilos' rivalry with the court at Baghdad, expressed as well through the exchange of gifts, both precious objects and silks, for example, as well as manuscripts,[152] was in part at least a conscious attempt to reclaim an antique past to which the Arab world was itself actively laying claim, and in part an attempt to restore the continuity with the late Roman world which the preceding two centuries had seen almost entirely ruptured.[153] Theophilos' other building activities will be considered shortly.

Finally, relations with the Abbasid caliphate – in spite of apparently major reverses in purely military terms – demonstrate that the east Roman state had begun to consolidate and build upon the economic strength and stability won by previous emperors. No longer was it threatened in its very existence by the much larger empire to the east, even if its international position as a great power was now seriously compromised.[154]

This is not to suggest that the international situation was stable, however. The warfare in Sicily continued, with the Byzantine forces, occasionally reinforced, being able to hold on to their main strongholds and even inflict some major defeats on the Aghlabid forces which were attempting to drive them from the island. Raiders from Spain joined forces with the Aghlabid

Constantinople: see Aschoff 1980; Pattenden 1983; Haldon, in *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, 254–5; Pingree 2001. For the caliph and Leo, see Magdalino 1998a.

[151] For the embassy, see Bury 1912, 256ff.; Lilie 1999c, 175, with n. 32 and earlier literature; and Leo Gramm., 219.4ff.; Theoph. cont., 95.19ff. For the palace, Bury 1912, 133; Janin 1923; Eyice 1959. See in general Grabar 1957, 165–72; but for some problems with both the supposed site of the palace and its identity with the archaeological remains at Kücükyalı investigated by Eyice, see Ricci 1998, and 421–2 below.

[152] See esp. Grabar 1997; Shalem 2005; Cutler 1996, 2001.

[153] See the remarks of Bury 1912, 129; Grabar 1951; and in particular Magdalino 1998a; Shahid 2005; and esp. Speck 1984b; Speck 2000a. On some aspects of diplomatic relations: Signes Codoñer 2001.

[154] See the discussion in Shepard 1998b; and Wickham 1998.

troops in 829; by 831 the important fortress port of Panormos had sur-
rendered on terms; and in the years up to 838 Muslim troops secured the
western parts of the island, although the Byzantines held on to their major
fortresses at Syracuse, Messina, and several other strategically important
strongholds. In 838, under the general Alexios Mousele, the Byzantines
counter-attacked and made some headway for a while. But Alexios was
recalled on suspicion of plotting against the emperor, and by 843 Messina
and several other important towns had fallen. The slow progress of conquest
continued through the 840s and 850s into the 860s. The key fortress town
of Castrogiovanni fell in 859; and although a fleet was sent to relieve the
defenders, the army it transported was defeated in two engagements. Only
Syracuse held out, until 878; but no further efforts, including the large fleet
sent under Michael III, succeeded in redressing the balance of power on the
island. The initial failure of Michael II's government to respond adequately
and to recognise the danger posed by the first Muslim attacks resulted even-
tually in the complete loss of the island, and the consequent creation of a
new threat to the Byzantine and non-Byzantine territories of southern and
central Italy.[155]

In 839, and as the result of a request for assistance from the governor of
Naples (nominally subject to Constantinople, but in practice independent
since the 790s), the Muslims of Panormos relieved the city from a siege
mounted by Sicard, the duke of the Lombard principality of Benevento,
and went on to surprise and sack Brindisi. Intervening thereafter in the civil
war which followed Sicard's assassination, they were able to sieze Tarentum;
the Venetian fleet requested by Theophilos to put an end to this threat was
defeated; and Muslim raids penetrated deep into the Adriatic. The sack of
Rome in 846 and the occupation of Bari revealed the extent of the changes
which had taken place following the loss of effective Byzantine control over
Sicily. In Sardinia, Muslim raids struck the island between 806 and 822;
the evidence suggests that by the middle years of the ninth century Byzan-
tine authority was loosened and local dynasts, often employing Byzantine
titles, were in effective control. Nominal allegiance to the empire was prob-
ably maintained, and the local leaders were successful in their defence of
the island – no Muslim forces were able to establish themselves until the
later tenth century, and then only for a short time before their ejection by
Genoese and Pisan forces. Somewhat further east, Byzantine naval weakness
had permitted the loss of Crete, the conquest of which had been completed

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[155] There are detailed accounts of the process in Bury 1912, 294–308; Kennedy 1995, with further
literature; and in McKitterick 1995, 251–3. For Alexios Mousele: *PmbZ*, no. 195; *PBE* Alexios 2.

by the end of the reign of Michael II, who despatched three equally unsuc-
cessful naval expeditions (although the last, under Ooryphas, had some
initial successes). Theophilos' efforts were taken up entirely with the Sicil-
ian problem; only in 843 did the *logothetes* of the drome, Theoktistos, lead
a naval expedition against Crete, but he abandoned it in order to return
to Constantinople, and the army seems to have achieved nothing. By the
end of the reign of Theophilos in 842, the balance of power in the central
Mediterranean basin had thus been dramatically transformed.[156]

In contrast, the Balkan front remained quiet for much of Theophilos'
reign.[157] Only two incidents are worth noting. Some time between 832 and
836, and for reasons which remain unknown, Byzantine forces mounted
an unsuccessful raid into Bulgarian territory. In 836, the Slavs of Byzan-
tine Thrace rebelled, but were defeated with the assistance of the newly
installed Bulgar ruler Presian, brother of the previous khan, Malamir. The
caesar Alexios Mousele was sent to Thrace with a large force, but he lim-
ited his campaign to restoring Byzantine authority over the coastal corridor
between Thrace and Macedonia, ceded by the treaty of 816 to indepen-
dent local chieftains. As a result, Theophilos and the Bulgar khan renewed
their peace treaty. Shortly thereafter, however, imperial naval assistance was
given to help Byzantine prisoners of the Bulgars, who had been settled
between the Danube and Dniestr rivers, escape and re-settle in their orig-
inal homeland in the *thema* of Macedonia.[158] In a second incident in 841,
there was a rebellion of the Slav population around Corinth and, although
Theophilos died before it was finally crushed, this seems to have resulted
in a further strengthening of the imperial presence in the Peloponnese
from 842.[159]

Theophilos' efforts to make his mark on the eastern front were apparently
less impressive, but are marked by the influence of his closest associates –
his wife Theodora and his mother Thekla, his confidant (and son-in-law)
Alexios Mousele, the general Manuel, as well as his patriarch John the
Grammarian, were all of Armenian stock. Just as importantly the historical
record on the Byzantine side is a reflection of iconophile values, so that
Theophilos' failures – perhaps most importantly the sack of Amorion – are

[156] Bury 1912, 308–14; Kennedy 1995, 253f. For Sardinia, Cosentino 2002; 2005a, 351f.; 2005b;
and Boscolo 1978, 64–7; and for Crete, Bury 1912, 290–4; Christides 1984.

[157] For the situation under Omurtag and his immediate successors, see Curta 2006, 156–65.

[158] See Ditten 1984; Runciman 1930, 84–7; Mango 1985b, 639–43; and Bury 1912, 370–2. For
alternative views on the reliability of the sources, see Treadgold 1985; and see Curta 2006,
165–6.

[159] See the commentary to *DAI* §50.6–7, at *DAI* II, 185; and Oikonomidès 1996b.

presented as far greater catastrophes in strategic terms than they may actually have been. And in fact his reign did see some significant successes, notably the incorporation of several thousand Khurramite refugees who had fled from the civil war between Ma'mun and the rebel Babak. Since about 816/17, the latter had been the leader of a group of dissident non-Arabs in Azerbaijan, the Khurramiya, organised to resist Arab penetration of the country and exploitation of its resources. They were able to maintain their independence through the reign of the caliph Ma'mun, and seem to have come to some arrangement with Theophilos at the beginning of his reign in 829; but in 833 one of the Khurramite armies was soundly defeated by new forces sent by Mu'tasim, and the survivors fled into Byzantine territory. They were received warmly by the Byzantine authorities, and supposedly converted to Christianity, although the sources are ambiguous on this. Some time later, another Khurramite rebel, Nasr, also took refuge in Byzantine territory. Many of these refugees were recruited into the provincial armies.[160]

Theophilos' reign began with some important losses to the Arabs: in 830, Ma'mun's forces captured several important frontier strongholds; although towards the end of the campaign, the general Manuel, who had accompanied the Arab column which had attacked the Khurramites, was able to return to Roman territory.[161] In 831, Theophilos led a counter-attack against a small Muslim raiding force, defeated it, and returned to Constantinople, where he held a triumphal entry into the city. The caliph launched a three-pronged attack in the same year, took a number of fortresses, including Tyana, and defeated Theophilos himself, albeit not heavily. The emperor sued for peace, but Ma'mun refused to negotiate. In 832, while attempting to relieve the besieged fortress of Loulon, the emperor was again defeated in battle; Loulon surrendered, and Cappadocia, deprived by now of most of its key fortresses and strongholds, was once more open to regular raids and

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[160] On the Khurramites, see Sadighi 1938, 229–80. The background and opening phase of their rebellion is summarised in Kennedy 1981, 170–3; Bury 1912, 252–4. On their role in the Byzantine army, and their numbers, see Cheynet 1998. Nasr himself appears to have been made *tourmarches* of the *Phoideratoi*, a unit of the *Anatolikon thema*. The Theophobos who played such an important role in the battles of the last years of the reign of Theophilos is probably Nasr's son. For Theophobos and further literature, see *PmbZ*, no. 8237; *PBE* Theophobos 1.

[161] Manuel fled in 829 on suspicion of plotting against Theophilos; the embassy of John the Grammarian was intended, among other aims, to secure his return, which was successfully accomplished by Manuel's accompanying an Arab expedition and then escaping over the frontier at Qurra (Koron): see the account in Rosser 1972, 144–51; Bury 1912, 256–9. For a detailed analysis of the sources and account of the warfare during the reign of Theophilos, see Signes Codoñer 1995, 449–574.

attacks.[162] In 833, Ma'mun inaugurated a grand scheme for the conquest of the empire, intending to garrison and settle the areas his armies conquered as they marched to Constantinople. He refused further offers to negotiate, but before the attacks were properly under way, he fell ill and died. His successor Mu'tasim faced political opposition at Baghdad and elsewhere, and was compelled to abandon the plan. But this was not the end of the threat. Raids continued, directed independently of the caliph by frontier leaders, and in 835 Theophilos was again defeated, this time losing the imperial baggage train, and forced to flee. In 837, grasping the chance offered by the caliph's preoccupation with the Khurramites in Azerbaijan, Theophilos struck against the region of Melitene. The major town of Sozopetra was taken and sacked; a small Arab force was defeated near Arsamosata and that town also taken and sacked; after defeating another force detached to challenge his progress, he returned into Roman territory and marched back to Constantinople, again celebrating his victory with a triumphal entry and procession of captives, booty, and weapons.[163]

Babak was captured and executed shortly thereafter and, as noted already, in the course of the next two or three years, many of his followers may have fled to join Nasr and Theophobos on Roman territory. But Mu'tasim launched in 838 a devastating response to the Byzantine campaign of 837. In a pitched battle at Anzen in July the emperor's field army was defeated in a major action, the emperor himself narowly escaping with his life. Ankara was taken and sacked, and Amorion fell soon afterwards, to be pillaged and sacked, and its surviving population sold into slavery. But disturbed by news of a rebellion in favour of Ma'mun's son 'Abbas, Mu'tasim was compelled to break off the expedition and return to the caliphate. A last attempt to negotiate the release of prisoners and arrange a subsidy to avoid further invasions was rejected by Mu'tasim.[164]

During the battle of Anzen some of the Azerbaijani Khurramites appear to have been involved in a plot against the emperor. After the battle these soldiers were able to withdraw to Sinope, where they proclaimed Theophobos

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[162] See Bury 1912, 472–7 for the events of 830–2 in the East.

[163] These campaigns are summarised in detail by Bury 1912, 234–62 (although some chronological adjustments are necessary in his version); Rosser 1972, 139ff., 154–69; 193–201; Treadgold 1988 has the most sensible reconstruction of the course of events: 275f., 278–80, 281, 286, 292–5; also Signes Codoñer 1995.

[164] Rosser 1972, 201–22, 231–44; Treadgold 1988, 297–304; Signes Codoñer 1995, 559–74; and for Amorion itself see Chapter 7. For the fate of the '42 martyrs of Amorion', senior officers taken in 838 and later executed, see Kolia-Dermitzaki 2002, who shows that their execution under al-Wathiq in 845 was intimately connected with the caliph's domestic policies and the difficulties he was experiencing at that time.

emperor; and for a while there was a danger that these troops would desert to the caliph, although this came to nothing. At the same time, a plot at Constantinople, stimulated by false reports of the emperor's death in battle, caused Theophilos some disquiet, although it was quickly uncovered and dealt with. In 839 Theophilos launched a minor preventative campaign towards the frontier, but met no opposition and undertook no attack on Arab installations. By 840 the emperor had been able to persuade and threaten the Persians and Theophobos into accepting a pardon, and thereafter the Persian troops were split up and redistributed throughout the provinces as garrison soldiers. Nasr himself seems to have died shortly before this time, fighting on the frontier, possibly in the capacity of *tourmarches* of the *phoideratoi* (the late Roman *foederati*, now based in the *Anatolikon thema*), for whom a ninth-century seal in the name of a certain [A]lnasir exists.[165] And in the same year Byzantine forces captured Adata and Germanikeia and conducted operations in the region around Melitene.[166]

In order to try to redress the balance of power in the east Theophilos inaugurated a major diplomatic effort in 839, sending embassies to the Franks proposing first joint military operations in Africa and Syria and, after the death of Louis the Pious in 840, a second embassy proposing a marriage between one of the daughters of Theophilos and the new Frankish king, Lothar. Theophilos' own death in 842 prevented these negotiations from progressing further.[167] Again embassies were sent westwards, in 840 to Venice (which supplied a fleet to combat Sicilian Muslim ships, and was destroyed) and in 839 or 840 to Cordoba, where a treaty of alliance against

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[165] For the Khurramite plot (although it may have been based on a misunderstanding), and its consequences, see Bury 1912, 265 and n. 2; Treadgold 1988, 300f.; 313f.; Rosser 1972, 222ff., 226–31; Signes Codoñer 1995, 461–89, 491–500, and 549–59 for the acclamation of Theophobos as emperor. For the Constantinopolitan plot: Rosser 1972, 221–5; and for the warfare of the last years of Theophilos' reign, *ibid.*, 248f. and Treadgold 1988, 321–4. See also the summary in *CMH* IV/1, 709–12. On suspicion that he might attempt a coup after Theophilos died, Theophobos was invited to the palace by Theophilos shortly before his death and kept there; immediately after the emperor's death, the leading officers (including Theoktistos and Petronas, and possibly Ooryphas, the *drouggarios* of the *Vigla*) had him executed. See Theoph. cont., 136.6ff.; Leo Gramm., 227.14–228.8; Genesios, iii, §8; commentary in Signes Codoñer 1995, 583–90. For the death of Nasr, see Mich. Syr., iii, 96; Vasiliev 1935, 400ff.. For the *phoideratoi* see Haldon 1984, 246–52; Signes Codoñer 1995, 35f.; Chapter 4 above, 364; and for the seal: *ZV* nos. 3148a and b.

[166] See *TIB* 2, 233–7 (Melitene).

[167] See Vasiliev 1950, 184f.; Ohnsorge 1955; Lounghis 1980, 167–76; Signes Codoñer 1995, 575–82; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 438. The sources record that among the ambassadorial entourage were a number of Rus', the first time that this people appear in connection with the Byzantine court. See Franklin and Shepard 1996, 29ff.

the Aghlabids in North Africa was requested, although negotiations were interrupted by internal problems faced by ʿAbd ar-Rahman II.[168]

In spite of the military failures of his reign, and excluding Sicily and southern Italy, no territory was actually lost. And Theophilos was able to achieve some successes: amicable relations with the Franks were maintained; friendly relations were established for the first time with the Umayyad court at Cordoba; and perhaps most importantly for the long term, he or his officials carried through a number of measures which strengthened the empire from the administrative and the military perspective: apart from the defensive work undertaken at Constantinople, new military districts were established, the *thema* of Chaldia, the so-called *klimata* or 'districts' in Cherson and, if it had not already been established during the reign of Michael II or Leo V, the *thema* of Paphlagonia. At about the same time, Byzantine engineers and soldiers constructed the fortress of Sarkel, north of the mouth of the Don, for the Khazar allies of the empire. New *kleisourai* were established in the areas of Charsianon, Cappadocia and Seleukeia, along the frontier, covering the regions from the south-western sector of the *Armeniakon thema* down to the Mediterranean.[169] It was measures such as these, introduced in response to changing conditions on the frontiers of the state, and based upon the solid achievements of the first three 'Isaurian' emperors, which laid the foundation for the gradual re-assertion of Byzantine economic and military power in the second half of the ninth century and the tenth century.

The artisanal production of second iconoclasm: 815–43

Though considerable evidence survives, in the form of actual objects and descriptions of them, the artisanal production of second iconoclasm has not generated much discussion since André Grabar's *L'iconoclasme byzantin* was first published in 1957.[170] The core material was summarised in our earlier publication,[171] where we focused on presenting the material and highlighting some of the problems it posed. Here, we will focus on the particular situation of artisanal production during second iconoclasm. The context within which that production must be understood is reasonably clear. From a material point of view, it consists of three bodies of objects.

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[168] Lounghis 1980, 168–9; Vasiliev 1950 185–7; Lévi-Provençal 1937; Signes Codoñer 2001; and in general, Manzano 1998. Cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, nos. 439, 441.

[169] See Oikonomidès 1972, 348–50, 353; Treadgold 1980, 286–7; *TIB* 2, 75–9. For Sarkel, see Signes Codoñer 1995, 543–8, and n. 179 below.

[170] But see the brief remarks in Cormack 1977a.   [171] Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 3–161.

The context

As we have observed repeatedly, the texts preserved from between *c.* 600 and *c.* 900 in Byzantium attest to the force of the past in early medieval Byzantium: tradition had been a major point of reference since at least the advent of Islam, and remained important throughout iconoclasm and beyond. The aspects of the past that iconoclasts presented as part of their rhetoric of self-validation were not the same as those used for the same purpose by the iconophiles, but iconoclasts and iconophiles alike called upon tradition to justify systems of belief that each side was convinced to be quite different from that held by their opposition.[172] Since different aspects of the past were valorised by each side, this did not mean that the old was automatically venerable – even apart from polemical debates like iconoclasm, it is clear that this was not ever necessarily the case in Byzantium – but it did mean that any particular aspect of the past that was promoted by a special interest group was hard for friend and foe alike to ignore.

Religious images, debated as a proposition during iconoclasm, fit this profile. Precisely because religious portraiture was under scrutiny, the context – the ambience – created by works made before first iconoclasm that had survived until the beginning of second iconoclasm in 815 could not be ignored even by those who were active iconoclasts;[173] for those who passively continued to accept the significance of religious art, and especially for those who actively defended it, the presence of works sanctified by time was presumably even more significant. Some of these works (for example, the encaustic icons now housed at the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai) were held in areas that were outside the regions directly affected by iconoclasm.[174] Others – such as the sixth- and seventh-century mosaics at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki – were well within the territories under imperial (and thus nominally iconoclast) control, but they nonetheless outlived the controversy. There is no evidence that the mosaics and frescoes at Hagios Demetrios were covered up,[175] and the little documentation we have suggests that even in Constantinople (the bastion of imperial iconoclasm) much mural decoration survived iconoclasm intact.

It is worth reiterating here that the Byzantines themselves rarely used the word iconoclasm; instead, they preferred iconomachy (image struggle), a

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[172] See, e.g., Brubaker 1999b, 37–43.

[173] See also Cormack 1977a, 41; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 324.   [174] See 218–20, 320ff. above.

[175] Unlike, perhaps, the apse mosaic at the Latomou monastery (see the account of Ignatios the Monk: Mango 1972, 155–6). For a possible reference to the mosaics at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki during second iconoclasm, see the sermon of 842 attributed to Leo the Philosopher: Cormack 1969, 50–1.

term that more accurately responds to the period as we now understand it: as we have seen, there is remarkably little evidence for any actual icon-oclast destruction;[176] and, as the often-cited letter sent by the emperors Michael II and Theophilos in 824 to Louis the Pious admits, the iconoclast emperors continued to allow 'those images that had been placed higher up to remain'.[177] This is important not only because it demonstrates that Byzantine iconoclasm was more flexible than later, European, iconoclast movements – a point that we have already made – but also because it means that the context for works produced during iconoclasm was predetermined: anything produced during iconoclasm had to be seen within a framework created long before it, and in a framework that was not, on the whole, visibly affected by iconoclasm.

A second context for works produced during second iconoclasm was, obviously, that generated by works produced during first iconoclasm (i.e. in the half century between *c.* 730 and 787). Since second iconoclasm was in some ways a conscious restitution of those earlier policies, one would suspect that products of first iconoclasm might be particularly valued or emulated. It is, however, difficult to evaluate this possibility. For example: we have already seen that Leo III and Constantine V were both responsible for considerable repairs to the urban fabric of Constantinople during first iconoclasm, and this process was continued by Theophilos during second iconoclasm, as exemplified by his repairs to the land walls (Figure 54) and the major reconstruction of the sea wall and the wall along the Golden Horn.[178] But Theophilos did not claim that his wall restorations continued the policies of his glorious forebears, though he inserted many inscriptions on the walls where he might have done so. Instead, the inscriptions praise Theophilos for renewing Constantinople: imperial civic largesse is more evident than any *pietas* toward the past.[179]

An obvious candidate for the emulation of first iconoclasm by patrons and artisans of second iconoclasm is the decoration of church apses with large crosses. In an iconoclast context, this motif is first preserved in the capital in Hagia Eirene (Figure 16), shortly after 753, and the presence of Constantine V's monograms on what was apparently the eighth-century

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[176] See 114ff., 197–212 above.   [177] See 136, 369–70 above.

[178] Mango 1951, 54–7; Foss and Winfield 1986, 70–1. On Theophilos, see further Van Millingen 1899, 183.

[179] If the fortress at Sarkel on the Don is correctly attributed to Theophilos in *Imperial administration*, this was a construction of necessity rather than of emulation. See the balanced assessment in Franklin and Shepard 1996, 82–3; Whittow 1996, 233–5; with Constantine Porphyrogennitos, *DAI* 42: ed. Moravcsik and Jenkins, 182–5.
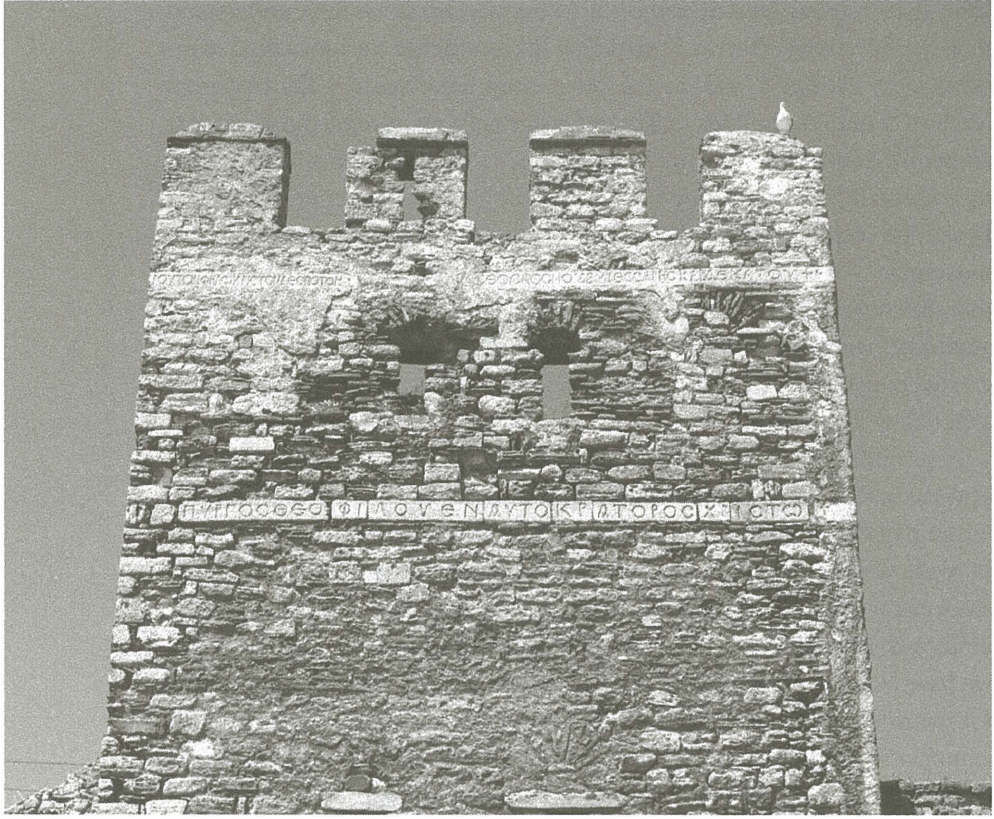
Fig. 54. Constantinople, sea tower: inscription of Theophilos.

templon screen would have kept his association with the building alive in the urban memory of Constantinople.[180] But no later examples are preserved in the capital, and only one imperially sponsored church – Hagia Sophia at Thessalonike commissioned by Eirene and Constantine VI (Figure 26) – repeats the motif.[181] We do not know when the cross decoration was placed in the apse at the Koimesis church in Nicaea (Figure 13),[182] and the only other building that may be securely ascribed to second iconoclasm that assuredly follows this tradition is Hagia Sophia at Vize in Thrace, dated dendrochronologically to after 833, which incorporates crosses sculpted in relief and has painted crosses in the apse.[183] While it is not intrinsically unlikely that later apsidal cross decoration was inspired (directly or indirectly) by Hagia Eirene, no other examples are datable, and

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[180] See 212–14 above.   [181] See 294–6 above.   [182] See 203ff. above.
[183] See further 419–20 below.

Fig. 55. Gold *nomisma* of Theophilos (829–42), mint of
Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4684: busts of
Theophilos (obverse) and Michael II and Constantine (reverse)

the presence of crosses alone hardly constitutes an indication of date, as is
evident from the assuredly sixth-century cross decoration in the main dome
at Hagia Sophia described by Paul the Silentiary.[184]

The only instance where there is an incontestable impact of first icon-
oclasm on the products of second iconoclasm appears in the coinage of
Theophilos. Here, the practice of depicting a portrait of the deceased for-
mer emperor on the reverse – instituted in Byzantium (probably following
Islamic precedents) by Constantine V, who placed his father, Leo III, on
the reverse of some of his coins – was revived on the 'class III' *nomismata*
minted under Theophilos between 830 and 840, which portrayed the dead
Michael II on the reverse (Figure 55).[185]

The third context for the products of second iconoclasm can be treated
very briefly. This is the body of works produced between the end of first
iconoclasm in 787 and the beginning of second iconoclasm in 815. Excluding
religious figural imagery such as *enkolpia* engraved with Christian scenes and
textiles like the Vatican Annunciation and Nativity silks (Figures 45–46),[186]
which are unlikely to have been emulated in iconoclast Constantinople, we
are left with the aniconic mosaics commissioned by Eirene and Constantine
VI for Hagia Sophia at Thessalonike (mentioned earlier, Figure 26)) and
the votive panels donated by Eirene to the Church of the Virgin of the
Source in Constantinople.[187] Both of these continued earlier patterns, and

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[184] Mango 1972, 83.
[185] *DOC* III, 406, 409, 425–8; also 442 for a *tremissis* from an uncertain mint with the same
formula. On Theophilos's coinage, see further 432–4 below.
[186] See 336ff., 350f. above; see also the description of the Stoudion monastery from *c.* 800 that is
sometimes interpreted as describing painted portraits of church fathers and saints: Speck
1964b, 333–44.
[187] See 310–11 above.

cannot be seen as directly inspiring subsequent work. Eirene's one apparent 'innovation' – the portrait of Christ on the Chalke Gate – pretended to be a restoration; and, according to the *Scriptor incertus*, Leo V duly removed it at the start of second iconoclasm in what he thought – or at least claimed – was direct emulation of Leo III.[188] Again, it is in the realm of numismatics that a pattern initiated earlier recurs in second iconoclasm: the double portrait found on the *nomismata* of Eirene (Figure 53), where she appears on both the obverse and the reverse, was copied by Leo V and Michael II (and perhaps Michael I) (Figure 60 below).[189]

Architecture and architectural decoration

Unlike Constantine V, neither Leo V nor his successor Michael II appear to have been ambitious builders. In Constantinople, the only work that either seems to be associated with is repairs to the 'little' baptistery at Hagia Sophia, which, as noted earlier, is datable by dendrochronological analysis to shortly after 814, but is not attested in literary sources.[190]

Building did not, of course, cease. Just prior to second iconoclasm, an inscription of 2 May 812 records the *enkainia* of a church of the archangel Gabriel at Alakilise in central Lycia.[191] In Thrace, an inscription carved into white marble (reused) discovered in 1965 and published by Ševčenko reads in translation: 'Here lies Sisinnios of blessed memory, the late curator of Tzurulon [Çorlu], who also had the monastery of the Holy Virgin restored. He died on the seventh of the month of December, indiction seven, in the year 6322 [813] from the creation of the world'.[192] The location of the monastery is unknown, and the restoration obviously predated the reign of Leo V, but we note it here as an indication that, despite the dearth of imperial building, the importance attached to patronage – and in this case the lay patronage of a monastery – continued into Leo's reign.

The remains of several other monastic complexes in the regions around the capital also appear to fall into the period. In Bithynia, Vincenzo Ruggieri assigned the remains of a church built on an island in lake Apolyont to the ninth century.[193] Mango, who first published the building, more cautiously suggested the ninth or tenth century. He noted that it might be associated with a monastery on an island called Thasios near the north shore of the lake – several islands appear here, including that on which our church

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[188] See 128–35 above.   [189] *DOC* III, 371–2, 387.
[190] Kuniholm 1995; Ousterhout 2001, 6.   [191] Harrison 1963, 128–9; Ruggieri 1991, 232.
[192] Ševčenko 1965; Thomas 1987, 131; Ruggieri 1991, 252.
[193] Ruggieri 1991, 216–17; Ruggieri 1995, 85–6; see also Ousterhout 2001, 12.
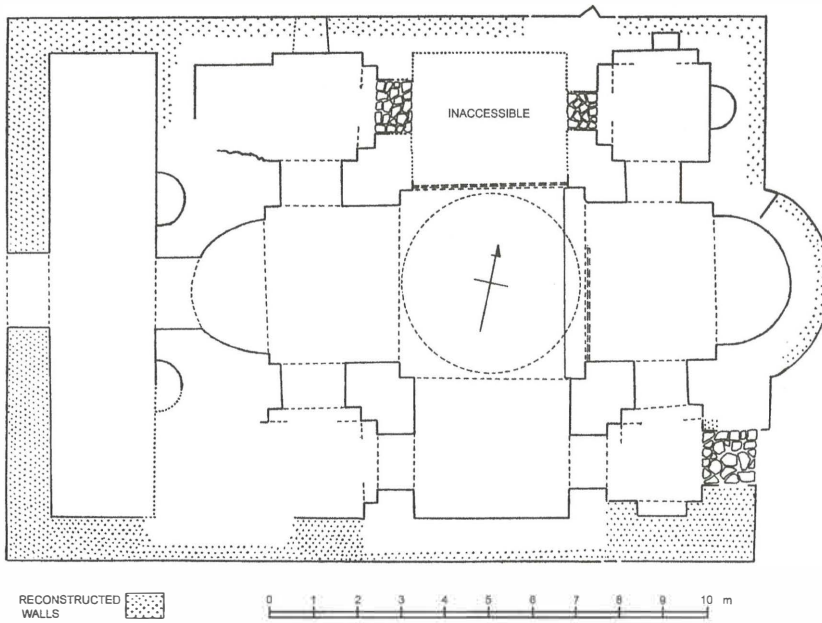
Fig. 56. Bithynia, Lake Apolyont, church of St Constantine: inscribed cross plan

sits – which St Ioannikios is said to have visited in 825.[194] If Ruggieri's arguments are accepted, the church was perhaps built somewhat earlier, in the early decades of the ninth century. The building was heavily rebuilt in, probably, the eighteenth or nineteenth century, and continued in use as St Constantine's until the early twentieth century, but the plan seems to retain its original form of an inscribed cross with, unusually, apses at both east and west ends (Figure 56).[195] Similarly double-ended churches (though with protruding rather than inscribed apses) are a hallmark of the late eighth- and early ninth-century west, where they are tangentially associated with burials and relics, and often appear in conjunction with two other new developments, crypts (for the display of relics) and monumental western entrances (westworks): the Frankish king Pippin's burial place at the entrance of St Denis in Paris, for example, was commemorated by what appears to be the earliest recorded example of the double-ended church, dedicated in 775.[196] We would not want to insist that the designer of the church later known as St Constantine's was necessarily adopting a western template, but would instead suggest that a similar concern to commemorate

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[194] Mango 1979. [195] *Ibid.*
[196] Pippin died in 768; Nees 1995, 824–5, both with additional bibliography.

an illustrious burial or to celebrate a relic or relic collection might have prompted the plan, otherwise unknown in the Byzantine world.

Other structures are less well studied. Two more are preserved in Bithynia. The island of Chalki (Turkish Heybeliada), one of the Princes' islands in the sea of Marmara, is often mentioned in early ninth-century texts. Between 809 and 811, Theodore of Stoudion was exiled here by Nikephoros I in response to Theodore's role in the moechian controversy; slightly later, Leo V sent the monk Theoktistos to Chalki; and, after Leo's death, his widow Theodora and her son Basil were confined here for two years by Michael II.[197] Theodore at least seems to have stayed in a monastery founded by a certain John in the early ninth century, the ruins of which Vincenzo Ruggieri believes that he may have found; he has described them briefly but no excavation has been undertaken.[198] Further east along the Asiatic shore, off Cape Akritas on St Glyceria island (Incirli adası), the monastery to which Niketas, *hegoumenos* of Medikion, was exiled after 815 is partially preserved but has not yet been excavated.[199]

Still more churches are known only from written reports. According to both versions of his *Vita*, after the restitution of iconoclasm in 815 St Ioannikios moved to Mount Alsos (Lissos) in Lydia, south-west of Mount Olympos, and founded churches; the earlier and apparently more accurate version of his *Life* by Peter says that they were dedicated to the Theotokos, Peter and Paul, and the martyr Eustathios.[200] Nothing further is known about these buildings, which apparently formed the core of a monastery. Equally little is know about the monastery that Makarios, in exile after 815, is said to have founded on the Propontis apparently shortly after 820.[201]

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[197] Janin 1975, 72–3.   [198] Ruggieri 1991, 207–8.

[199] Janin 1927, 290–2; Ruggieri 1991, 208–9.

[200] Mango 1983 (with substantive corrections to Janin 1975, 140, 150, 154); reiterated by Ruggieri 1991, 232, 235, 253. On the *Vita* see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 215; for an English trans. see Sullivan in Talbot 1998, 255–351; Ioannikios' building activity at Lissos appears at §§ 19, 22, 23. The monastery of Balaiou, perhaps on Mount Olympos, may also have been built by Ioannikios, but this is claimed only in the less reliable *Life* of the saint written by Sabas: Ruggieri 1991, 215; on another problematic Olympos monastery, see *ibid.* 223–4.

[201] *V. Macarii Pelecetes* 156, 21 (on the text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 218); for the context, Mango and Ševčenko 1973, 244–5; discussion and additional bibliography in Ruggieri 1991, 201. Two other problematic accounts may be mentioned. According to Ruggieri 1991, 258, Symeon of Mitylene built a church to St Isidore shortly after 820, but the *Vitae* are contradictory and the *Deeds* of David, Symeon and George simply note that Symeon moved to an island with a church dedicated to that saint after retiring from life as a stylite. On the *Vitae*, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 210–11; Eng. trans. by D. Domingo-Foraste in Talbot 1998, 149–241 (mention of church at 184). The church at Kurşunlu, probably the Komnenian remains of the monastery of Elegmi, may replace the earlier monastic church mentioned in

Theophilos seems to have been a more active patron than Leo V and Michael II.[202] In addition to restructuring and embellishing the imperial entrance and (probably) exit porticoes at Hagia Sophia (on which see the discussion of metalwork below), inscriptions praise him for renewing Constantinople, and he certainly continued the repairs to the urban fabric begun under Constantine V. What remains, and is attested by numerous inscriptions, are his repairs to the land walls (Figure 54) and the major reconstruction of the sea wall and the wall along the Golden Horn.[203] Although Michael II had already begun some work following the siege of the city by Thomas the Slav,[204] most of the strengthening and renovations were carried out under Theophilos, whose name is mentioned in inscriptions associated with the walls of Constantinople more often than that of any other ruler. The rebuilding of the sea walls seems to have been a particularly important undertaking of this emperor, as witnessed by the epigraphical evidence.[205]

The most important surviving building from his reign is the church of Hagia Sophia (now the Gazi Süleyman Paşa Camii) at Vize in Thrace, which is dated dendrochronologically to after 833. It is architecturally related to Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, with sculpted and painted crosses in the apse.[206] Here, too, fragments of wall painting were found, and first fully published in 1989.[207] The largest fragment shows remnants of a composition with the enthroned Christ holding an open book on which the standard 'I am the light of the world' text (John 8:12) is inscribed; an angel and an unidentifiable figure, perhaps female, stand to the right (Figure 57). Yildiz Ötüken, who published the fragment, dated it to the later ninth centuries, on the assumption that representational religious imagery could not have been painted earlier in the century. We wonder. The iconography could belong in the seventh, eighth or ninth centuries, and it recalls the pre-iconoclast mosaics at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki more than

the *Vita* of Ioannikios that, according to the *synaxarion* of Basil II, was founded by Methodios: on the highly problematic textual evidence, see Mango 1968a, 174–5.

[202] For additional analysis of the written sources for Theophilos' buildings, see Signes Codoñer 1995, 603–19.

[203] Mango 1951, 54–7; Foss and Winfield 1986, 70–1.

[204] Tsangadas 1980; Meyer-Plath and Schneider 1943; Schneider 1933, 1157–72; Janin 1964, 248ff., with maps. For the evolution of the plans for the walls, their realisation, and the Constantinopolitan legends that developed around them, Speck 1973.

[205] See Mango 1951, 54–7.

[206] Mango 1968b; Cormack 1977a, 40; Krautheimer 1986, 285; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 324; Ruggieri 1991, 233; Ousterhout 1998, 127–9; Ousterhout 2001, 6, 9; Ruggieri 1995, 132–5.

[207] Ötüken and Ousterhout 1989, fig. 6, pl. XXXIII; we thank Robert Ousterhout once more for providing us with a colour slide of the fresco fragment. Mosaic cubes were also found: see 420 below.
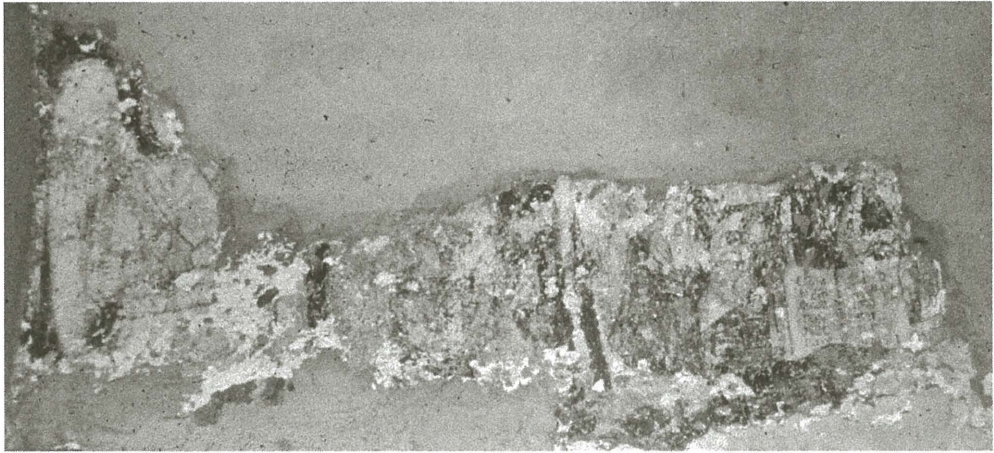
Fig. 57. Thrace, Bizye (Vize) church of Hagia Sophia, fresco fragment: Christ enthroned and angel

post-iconoclast monuments largely known from Constantinople. In terms of style, the fragment is too damaged to bear the weight of much speculation, but the drapery patterns that can be minimally traced fit within a broad strand of geometricising drapery painting that would not surprise any time from the mid-eighth century – when it appears in the Vatican Ptolemy (Figures 18–20) – through the first three-quarters of the ninth century, when it is found, for example, in the mosaics attributed to the 870s at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.[208] On the basis of style and iconography, it is possible – though no more than that – that Vize was painted when it was built, some time shortly after 833.

Elsewhere, at Side, on the south coast of Anatolia, church H reveals an early version of the cross-in-square plan first found at Trilye around the year 800, and may probably be dated to the ninth century.[209] Only slightly better preserved, and also apparently approximating a cross-in-square plan, a church on Söğüt adası (Bozburun area) has been dated to the first half of the ninth century.[210] Further afield, an inscription now held in the Tigani museum attributes some unspecified (reconstruction?) work on the island of Samos to the reign of Theophilos.[211] And, finally, a group of buildings – otherwise unrelated to each other – are often attributed to the reign of

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[208] Mango and Hawkins 1972; Cormack and Hawkins 1977.

[209] Eyice 1958; Ruggieri 1991, 242, pl. 20 (plan), fig 32; Ousterhout 1998, 127; Ousterhout 2001, 13–14. For Trilye, see 300 above.

[210] Ruggieri 1989, 351–4; Ruggieri 1991, 242, pl. 21 (plan), figs. 34–5.

[211] Halkin 1952, 121; Ruggieri 1991, 261, with earlier bibliography.

Theophilos on the basis of their aniconic decoration. As we have observed elsewhere, this is insufficient grounds for such precise attribution.[212]

Various texts – mostly saintly *Vitae* – suggest that many more monuments than those just listed were built during second iconoclasm. The documentary evidence confirms a number of patterns suggested by the preserved monuments; it is also important because it reveals themes that would otherwise be totally lost to us. Of course, these documents have narrative agendas of their own; and they are not the primary material, the monument itself, but a mediated interpretation of that monument. Some may even describe a building that never existed. Documents on their own are thus never entirely trustworthy, and can only be used for certain (restricted) types of interpretation.

An exemplification of the types of problems raised by descriptions of buildings concerns what is perhaps the best-known of all monuments attributed to second iconoclasm: Theophilos's Bryas Palace, described by the Continuator of Theophanes.[213] Though it has been argued that the ruins of this palace survived at Küçükyalı (in the Asiatic suburbs of Istanbul, across from the Prinkipo islands), Alessandra Ricci's recent work suggests that this is not the case: the ruins appear to be the remains of a cistern above which was constructed a single-apsed and domed church that apparently closely resembled the eleventh-century monastic church of St George at the Mangana.[214] We must return to the Continuator of Theophanes for our information on the Bryas Palace. He says that John the *sygkellos* (later to become the famous iconoclast patriarch John the Grammarian) returned from an embassy to Baghdad deeply impressed, and

Having come back to Theophilos and described to him the things [he had seen] . . . [John] persuaded [Theophanes] to build the palace of Bryas in imitation of Arab [palaces] and in no way differing from the latter either in form or decoration. The work was carried out according to John's instructions by a man named Patrikes who happened to be also adorned with the rank of *patrikios*. The only departure he made [from the Arab model] was that he built next to the bedchamber a church of our most holy lady, the Mother of God, and in the courtyard of the same palace a triconch church[215] of great beauty and exceptional size, the

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[212] Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 24–8, with additional bibliography of which the most pertinent here is Wharton Epstein 1977. For a less sceptical overview of many of the buildings in question, see Ruggieri 1991 and Ruggieri 1995, esp. 136–44.

[213] English trans. in Mango 1972, 160. Discussion in Grabar 1957, 169–72; Ricci 1998.

[214] Ricci 1998, the Mangana comparison at 147–8. For arguments in favour of the connection with Theophilos, see Mango 1994, 347–50.

[215] The church at Küçükyalı is single-apsed.

middle part of which was dedicated to the archangel [Michael], while the lateral parts were dedicated to women martyrs.[216]

This account has provoked considerable discussion, and has been interpreted variously as evidence of cultural receptivity (or appropriation) under Theophilos,[217] or as evidence of later iconophile fabrication intended to paint the last iconoclast emperor and his patriarch as Islamic sympathisers.[218] Both views find some support: there was considerable exchange between Constantinople and Baghdad during the reign of Theophilos, and to accuse the iconoclasts of being Saracen-minded (that is, influenced by the Arab Muslims) is a reasonably familiar insult in iconophile texts.[219] The account in Theophanes' Continuator is not, however, particularly polemical and it seems most likely to us that the Bryas palace, wherever it was located, was perceived by its Byzantine audience as 'Arabian' in inspiration.

The account of Theophilos's additions to the Great Palace in the Continuator of Theophanes is less controversial and less open to polemical interpretation.[220] The palace constructions consisted of a number of buildings sheathed in various kinds of marble, with bronze and silver doors (which possibly resembled the 'Beautiful Door' at Hagia Sophia, Figures 65–6 below), and a bronze fountain with a 'rim crowned with silver and a gilded cone' that spouted wine during the opening reception for the building, 'two bronze lions with gaping mouths [that] spouted water', and 'carved verses' by Stephen Kapetolites and 'Ignatios, the university professor'. An armoury was decorated with pictures of 'shields and all kinds of weapons'; another room had its lower walls reveted with slabs of marble 'while the upper part [had] gold mosaic representing figures picking fruit'; a third had 'on its walls . . . mosaics whose background is entirely gold, while the rest consists of trees and green ornamental forms'. Theophilos is also credited with decorating 'with gold mosaic' two pre-existing halls, the Lausiakos and the hall of Justinian II; and the whole complex was interspersed with terraces and gardens.[221] We are told that he built two structures known as the Trikonchos and the Sigma, placed so as to connect the older palace of Constantine and the Chrysotriklinos. The Sigma opened onto a court

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[216] Trans. Mango 1972, 160.   [217] Cormack 1977a.   [218] Barber 1992, 2–5.

[219] On exchange, see Magdalino 1998 and the discussion of silk in Chapter 4; on iconophile insults see for example Theophanes, who accuses Leo III of being 'Saracen-minded': *Theoph* 405; trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 560.

[220] For the text in Eng. trans., Mango 1972, 161–5.

[221] Further discussion in Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 322.

with a fountain, spacious enough for major imperial receptions at which representatives of the Blue and Green chariot-racing clubs could be present. A range of other, equally lavishly decorated, smaller buildings were associated with this complex. Elsewhere within the palatine precinct, Theophilos constructed porticoes or *heliaka* through which the light could pass, in newly laid out gardens, as well as apartments of several storeys decorated with mosaics, marble, and many-coloured tile flooring.[222]

The Continuator – like many ekphrastic writers before him – spends more time describing the marble than the mosaic, but certain elements of the decoration nonetheless recall the mosaics in the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem and in the courtyard of the Great Mosque at Damascus, by the time of Theophilos over a century old. These were probably set at least in part by imported Byzantine mosaicists – the technical details are remarkably consistent with slightly earlier Constantinopolitan work[223] – and, along with the contemporary Umayyad palaces, suggest a range of deluxe non-religious imagery of which little has been preserved in Byzantium. There is no reason to link such decoration specifically with second iconoclasm (earlier and later accounts of comparable ornament survive in abundance), but its apparent continuation during the second quarter of the ninth century indicates that training in 'the art of mosaic' did not wither then: artisans skilled in setting tesserae could easily have been employed through the iconoclast era.

In and around Constantinople, the Continuator of Theophanes tells us that Theophilos built a refuge for former prostitutes.[224] Most sources, however, focus on monastic commissions. Imperially sponsored monasteries noted in the documents are limited to the Monastery of Gastria, favoured by the women of Theophilos's family (his mother Euphrosyne retired there, and his widow Theodora was exiled and buried there);[225] the monastery of St Panteleimon erected by Theodora;[226] and the monastery at *ta Anthemiou*, Chrysopolis (on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphoros),

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[222] See further Bury 1912, 130–4; Grabar 1957, 169ff.; and the detailed survey in Rosser 1972, 110–30.

[223] See Gibb 1958; and compare the technical details in Creswell and George 1912.

[224] Theoph. cont. 95.

[225] For comparison of the *Vita Theodorae* with the chroniclers see Janin 1969, 67–8.

[226] References and discussion in Thomas 1987, 133. For what it is worth, two other ecclesiastical structures are attributed to Theodora in the *Patria*: the church of St Anne of Dagistheos and the conversion into a monastery of the emperor Maurice's *armamentaria* (see Janin 1969, 37, 52, 386–7). On female monasticism during iconoclasm, see further Herrin 2006.

built by Alexios Mousele, son-in-law of Theophilos, who retired there after 843.[227]

Theodore of Stoudion noted a convent dedicated to the Theotokos built by Anna, wife of Leo the *patrikios*.[228] The *patrikios* Antony apparently founded the church of the Theotokos of Neorion, probably in the 820s;[229] while after his death from wounds in 838 the Armenian general Manuel was buried in a monastery that apparently formed part of his palace.[230] Soon thereafter, in 840 or 842, Leo Grammatikos seems to suggest that the military leader Theophobos' house was turned into a monastery after his execution for treason by Theophilos.[231] The same emperor also apparently ordered his courtier Martiniakos, in disgrace, to convert his estate into a monastery and retire there.[232] Finally, the poet Kassia is said to have founded a monastery, apparently in the outskirts of Constantinople, where she lived and wrote until her death.[233]

We also hear of monasteries founded outside of the city by exiled iconophiles. In 815, after visiting Nikephoros at the monastery of Agathos, the exiled St Makarios is said to have founded an eponymous monastery on the Bosphoros.[234] Slightly later, during the reign of Theophilos, the island of Aphousia (Avsa adası) in the sea of Marmara apparently became a common site of banishment.[235] According to his *Vita*, a church was built here by Makarios of Pelekete after 829.[236] Also during the reign of Theophilos, Symeon of Lesbos built a church dedicated to the Theotokos here; this later became the core of a monastery.[237] Further south, near the Rhyndakos

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[227] Theoph. cont., 109; Ps.-Symeon, 632; Kedrenos 2, 119. See Thomas 1987, 132; Ruggieri 1991, 201–2.

[228] Theodore of Stoudion, epigrams 115 and 120; see Speck 1968, 310–14; Kazhdan and Talbot 1991/2, 398. Whether or not this Anna was one of Theodore's correspondents is uncertain.

[229] Janin 1969, 198. A monastery of Damianos, *parakeimonenos* under Theophilos and Michael III, is mentioned (only) in the *Patria*: see *ibid.*, 84.

[230] Ps.-Symeon, 636–7. See Grégoire 1934, 198; Janin 1969, 320, 384.

[231] Leo Gramm., 228; see Grégoire 1934, 195–7.

[232] See Janin 1969, 328, 340; Thomas 1987, 133; Ruggieri 1991, 193.

[233] See Janin 1969, 102; Ruggieri 1991, 190; and, on Kassia, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 306; Tsironis 2003–4; and the rather credulous Silvas 2006.

[234] *V. Macarii Pelecetes*, 156; on this text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 218. See also Ruggieri 1991, 201, with earlier bibliography.

[235] See, e.g., 395, 397, 401–2 above for the *Graptoi*. Discussion in Janin 1975, 200–1; Ruggieri 1991, 206–7. Earlier, Theophanes claims that Constantine V's sons were banished here by Michael I: *Theoph.* 496; trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 680.

[236] *V. Macarii Pelecetes*, 160; see Janin 1975, 200; Ruggieri 1991, 206.

[237] *Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii*, 24, 240; trans. Domingo-Foraste and Abrahamse, 205; on this text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 210–11. See also Ruggieri 1991, 206.

(Hellespont), a monastery dedicated to St Porphyrios belonged to Peter of Atroa before 830.[238]

Four monastic complexes are also signalled in various sources. For our period, the monastic complex on Mt Olympus in Bithynia is known primarily from the *Vitae* of St Ioannikios (752/4–846) and Peter of Atroa (d. 837). The best known monastery here was that dedicated to St Zacharias, apparently restored *c.* 800 from an abandoned chapel by Peter and his master Paul of Atroa.[239] During second iconoclasm, we are told that a church dedicated to John the Baptist was built in the nearby monastery of Antidion by Ioannikios in (probably) the 830s.[240]

A second group is associated with Niketas the Patrician. The Monastery of Niketas at Zouloupas (near Nikomedeia) was built between 833 and 836 on land given to Niketas by a relative; apparently, a monastic community was established here.[241] After leaving Zouloupas, Niketas restored the church of St Michael at Katesia between 833 and 836.[242] The Monastery of Niketas near Kerpe on the Black Sea was built before 836; Niketas was buried here.[243]

Thirdly, before he became patriarch of Constantinople in 847, Ignatios (the castrated son of the former emperor Michael I) built three monasteries on islands in the sea of Marmara: at Terebinthos,[244] Yatros,[245] and Plate. The latter, from which a seal has been preserved, included a church of the Forty Martyrs and a chapel dedicated to the Theotokos.[246]

Further afield, a group of three monasteries on Mount Lissos (in Lydia) associated with Ioannikios were all apparently built *c.* 815. The *Vitae* of Ioannikios name them as the monastery of the Apostles (with a typikon

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[238] *V. Petri Atroae*, 161, 185, 189, 193, 199, 207, 213; on this text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 224. See also Ruggieri 1991, 225. At Nikomedeia, a monastery dedicated to the Theotokos of Niketiatos is attributed to a *magistros* Sergios in the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople (see Grégoire 1933, 519–34; Ruggieri 1991, 227). This is a tenuous ascription, however, as is the connection made in the *Synaxarion* of Basil II (*PG* 117, 500A) between the monastery of Elegmoi, Kurşunlu (Katabolos, in Bithynia), and the future patriarch Methodios: see Mango 1968a, 174–5; Ruggieri 1991, 217.

[239] The monastery included an extra-mural chapel dedicated to the Theotokos for combined monastic and lay services: *V. Petri Atroae*: ed. Laurent, 89; and *V. Petri Atroae retractata*, 106. See Janin 1975, 151; Ruggieri 1991, 230.

[240] *V. Ioannicii*: *AS Nov* II.1, 366; on this text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 215. Only the later version of the *Life* (*BHG* 936) appears in Talbot 1998. See also Ruggieri 1991, 218.

[241] *V. Nicetae patricii et monachi*, 329; on this text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 222. See also Ruggieri 1991, 222.

[242] *V. Nicetae patricii et monachi*, 337; see Thomas 1987, 132; Ruggieri 1991, 222.

[243] *V. Nicetae patricii et monachi*, 343; see Ruggieri 1991, 222.

[244] Now called Tavşan adası (hare island): *V. Ignatii*, 496D, 505B, 513B, 516C; Ignatios returned here after his deposition in 858: see Janin 1975, 61–3; Ruggieri 1991, 209.

[245] Sedef adası: *V. Ignatii*, 469D; see Janin 1975, 65; Ruggieri 1991, 209.

[246] Yassi ada: *V. Ignatii*, 496D, 532BC; see Janin 1975, 67; Ruggieri 1991, 209.

composed by Ioannikios);[247] the monastery of the Theotokos, which was perhaps joined with the Apostles monastery (here too Ioannikios left a typikon for the appointed *hegoumenos*);[248] and the monastery of St Euphemia, near to the other two.[249]

Also in Lydia, a monastery of Balentia is noted in the life of Peter of Atroa,[250] and a church dedicated to St Isidore is recorded as existing on an island near Lesbos when Symeon of Mityline arrived there around 820.[251] Whether either of these belong to second iconoclasm is, however, uncertain.

Finally, the documents note a limited amount of restoration work in the region of Constantinople. For example, a nunnery dedicated to Metanoia (independently attested by a seventh- or eighth-century seal) that had been revived already by Theodote, the second wife of Constantine VI, had become structurally unsound by 840 when, at the request of its resident nuns, it was converted into a *xenon* by Theophilos.[252]

Monumental painting

No representational painting can be securely dated to second iconoclasm,[253] though decorative geometical mosaic work has recently been recovered from the Fatih Camii in Trilye (post-799) and some was also found at the Vize church mentioned earlier, which dates to some time after 833.[254]

More solid evidence for representational imagery during second iconoclasm might be extrapolated from images produced after the so-called

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[247] *V. Ioannicii*, 352, 397; trans. and commentary on the later version: Sullivan, in Talbot 1998, 279; see Janin 1975, 140; Ruggieri 1991, 232.

[248] *V. Ioannicii*, 351, 397; trans. (of the later version) Sullivan, 279; see Janin 1975, 154; Ruggieri 1991, 253.

[249] *V. Ioannicii*: ed. van den Gheyn, 351, 396; trans. (of the later version) Sullivan, 278; see Janin 1975, 150; Ruggieri 1991, 235.

[250] *V. Petri Atroae*, 165, 167; see Ruggieri 1991, 233.

[251] *Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii* 16 (230); trans. Domingo-Foraste and Abrahamse, 184; *pace* Ruggieri 1991, 258. Similarly, at some point before 830, when Gregory the Dekapolite stayed there, a monk Zacharias restored the church of St Menas in Thessaloniki (Janin 1975, 397; Ruggieri 1991, 260).

[252] Discussion and sources in Thomas 1987, 133; and Ruggieri 1991, 191.

[253] The Vatican Ptolemy, which of course has figural imagery, is no longer assigned to second iconoclasm: see 220–4 above. Oikonomidès' suggestion that the apse mosaic at Hagia Sophia should be redated to the years between first and second iconoclasm has not met wide acceptance (and is not of particular relevance to this study in any case).

[254] We thank Robert Ousterhout for (unpublished) information on these two churches. On Trilye, see also Buchwald 1969, 56–7; Cormack 1977a, 40; Ruggieri 1991, 227–9; Ousterhout 1998, 127–8; on Vize, see 419–20 above.

'triumph of orthodoxy' in 843. The miniatures of the Khludov Psalter did not emerge from a vacuum, and if Kathleen Corrigan is correct in her association of the manuscript with Methodios and its dating to 843–7, the preparation for the pointed political cartoons that are such a famous feature of that manuscript may well have occurred during the reign of Theophilos.[255]

Documentary evidence for figural religious imagery during second iconoclasm appears in (later) references to the painter Lazaros, a man shrouded in iconophile rhetoric whose legendary artisanal production cannot easily be translated into actual artefacts. What little information has been preserved about him was collected and synthesised long ago by Cyril Mango.[256] Lazaros is recorded in the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, the *Liber Pontificalis*, and a papal letter; the major account of his activities, however, appears in Theophanes Continuatus.[257] This repeats many of the well-worn tropes favoured by iconophile authors, claims that Lazaros was 'famous for the art of painting', and was 'widely believed to have died' from the torture Theophilos had inflicted upon him for this fame; he had 'barely recovered in prison, [before he] took up his art again and represented images of saints on panels'. Theophilos therefore 'gave orders that sheets of red-hot iron should be applied to the palms of his hands'. This almost killed him, but then, 'thanks to the supplication of the empress [Theodora] and some of his closer associates', Theophilos released Lazaros from prison and he went to the church of the Forerunner *tou Phoberou* (on the Asiatic shore of Bosphoros); here, according to the Continuator, he painted an image of John the Baptist that later performed 'many cures' (the exact nature of which is unspecified). Theophanes Continuatus also credits Lazaros with the Chalke portrait of Christ set up in or after 843.

Whatever his artisanal production during second iconoclasm actually was, Lazaros evidently did not die for it; and that he became a symbolic *locus* for later accounts of iconophile activity is clear from pilgrim accounts of Hagia Sophia from *c.* 1200, where Lazaros is credited with the apse mosaic dedicated by the patriarch Photios in the presence of Michael III and Basil I

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[255] Corrigan 1992; and, on polemical pamphlets, Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 52–4. If the Vize paintings do indeed date from second iconoclasm, they could be seen as a context of sorts for this tradition. For further speculations, see Auzépy 2003 and our response, in n. 266 below.

[256] Mango and Hawkins 1965, 144–5.

[257] Theoph. cont., 102–3; Eng. trans. from Mango 1972, 159. Further discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 72–3.

in 867.[258] The person Lazaros apparently existed, but the products attributed to him cannot be tied to any preserved works.

Manuscripts

Two manuscripts well-known to Byzantinists date from the period of second iconoclasm,[259] but neither contains miniatures or elaborate ornament. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, gr.437, a majuscule copy of Dionysios the Areopagite, was probably written shortly before 827 and sent west by the Byzantine emperor Michael II as a gift to the Frankish emperor Louis the Pious in recognition of the (incorrect) association between Dionysios and St Denis, the patron saint of the Frankish ruling family (Figure 58).[260] The decoration is restricted to small red crosses that accompany chapter headings, undulating horizontal lines punctuated with small vertical squiggles that sometimes fill the space left at the end of a line of text, a scattering of red initials and titles, and simple enlarged initials. In some cases, a letter stroke is slightly elongated;[261] in others, the letter form itself is drawn out into a point or the seriphs attached to the base line are elongated.[262] The most complicated ornament is a terminal tail that is often attached to the letter *kappa* when it appears at the end of a line or in the lowest line of text. Stripped of the elongated majuscule letter forms and tailed *kappas*, this same basic formula recurs in a series of undated minuscule manuscripts, most associated with the Stoudite monastery.[263] To this basic scribal repertoire, the Uspenskij Gospel – a minuscule text written by the Stoudite scribe Nicholas in 835 (Figure 59) and now in St Petersburg (Gosudarstvennaya Publičnaya Biblioteka im. Saltykova-Ščedrina, gr.219)[264] – adds a small terminal ivy leaf, drawn in the ink of the text, to the base of some marginal

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[258] Discussion in Mango and Hawkins 1965.

[259] The Vatican Ptolemy (gr. 1291), once dated 813–20 or 828–35, has been conclusively reattributed to the years around 753/4: see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 37–40, and 220–4 above.

[260] Omont 1886, 47–8; Omont 1892, 8, pl. XIV; Omont 1904; Ebersolt 1926, 76; Leroy 1961b, 42–3, 54–5; Cavallo 1977, 99; Fonkič 1980/2, 84; Lemerle 1986, 6–9, 125, n. 10, 143; *Byzance* 1992, 188–9 (no. 126); Perria, 1993, 247; Fonkič 2000; Perria 2000; Brubaker 2000b; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 41–2.

[261] E.g. an *eta* on f.54r, an *alpha* on f.93v.

[262] E.g. a *delta* on f.6r, an *epsilon* on f.7r, a *sigma* on f.22v, an *omikron* on f.31r.

[263] E.g. Vat.gr. 2625 and Paris.Coisl.20, ff.1–2 (both *c.* 830): see Fonkič 1980/2, 84–6; Perria, 1993, 249–52.

[264] Petropol.gr. 219 is apparently the oldest dated minuscule manuscript. See Fonkič 1980/2, 84–5, pls 1–4; Kavrus 1983, 99–102, pls 1–3; Fonkič 2000; and, for the manuscript's decoration, Perria, 1993, 248–9; Perria 2000.
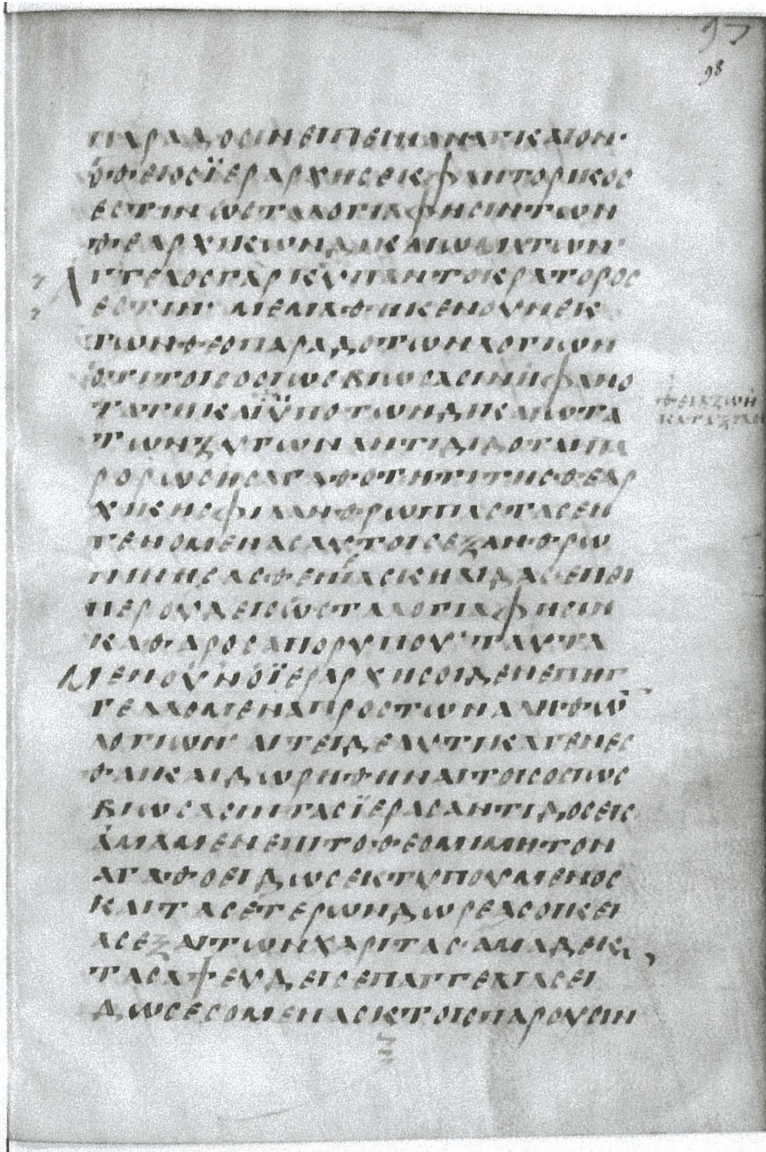
Fig. 58. Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite (Paris.gr.437, f. 98r)

scholia and Nicholas once inserts a cross partially framed by a vine with small grape clusters formed of dots, all in the ink of the text.[265] The St Petersburg manuscript is well-known as an early example of minuscule, and as an early

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[265] Fonkič 1980/2, pls 2–3; Kavrus 1983, pl. 2b; Weitzmann 1935, fig. 23 6.
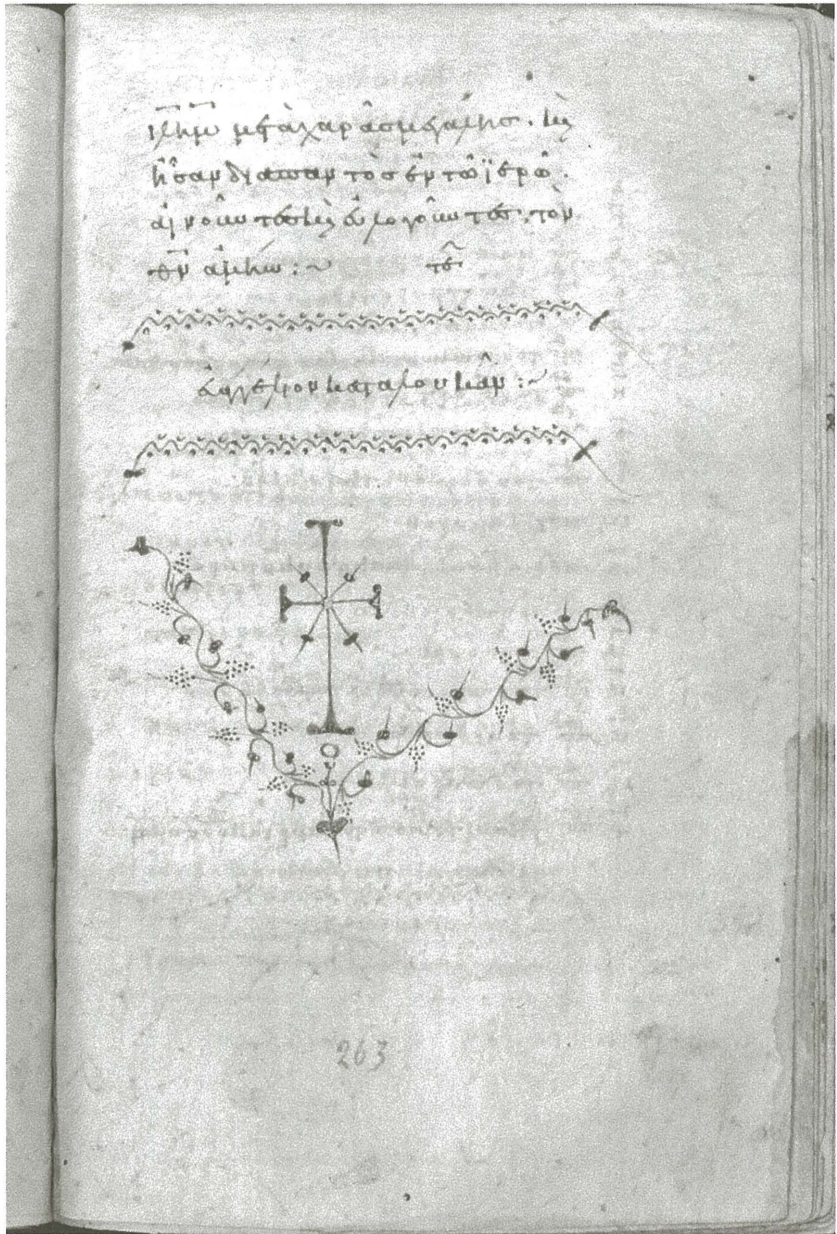
Fig. 59. Uspenskij Psalter (St Petersburg, GPG gr. 219, f. 263r)

Fig. 60. Gold *nomisma* of Leo V (813–20) mint of Constantinople (?);
Hermitage (Tolstoi 1): busts of Leo V (obverse and reverse)

product of the Stoudite monasteries; it should also be recognised as one of
the oldest Byzantine manuscripts to incorporate what would soon become
the ubiquitous ornament of ninth- and tenth-century Greek manuscripts:
its ivy leaf terminal decoration would dominate the decorative systems of
all Greek books produced for the next century.[266]

Coins

Leo V's earliest *nomismata* follow the pattern established by Eirene, picturing
the emperor on both obverse and reverse (Figure 60). After December 813,
when Leo's son Smbatios was renamed and crowned as Constantine, he
replaced Leo on the reverse (Figure 61).[267] Here Leo V reverted to the
formula used by Leo III (and perhaps as well recalled by Leo IV, whose son
was also called Constantine); we have already noted that Leo V emulated
Leo III, explained by contemporary sources as due to his desire 'to reign as
long as the other had done'.[268] The *miliaresia* continue the familiar pattern,
and retain the inscription *basileis romaion* introduced under Michael I.[269]

Michael II took the same route. He appeared on both the obverse and
reverse of the *nomismata* until the coronation of Theophilos, after which

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[266] Brubaker 2000b, 513–33. Auzépy 2003 has argued that various compositions in the Khludov
Psalter – normally dated, following Corrigan 1992, between 843 and 847 – may have
originated during second iconoclasm, and, apparently unaware of the distinctly figural
miniatures of the eighth-century Vatican Ptolemy, concluded that 'Il est temps d'envisager
l'existence d'un art "iconoclaste" où la personne humaine a toute sa place' (*ibid.*, 20). We find
the argument problematic: if images of the Old Testament have been sanctioned by the
iconoclasts, as Auzépy speculates, surely the iconophiles would have produced a response.
Somewhat more plausibly, Anderson 2006 has also suggested that a prototype for the
marginal psalter was developed at this time, in Rome, and carried east by Methodios.

[267] *DOC* III, 371–2.   [268] See 129–30 and n. 209, and 370 above; and see Füeg 2007, 24.

[269] *DOC* III, 372–3; descriptive lists and reproductions at 375–86, pls XVIII–XIX.

Fig. 61. Gold *nomisma* of Leo V (813–20), mint of Constantinople; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4633: busts of Leo V (obverse) and Constantine (reverse)

Fig. 62. Gold *nomisma* of Theophilos (829–42), mint of Naples; The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4735: bust of Theophilos (obverse), cross above three steps (reverse).

the latter is shown on the reverse; the *miliaresia* continued to follow the standard pattern.[270] The only major changes are that the later coins show Theophilos with a beard, and the later *folles* are larger and heavier than those minted earlier, suggesting revaluation.[271]

The earliest of the five distinct *nomismata* struck during the reign of Theophilos, dated by Philip Grierson to 829–30/1, showed a frontal bust of the emperor, bearded and holding the *globus cruciger* with a patriarchal cross and the invocation 'Lord, help your servant' on the reverse (Figure 62).[272] The second issue, with Theophilos on the obverse and his son Constantine on the reverse, appeared only briefly: Constantine died as an infant, and was co-emperor for just a few months in 830 or 831. After Constantine's death,

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[270] *DOC* III, 387–9.
[271] *DOC* III, 389; descriptive lists and reproductions at 394–405, pls. XX–XXI; Füeg 2007, 24f.
[272] *DOC* III, 131, 179, 411–12. On the coinage of Theophilos see also Füeg 2007, 25–8.

Fig. 63. Gold *nomisma* of Theophilos (829–42), mint of Constantinople (?); Whittemore collection of Harvard University: Theophilos with Theodora and Thekla (obverse), Anna and Anastasia (reverse)

the *nomismata* reverted to a variant on the ancestor type used intermittently throughout the years of iconoclasm, with both the dead Constantine and his dead grandfather, Michael II, on the reverse (Figure 55).[273]

A fourth issue, minted probably between about 838 and 840, depicted Theophilos flanked by the empress Theodora and their eldest daughter Thekla, with their daughters Anna and Anastasia on the reverse (Figure 63). A dynastic statement was clearly intended, but the impetus is unclear: possibly these *nomismata* followed the death (or otherwise unattested disgrace?) of Theophilos's daughter Maria, whose husband, Alexios Mousele, had been designated *caesar* after their marriage but is no longer displayed as next in line for the throne.[274] Few of these survive, the dynastic succession having been assured in 840 with the birth of Michael III, who duly appears on the reverse of the final issue of *nomismata*, with Theophilos on the obverse.[275]

Five issues of *miliaresia* also appear.[276] The earliest is remarkable as the first *miliaresion* struck in the name of a single emperor, which suggested to Grierson that the coin was no longer considered as a ceremonial issue but had instead become a regular denomination.[277] The second issue is larger and heavier. It adds the name of Constantine and includes a longer inscription than had been found before, invoking the 'servants of Christ, the faithful emperors of the Romans'. Like the second issue of the *nomisma*, this rare coin was apparently only briefly struck sometime in 830/1. After Constantine's death, his portrait was removed; and in what

[273] The pattern recurs toward the end of the century under Basil I: *DOC* III, 9, 412–13.
[274] See *DOC* III, 407, 415–16.   [275] *DOC* III, 416.
[276] This and the following paragraph replicate with only minor emendations Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 126–7.
[277] *DOC* III, 63, 406, 411.

Fig. 64. Copper *follis* of Theophilos (829–42), mint of Constantinople;
The Barber Institute Coin Collection B4698: half figure of Theophilos
(obverse) and inscription (reverse)

was apparently a fourth issue the smaller size and lighter weight were
reinstated.[278]

Folles survive in three issues. The earliest continues the larger and heav-
ier formula initiated under Michael II. This shows Theophilos, holding a
patriarchal cross and the *akakia*, on the obverse, the weight mark M (for
forty *nummi*, the standard notional 'weight' of the *follis* since its invention
under the emperor Anastasios in 498) on the reverse. The second issue,
struck in 830/1, includes two busts, one of Theophilos and the other of the
infant Constantine. The third and final issue is quite different. The obverse
portrays a half-figure (not a bust) of Theophilos, holding the *globus cruciger*
but also now the *labarum*, the military standard associated with Constan-
tine the Great (Figure 64).[279] The emperor wears the tufa, a headpiece with
a central, fan-shaped plume of peacock feathers associated with imperial
victories;[280] an inscription, which reads 'Theophilos augustus, thou con-
querest', replaces the old weight designation which was no longer significant,
since half-*folles* had ceased to be minted,[281] and is now dropped forever. The
insistent references to victory have suggested that this issue was first minted
to celebrate a military triumph in 831. The type continued until the end of
Theophilos' reign.[282]

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[278] *DOC* III, 412–13, 416.
[279] On the *labarum*, see *DOC* III, 127, 134–5; and on the context, and other insignia, Haldon, in
        Const. Porph., Three treatises, 270–4.
[280] On the tufa, see *DOC* III, 129–30.
[281] In fact, however, a half-weight issue of this same coin was effectively a half-*follis*, though it is
        not labelled as such: see *DOC* III, 413–15.
[282] *DOC* III, 406, 411–13. Distribution lists and reproductions of all coinage under Theophilos at
        ibid., 424–51, pls. XXII–XXVII.

Metalwork

Coins and seals aside,[283] the most significant metalwork produced between 815 and 843 was the 'Beautiful Door' at Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (Figures 65–6).[284] The double door, in the vestibule situated at the south-west end of the inner narthex, was installed in 838/9 and its legends were revised in 840/1 to accommodate the birth of Michael III.[285] The large door panels (4.35 m high by, together, 2.91 m wide) are made of wood, to which copper-alloy plates were attached; the central panels contain eight paired monograms, inlaid with silver. Presumably in deference to the medium, the inscriptions mimic those on contemporary seals; the uppermost two read (in translation) 'Lord help the ruler Theophilos' and 'Mother of God help the empress Theodora'. The lower two originally read 'Christ help the patriarch John [the Grammarian]' and gave the date as 'the year from the creation of the world 6347, indiction 2 [838/9]'. After the birth of Theophilos's son – the future Michael III – the silver letters spelling out 'the patriarch John', the original indication of the date, and the indiction number were picked out, and 'the ruler Michael' and a new date, 840/1, inserted. At the same time, the inscription panel at the top of the doors, 'Theophilos and Michael, victorious' was added.[286]

Although Emerson Swift believed that the doors were composed of pieces from three different periods – the fourth, sixth, and ninth centuries – we have argued elsewhere that the comparisons he cited are not convincing. Instead, the decorative vocabulary recalls motifs we have seen on textiles of *c.* 800 and in ninth-century manuscript illumination; it is sufficiently similar to that in the mosaics of the rooms above the vestibule, dated to the 870s, that we believe the door panels to have been produced as part of a single campaign, dated to the years suggested by the monograms: 840–2.

The south-west vestibule was added to Hagia Sophia at some point after the main reconstruction of the building by Justinian in the 530s, but exactly when it was constructed is not clear.[287] The importance of the portal in imperial ritual, and its designation as the 'Beautiful Door', is first attested

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[283] For the seals, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 129–40 with further bibliography. The Fieschi-Morgan reliquary (Figure 49), sometimes dated to second iconoclasm, probably belongs shortly after 843: *ibid.*, 112–13, and 348–50 above. See also Poulou-Papadimitriou 2005, esp. 699.

[284] Mango 1967, 253–8; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 109–11. Swift 1937, 137–47 should be used with great caution.

[285] Swift 1937; Mathews 1971, 91, 93; Mainstone 1988, 29, fig. 28; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 109–11.

[286] See Mango 1967, esp. 253–4.

[287] Discussion, with earlier bibliography, in Cormack and Hawkins 1977, 199–202.
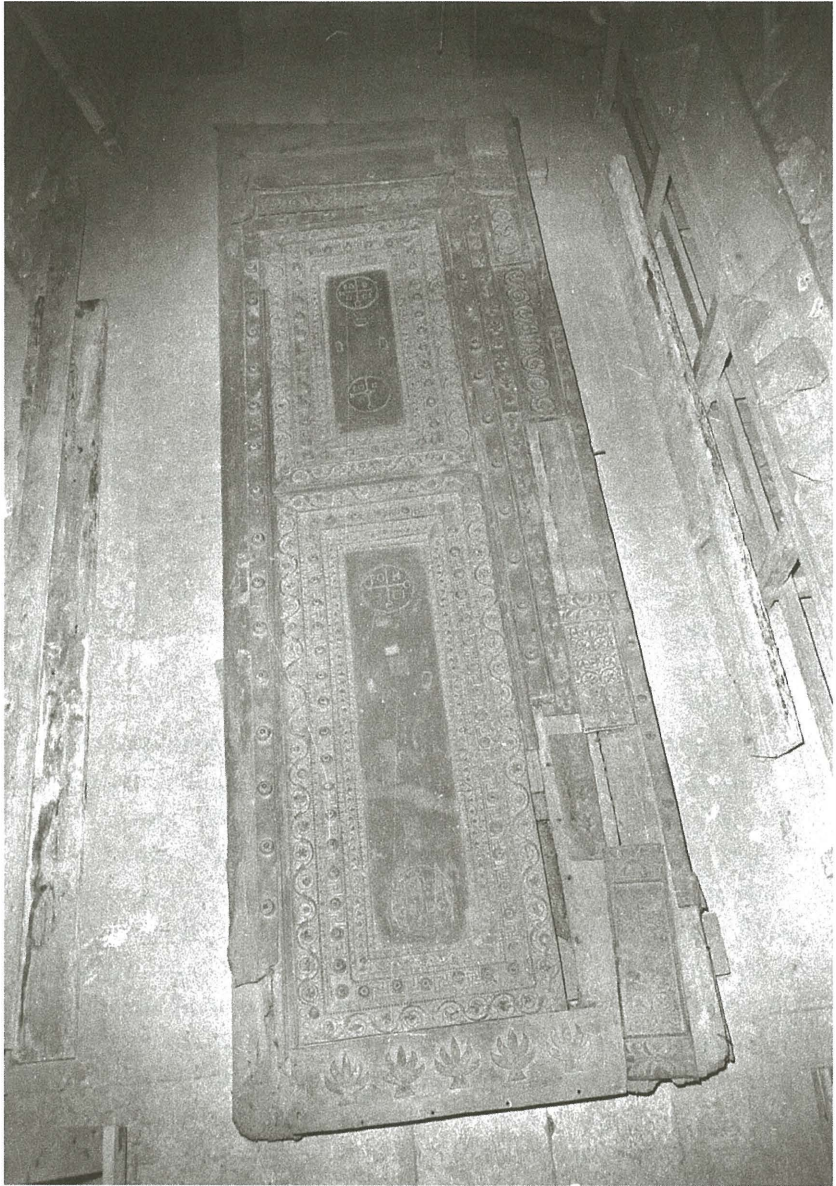
Fig. 65. Istanbul, Hagia Sophia: 'Beautiful Door' view

in the written documentation only in the mid-tenth century, in the *Book of Ceremonies*, at which point the well-known mosaic of the Virgin flanked by Constantine and Justinian was set in the lunette above it, but the creation – or replacement? – of the door itself by Theophilos indicates the importance of the entrance already by 840. As we have seen, the adjacent baptistery was
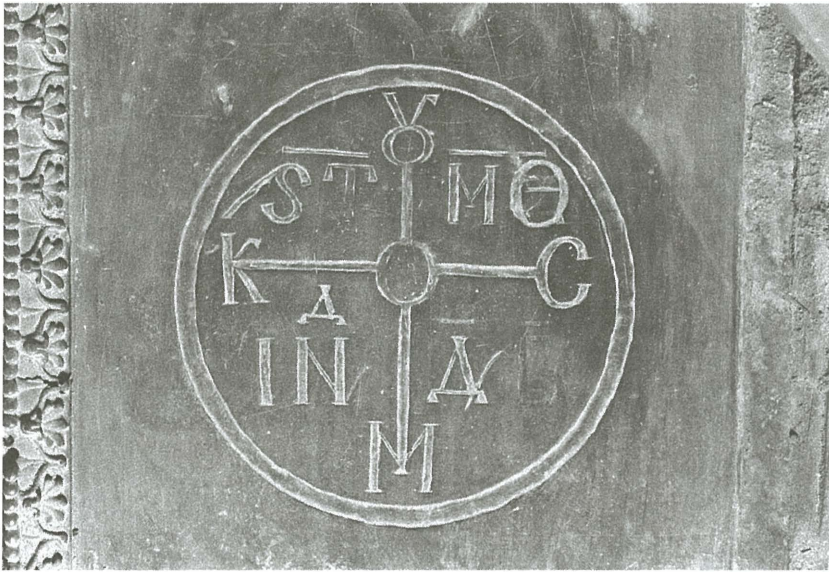
Fig. 66. Istanbul, Hagia Sophia: 'Beautiful Door' detail

at least partially reconstructed some time after 814, and it is possible that the remodelling and enhancement of the vestibule was part of this same campaign.[288] But whenever it was reconfigured, Theophilos's commission suggests that by the 840s the south-west vestibule had become the point of entry into the Great Church for the emperor, who, according to the *Book of Ceremonies*, removed his crown there, met the patriarch, and proceeded with him down the narthex and into church through the 'imperial door' (Figure 67).[289] This ritual made the vestibule a site of significant transition: the terrestrial ruler removed the sign of his office out of respect for the celestial ruler whose territory he was now entering. In this the emperor was assisted by the 'custodian' of God's house, the patriarch, and the process thus involved a physical manifestation of the transfer of power from one realm to another, as embodied by the head of state and church respectively.[290] After the service, much of which the emperor spent in an area reserved

[288] See 416 above.
[289] See Vogt I, *commentaire*, 58; Strube 1973, 40, 46, 49–52, 68; Dagron 2003, 92, 99, 279–80 (= Dagron 1996, 109, 116, 287). Strube 1973, 52, believes that the name was probably stimulated by Theophilos's gift of the door.
[290] The mosaic installed a century later implicitly redresses the potential imperial loss of face by portraying Constantine and Justinian voluntarily donating the city and church to the Virgin and child, without any hint of patriarchal assistance or participation. Later commentators also speak of a great mosaic of St Michael in the vestibule, but its date is uncertain. See Majeska 1984, 202–5.
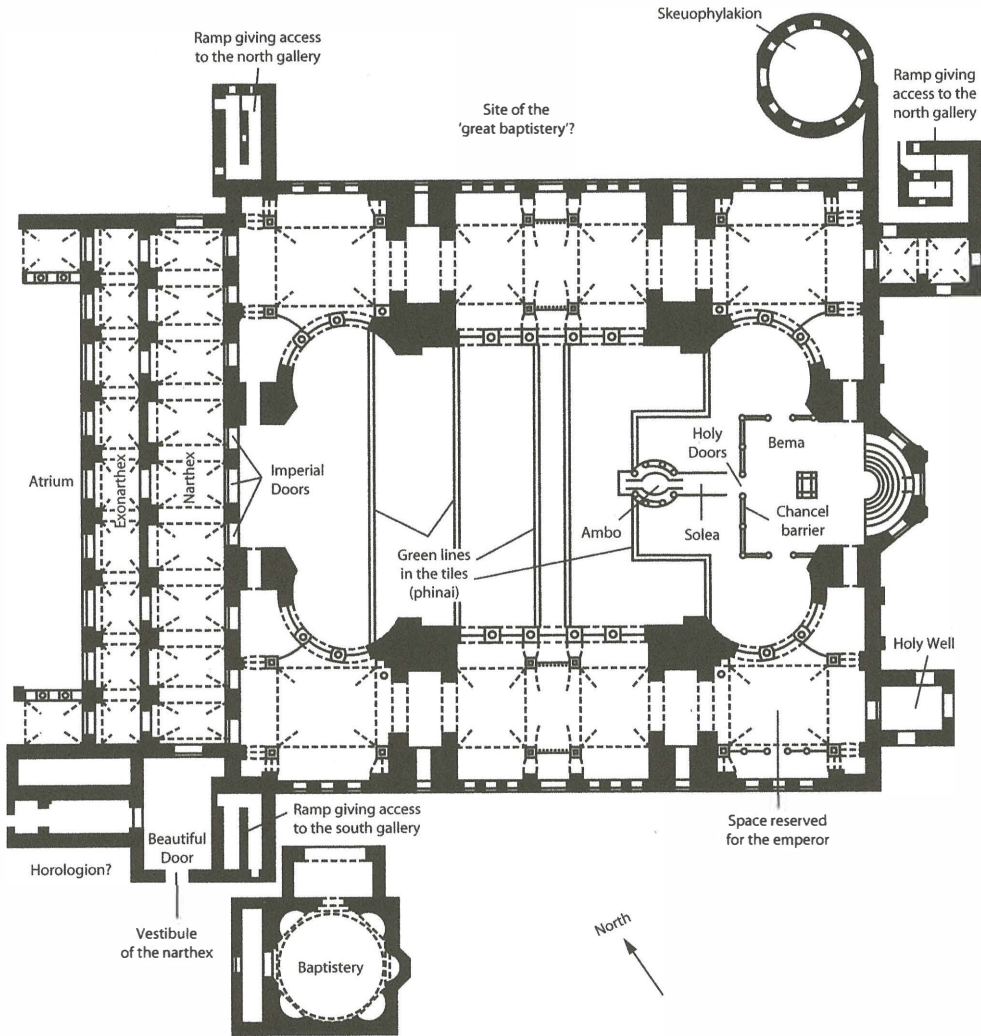
Fig. 67. Istanbul, Hagia Sophia: plan with SW entrance and SE exit

for his use in the south-east corner of Hagia Sophia, adjacent to the bema, he left the church through an adjoining vestibule, the portico of the Holy Well, so-called after its most important relic, the well on which Christ sat when he talked to the Samaritan woman.[291] Here, after giving gold to the patriarch, the emperor retrieved his crown, and, his patrimony restored,

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[291] Mango 1959, 60–72, remains the fundamental discussion.

returned to the palace.[292] The earliest mentions of the Holy Well are, like the Beautiful Door, connected with Theophilos: it is noted in passing in the letter of the three patriarchs to Theophilos (836?) and associated in the *Book of Ceremonies* with Theophilos's triumphal procession after the defeat of Islamic forces in Cilicia (830s).[293] The textual and visual links between Theophilos and the new imperial entrance and exit portals at Hagia Sophia suggest – though there is no way of demonstrating this conclusively – that he was responsible not only for the door marking the entry but also the reconfiguration of the imperial transit space of the Great Church.

One of the social processes that played itself out during iconoclasm was the negotiation of a new balance of power between church and state. Later Byzantine writers often present this as an issue, and sometimes even the main one, but that it was recognised during Theophilos's tenure is intimated by a passage from the *Life* of Niketas of Medikion, written before 844/5 and probably before 842. The author, the monk Theosteriktos, portrays iconoclasm as an imperial heresy, and exhorts his readers to 'Know the difference between emperors and priests'.[294] The rituals of entering and leaving Hagia Sophia, staged in what appear to be purpose-built vestibules newly constructed (the south-west vestibule and door) or at least newly energised (the south-east Holy Well) under Theophilos, show that this distinction was acted out by the time the *Book of Ceremonies* was written. Whether or not these rituals were initiated by Theophilos and the then patriarch, John the Grammarian, is uncertain, but the establishment of spaces dedicated to their enactment suggests that this is a viable option.

The written sources mention other items made wholly or in part of metal, and particularly mechanical devices powered by water or bellows, such as organs and furnishings that moved. Both seem to have been Greek specialities in the eighth and ninth centuries, and western and Abbasid sources suggest that Byzantine organs were especially valued in diplomatic gift exchange: one, sent to Pippin in 757, was heralded as 'not previously seen in Francia'; another Greek organ (*urghan rumi*) belonged to the caliph al-Ma'mun (813–33).[295] Evidently they were also made for local use in Constantinople: according to Leo the Grammarian, Theophilos commissioned

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[292] Full discussion in Dagron 2003, 94.

[293] Letter 7.13 and 12: Munitiz, Chrysostomides, Harvalia-Crook and Dendrinos 1997, 46–7, 72–3; see also Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 279–80; Afinogenov 2003–4. *Const. Porph. Three treatises*, 146–7.

[294] *AS* April I, xxviii; Eng. trans. from Dagron 2003, 188, with additional discussion. On the *Vita* see further Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 222.

[295] See Herrin 1992.

'two enormous organs of pure gold . . . decorated with different stones and glasses'.[296]

Later authors also credit Theophilos with automata. Best known are the 'golden tree in which were perched birds that warbled musically by means of some device' and the throne – described a century later by Liutprand of Cremona – that rose in the air, accompanied by the roaring of golden lions.[297] Leo the Grammarian, the source of most of our information on Theophilos's metalwork commissions, also tells us that the emperor ordered from the master of the mint a piece of furniture known as the *Pentapyrgion*, a large cupboard surmounted with five towers that sat in the throne room (Chrysotriklinos) of the Great Palace and apparently functioned as a display case.[298]

There are also several references to phylacteries or *enkolpia* (religious talismen usually worn around the neck), the most detailed of which, as we have seen, appears in the *Antirrhetikos* of Nikephoros, written shortly after 815.[299]

To underscore the favoured iconophile argument that religious images were sanctified by tradition, Nikephoros of course stressed that figural phylacteries had been used by Christians 'from the very beginning'. But what is particularly interesting about his account is that it avoids claims of wholesale destruction of religious imagery found elsewhere – though always rather vaguely – in Nikephoros's writings,[300] and instead – as we have also seen – suggests that it was sufficient proof of iconoclast sympathies to 'abominate' and 'avoid' them. Again, this fits the pattern we have repeatedly observed: there was little actual destruction of religious representations during the eighth and ninth centuries, even in Constantinople.

Icons

There are no icons firmly dated to the years of second iconoclasm. They probably continued to be made, at least in areas away from the capital,[301] but evidence for Constantinople is lacking. As noted earlier, later sources

[296] Leo Gramm., 215; trans. Mango 1972, 160–1; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 115.

[297] Leo Gramm., 215; trans. Mango 1972, 161. Liutprand of Cremona, *Retribution* VI, 5: trans. Wright 1993, 153; Squatriti 2007, 198. For discussion, see Brett, 1954; *ODB* 1, 235.

[298] Leo Gramm., 215; trans. Mango 1972, 160. See further Magdalino 1998a, 196ff; Dagron 2005.

[299] *Antirrhetikos* III, 36, see 350 above (on this text see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 256): *PG* 100: 433; trans. Mango 1972, 176. On later legends associating *enkolpia* with Theophilos, see Vinson 1995 and Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 115.

[300] See 118, 381 n. 56 above.   [301] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 55–74.

claim that icons were secretly venerated in the imperial palace by Theophilos's female relatives.[302] There is no contemporary record of any such practice. In this context it is worth noting that the only contemporary source praising an empress for rejecting iconoclasm – Theodore of Stoudion's letter to Theodosia, widow of Leo V (†820) – does not mention icons.[303]

Silks

As we saw in Chapter 4, there was considerable silk production across the eighth and ninth centuries. During the period of second iconoclasm, we are told that Michael II sent ten silks to the Carolingian emperor Louis the Pious,[304] and other pieces can be tied relatively firmly to contemporary western owners – the Vatican Pegasus silk, for example, is associated with the cross of pope Paschal I (817–24)[305] – but because silks were kept in store or reused it is impossible to know for certain that it was made during Paschal's papacy or beforehand. A number of examples have been associated with Theophilos, in particular a body of silks woven with secular imagery that promoted imperial ideology, such as hunters or charioteers.[306] A silk now in London that represents a charioteer (Figure 68) has been specifically linked with Theophilos, who, apparently celebrating the pillage of Zapetra in 837, is said to have participated in (and of course won) a race in the hippodrome.[307] The connection is impossible to confirm, and the widely accepted association of secular themes with iconoclast patronage is highly problematic. No matter what period, imperial themes were always appropriate to produce in Byzantium; and as we saw in the last chapter some of the silks closely related to those with secular subject matter portray figurative Christian scenes such as the Annunciation and the Nativity (Figures 45–6).[308] While we know from the *Liber Pontificalis* and Leo the Grammarian, who tells us that under Theophilos the imperial vestments were renovated and 'adorned with gold embroidery',[309] that the silk

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[302] See 398 above.

[303] *Ep.*, 538: ed. Fatouros; further discussion in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 71–3.

[304] *MGH, Conc.* 2. 480.5–7.   [305] See Muthesius 1997, 176–7.

[306] So, e.g., Muthesius 1997, 2, 60, 68–72, 146; *Byzance* 1992, 192.

[307] Grabar 1936, 63; cf. Muthesius 1997, 58. On the occasion, McCormick 1986, 149–50. The accounts (in the Continuator of George and Symeon *magistros*) may be anti-iconoclast polemic, as chariot racing was normally beneath imperial dignity. We have elsewhere argued for a somewhat earlier date (*c.* 800) for the silk: Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 101–2.

[308] See 342–3 above.

[309] Trans. Mango 1972, 161. On the *Liber Pontificalis*, see 84–90 above.

Fig. 68. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. 762–1893: Charioteer silk

workshops remained active during Theophilos's reign, subject matter alone remains an insufficient indicator of date.

Artisanal production outside the empire

Outside the empire, but within what is sometimes considered the Byzantine sphere of influence, we know – from documentary evidence only – of five churches rebuilt in Harran in the Tur Abdin around 813, and it is possible that the palace at Pliska in Bulgaria was begun during the reign of Leo V.[310]

To the West, in Rome, the church of Sta Prassede, one of three large basilican churches commissioned by pope Paschal I (817–24) has been linked with Byzantine influence by both Krautheimer and Brenk, with specific reference to the mosaic decoration of the cruciform side chapel dedicated to St Zeno and built to house relics and the tomb of the pope's mother, Theodora (Figure 69).[311] Although, as Davis-Weyer has demonstrated, the iconography of, in this instance, the Anastasis imposes western features on what is assumed to be a core Byzantine pattern (Figure 70),[312] Brenk has stressed that the hierarchical nature of the decoration followed the precepts of Nicaea II closely and anticipated middle Byzantine formulae, and both he and Krautheimer suggest that the eastern elements probably entered the Roman repertory through the agency of the Greek monks whom Paschal installed in the monastery that he attached to the church.[313] There are problems with these arguments. While it is certainly possible that the Anastasis was 'invented' in the East, the earliest examples that have been preserved are in the West, and by the time Sta Prassede was built the iconography was a century old, it was already well-known in Rome – appearing twice at Sta Maria Antiqua (705–7), and once in the oratory of John VII at St Peter's, of the same date – and did not need to have been imported.[314] And while the 'hierarchical' programme of decoration does indeed find parallels in the text of the Acts of Nicaea II, it replicates the standard progression of intercession familiar far earlier (and discussed by us in Chapter 2), with

[310] Bell and Mango 1982, 163; Krautheimer 1986, 315–18. Castelseprio, in northern Italy, has sometimes been dated to this period; recently, however, the building has been dated dendrochronologically to 867 and it will therefore not be treated here (Kuniholm 1995).

[311] Krautheimer 1980, 128; Brenk 1972/4. On the relics, see Goodson 2010 and Mauck 1987, 825–7.

[312] Davis-Weyer 1976. See also Kartsonis 1986, 88–93.

[313] Sansterre 1983, esp. 38, 171–2.

[314] On these, and earlier textual references to the Anastasis emanating from Rome, see Kartsonis 1986, 69–81.

Fig. 69. Rome, Sta Prassede, Zeno Chapel: mosaic

Fig. 70. Rome, Sta Prassede, Zeno Chapel: mosaic detail

Christ at the top of the scale, followed by the Theotokos, the saints and so forth down to ordinary human beings. There are many routes by which this pattern could have entered the mind that organised the decoration of the Zeno chapel, and detailed knowledge of the Acts of a council held thirty years earlier, across the Mediterranean, is not required. Further, even were we to assume that the Greeks installed by Paschal were Byzantine Greeks (as opposed, say, to Greek-speaking monks from Calabria or Naples), their participation in Paschal's decorative scheme seems unlikely. Despite these caveats, however, the decoration of the Zeno chapel has – and, as Paschal's insistence on the presence of Greek monks 'chanting the psalms in the Greek manner' indicates,[315] was surely intended to express – a Byzantine attitude. Caroline Goodson has recently argued the Sta Prassede was both a 'political and salvific statement': political in its 'contradiction' of Frankish ecclesiastical architecture and resistance to Louis the Pious's attempts to unify monastic practice (hence the insistence on Greek monks); salvific in its desire, expressed by inscription and the mosaics of the triumphal arch as well as by the chapel mosaics, to gain Paschal and his mother entrance into heaven.[316] We may perhaps interpret the Byzantine elements of the Zeno chapel in this light, as evidence of Paschal's flirtation with things Greek in order to divorce himself from Louis's control and strengthen his hand against the Franks.[317]

Artisanal production during second iconoclasm: conclusions

Artisanal production did not stop during second iconoclasm. In terms of preserved works, however, no more remains from second than from first iconoclasm and the interim period between 787 and 815. Any attempt to define the artisanal production of thirty years is bound to run into difficulties, and this summary of known works from the years between 815 and 843 is no exception. A few general points are nonetheless worth remarking.

Much of the construction work documented during iconoclasm consists of repairs to or alterations of older structures. There may well be more of this than the sources suggest, for it seems at least plausible that some of the monasteries that our documents claim were 'built' – like the converted estates of Theophobos and Martiniakos mentioned earlier – in

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[315] *LP* 2, 54. The emphasis on relics, too, hints at Byzantine practice.

[316] Goodson (forthcoming) and, on the triumphal arch, Mauck 1987. We are very grateful to Caroline Goodson for allowing us to read her article in advance of publication.

[317] For another possible Italian reference to iconoclasm, see Falla Castelfranchi 1996.

reality adapted older domestic buildings for monastic use. But both repair-work and new construction alike require a skilled labour force, and this seems to have been available throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. That it was mobile is suggested by the ninth-century (but post-iconoclast) church at Dereağzı in central Lycia, the bricks for which came from a region on the sea of Marmara, probably with a master mason to lay them.[318]

Land-use and patronage-patterns during iconoclasm as a whole are also worth noting. Some land seems to have been developed for the first time, and this suggests economic expansion. The islands in the sea of Marmara apparently underwent extensive development, perhaps because during the years of iconoclasm they served as places of exile, and were sufficiently removed from the capital to allow considerable freedom of movement (and patronage) for banished aristocrats. Many new monasteries – which, as noted earlier, may well sometimes have been little more than refurbished domestic buildings – were constructed on family lands the previous use of which (if any) is rarely specified, though occasionally, as at the Stoudite Monastery at Boskytion (in Bithynia), we are told that the complex was built on family estates already under cultivation.[319]

One of the more interesting general conclusions to be drawn from the evidence preserved from the iconoclast centuries is that, while iconoclast emperors are credited with civic patronage such as repair of walls and aqueducts, ecclesiastical patronage in the period is less often attributed to them than one might have anticipated. The identity of many patrons is not known, and the majority of named benefactors were religious. Others, however, were civic officials of some sort (e.g Anna, wife of Leo the *patrikios*, the general Manuel, the courtier Martiniakos);[320] and some were aristocrats who sponsored monasteries or groups of monasteries (e.g. Antony and Niketas, both *patrikioi*). This may be due to the nature of our source material, which is largely hagiographic and pro-iconophile: the longest-ruling emperors of the years between 730 and 843 were Leo III and Constantine V (who between them ruled from 717 to 775) and, since both were vilified as heretics by later writers, positive references to any ecclesiastical building activities may have

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[318] Ousterhout 1998, 128.

[319] Near Katabolos, this was the first Stoudite church built after the group left Constantinople: see the concise discussions, with references, in Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, 322, and Ruggieri 1991, 215–16.

[320] See 424 above. In this connection, the observation by Dunn 2005b of the proportionate growth in the number of 'official' seals in the eighth and into the ninth century is significant.

been expunged from the record. The semi-legendary account of the building history of Constantinople preserved as the *Patria* follows this same pattern, with few churches attributed to iconoclast emperors; here, as in many tenth-century and later revisionist accounts of the period, ecclesiastical initiative during iconoclasm is linked to imperial wives.[321] That the ninth-century written material anticipates this model suggests that the history of the iconoclast era began to be revised earlier than has sometimes been proposed.

In terms of artisanal products, the period of the second iconoclasm did not witness a sharp break from the past. As we saw at the beginning of this discussion, the dominant force was continuity rather than rupture. On the whole, pre-iconoclast monuments survived and, apart from the general shift away from figurative religious subject matter, there is little to differentiate the patterns of production from those that came before. The most radical architectural change of the whole period was the introduction of the cross-in-square plan, but that, as we have seen, pre-dates second iconoclasm and its development simply continued in the first half of the ninth century. The same is true of the two major technical innovations of the iconoclast era, minuscule and (probably) a new loom type: both apparently emerged *c.* 800 and stayed on.[322] That the key date here is *c.* 800 suggests that the real shifts were economic ones, and had less to do with iconoclasm (first, second or the interim) than with the increasing prosperity of the ninth-century world. But one thing *was* radically changed by iconoclasm: the roles and uses of figurative religious art. Codified and developed during the debates of the eighth and early ninth centuries, the theory of images charged icons with qualities previously held only by relics and thus fundamentally transformed the orthodox experience.[323] We will return to this issue in Chapter 12.

The 'triumph' of orthodoxy

Theophilos died in January of the year 842. The traditional interpretation of the events that followed, and which led to the restoration of holy images

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[321] Especially to Anna, wife of Leo III, and St Theodora, wife of Theophilos: Preger 1901, 232, 251, 265. On the tenth-century tendency to ascribe iconophile sentiments to imperial women, see Vinson 1998; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 71–2.

[322] See 000 above and for the loom used for paired main warp twill silks (Muthesius's weaving type C.ii) see Muthesius 1984, 235–54; Muthesius 1997, catalogue M38–M67; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 99–103.

[323] See 317 above, with Brubaker 1998, 1215–54.

and the extinction of imperial iconoclasm once and for all, has the pious empress Theodora, regent for her young son Michael III, carefully planning the event with her closest advisers, several of them members of her own family, engineering the removal of the iconoclast and patriarch John Grammatikos,[324] and convening a meeting of leading officials of the church at which orthodoxy was officially re-established, marked by a procession on the first Sunday in Lent, 843, a set of events henceforth known as the triumph of orthodoxy.

It has been shown that things were in fact somewhat more complex than this, however.[325] Apart from the dubious post-restoration accounts of Theodora's secret devotion to images, undoubtedly aimed at establishing her reputation as a devout iconophile, there is no evidence that Theodora wanted to re-establish image veneration out of purely pious sentiments. She was as much a figurehead as she was an inspirer and leader, and the other figures involved – the *magistros* Theoktistos, her brothers Bardas and Petronas, along with several other high-ranking political and military men – seem to have played equally important roles. We should recall that Theoktistos and others had been staunch supporters of Theophilos' iconoclasm until his death.[326] Some time was spent preparing the ground for the shift, and it was a whole year after the death of Theophilos before anything was done openly. There appears to have been no openly iconoclastic opposition to the move: clearly, it was inspired largely by matters of convenience in terms of removing a cause of internal dissension and factionalism within the dominant elite, and between the official church and the various individual opponents who continued, if not very effectively, to voice their opposition, although the genuine faith in the theological basis for images was an equally crucial element. Theoktistos in particular seems to have been moved entirely by pragmatic concerns, having been an enthusiastic supporter of Theophilos beforehand; similar motives probably moved most of the other leading actors, who had clearly worked with Theophilos and tacitly accepted his

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[324] Lilie 1999c, 177–8. John died in the 860s, having been kept under house arrest, either in Constantinople or on a family estate of Kleidion in Asia Minor, for the rest of his life.

[325] See esp. the discussion of the sources and of the events in Zielke 1999, 216–30.

[326] For a more traditional account, see Martin 1930, 212ff.; but see now Gouillard 1967), 119ff.; and the accounts in Ostrogorsky 1968, 181ff.; Bury 1912, 143–53; Mango 1977b, who discusses the role of several of the key figures, including the father of the later patriarch Photios, Sergios; and Karlin-Hayter 2001, 181–2. Karlin-Hayter 2001 argues for a much more pragmatic position, and agrees that the levels of pro- or anti-iconoclast sentiment in the government and court reflected largely the emperors' own views. See also Karlin-Hayter 2006, for a re-appraisal of the propaganda elements in the *Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii* (and see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 210–11).

iconoclasm. The well-established tradition recounting Theodora's demand that her husband be pardoned also suggests that she would not have supported the re-establishment of the veneration of images had this not been agreed.[327] The only opposition may have come from the patriarch John (with the clergy of the Hagia Sophia – see below) before and at the time of his deposition in 843, although the stories that survive about his actions at that time are largely the stuff of iconophile myth-making.[328]

It is also significant that neither members of the monastic community nor leading churchmen seem to have been involved in the change. Methodios was appointed to the patriarchal throne and seems to have been consulted, but it was the secular officials who inaugurated the changes and carried them through, and as we have seen, Methodios was himself closely connected with Theodora's family. After a preliminary meeting or meetings in the private house of Theoktistos with only a few churchmen present, a synod was held, very probably in the Blachernai palace.[329] This surely suggests that the clergy of the patriarchal church were resistant to the proposed changes – for a meeting with such crucial implications for the whole imperial church and claiming imperial and synodal authority to exclude them is odd, to say the least. Yet there, in early March, the Acts of the Council of 787 were confirmed once more, and the chief iconoclasts of the period from 815 had their names added to the list of heretics drawn up in 787. The name of the emperor Theophilos was omitted. This was in order to avoid stigmatising the family that was still in power, as well as to avoid alienating those who held his memory in honour, in particular his reputation for being a just and honourable emperor (to the extent that this was itself not a later invention). And as noted above, a key motif in the accounts of the change in policy is the demand by Theodora that her husband be formally pardoned and not dishonoured along with the other iconoclast rulers.[330] After the issues had been presented and an official decision reached, John the Grammarian was asked to resign, and Methodios was appointed. The synod probably ended on Saturday, 3 March 843, and Methodios' enthronement probably took place either on the following

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[327] Genesios, 80. 2, 5ff.; Theoph. Cont., 152–4; Ps.-Symeon, 650–1; and see Gouillard 1967 and Karlin-Hayter 2001 for detailed discussion.

[328] See Bury 1912, 147–52; Lilie 1999c, 178–80.

[329] Duffy 1979, 133, notes that the *Synodicon vetus* and the later tradition dependent upon it name the palace of Theoktistos as the location of the synod, but that this seems to be a misunderstanding. According to an unpublished ms. from Sinai (*Cod. Sinaiticus graec.* 482), the synod was in fact held in the imperial palace at Blachernai. See Zielke 1999, 229 and n. 203.

[330] See Theoph. Cont., 152–4; Ps.-Symeon, 650–1 and Karlin-Hayter 2001, 181.

day, Sunday, 4 March, or a week later on Sunday, 11 March.[331] Opposition to his appointment seems to have existed among the Stoudite community – a defamatory rumour about an illegitimate son he is supposed to have fathered was easily refuted, but it is possible that this was in fact not circulated by supporters of the deposed John Grammatikos, as proclaimed at the time, but rather by certain Stoudites whose opposition to Methodios' appointment lay in the nature of his election, by imperial mandate and without a democratic synodal decision.[332] This was perhaps a foretaste of the problems Methodios was to have with the Stoudite community in the opening years of his patriarchate.

After the synod had concluded its business and a vigil observed overnight, a formal procession from Blachernai to the church of the Holy Wisdom took place, followed by a solemn liturgy in the church itself, attended by monks from the surrounding regions. No dissent is recorded in the admittedly partial sources,[333] although it is clear that Methodios proceeded thereafter – beginning with a relatively conciliatory position – to the expulsion from the church of a number of senior and middle-ranking clergy, partly under pressure from harder-line monastic and ascetic circles (Ioannikios is reported to have played a significant role in this). Particularly targeted were those who had changed their position twice – in 787 and again in 815 – and those whose appointments were made by such churchmen; although there appears also to have been some difficulty thereafter with some of those ordained in their stead, who turned out to be lacking in qualifications or the correct motives. That there was a sort of mass expulsion of clergy – according to one slightly later account numbering some 20,000 – seems exaggerated, although the evidence is ambiguous, and there was opposition to Methodios' policies from several quarters – even his own *Vita* accuses him of fomenting dissension within the church.[334] While some iconoclastic sentiment appears to have prevailed among some churchmen into the 860s,[335] it is likely that it had only very limited purchase among the ordinary population. This is not to say that the population had therefore been

[331] Zielke 1999, 228–30 for the date and relevant sources.

[332] The *Vita Ioannicii* by Peter (see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 215) includes both the iconoclasts and the Stoudites together as perpetrators of the scandal. See Von Dobschütz 1909, 46; Sullivan 1998, 340–1 and n. 507; Zielke 1999, 230–1, and notes.

[333] Bury 1912, 148–51; see again Zielke 1999, 216–30, for a detailed account both of the events and of the conflicting and problematic sources.

[334] For a detailed analysis and careful assessment of the sources, see Zielke 1999, 231–47, more cautious than Afinogenov 1996 and Thümmel 2005, 276–8. See *V. Methodii*, 1252C.

[335] John, the former patriarch, had died before 866, when his tomb, and that of Constantine V, was opened on the orders of Michael II and the bodies displayed and burned in the hippodrome (see Leo Gramm., 248.15–23). At a synod in 869, five iconoclasts were

Map 2. The empire and its neighbours *c.* 840

more-or-less wholly iconophile in its sympathies, either: a silent partiality for one position or the other and a silent neutrality probably underlay the relatively passive response to imperial policy of either party, and the limited and easily policed opposition to imperial policy, especially after the death of Theodore of Stoudion, would support the view that, however widely applied imperial iconoclasm may have been by individual appointees of the iconoclastic emperors and their patriarchs, serious opposition and debate was a largely metropolitan phenomenon.[336]

condemned, along with Theodoros Krithinos, reported as the leader of the iconoclasts (see Mansi, xvi, 388A–389D for the Greek text; the Latin version at 141C–142E; and the discussion on Theodore in Gouillard 1961a, 387ff.).

[336] Suggested perhaps also by the fact that the patriarch Photios stressed the role of his parents in combatting iconoclasm, and introduced the issue of iconoclasm as still a danger at the synods at which he presided, chiefly in order to bolster his own authority: see Mango 1977b, esp. 139–40; and esp. Thümmel 1983, 153–5 (and see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 260 n. 80).

6 | Economy, society, and state

The economic changes which affected the east Mediterranean and south Balkan world in the period from the later seventh to the ninth century were dramatic. It is important to stress at the outset of any discussion dealing with this aspect of Byzantine history that these changes were both part of the internal dynamics of Byzantine society or responded to its radically transformed situation at this period, and a reflection of developments outside Byzantine society. In other words, Byzantium is, in particular with regard to its economy, only one part of a much broader picture, and reflects the local variations on a theme that stretches from the Atlantic coast in the West to the Iranian plateau in the East, if not further. This is not the place to attempt a general delineation of this broader picture – recent and current research by other scholars must provide the background here.[1] Yet one important point should be made, and that is that the Byzantine world, to judge from the archaeology as well as the textual and related evidence, was relatively impoverished compared with the Islamic lands to the East, and certainly hardly superior to the Christian lands in central and southern Europe. The simple reason for this can be stated fairly baldly: unlike the former provinces in the East, Byzantine Anatolia suffered constant and major economic disruption and long-term damage throughout the later seventh and well into the eighth century. Yet the empire's more effective fiscal and military administration made it possible to exploit its limited resources extremely efficiently, so that, even if there was a substantial low point in emissions during the later seventh and eighth centuries, it continued to mint an extensive gold coinage throughout the period.

The history of the 'dark-age', 'transitional', or 'early and middle' Byzantine economy has, over the last thirty or so years, been viewed as one of urban collapse, shrinkage, localisation, impoverishment.[2] A dramatic reduction

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[1] See McCormick 2001 and Wickham 2005, for example, and the survey in Haldon 2008. Some of the key elements of this chapter were first sketched out in Haldon 2010.

[2] 'Transitional' has recently become the more generally acceptable term (see Ousterhout 2005a), certainly preferable to the older 'dark ages'. It brings its own problems with it, however, suggesting linear movement from one state of affairs to another, which we believe is misleading

in market exchange and commerce is thought to have accompanied the reduction of towns and cities to mere fortified *kastra*, all taken as clear evidence of the collapse of late ancient urban society. Sometimes this picture is overstated, sometimes it is presented in slightly more ambiguous guise. And while this is the basic picture, and is certainly much more accurate and more useful than earlier models of a thriving, urbanised monetary economy at this time, it stands in need also of substantial refinement. Indeed, things were by no means quite so straightforward, and complexity, regional variation, and local colour need to be woven into the fabric of the empire's development. For example, the evolution of towns needs to be taken in the context of the structure of settlement patterns as a whole, and cannot be seen simply as a process whereby former *poleis* evolve into *kastra*. A whole range of specialised, fortified centres came into being in response to both state requirements (military and fiscal) and the pressures of demographic change; some of these were the result of direct state intervention and funding, others may have been the work of members of the local elites we will discuss in Chapter 8. Other small forts and fortified centres may have housed the dwellings of the local military, while in many regions less well-fortified walled enclosures seem to have represented the refuges for the rural and urban populations of the provinces or the estate-centres of local elite families or officials.

The changes which can be observed archaeologically, where the evidence is sufficient (in the southern Balkans, therefore, in particular), and which are dimly reflected through the literary sources, seem thus to represent shifts in emphasis and the distribution of settlement and population, as much as any absolute decline. Absence of coins from important as well as secondary urban and semi-urban sites should not necessarily imply absence of economic activity as such, and even less an absence of state administrative or military, or indeed ecclesiastical, activity, a point to which the presence of official lead seals from such sites should alert us.[3] The absence of ceramic material remains problematic, of course, although in many cases this simply reflects a lack of appropriate investigation. Economically the basic picture – of shrinkage and localisation – can be accepted, yet the 'state' economy remained flexible (see also Chapter 10). The evidence we will

(cf. Haldon 1985, 111–12): we are dealing with a series of transformative shifts which relate to both form and function. We prefer therefore to use a neutral chronological descriptive term which follows more recent archaeological practice: 'early Byzantine' refers to the period from the sixth/seventh to the later ninth century; 'middle Byzantine' refers to the following period, up to the early twelfth century (Vroom 2005b, 15).

[3] A point made in Haldon 1997a, 119ff.; and see Dunn 2005b.

review below shows that substantial quantities of gold coinage continued
to be minted with which to pay the army and in particular members of the
imperial administrative apparatus, and that private exchange relationships
flourished. It will also show that longer-distance commercial exchange, not
only in respect of Constantinople, continued with few permanent interrup-
tions, although the volume of traffic was reduced,[4] and the *loci* of pottery
production and the networks of exchange did shift. The problem lies in
recognising the media through which such relationships were conducted
and the forms they present to the observer – how the government effected
the appropriation and deployment of resources, for example, and through
what means rural populations were able to exchange goods and services;
and how these interwoven levels of social and economic activity evolved
over time and changed their appearance as conditions changed and as the
needs of different interest groups within Byzantine society developed. The
potential for recovery, or 'revival', was thus inscribed into the structures of
Byzantine society and economy, not in any deterministic sense, but rather
insofar as flexibility of response and of the articulation of the different parts
of the economic life of Byzantium – both geographically and in terms of
levels of economic activity – were key aspects of the history of the empire
and of Byzantine society as a whole. Although hardly an 'economic' phe-
nomenon, imperial iconoclasm is an important symptom and reflection of
this systemic flexibility.

The context

It is somewhat artificial to separate the discussion of the 'social' from the
'economic', but we have done so in this and in the following chapters the
better to present the multifaceted nature of the material and the problems
which are raised by questions of social and economic development over this
period. In historical terms, of course, and in respect of the perceived realities
of contemporaries, the two aspects are part of an inseparable whole, and
the conclusions which we will draw regarding the dynamic and structure of
Byzantine society from the later seventh to the middle of the ninth century
should be understood in the context of our discussion of the material
aspects of Byzantine society and economy, which form the focus of this
chapter. Meaningful analysis of the economic and social life of the east

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[4] See Mundell Mango 2001 for an appreciation of the extent and volume of international
exchange before the Islamic conquests.

Roman empire in the period from the middle of the seventh to the middle of the ninth centuries is hindered from the outset by the current state of the archaeological, and more especially the ceramic, record, which is extremely poor for Anatolia, and patchy for the south Balkans and Aegean region. Reliance on numismatic and documentary evidence alone, with all the methodological dangers inherent in these sets of data, is therefore greater than desirable but at this stage unavoidable. Yet 'social and economic' implies and includes a great deal, so that this chapter will not attempt a detailed analysis of every factor which contributes to the overall picture, but rather will sketch in some key framing elements within the context of which the other material we have presented may be situated.[5]

The context in its general lines is well-known. Following the loss of the empires wealthiest provinces – in particular Egypt, the source of the grain which had both fed Constantinople and other major coastal cities as well as contributed to the supply of the east Roman army, and Syria/Palestine, a source of considerable fiscal income as well as of finished luxury products – there remained that part of Asia Minor behind the Taurus–Anti-Taurus ranges, very roughly in a line running from the western end of the Cilician plain up to Trebizond on the Black Sea coast. The Balkan territories had been reduced to disconnected coastal strips along the Adriatic, around western Greece and the Peloponnese, the coastal plains of the Argolid and Attica, Euboia, the region running north through Thessaloniki and around to the southern Thracian plain. To the north of Thrace the Black Sea coast up to the mouth of the Danube was held until the 680s (the arrival of the Turkic Bulgars), and thereafter for much of the eighth and ninth centuries as far as Odessos (Varna) or Anchialos (Gulf of Burgas), with a more-or-less limited control of the inland regions of Thrace below the Stara Zagora, depending chiefly on the presence of imperial troops or the willingness of the local population – variously composed of mixed Slav, Turkic, and indigenous groups, depending on area – to accept imperial authority. Little or no control was exercised over the central and western inner Balkan regions except along the coasts. The empire retained its control in the Aegean islands, although they were constantly threatened,

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[5] There is a substantial older literature relevant to the east Roman area, which still provides useful material: Ashtor 1970; Hübinger 1968; Lopez 1959; Lopez 1945; Lopez 1951; Lopez 1955; Lewis 1951; Adelson 1957; Grierson 1959; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963; Claude 1985. More recently Hendy 1985, esp. 561–9; the essays in Hodges and Bowden 1998; and Reynolds 1995. For a helpful account of the sixth-century situation, see Morrisson and Sodini 2002, and for the most recent analyses and accounts of the medieval Byzantine economy, see the contributions to Laiou *et al.* 2002.

and occasionally occupied, from the 650s by the nascent Muslim maritime power, and Cyprus (divided as a condominium by treaty in 685); it continued to hold still considerable Italian territories, albeit fragmented and under permanent threat from local Lombard rulers (but including Rome and Sicily as well as the islands of Sardinia and Corsica); and the North African provinces remained under increasingly precarious Constantinopolitan authority until the fall of Carthage in the early 690s. While the evidence concerning the latter is slender, it is clear that they retained importance for Constantinople both economically and politically until their final loss in the 690s.[6]

When compared with the empire in the early seventh century, therefore, we are confronted in the later seventh and early eighth century by a very much reduced east Roman state. One oft-quoted estimate suggests a reduction in tax revenue by the 650s of as much as 75 per cent, given that Egypt alone has been estimated to have supplied something like a third of the state's revenues from the prefectures of Oriens and Illyricum combined.[7] Be that as it may, the central government was faced with a set of fiscal and political problems probably greater than any that had afflicted the Roman state hitherto. The solutions it adopted to deal with these – affecting every aspect of east Roman administrative and social life – evolved for the most part in a piecemeal manner, by fits and starts, as the problems and their implications for first one sector and then another of the state's operations became apparent. Fiscal, military, judicial structures were all radically implicated, as were relations between state and taxpayers, landlords and tenants, and town and country. The long-term results of these changes over the remainder of the seventh and eighth, and well into the ninth century, were to produce a very different, yet still recognisably Roman, state administrative apparatus, rooted in a transformed society and culture. And these transformations were not confined to the lands of the eastern Roman empire: the rest of the western Eurasian world was equally drastically affected, not necessarily in the same ways, and the general context shared by western and northern

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[6] Haldon 1997a, 63–75, for further literature; Avramea 2001 for Greece. On North Africa: Brett 1978, 503–13; and Morrisson and Seibt 1982. Corsica seems to have been lost to the Lombards during the later seventh century. For residual east Roman power in Malta, Sardinia, and the Balearics well into the eighth century: Boscolo 1978; Eickhoff 1966, 38ff.; Brown 1975; and for Sardinia, Cosentino 2002, 2005. A naval expedition of some importance involving vessels from the Sicilian fleet as well as others was in action in 760 in the Tyrrhenian sea, for example: see Eickhoff 1966, 224; von Falkenhausen 1967, 4. On the situation in the western Mediterranean and the Byzantine role there, see also Manzano 1998. See Chapter 11 on military administration, and Chapter 3 on the political history of the reign of Constantine V.

[7] See Jones 1964, 462–4; Hendy 1985, 164ff.

Europe, Byzantium, and the early Islamic world alike sets the stage for the development of society in all these areas.[8]

These changes had important and sometimes dramatic implications for the production, distribution, and consumption of social wealth. Quite apart from the narrower concerns of market exchange and the use of money, or the production and distribution of luxury goods, the redistribution of agrarian production by the state through its fiscal apparatus was directly affected, while movements of population disrupted established patterns of consumption and production of foodstuffs, hence also shifts in patterns of demand and the distribution of goods which were associated therewith. Changes in the nature and function of urban centres meant at the same time changes in fiscal, military, and ecclesiastical administration, so that it would be reasonable to say that the whole fabric of east Roman state and society was affected in one way or another by the events of the seventh century, with all the consequences for the ways in which systems of exchange and production worked which this entailed. In the following, we will try to give some idea of the directions and emphases of those changes.

The situation of real crisis may be said to have lasted from roughly the 640s through to the first decades of the eighth century. Its structural origins pre-date the Islamic conquests or the Persian invasions of the reign of Herakleios, as is widely recognised: from the fourth century transformations in the role, function, and physical character of urban centres, often over very different periods and with different results in, say, the Balkans as compared with Anatolia or greater Syria; changes in the demography of the empire, shifts in patterns of trade and commerce, and of production of both luxury and non-luxury goods; changes in the make-up of the political elite of the empire, shifts in modes of perception and understanding, and a whole series of related factors had already made the late Roman world a very different place from that of the high empire. Together with a vastly different international political and military environment, all these contributed in many different ways, with many different regional variations and accents, to the context from which the eastern Roman state and society were evolving in the seventh century.

But by the 730s and 740s we have seen that the military situation on the eastern front was becoming more stable. The regular deep penetration of imperial territory by hostile forces which characterised Muslim strategy from the 650s, involving the death or deportation of populations and destruction of buildings, livestock, and crops, became less frequent as a

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[8] For a recent general survey, see Wickham 2005.

workable defensive strategy evolved (and as internal politics in the Islamic world also played a role). Muslim activity at sea increased, however, causing initially very severe disruption in the Aegean especially, although this challenge – which promoted shifts in demographic and settlement patterns – appears to have been stabilised by the time of Leo III's accession in 717. The evidence suggests that coastal settlements in fact suffered more than sea traffic, a point borne out by the surviving textual as well as the archaeological evidence. Yet new networks of exchange and commerce developed, so that trade between the Aegean and the Levant, for example, or between the north Aegean region, the Peloponnese, and S. Italy and Sicily, can be seen in the movement of ceramics as well as in the track and direction of disease. Some of these corridors were the result of purely commercial activity, others followed the interests of the court at Constantinople and its strategic and diplomatic demands.[9] New fiscal and military administrative structures were evolving which enabled the state to maximise the extraction of resources and capitalise on the productive potential of the provincial population (see Chapters 10 and 11). New hierarchies of urban and administrative centres were developing which reflected the needs of both the state, in terms of its fiscal and military requirements, and the church, in terms of ecclesiastical administration and ideological authority, while at the same time reflecting a more stable relationship between such centres and rural production as well as of the social and political elite. And by the 820s and 830s, these developments were further enhanced by an internal political and economic stability that enabled a very considerable expansion of monetised exchange relationships throughout the empire's territories. It is no accident that the early ninth century appears to witness a major expansion of monastic landholding, for example.[10] Although the pace in the southern Balkan region was initially slower – since the military recovery of much lost territory was a pre-requisite – the process of urbanisation and monetisation was, eventually, much more rapid here, although this becomes apparent only in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[11]

The environmental background

But there was also an ecological and environmental aspect, for minor climatic shifts appear to have affected the late Roman and early medieval

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[9] See the comprehensive survey of Trombley 2001a.

[10] See Kaplan 1992, 294–300; 1993, 213ff.; Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 205ff.

[11] Harvey 1989, 85–9, 207–43, provides a useful survey of the relevant documentary evidence.

worlds from the fourth and fifth to the eighth/ninth centuries. Although climatic fluctuation was minimal across the late ancient and medieval periods, it did occur, and in association with natural events (earthquakes, human-induced phenomena such as warfare, catastrophes such as pandemic disease), could have important short- to medium-term results for the human populations of the regions with which we are concerned. Patterns of settlement, land-use, the extraction, distribution and consumption of resources, as well as political systems could be affected. The climate throughout much of the late Hellenistic and Roman imperial period was relatively warmer and milder than in the period which preceded it, and constituted a 'climatic optimum' which favoured the expansion of agriculture and population, generating an extension of cultivation and an intensification of exploitation. By about 500 CE this situation was changing, with colder conditions persisting up to the mid-ninth century. The human environment of the later fifth to seventh centuries thus became both more challenging and the economy of existence somewhat more fragile. In conjunction with the mid-sixth century plague, a cycle was inaugurated which impacted upon the population and thus upon settlement patterns and density, particularly in areas where the balance of economic life was inherently more fragile – whether because conditions were in themselves precarious, or because fertile soils and access to local markets had led to an overpopulation and subsequent collapse.[12] The effects of the appearance of plague from the 540s and its recurrence throughout the eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern zone into the middle decades of the eighth century, clearly must have had a dramatic impact, although the exact implications for each region and sub-region, on population, on the production and availability of resources in labour power and goods, on demand, and on levels of production, remain an issue for debate.[13] The written accounts are themselves contradictory: some texts contain graphic accounts of the horrific consequences and high mortality of visitations of the plague while others seem to reflect a relatively flourishing commercial and agrarian economy; and the latter is in many areas apparently borne out to some extent by archaeological evidence.[14] The local constraints imposed by such factors and their effect on demography, commerce, and the economy of a region in general are difficult to

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[12] Such as may have occurred in north Syria, for example, during the later sixth century: see Gatier 1994; and it appears to have occurred in the Konya plain region of Anatolia during the later seventh century and later: Baird 2004. On the plague, see Stathakopoulos 2004; Brandes 2005b.

[13] See in particular McCormick 2007 and Conrad 1996.

[14] See the material assembled by Morony 2007, esp. 72–81, and compare with, for example, Walmsley 2000; 2005.

extrapolate in the light of this evidence. Thus while we may be able to draw some conclusions about the degree of demand or the level of exchange (insofar as the material evidence permits a degree of quantification) for much of the area with which we are concerned, we can say little at present about the precise causal relationships underlying the patterns that emerge, except in terms of the sort of problematic generalisations already noted. Nevertheless, combined with other changes in the human environment, we should assume such factors did play a key causal role in some of the changes observable in the archaeological as well as the written record.[15]

On the whole, geographers and climatologists are not convinced that the shifts in the pattern of exploitation of the land and in vegetation and afforestation are due primarily to climatic change. Rather, changing patterns of human activity seem to be at the root of many of the phenomena observed in the data. By the same token, theories of climatically induced alluviation which impacted directly on human exploitation of the land and hence both settlement and demography need to be re-interpreted both chronologically – there was no single alluviation which affected all areas at the same period – and in respect of the regional and local effects such alluviation may have had.[16]

Geological surveys and pollen analyses together thus suggest that in Asia Minor marginal lands, which may have been brought under cultivation following an expansion of population and settlement in the fifth–early seventh centuries, were largely abandoned at the end of this period, and soil erosion increased where agriculture receded. In the Balkans the devastation and depopulation of the rural hinterland across the northern and central regions was already well-advanced by the middle of the sixth century as a result of over a century of continuous hostile raids and inroads.[17] The slightly colder, wetter climate generated increasing water volume in rivers and watercourses, contributing to a rapid alluviation accompanied by lowland flooding in certain more exposed areas. But the picture cannot be generalised without careful qualification – indeed, it appears to have been highly regionalised. In north-west Asia Minor – Bithynia – for example, recent work reinforces the proposition that it was primarily human activity that affected vegetation and land use, in particular as conditions fluctuated between relatively secure or insecure.[18] In some highland areas, especially on the western Anatolian plateau, where conditions appear to have become

[15] See Kennedy 2007; Conrad 1994.   [16] Horden and Purcell 2000, 312–20.
[17] Baird 2004, for example (Konya plain); Curta 2006, 39–69 (Balkans).
[18] Geyer and Lefort 2003b.

more arid, settlements which no longer had access to adequate water supplies were abandoned. All these changes had an impact on how the land was used – again, the regional picture varies, but in the area around Sagalassos in Pisidia, for example, which has been extensively surveyed, there is evidence both for a retreat and then an abandonment of oleoculture, a drawing-in of cereal production to the immediate hinterland of the town, and a reduction in cattle breeding accompanied by an increase in goat breeding.[19] This picture is borne out by other surveys, in particular drawing on the palynological record. At Nar Gölü, for example, in the area to the south of Nazianzos, and just to the north of the region described in Arabic sources of the ninth–tenth centuries as *Marj al-Usquf*, 'Bishop's Meadow' (mod. Melendiz Ovası), dateable stratified pollen samples from the lake bed suggest a reduction in cereal production and olive cultivation, accompanied by a short-term increase in weeds as formerly tilled land was abandoned, and an increase in certain types of wild shrub, changes which can be dated fairly precisely to the 680s, coinciding with the documentary evidence for a period of intense hostile military activity in the region, and which are again suggestive of a retreat in human occupation and numbers, a retreat which appears to have no causal association with any changes in climate. In contrast, it seems clear that at Amorion large-scale wine-making continued throughout the period up to the middle of the ninth-century, and that local agrarian activities involved both cereal (wheat and barley) production as well as animal husbandry.[20]

An overall reduction in population on Byzantine territory, and thus in the rate of exploitation of natural resources such as forest, is suggested by an increased variation in woodland flora over the same period. During the ninth and into the tenth century this trend was reversed – and is paralleled by an extension of agriculture and of human exploitation of woodland and scrubland, strong demographic growth and an increasing density of settlement and rate of exploitation of agrarian resources.[21] It is important to emphasise the fact that such effects were not universal – localities or regions with a less fragile agrarian base may have suffered correspondingly less, for example, as is clearly the case in Bithynia – so that we should resist the temptation to make too many generalisations on the basis of this evidence. It is also important to emphasise that the paleo-environmental evidence from

[19] Waelkens 2000; Vanhaverbeke *et al*. 2004; Vionis *et al*. 2009, 204–5.

[20] See Haldon 2007a. For the economically damaging activities of Arab raiders, see Lilie 1976, 190–5, 201ff. For Amorion: Lightfoot 2009.

[21] Geyer 2002, 40–4; Telelis 2000 (for methodological issues); Dunn 1992; Koder 1994; 1996; Bintliff 1982.

Nar Gölü mentioned above indicates clearly that it was human activity – Arab raids – which were the direct cause of these shifts. This interpretation receives support from related paleo-environmental data for other parts of the Aegean and southern Anatolian regions.[22] It must also be apparent that such a reduction in cultivation, unless accompanied by an intensification which we are as yet unable to observe in the evidence, will have reduced the income available to the state in the form of taxable resources.

In the Byzantine world, some of the more obvious changes that affected economic life and society can be summarised as follows. First, there occurred what we might term a 'ruralisation' of society, partly promoted by the fact that the traditional Greco-Roman 'cities' (in the legal-constitutional sense) were already losing their role in the state fiscal system by the later sixth century. Yet this ruralisation was engineered in part by state interests, and involved a functional and regional diversification of semi-urban and urban centres across upland as well as lowland regions to meet with defensive and administrative needs. We will discuss some of these aspects in Chapter 7.

Together with the devastation, abandonment, shrinkage or displacement of many urban sites in Asia Minor as a result of invasions and raids, especially from the 640s but also during the period of the Persian wars (602–26), the state transferred its fiscal attention in particular to the village community (a process already under way during the sixth century), which became the main unit of assessment by the later seventh century and, in terms of fiscal administration, to the evolving types of fortified urban or quasi-urban centre already mentioned (and see also below).[23] This process had already begun much earlier in the Balkans, and it has recently been argued that the pattern of state involvement in re-structuring urban and defensive centres there, beginning in the fifth century and continuing through the sixth and into the seventh century, served as a model for similar state-led changes in Asia Minor, not simply in terms of the types of site that were selected, but also of the techniques and styles of building and fortification. The defensive properties of 'urban' sites, their direct relevance to military, administrative or ecclesiastical needs, and so on, now played the key role in whether a 'city' survived or not. Settlement of soldiers from the regional armies of the late Roman period and a dispersal of both military and administrative functions

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[22] See England *et al.* 2008; Haldon 2007a.

[23] See the list and discussion in Brandes 1990, 120–4. For the state's increasing focus on the village as the basic fiscal unit with which it dealt, see Kaplan 1992, 185–95; with the discussion of Zuckerman 2004, 138–42, 238–40.

downwards from traditional urban centres to smaller semi-urban sites with defensive properties and structures expedited this process.[24]

At the same time, the pre-eminent position taken by Constantinople has long been recognised to have had far-reaching consequences for the pattern of exchange and movement of goods in the Aegean and east Mediterranean basin.[25] The social elite was also transformed. An elite of mixed provenance – members of the older establishment, both metropolitan and provincial, and 'new men' from among neighbouring elites – of Armenia, the Balkans, Syria – began to evolve, but one which, in the context of the drastic shifts which were taking place, appears at first, and until well into the later eighth and ninth centuries, to have been heavily dependent upon personal imperial patronage for posts and influence.[26] This in turn had effects on patterns of demand as well as upon the production and distribution of resources, for the events of the seventh century produced what can be seen as a re-assertion of central state power over late Roman tendencies toward decentralisation. Social status and advancement, indeed the very self-identity of the elite, were intimately bound into the imperial system and personal association with the ruler, and these arrangements had important implications for the economic life of the empire: the continued power and attraction of the imperial establishment at Constantinople, with its court and hierarchical system of precedence, as well as the highly centralised fiscal administrative structure, consumed the whole attention of the Byzantine elite, until the later tenth and eleventh century, hindering the evolution of a more highly localised aristocracy which might otherwise have invested in the economy and society of its own localities and towns, rather than in the imperial system.[27]

Patterns of economic activity: the state

In any consideration of patterns of production and distribution in the east Roman world the role of the state must figure prominently, even if we would wish to challenge some of the more emphatically 'statist' views which have appeared since the mid-1980s. Yet just as in the period before the

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[24] See Dunn 1994; 1997; 1999 and 2004. Dunn provides a good survey of the relevant Balkan archaeological material in this respect, as well as the recent secondary literature. See also Dunn 1998, and esp. the essays in Poulter 2007a. For these changes, and the shifts in vocabulary which accompanied them, see Haldon 1999b; Brandes 1999; and Brandes and Haldon 2000.

[25] See, for example, Mango 1986.   [26] See Haldon 1997a, 153–72 and 395–9.

[27] For the development of these relationships, see Angold 1985 for discussion of the growth of provincial elites; and Harvey 1989, 200–3, 207ff.

Islamic conquests, so thereafter the needs of the state tended to dominate in terms of supplying and housing its armies, paying and maintaining its administrative apparatus, and maintaining the imperial household, so that from a certain point of view the history of the east Roman political formation in the medieval period can be treated as the history of the tensions and contradictions in the relationship between the vested interests of the state, as embodied in these institutional arrangements, and those of the rest of the population. In practice, this meant, of course, tensions between the state and any social elite that might be in a position to challenge the state for the control of resources. In itself, this is common to all political formations of this type, and is thus not unusual. What is important in this instance is the fact that such contradictions were temporarily resolved by the events of the seventh century permitting, as noted already, a more monolithic political structure to operate relatively unchallenged, at least until the tenth century.[28] Indeed, the ability of the state in the seventh and eighth centuries to implement a relatively full control over its tax-base directly determined the way in which the middle and late Byzantine aristocracy evolved. Similarly, and looking forward to the period following that with which we are concerned in this volume, the civil wars and the fiscal crisis of the central government in the later tenth and eleventh century especially, the corresponding shifts in both the mode of recruitment and source of manpower for the army, as well as changes in provincial and central civil and fiscal administration, can all be connected to the nature of the state's relationship with its fiscal base.[29]

The role of the government in the extraction and redistribution of resources is especially clear in terms of taxation, and in two aspects, the administrative infrastructure for which will be detailed in Chapter 10: the raising of produce locally, throughout the provinces, with which to feed, clothe, arm, and equip the army; and in the issue and circulation of coin, the basic mechanism through which the state converted agricultural produce into more readily transferable fiscal resources. Whereas taxation had been highly monetised throughout most regions of the empire until the Persian war in the first three decades of the seventh century, from the middle of that century grain and probably many other requirements were regularly raised in kind, either as a portion (or occasionally the whole) of the regular land

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[28] See the discussion and comparative analysis in Haldon 1993b; also Haldon 1998b.

[29] See Haldon 1992b. A particular problem arose for the government during the tenth century and afterwards, because the central government was often represented in the provinces by leading officials who were also members of the very social elite which was able to confront and challenge the state's demands, thus prejudicing the interests of the centre in the extraction of fiscal resources.

tax, or in the form of extraordinary levies in particular goods – a generalisation of the system applied at times and in particular areas during the late Roman period, in fact. This does not mean that resources could not be, and were not quite frequently, raised in coin. Coin, on the other hand – at least until the middle of the ninth century if not later – had the major function of supporting the operation of a redistributive fiscal mechanism, although its effects went far beyond this: the state issued gold in the form of salaries and largesse to its bureaucracy and armies, who exchanged a substantial portion thereof for goods and services in maintaining themselves, thus releasing quantities of gold on a regular basis into the world of market exchange. Bronze petty coinage complemented the precious-metal coinage as a means of conversion, facilitating market transactions. The state could thus collect much of the coin it put into circulation through tax, the more so since fiscal policy generally demanded tax in gold and offered change in bronze.[30]

There is no doubt that the changes in the weight and value of the coin produced by the state, as well as the number of coins struck, reflected both regional monetary tradition as well as the general economic situation within the empire's remaining territories.[31] The numismatic evidence suggests a deliberate curtailment of issues of the bronze petty coinage from about 658 or soon thereafter, a curtailment which has been associated with the probable internal restructuring of tax collecting mechanisms (and by definition, therefore, with the ways in which the army was paid and supplied),[32] and which would suggest once more that the government was concerned primarily with the fiscal functions of the coinage, with its involvement in market exchange a secondary concern. This does not contrast so very markedly with the rate of production of the precious-metal coinage from the middle of the seventh through to the ninth century and beyond.[33] The dramatic fall in the numbers of bronze issues recovered from archaeological sites across Asia

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[30]   Hendy 1985, 602ff., 662ff.; Hendy 1989b. Although one can modify the point according to the historical context (for example, pointing out that the role and significance of commercial exchange and cash-crops increased very considerably during the period after the tenth century), it remains valid for the whole Byzantine period up to the thirteenth century. For a critique of Hendy's strongly 'statist' approach, see the remarks of Morrisson 1991b. For the role of coin in the period up to the middle of the seventh century, see Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 212–19; with the useful methodological discussion by Reece 2003; and for the role of the state, Oikonomidès 2002b.

[31]   See the survey of the role of coin in the Byzantine economy in Morrisson 2002.

[32]   See Haldon 1997a, 226–7, 232–44, with earlier literature; and Phillips and Goodwin 1997, esp. 75ff.

[33]   The purity of the gold *nomisma* was in fact slightly reduced during the second half of the seventh century and only slowly restored, by the early ninth century; but this fluctuation was, compared with that in the form and quantity of the bronze coinage, insignificant. See the detailed survey of the evidence in Morrisson 1985, esp. 123–7; Morrisson 2002, 920–9.

Minor for the period *c.* 660 until the early ninth century or later, corroborated by the incidence of such issues in collections, illustrates the change in the economic circumstances under which exchange and the appropriation of surplus through tax took place. The pattern is borne out even in Constantinopolitan contexts where, although there can be no doubt of the availability of bronze issues throughout the period, issues for the emperors from Constantine IV through to Theophilos are sparse and follow the same contours.[34] The curtailment of production of the petty coinage after this time does not mean that no small-scale exchange activity took place, merely that it must have been substantially reduced, or at least constrained by other mechanisms – the use of credit, for example, of barter and the exchange of equivalences (but always with the imperial coinage serving as the means of calculating prices and attributing exchange values) – or the presence of particular activities associated with the government. Nor does it mean that a reduction in the amount of coins minted must always be the explanation for an absence of such coinage. A similar disappearance of casual finds of bronze, and a sharp reduction in the number of hoards of both bronze and gold, from archaeological contexts in Greece after the 580s and more particularly after the first decade of the reign of Herakleios, can be associated with the withdrawal of Roman forces, for example, rather than a reduction in either minting or in exchange activity as such; while a dramatic reduction of coins from archaeological contexts in the northern Peloponnese from the 630s onwards can also be connected with the closure in 629–30 by Herakleios of the mint at Thessaloniki, which in the context of a strongly regional distribution of coins had clear results for the areas previously supplied from that mint.[35] And finally, the continued production of bronze to service the state's requirements in terms of the military and fiscal apparatus is demonstrated both by the despatch of specific consignments of bronze to particular locations associated with particular political or military events, and the reforms of the bronze coinage undertaken by Constantine IV.[36]

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[34] Hendy 2007a, 179ff., with fig. 79, 181; Metcalf 2001.   [35] Callegher 2005, esp. 232f.

[36] See the survey by Morrisson 1986b, 156ff. See Grierson 1960, 436, with table 2; 1968, 1, 6f.; summarised in Hendy 1985, 496–9; 640f.; see also Brandes 1989, 226–7. For recent excavation results which demonstrate the same pattern: Galani-Krikou 1998, esp. 152ff.; Bowden 2003a, 67, for Albania. It should be noted that, while many of the sites in which this pattern emerges have been the subject of excavations limited to very restricted areas, it also appears even at those sites – for example, in Greece and the Peloponnese – where much more extensive soundings or excavations have taken place, so that its universal application can hardly be doubted, although, as noted, the chronology and the causes may vary according to local and regional political variations and fluctuations – see below, and for the south Balkans, Curta 2001, 169–81; 2006,

The differences between the Balkan pattern of coin finds and that of Asia Minor underline these points. In the Balkans two phenomena have been noted: first, the earlier disappearance of casual bronze finds, remarked above; second, the association from the middle of the seventh century between finds of bronze, coastal regions and sites, and military or naval activity. In the first case, substantial amounts of bronze from Athens (especially issues of Constans II, Philippikos, and Leo III) and Corinth (especially of Phokas, Herakleios, Constans II, and Constantine IV) have been reasonably connected with military activity and the presence of soldiers, a point borne out by the actual distribution patterns within the excavated areas. As we shall see, Cyprus and Sicily, for different reasons, also offer exceptions to the pattern. In the second case, bronze coin of seventh-century rulers from sites in the Dobrudja and the coast of Bulgaria, notably Mesembria, where there was a substantial imperial naval and military presence, contrasts with the absence of such material from inland regions, again suggestive of the movement of coin via ships, whether military or commercial, and a qualitative difference in the sort of exchange activity possible in coastal and metropolitan as opposed to inland regions. In addition, an association has been drawn between precious metal coins – silver in particular, but gold also – from hoards in territories associated with 'barbarian' rulers, and the deliberate dispatch of such coinage to foreign rulers in return for their support, military or diplomatic. Finds of specially minted gold ('light-weight *solidi*'), found usually on the south Russian and Ukrainian steppe and issued by the Constantinople mint, contrast with gold found in the northwest Balkans, Hungary, and western Romania, originating from the mints at Constantinople as well as Sicily, suggesting specifically targeted payments for both diplomatic and military support. A similar interpretation has been suggested for finds of silver hexagrams or *miliaresia* of Herakleios, Constans II, and Constantine IV in particular, both from the Caucasus and from the north Balkans.[37]

74–5. But the basic pattern from the later 660s onwards seems to be confirmed throughout the empire's remaining territories. See the comments in Morrisson 2001, esp. 383; and for some of the material: Lampropoulou *et al.* 2001, esp. 221–4. Lightfoot 2002 notes that bronze coins at Amorion and in its hinterland might argue for a trend counter to this. Yet the role of the city as a garrison across this period, and its political importance, would suggest that the pattern here is hardly different from that at other such sites, even if regionally nuanced. For the consigning of bronze, see the evidence summarised by Hendy 1985, 641–2, 659–62.

[37] The evidence, with earlier literature, is presented in detail by Curta 2005. See Morrisson *et al.* 2006, 41–73; Ivanišević 2006; Touratsoglou 2006; Gavrituhin 2006.

But the Anatolian pattern does not contrast so sharply with the Balkans in essentials, and in particular when casual finds from areas around or associated with fortresses, or military or administrative sites, are taken into account. Finds from Sardis, Ankara and Ephesos may in fact offer a similar pattern and be subject to a similar explanation. As we shall see, more scattered finds around sites such as Amorion may point in the same direction.[38] On the other hand, the pattern in both the Balkans and Asia Minor contrasts very sharply with the continued widespread and intensive use of copper coins throughout the former imperial territories now under Islamic control, where the archaeological as well as numismatic material shows virtually no disruption to the patterns of economic activity which had been established before the 630s, and indeed suggests a very considerable demand for coin which was met by the production on a large scale and at a number of local mints of coins which, until the 660s and 670s at least, imitated available imperial issues.[39] This difference is not simply a result of the Islamic conquests or of the economic dislocation caused by warfare in either Asia Minor or the Balkans, but rather of longer-term regional differences already evident in the preceding period.

The reduction in issues of bronze is paralleled, however, by what can now be seen as a very clear reduction in the emission of the gold *nomisma* from the later seventh century, across the eighth century and into the ninth. A quantitative analysis by emission reveals a dramatic reduction in the number of dies employed, hence the amount of coin struck, with recovery setting in only with the reign of Theophilos. The degree of variation is considerable and clearly parallels the general economic trends of the period as they can be extrapolated from textual and archaeological evidence. Thus emissions under the Isaurian emperors of the eighth century attained less than 30–50 per cent; of those under Theophilos, and less than 20–30 per cent of the emissions under Anastasios or Justinian. The eighth-century estimates are thus close to the (less certain) estimates for the later seventh century. Whatever the other consequences of this may have been, it is clear that such a reduction in the amount of gold issued must have affected both the liquidity of the social elite of the empire, as well as hindering the ability of the government to manage its administrative, fiscal and military

[38] Hendy 1985, 640–2; Culerrier 2006.
[39] See Gatier 1994, MacAdam 1994, and Tsafrir and Foerster 1994 for generalised continuity in central and northern Syria, Palestine, and western Jordan; and for the coinage, Walmsley 2000, 332–9; Domascewicz and Bates 2002; Foss 1999; Phillips and Goodwin 1997.

operations effectively, even if the coins remained in circulation for longer as a result.[40]

Resources and coinage

The conditions of the second half of the seventh and much of the eighth century thus meant that soldiers were supplied in both coin as well as in produce and other requirements, a substantial portion of the provincial tax burden of the areas in which they were based being raised in kind, but that where troops were supported also in cash – both gold and bronze – this acted as a conduit for the distribution of coinage throughout the regions with which they came into contact. All soldiers continued to receive at least some payments in money, although for the later seventh and much of the eighth century the forms this took, and the proportion relative to provisions and supplies in kind, are unclear; and some taxes continued to be collected in coin, although again it remains unclear what proportion. Since the bronze was bagged up in specified quantities by weight and equivalent to stated sums in gold coin, there is no doubt that the principle of paying soldiers and imperial officials in gold was adhered to as far as possible, as the frequent references to the payment of *rhogai* would suggest. No doubt gold was used as often as was feasible or appropriate, and local circumstances would determine this to some extent. Troops were certainly paid on occasion in shipments of bronze coin, although again whether this was determined by area, or by the circumstances, and how long it became the standard practice, if at all, remains entirely unclear. The evidence is particularly nuanced for certain key sites in the Balkans, as noted above. But it also affected other important centres in Asia Minor, during the reign of Constans II, for example, and earlier, during the period of Herakleios' Persian wars. Such coin would naturally filter down quite rapidly into the local marketplace.[41] And although figures given for military pay in the historical texts of the period are usually represented through gold *nomismata*, the frequency with which concentrations of bronze issues have been found at fortresses or the sites of defended cities would support payment in this coinage.[42]

Throughout the later seventh and eighth centuries there were thus strong regional as well as chronological variations in the availability and use of coin across the empire: areas in which urban or rural markets existed and

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[40] See Füeg 2007, esp. tables at 166–71; and discussion 153. Füeg stresses the fact that governments preferred to recover gold coin as quickly as possible, both for fiscal as well as propaganda reasons. See also Morrisson 2002, 936–42, with tables and further literature.

[41] Hendy 1985, 415–17, 642–3.   [42] See the material assembled by Oikonomidès 1994b.

were secure from hostile attack, such as the metropolitan regions around Constantinople, were generally supplied not only with gold but also with bronze coinage, for example. Sicily seems throughout the seventh and eighth centuries to have been an exception, perhaps because until it became the focus for raids in the later eighth and ninth century it remained relatively free from external harassment and economic disruption.[43] There is increasing numismatic evidence that certain Aegean islands always retained a fairly monetised economy, although of a relatively low level of activity in the eighth and early ninth centuries, compared with the situation before the middle of the seventh century. There is also good evidence that money-based exchange continued in many of the major military centres in the provinces, and thus also in the nearby dependent forts and rural settlements. The evidence is largely derived from casual finds of bronze, but it should also be remembered that the imperial administrators, tax officials, and military received their salaries in gold and, depending on circumstances, would have spent some of this in their provinces.

The extent to which the economy of an area remained monetised depended upon several factors: the structure of rural exploitation, for example, was a key element. The contraction of the available supply of gold must have impacted in several ways. Large estates with resident labourers sub-letting small plots and paid in cash for work on the 'home farm' or demesne, or in vineyards or fields producing commercial crops such as cereals, and where a market was accessible (either coastal regions close to ports, or inland districts with regular military buyers, for example) may have been able to maintain the sort of monetised estate management typical of parts of the empire in the period before the Islamic invasions, notably Egypt, but other areas as well. Longer-term changes in the incidence of emphy-teutic leaseholding, along with the break-up of some large estates in the Anatolian regions of the Byzantine state, are probably reflected in changes in local and possibly regional patterns of demand and the distribution of goods, as peasant households in some communities became less dependent on labour contracts with estates and/or more subject to local military and fiscal demands. Equally, the reduction in the money supply in the provinces, both the petty coinage after 658 as well as the gold at about the same time, will have made estate management in some cases – those in which estate managers paid their labour force in credit chits exchangeable for petty cash – more difficult, thus inducing shifts in patterns of estate administration and

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[43] Kislinger 1995b; Morrisson 1998, 307–34; McCormick 2001, 627–9; Morrisson 2002, 915, 957–8.

finance.[44] Communities of independent peasant smallholders will have been in a more difficult situation, particularly if they were in a region where regular commercial markets were not easy to access. In such cases, the army or other state-funded activities, such as the *dromos* or courier and transport service, must have played an absolutely crucial role in enabling them to obtain gold for taxation, even where fixed tariffs for certain commodities, such as wheat, were enforced. In this respect, even quite small urban centres which had a military and administrative presence will have remained *foci* for money-based exchange. The numismatic material from the larger military centre of Amorion, for example, appears to show a somewhat less marked gap in the record of bronze coinage for the years *c.* 660–800 than at other similar sites from which comparable evidence is available. And a similar result obtains for major coastal centres, such as at Amastris, for example.[45]

It is entirely possible that this picture may hold for many other such locations. At Constantinople, excavated bronze coins from sites such as the hippodrome or Saraçhane show a much less accentuated drop in numbers for the period in question compared with provincial sites, which we might expect, although the pattern from Kalenderhane shows a greater reduction, parallel to that of the provinces.[46] In one sense, therefore, the usual constraints on a generalised system of monetary exchange which had prevailed before the middle of the seventh century had simply become much more pronounced in the difficult conditions after the 650s. Such constraints had always operated in remoter localities, or areas where the activities of the state did not promote such monetised activity, as in Anatolia after the cutting back of the state postal and transport service in the 530s, for example; and

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[44] See Banaji 2005, 6–22, and 39–88, with the critical comments of Sarris 2005. Banaji somewhat overestimates the liquidity of the monetised economy after the middle of the seventh century, however, by assuming that the conditions which pertained before the Islamic conquests continued to hold in respect of both the issue of gold coin and the nature and structure of the Byzantine state elite. Changes in landlord-tenant relations across the period from the sixth to the eighth century: see Haldon 1997a, 132–41; Kaplan 1992, 161–9, 186–218; for estate management and labour in the sixth century, Sarris 2006, 29–70 (50–68 on credit; and cf. Sarris 2004b).

[45] See, for example, Penna 2001, for Naxos, Delos, Thera, and other islands in the region. For military centres and the nearby settlements, see, for example, Ireland 2000 and Ashton *et al.* 2000, 171–92 (for the region of Polybotos, near Amorion); and for Amastris, see Ireland and Atehoğulları 1996. For Amorion itself, see Lightfoot 1998b, 2002, 2009.

[46] See the survey by Hendy 1996; and Hendy 2007a, 175–6. In territories neighbouring the empire, in the eighth and ninth centuries in Bulgaria, for example, similar highly regionalised patterns of coin use and availability are also found, reflecting again specific circumstances, such as access to ports or entrepôts, the presence of soldiers or a court: see Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2005.

they continued to operate thereafter. What does seem to be clear is that both in the Balkans in the later sixth and early seventh centuries as well as later, and in Anatolia from the middle of the seventh century, the presence of both hoards and casual finds of bronze in a region can generally be associated with the assumed presence of the military.[47]

But there did take place a contraction in the monetary economy of the empire. Given the enormous loss of revenue and resources resulting from the Islamic conquest of the rich eastern provinces, including Egypt, and the additional drain on the empire's reserves through payments of substantial subsidies to foreign rulers – both the Umayyad caliphs as well as various barbarian rulers north of the Danube and on the steppe – the government must have had to find ways of reducing its regular expenditure, and the fiscal measures, including the reduction in emissions of gold and the dramatic curtailment of the bronze petty coinage, so evident in the second half of the seventh century and into the eighth, reflect this concern. This contraction generated several changes after the middle of the seventh century, from a relatively flexible trimetallic system – several denominations of gold and copper, with an intermediate silver coinage – to a more rigid structure with a single denomination for each metal. Under Leo III and Constantine the main gold coin, the *nomisma*, which had also suffered a slight reduction in weight, was stabilised. But the *semissis* or half *nomisma* suffered a reduction in gold content and in weight from the year 680, and almost completely disappeared from the early 740s (those coins which were struck probably had a primarily ceremonial function), partly stimulated by the reform of the silver coinage under Leo III. The latter had always played a relatively minor role. The silver *hexagram* introduced by Herakleios in 616 (valued at 1/12 of a *nomisma*) barely survived to the end of the century, and was issued on a very limited basis from the mid-680s. As we have seen, it was often the coinage of preference for payments to allies or as 'tribute' to potential enemies in the north and west. A reformed *miliaresion* was introduced by Leo III, once again valued at 1/12 of a gold *nomisma*, but only half the weight of the *hexagram*, struck at a rate of 144 to the pound initially. Until the later eighth century the evidence would suggest that it had as much a ceremonial as functional exchange role, however, and it has been suggested that its introduction was connected with the appearance shortly before of the new Muslim silver coin, the *dirhem*. The reformed silver coinage affected the gold

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[47] Hendy 1985, 294–305; Haldon 1994; Morrisson 2002, 954ff.; Laiou 2002a for a general discussion of the balance between economic and non-economic exchange (although the question might better be presented in terms of monetised and non-monetised exchange).

insofar as the minting of fractional issues of the *nomisma* declined during the eighth century and after. The bronze coinage, especially as represented by the *follis*, of which there were (with fluctuations) some 288 to the *nomisma*, also suffered during the seventh century, being reduced to less than half the weight it had been under Herakleios. A short-lived reform took place under Constantine IV in 669,[48] but thereafter the reduction in weight and value re-asserted itself and, as we have noted, there seems in any case to have been a dramatic curtailment in production from the end of the reign of Constans II, even taking into account the increased production of coin for Sicily under Constantine IV.[49] At the very bottom of the numismatic pyramid the continued use of *folles*, half-*folles*, and *decanummia* (worth only one quarter of a *follis*) found on some Balkan sites,[50] as well as textual references to the use of small denominations in urban (specifically Constantinopolitan) contexts, shows that the essentials of the system remained intact, but were confined to particular types of location: coastal, metropolitan or military. This pattern reflects an important change in the attitude of the imperial court to the use and function of the coinage it produced.[51]

The change in the government approach to state finance is demonstrated by the interesting, and temporary (i.e. from *c.* 640 to *c.* 730), expansion of the role of the *kommerkiarioi*, as we will see in Chapter 10, and the subsequent evolution of the imperial *kommerkia* during the reign of Leo III. The continued production of lead seals of general or imperial *kommerkiarioi* attached to specific ports or entrepôts underlines the association of many such officials with trade as well as with exchange activities with lands outside the empire. From the later eighth century, there is sound evidence for the levying of a duty on trade, referred to as the *kommerkion*, and there is no doubt that *kommerkiarioi* were associated with its collection. This may also be reflected in the apparent intensification of state demands for tax-payments in cash rather than in other forms, suggested by Theophanes' statement for the year 767 that the emperor Constantine V compelled rural producers to sell off their produce cheaply in order to meet their tax-demands.[52]

[48] See *MIB III*, 17. For the Sicilian coinage, see esp. Prigent 2006b; and Morrisson 1998.
[49] See Oddy 1988; and Morrisson 1985; Morrisson 2002, 928–30.
[50] See Curta 2005, catalogue nos. 16ff., 59ff., 107–9, 112, 117ff., 122ff.
[51] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 117–28, for the coinage of the period and further literature; and Morrisson 1985; Morrisson 2002, 936–42; 946–58.
[52] Oikonomidès 1986b, 50f. and 1986a, 41–2, 48–9, 51ff. See Theoph., 469–70 (Mango and Scott 1997, 645) (Constantine VI reduced the *kommerkion* of 100 lbs in gold levied on the fair at Ephesos); 475 (Mango and Scott 1997, 653) (Eirene reduces the *kommerkia* levied at Abydos and Hieron); 487 (Mango and Scott 1997, 668) (Nikephoros I borrows from the

The incidence of taxation

The survival of the state depended upon the continued functioning of a fiscal administration that could extract sufficient resources to maintain itself and the imperial armies. Any attempt to work out what the percentage burden for the producing population actually amounted to must confront a number of methodological problems, and is likely to founder for lack of adequate statistical evidence. But that the burden was heavy, and that it swallowed up most of the surplus[53] generated by the rural population every year is very probable: certainly, when in the later eighth and early ninth century we again have some evidence about tax rates, it seems clear that once they had acquitted their basic land tax and rents, peasant producers had little extra to give in the event of the imposition of an extraordinary levy, for military purposes, for example.[54] Documents dating from the tenth to twelfth centuries suggest that the basic land-tax amounted to some 4.5–5 per cent, or 1/24, of the value of the land, the calculation of value being based on the average 'normal' sale price, while rents represented usually double this amount. The percentage of the annual crop which the former reflected varied, of course, but it seems that about 10–12 per cent would be a reasonable average, although it may have been higher at times and in particular regions; while it should be borne in mind that the absolute burden was very considerably increased both by the rent extracted by landlords, by the addition of a number of regular supplementary impositions, as well as by the extraordinary levies (which were often raised on a yearly basis, particularly in regions where the armies were active). A global rate of taxation of between 15 and 23 per cent has been proposed for the empire in the period from the eighth century onwards, for example, varying by time and place, degree of monetisation, and other related factors.[55] According

Constantinopolitan shipowners while still levying the 'usual customs dues'). For Constantine V's actions in 769, see Theoph. 443 (Mango and Scott 1997, 611); Nikeph., 160; Mango 2002, 981.

[53] 'Surplus' is, of course, a flexible quantity. In its simplest form, it represents what remains after the subsistence consumption needs of the producer are taken into account, but since subsistence needs can be fixed along a spectrum ranging from minimum nutritional requirements to permit biological reproduction and labour upwards, it is obvious that there may often be a very considerable degree of variation in the percentage of gross product characterised as 'surplus'.

[54] Haldon 1994, esp. 140–2; Haldon 1992b.

[55] For calculations of basic land taxes, see Schilbach 1970, 248–63; Oikonomidès 1991b; and Morrisson 1991a, 295; Morrisson 2002, 949–50; Morrisson and Cheynet 2002, 821f. The middle Byzantine rates are much higher than those of the Roman empire in the first and second centuries: see Hopkins 1980, 1995–6, but much lower than the very high rates suggested for the later Roman empire in the sixth century by Wickham 2005, 64–6.

to the *Farmer's Law* the basic rent for a leased holding was 10 per cent of the crop, a proportion supported by an early ninth-century letter from the metropolitan Ignatios of Nicaea, in which the author complains about the additional demands made for the army.[56]

On the other hand, from calculations based on the evidence for imperial and ecclesiastical revenues from Sicily in the later seventh and early eighth centuries, it can be inferred that tax revenue and rent represented more or less equivalent values, which would suggest that, as the empire expanded in the tenth century, the overall burden of tax extracted by the state declined in relation to rental income. For example, when Constans II granted auto-cephalous status to the see of Ravenna the Sicilian income of the church was calculated at some 31,000 *solidi*, of which just over 50 per cent (16,000) went to the church as rent, the remainder to the state as tax (15,000).[57] By the same token, it has been shown that, if the same proportion of rent to tax prevailed on the patrimonial estates of the Roman church at the time of their confiscation by Leo III in the 720s (see Chapter 2), the rental income of some 25,200 *solidi* (3.5 *kentenaria* as reported by Theophanes) should be balanced by a tax revenue amounting to some 23,640 *solidi*.[58] But the oft-repeated view that imperial taxation was heavier than comparable rates in the Islamic world or under the Carolingians, for example, is not supported by the evidence: taxes in eighth-century Egypt appear to have been as high as they had been before the conquest, and possibly higher. When the Franks occupied Istria at the beginning of the ninth century, taxes went up, having previously represented, as with the cases of Ravenna and the papal patrimonial revenues, again about half of the actual surplus generated; taxes in the Lombard territories were higher than in neighbouring Roman (imperial) territories.[59]

Yet until better archaeological evidence becomes available, we should be extremely cautious in interpreting these statistics. These figures give us absolute figures for state revenue and private income. But they tell us nothing about the gross income from the land. For example, the Ravenna estates in Sicily also generated a further 50,000 *modii* of wheat, and depending on values this might be worth between 1,250 and 1,600 *solidi*,[60] the equivalent

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[56] See Kaplan 2001b, 370; Kaplan 1992, 262.

[57] Haldon 1997a, 313, with literature; Agnellus, 111 (Nauerth, 414ff.).

[58] Theoph. 410 (Mango and Scott 1997, 568) and the discussion in Zuckerman 2005, 95–104.

[59] Ducellier 1996, 62; Petranović and Margetović 1983, with Krahwinkler 1992, 202; Montanari 1988, 1–65.

[60] Price fluctuations could, however, be considerable, depending on levels of production and a range of related factors: see Morrisson and Cheynet 2002, Table 5.

of a wheat ration per person for some 1,250 adults.[61] The late antique
evidence for parts of Syria and Palestine, for example, shows that even with
relatively high levels of taxation rural communities producing particular
crops for a local market – such as wine or oil, for example – could be fairly
well-off.[62] To what extent this was the case in parts of the Byzantine world
after the sixth century – the rich agrarian zones of the northern Black Sea
littoral or the western lowlands of Asia Minor, for example – remains to
be seen. But the probability is that a much greater degree of social and
economic differentiation, and a more substantial element of market-based
production, existed within as well as between regions, than the very sparse
documentary evidence allows us to see, particularly in the metropolitan
hinterland of Constantinople.

Yet the Italian evidence does give some broad indications of imperial
revenue in the period from the 660s to the 720s, and it has been argued that
the total revenue accruing from the taxes of the island of Sicily, as distributed
across the estates of Raverina, those of the papal patrimonial properties, and
the rest, in the proportion 21.1 per cent : 33.3 per cent : 45.6 per cent, would
yield, approximately, a cash revenue of some 120,000 *solidi* plus a revenue
in wheat of some 300,000 *modii*.[63]

The activities of the state in the process of extracting and redistributing
wealth can thus be summed up as the 'fiscal economy', and the relation-
ship between this economy and that of elite society and indeed society at
large varied according to both internal political as well as international
economic circumstances. The state extracted agrarian produce, skills, and
labour power, and then redistributed them according to its own needs,
including the payment of considerable quantities of gold coin to its leading
officials. This redistributive process could occur centrally and indirectly,
through the collection of taxes in gold and the recirculation of some of that

[61] On the basis of an annual per capita requirement of 40 *modii* per person: see Rickman 1980,
156–97; Duncan-Jones 1976. Garnsey 1991, 77–9 (followed by Carrié 2003, 164), uses a per
capita ration of 25 *modii*, however (suggesting a total of 2,000 persons in this case), while
Kislinger (1995a) uses a ration of 49 *modii*, resulting in a much lower number of persons.
The problem of which *modios* is used in which context has been resolved for the period from
the middle of the sixth century in favour of the *modius castrenis*, of 8.94 kg. With a shift in the
weight of the Byzantine pound, the Byzantine equivalent is referred to in later texts as the
annonikos modios = 8.5 kg: see Haldon 1998a.

[62] The useful discussion in Kingsley 2003, with relevant literature, should serve as a healthy guide
in this respect; see also Foss 1997, emphasising regional variations.

[63] See Zuckerman 2005, 103–5. The sums arrived at should represent very approximately the
state's overall income from Sicily together with an unknown portion of the tax income from
Calabria, and offer an order of magnitude which can be usefully integrated into the general
picture.

gold to the army and members of the elite; or directly and locally, either through the imposition on the producers of the transportation of the goods to state depots, or through the direct consumption of the resources by state officials and the military at the point of collection/production. There is nothing in the least novel about this. In the period up to the 530s, for example, the imperial postal and heavy transport service, with its network of way-stations, stables and stud-farms, hostelries and ancillary services (farriers, leather-workers etc.), represented a direct consumer of fiscal resources throughout the regions where it was established; and even though Justinian appears to have considerably curtailed its activities and extent, it certainly continued to exist throughout the Byzantine period and to operate along much the same lines.[64] Similarly, units of soldiers en route to a military base or a campaign were provisioned by direct levies of foodstuffs on the districts through which they passed, and the goods and services consumed were then written off against that year's or the following year's tax-demands (in theory – the system generally worked to the disadvantage of the producers).[65] It could also occur trans-regionally, through the conversion of those resources into cash (gold coin), its collection through regular fiscal assessments at the local and provincial level, and its forwarding to Constantinople.

The state might assist the process, insofar as it regularly established 'artificial' markets through which the produce in question could be purchased for coin, which coin could then be collected through the fiscal system. The presence of state officials and the army, who were paid in gold, represented the most obvious way in which this could be attained, and there is good evidence not only that this happened as a matter of course, but also that it could have significant distorting effects on the price structure of the local markets it affected – indeed, the continuous presence of administrative and military officials salaried in gold enhanced local economies and attracted both production and commerce. The use of the system of *coemptio* or compulsory purchase was an alternative means of introducing cash through an artificially imposed price structure on provincial populations and redistributing locally produced goods, and it survived, under a different name, into the middle Byzantine period. Both Prokopios and Agathias comment that the

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[64] See Hendy 1985, 603–13; and for Justinian's curtailment, *ibid.*, 294–6; see Prokopios, *Secret history*, xxx, 5–7; *Lydus, De mag.*, iii, 61. It is clear from the middle Byzantine evidence that the *dromos* (the Greek term for the *cursus [publicus]*) was a major element in the state's operations. Originally under the authority of the Praetorian Prefects, by the 760s, and probably by the middle of the seventh century, it was an independent department under its *logothetes*, a high-ranking officer for whom numerous seals survive. See Laurent, *Corpus* II, 195–243; Oikonomidès 1972, 311–12; Hendy, 1985, 608 and n. 238.

[65] *Iust. Nov.* cxxx, and cf. *nov.* cxxviii (a. 545), esp. §1–3.

system of *coemptio* was regularly abused, to the disadvantage of peasants and landowners both, and there is likewise evidence from the later period that similar structural problems accompanied its continued existence.[66]

But whereas the social elites of the period up to the Islamic conquests had been involved in a monetary economy in which gold played the key role,[67] the reductions in both the state's revenues on the one hand and the increasing regionalisation of international trade and commerce on the other must have impacted on the liquidity of those who remained within the rump of the sixth-century empire, and this may also have contributed to the increasing concentration of elite interests in and around the imperial court and imperial service, and the (apparent) relative weakness of elite market demand in the provinces that the admittedly very fragmentary archaeological record appears to reflect. We will return to this at the end of this chapter.

As well as taking, the state also gave, in an inverted version of the relationship described above, directed both internally and externally. The payment of substantial amounts of gold coin to foreign rulers has already been mentioned. The production of silk appears, at least until the middle of the ninth century, to have been more-or-less dominated by the needs of the imperial government, and high-quality silks, and the special dyes that were employed in their preparation, were an important, if limited, resource, both in the empire's diplomatic effort (silken cloths and finished items were highly prized outside Byzantium, especially in the West), as well as fiscally, serving (certainly by the middle of the ninth century, and therefore probably much earlier) as an alternative form of payment to middling and senior officers of the civil and military establishment. While there always seems to have been a considerable element of private enterprise in silk production and weaving, the imperial government always exercised a strong supervisory role, controlling both the internal and foreign market especially in the higher-quality materials and the rarer dyes (various hues of 'imperial' purple).[68] But this distribution network was limited: from Constantinople via ambassadors to foreign potentates, and via the imperial household to senior Constantinopolitan officials and provincial military officers. Silk could also be used as

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[66] Prokopios, *Secret history*, xxiii, 11–14; Agathias, *History*, iv, 22. See Stein 1949, 440; Haldon 1994, 118–22.

[67] Banaji 2001, 39–88.

[68] See Oikonomidès 1986a, repeated in an abridged form in Oikonomidès 1989; Muthesius 1992; Cormack 1992 for silk in diplomatic exchange. For a longer-term analysis of Byzantine silk production, see Jacoby 1991/2. For officials paid in silk, see Oikonomidès 1986a; and *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, [C] 250–60, 501–11 and commentary. On sources for silk, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 80–108.

payment for goods or services from outside the empire: in 768/9, for example, Constantine V bought the freedom of 2,500 inhabitants of the Aegean islands of Imbros, Tenedos, and Samothrake, who had been seized by Slav raiders, with silken vestments.[69] Precious silks figure later, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the wills of magnates or as part of endowments to monastic houses, but it is clear that this still represents a wide-ranging but relatively limited pattern of distribution. By this time, of course, commercial silk production, based especially in Greece around, for example, Thebes, had expanded and become integrated into a much more widely based market for cloths of all varieties extending across the whole east Mediterranean basin and across to Italy and beyond.[70] Similar considerations apply to other luxury articles, such as illuminated books, for example, although here the rate of production and quantities involved were exceedingly limited compared with that of, say, silk.[71]

Finally, we should bear in mind that, while we have been discussing the 'extraction' or 'appropriation' of wealth, this simple term itself conceals a great deal. For example, the armies were equipped through levies of finished goods as well as raw materials for state manufactories or *fabricae* (although not many remained in imperial hands after the period of the early Islamic conquests). The need for vast quantities of spears, arrows, and many other items, such as for leather, metals, cloth, and so forth, was met this way. State demands for such material must have been a considerable stimulus to production across the empire, from village level to local town and beyond, to Constantinople itself, whether or not the state fixed the price of such goods or simply levied them (or the skills of the craftsmen involved) in kind and in skilled services.[72] Textual evidence for this activity comes from the later eighth and ninth centuries only; material evidence for what was in effect a vast network of exchange and production, facilitated by the court at Constantinople and the state's administrative apparatus throughout the

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[69] See *Nikephoros, Brief History*, 162 (§86).

[70] See Jacoby 1991/2, 460ff.; Louvi-Kizi 2002 (for Thebes); and for some general remarks on the broader international context of silk exchange, McCormick 2001, 719–26; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 80–108.

[71] See the remarks of Brubaker 1997, 40–1.

[72] For the production of arms and equipment, see Haldon 1984, 319–23; 2000b, 291–4. The presence of a substantial number of funerary inscriptions for leather-workers or merchants from Odessos (Varna), for example, largely of the sixth century, testifies to the significance of the military demand for leather from units along the Danube frontier, which Odessos served as a base for supplies and equipment. See Beševliev 1964, nos. 99, 100, 102, 103, 104; and see nos. 105 and 106, for a soap-maker and a tallow-dealer (or candlemaker), both associated trades. Such demands will barely have lessened by the end of the seventh century in the territory remaining to the empire.

provinces, is more or less entirely invisible, or at least, we have not yet learned how to identify it archaeologically. In other words, even if evidence for production at village and urban level is lacking, and monetised exchange fluctuated by time and region, we know that this sort of activity certainly took place, and in its turn fed into the complex set of relationships of exchange and production of Byzantine society. This alone should caution against an overly catastrophist view of the economic life of the period.

All these forms of redistribution are, to an extent, however, one-sided: the state gave, as imperial largesse, official salaries and rewards, or diplomatic gift; but it took, and even where it paid for what it took (as with *coemptio*), it might have done so at depressed prices. It would be reasonable to suppose that, for the later seventh and eighth centuries at least, the state dominated (which is not by any means to suggest that it controlled) the production and distribution of agricultural goods (beyond the level of producers' own consumption) in all those areas where soldiers were based, and probably of luxury products such as silk. Thereafter, as economic and political stability promoted stable markets and increased monetisation of exchange at the level of day-to-day needs, as urban centres began to attract such activities, and as local elites began to evolve greater purchasing power and more complex demands for goods of all kinds, the proportion of the empire's productive capacity integrated into market exchange relationships independent of the state's interests and activities increased. Yet as we will see below, commercial exchange certainly continued to and from coastal locations in both East and West, in the Balkans and Aegean as well as around the Black Sea and Asia Minor, at least insofar as the appearance of pottery from other regions within, or from outside the empire, is a valid indicator. What this represents in relation to the fiscal economy of the state, however, remains entirely obscure in light of the evidence currently available.

Much discussion has been devoted to the question of the economic recovery of the empire during the early years of the ninth century, and in particular the question of the extent to which the government understood the relationship between a growing market-led demand for a small denomination petty coinage through which day-to-day low-level transactions could be facilitated, velocity of circulation, and rate of production of such coinage.[73] To provide a detailed answer to this set of questions is, of course, far beyond the scope of this chapter. But it is appropriate next to comment briefly on

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[73] It is generally agreed that the bronze coinage had an intrinsic value at times, although the extent to which this was recognised in respect of its exchange value when measured against goods, as opposed to its value as a petty coinage, is debated: see Callu 1989; Hahn, *MIB*, 39–41.

the functioning of the coinage, since it was the most significant medium of state-controlled redistribution of social wealth.

The state and its redistributive cycle

We have already signalled the three-sided redistributive mechanism which was operated through the issue of gold, by which state officials and above all the army were paid in gold and purchased their foodstuffs and other requirements in exchange for a portion of this gold, which was then collected by the government through taxation. It is apparent that such a precious-metal system operates most efficiently in a plurimetallic context, that is, if a petty coinage – in this case, bronze – is available through which day-to-day exchanges can be carried out, change given, and so on. Such a coinage must, if it is to function at all, have a stable rate of exchange with the precious metal coinage; where this breaks down, the petty coinage becomes marginalised, as seems to have occurred in the Balkans in the period from the mid-540s, for example.[74] Where the precious metal coinage was also scarce, price inflation followed by hoarding was usually the case and, where state fiscal requirements were concerned, a fairly rapid move from the extraction of fiscal revenues in cash to one in which actual produce was collected, with all the consequences for the distribution of goods and personnel which that entailed. But a regular, reliable gold issue sufficient to cover the needs of the military and the bureaucracy, put into the market through purchases of the supplies, goods, and services to meet these needs, would maintain the stability of the system, if not its former flexibility. This appears to have been the case between the late 650s and the early 820s, with the state continuing to mint gold which was released in the form of payments to soldiers and to members of the elite, and at the same time to extract resources both through taxation in materials and services as well as in gold coin.[75]

It is important to emphasise that the incidence of the application of raising resources in kind varied regionally – in other words, there may have been occasions when the empire's resources were collected almost entirely in this form, but such occasions may not have been very frequent. There was a strongly regionalised pattern, which in its turn depended on longer term

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[74] Summarised in Curta 2001, 170–6, with literature, and associated with attempts to revalue the *follis*, a shortage of coin connected with Justinian's Balkan programme of fortifications, and the effects of the plague on major cities, including Constantinople.

[75] The evidence from hoards of gold coin is generally taken to confirm this: see, e.g., Morrisson 1980; and 1985, 2001, 2002b.

patterns of the availability of coin, the political conditions in each area and the relation of towns and the larger population centres to their hinterlands and major routes of communication, military needs, and so forth.[76] Such was the case in the fourth and early fifth centuries, and apparently in the later seventh and much of the eighth century.

The government always faced two problems: first, to estimate how much gold coinage should be produced to maintain the cycle of redistribution and to service the demands of its own personnel – which, as in the late Roman period could be very substantial indeed; second, to know how much bronze coinage was required to facilitate this cycle at the lower level. In the first case, there are several historical examples showing the effects of a shortage of gold: the case reported by Prokopios and John Lydus, noted already, where the closure of the way-stations on many of the routes operated by the *cursus publicus* deprived local producers of a ready market for their goods, and thus of the gold with which to pay their taxes; the case noted in the fifth century by Theodoret of Kyrrhos, where a shortage of gold (reason unclear) forced the rural population to borrow gold from the local garrisons in order to pay their taxes; a similar situation to that described by Lydus and Prokopios affected the rural population of the provinces during the 760s, when the emperor Constantine V seems deliberately to have restricted the circulation of gold but demanded tax payments in coin, thus forcing the producers to sell their crops at artificially deflated prices (a policy which may be reflected in the incidence of gold issues of this emperor attested archaeologically); and there are other examples from the following centuries.[77]

In the second case, the inflationary effects of the over-issue of bronze are demonstrated by the great inflation of the fifth century, eventually culminating in the major reforms of Anastasios and then Justinian, while the lack of supplies of bronze in the seventh and eighth centuries appears to be closely associated with the transformation of urban centres and insecurity of the internal market. But the issue is complicated by the dramatic reduction in the production of bronze coins after the early 660s and the consignment of bronze to specific locations for specific purposes (military, or, in the case of the countermarked coinage despatched to Sicily, connected with the purchase of grain). With the exception of Constantinople and its immediate environs, on the one hand, and provincial sites where state or commercial

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[76] For some useful discussion of the relationships between urban centres and their *territoria* up to the middle of the seventh century, see Trombley 2001b. For coinage, see esp. Reece 2003.

[77] For Prokopios and Lydus, see above; for Theodoret: *Ep.* 37; and for Constantine V: Theoph., 443 (Mango and Scott 1997, 611); *Nikephoros, Brief History*, 160 (§85). Further examples in Hendy 1985, 297–9; see also Curta 2005, 120f.

activities of some sort may have influenced the pattern, as noted already, this parallels the fluctuations in the rate of production, and the weight and purity of the issues themselves, of the gold.

The three-sided model through which the government's fiscal interests were realised (state $\Rightarrow$ bureaucracy/army $\Rightarrow$ producers [and back to the state]) did not operate in a monetary vacuum, however. For even if we accept that the state's fiscal interests did generally predominate (certainly until the reforms of the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries, where the gold coinage was concerned), there must also be borne in mind the reactive effect upon this relationship of the inevitable attraction of coins to markets. The simple triangular model is thus complicated by the addition of a fourth point, as it were, above the triangle, creating in effect a three-dimensional metaphor of the dialectic between the state and its needs, the producing population, and the movement of wealth by means of market-exchange, especially through the activities of the state elite, which received very considerable quantities of gold in the form of annual salaries and occasional largesse.[78]

The various hoards of silver, as well as the numerous but very scattered finds of bronze from sites across the empire show that money-based exchange was never entirely interrupted, although there is good reason to believe, as we have seen, that the intensity and degree of such activity was, except where particular conditions prevailed, very patchy and quite limited for some 150 years after the middle of the seventh century. In the Balkans in particular we have noted that small-denomination currency continued to be employed in centres of imperial administration and military activity, although such centres were chiefly found in coastal regions rather than inland. The evidence for Asia Minor is beginning to suggest that this was also the case here.[79] Older coins also continued in use, and not only where there was a local demand not met by the supply of contemporary issues – this was apparently the case at Byzantine Corinth, for example, where for certain strata over half of all coins were more than fifty years old when they were deposited.[80] Again, however, we stress that an absence of coins may

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[78] See, for example, the important article by Corbier 1989, who modifies the 'state fiscality' model in this respect for the Roman world; and Banaji 2001, 39ff. for the later Roman world up to the early seventh century.

[79] See, for example, the evidence for one particular region, the Peloponnese, assembled in Penna 1996; and the summary of other scattered material in Morrisson 2001, esp. 389–91.

[80] An issue discussed in Morrisson 1983; 2002, 942ff.; see also, for the later Roman period, Banaji 2001, 70–7. For Corinth, see Sanders 2000, 155–6. Extended use of coins well beyond the date of their issue seems to have been not uncommon: coins of the Vandal period continued in use in North Africa beyond the middle of the sixth century, for example.

by no means signify an absence of exchange. Systems of reciprocity, both in terms of bartered goods as well as in the use of instruments of credit, may have enabled the maintenance of most economic relationships at a local level whatever the change in conditions.[81]

Importantly in this respect, the provenance of coins shows a marked localisation of distribution, if we exclude, that is, finds related to subsidies and tribute or payments to neighbouring peoples.[82] Thus whereas for the period 491–641 only 80 per cent of the coins from the Saraçhane site in Constantinople were minted in the capital, the remainder deriving from other mints across the empire, in the following period from 641–867, 100 per cent of coins excavated were from the local mint. Similar statistics prevail at other sites: of the coins excavated from the Athenian agora for the first period, 50 per cent are Constantinopolitan, whereas in the later period this percentage is 95 per cent; at Bari some 15 per cent of coins came from Constantinople in the first period, with some 73 per cent deriving from Italy and the mint in Sicily, whereas in the later period all the coins were from the Sicilian mint; and so on. In Italy in general after the sixth century there is a marked regionalisation of coinage use and distribution.[83] In Cyprus at the Kourion site several mints are represented up to the year 630, after which Constantinople dominates completely.[84] The diffusion of Byzantine coins to regions outside the empire, both in the East and in the West, is much more restricted after the middle of the seventh century, a further indicator of the localisation of networks of exchange at this time, although part of the picture reflects, as noted, the dispatch of coin in various forms, especially silver and gold, as subsidies or payments to neighbours. As we shall see below, however, this does not mean that no longer-distance exchange survived: a small number of coins of the late seventh and of the late eighth centuries minted in Sicily have been excavated from the lower town at Corinth, suggestive of continued contacts along the route from Sicily to Constantinople via the northern Peloponnese, a picture repeated at other coastal sites.[85] This picture is borne out by the ceramic evidence.

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[81] See Sarris 2004b. [82] Curta 2005, 117ff; Smedley 1988.

[83] Arslan 2006. All of the Byzantine coins found in Mallorca except one (a half *follis* of Constantine IV), for example, were minted in Sicily or Naples. The half *follis* from the Constantinople mint may perhaps reflect imperial military activity of some sort. See Ilisch *et al.* 2005, 22–5. For the Constantinopolitan material, see Füeg 2007. A similar picture applies in the Peloponnese already before the early seventh century: Callegher 2005, 232; and in Africa (Carthage) during the later sixth and through to the fall of the city at the end of the seventh century: Morrisson 2008, 646f.

[84] Hendy 2007b, 403.

[85] See Morrison 2001, esp. 383–7; Morrisson 1995, 78–81; Avramea 1997, 72–81. For diffusion outside the empire, see Morrisson 1995, 83–9; Morrisson 2002, 962ff.; Morrisson 2008.

That the government, having cut back the production of bronze to the provinces after the 650s, and having restricted its distribution to specific channels (for the army and the fleet, for example), was aware that a medium of exchange of this type was nevertheless necessary to urban markets, is evident from the fact of continued production of appropriate, even if apparently reduced, quantities of bronze – as far as the limited archaeological and documentary record can tell us – for Constantinople itself. This hypothesis seems the more likely when we then consider the dramatic increase in the issue of bronze coins during the reigns of Michael II (821–9) and his successor Theophilos (829–42), the establishment of at least one, and probably two new mints for bronze (Thessaloniki and Cherson in the Crimea), and the increase in weight of the standard bronze *follis*.[86]

Indeed, the initial minor increase in bronze coin production, associated with a slightly larger coin under Michael II in the 820s, was followed by a six-fold increase in the issue of a fully reformed and still larger coin type, and this can be related in turn to the (admittedly sporadic) re-appearance of such coins from urban archaeological contexts from the Balkans and from Asia Minor at about the same time (and increasing in quantity thereafter). While this may suggest a recognition of a market-led demand for bronze (increased market activity), and the connection between that and the state's fiscal requirements, it may also, and at least initially, suggest an increase in the use of gold for the army, a greatly increased military presence in the Balkan provinces in particular, and a concomitant need to provide appropriate media into which this could be exchanged through taxation. Coin finds which can be stratified archaeologically also reflect the local and regional political/economic situation. At Corinth, for example, considerable numbers of metropolitan *folles* are found together with coins of Michael III minted in Sicily, suggestive of longer-distance commercial contacts. Yet for Basil such coins almost entirely disappear, indicating a significant shift in such relationships at the time.[87] It is nevertheless also the case that, archaeologically, most excavated sites show this upturn in finds of bronze only from the later years of the ninth and the tenth century, so that there remain some difficulties in tying increases in coin emission to the market response.[88]

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[86] See esp. Metcalf 1967a, 270–310; with the comments of Grierson, *DOC* III, 1, 94–7, 406–8, 412–15; Metcalf 1968, 121–53; Metcalf 1967b, 21–34. For the new mints, see Hendy 1985, 424–5.

[87] Grierson, *DOC* III/1, 70–1; Metcalf 1973, 180–251.

[88] For summaries of the evidence, see Harvey 1989, 86–8; Angold 1985, 7–8; Morrison 1986b; Morrisson 2002, 958–60; with the case-study of Byzantine coinage penetration beyond the political boundaries of the empire in the north-east Balkans presented by Oberländer-Tarnaveanu 2005, 335–7. See also the useful tabulation of finds of Byzantine coins outside the

These changes can be understood in the context of the stabilisation of the empire's internal situation in general and the beginnings of a recovery of lost territories, especially in the southern Balkans; an increased demand for fiscal resources on the part of the state, coupled with reforms in fiscal administration making this possible; and the (assumed) increased monetisation of fiscal income, already a feature of the second half of the eighth century, but now perhaps representing once more a return to the norms of the Justinianic period.

While there is enough evidence to suggest a very patchy and strongly regionally inflected incidence of taxation in money in the difficult years from the early 660s until the 730s or perhaps the middle of the reign of Constantine V, the situation appears to have improved thereafter. The degree of monetisation of the economy as a whole in the first half of the ninth century is difficult to calculate, of course, since we would need to know the gross yearly product of the economic region concerned and the amount of coin in circulation at a given moment. A crude estimate can be attempted, following a model proposed for the Roman empire between the second and fourth centuries, which suggests that if one takes approximately 80 per cent of the gross annual product as deriving from agrarian production and 20 per cent from petty commodity and artisanal production, then some 20 per cent of agrarian production (i.e. 16 per cent of the total) might have been commercialised, and up to 75 per cent of the remaining 20 per cent (i.e. 15 per cent of the total) was similarly exchanged through monetary activity. It has been argued that this is probably too high, at least for the Byzantine context of the ninth century, and by analogy with recent pre- or proto-industrial economies it has been proposed that a more reasonable total of perhaps 20 per cent of the total product was monetised; and this is itself probably too high for the period between about 660 and 800, very approximately.[89] But it seems reasonable to conclude that the Byzantine petty coinage, while it had always been central to the state's fiscal activities and the extraction/distribution of surplus produce, began only from the middle years of the ninth century to recover the major role it formerly held in the private, commercial sphere, in which its limited availability had marginalised it during the period from the 660s to the 820s, with the exception of those major urban centres, whether inland or on the coast, where substantial numbers of soldiers,

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empire in the Frankish west in the eighth–tenth centuries, illustrating the upturn in exchange activities, presented in McCormick 2001, 834–51.

[89] Hopkins 1980, 101–25; Morrisson 1991a, 294–5; and with slight variations, Morrisson 2002, 946–50.

state officials, and churchmen might be established – including, of course, Constantinople.

Non-state activity

Yet it is very easy to over-emphasise the state's role, and demand from private persons must have continued to play a fundamental and determining role in the way goods and money circulated. The political elite of the empire, both at Constantinople and in the provinces, had demands which could only be met by the import of luxury commodities and by the movement of products such as wine, olive oil, fish, meat on the hoof, and spices across sometimes considerable distances, and as we have noted they continued to receive substantial salaries in gold coin. While it may signify no more than one individual's tastes, contacts or interests, the fact that a fragment of a T'ang marbled ware vessel of the later eighth or early ninth century was recovered from the fortress at Methone in the Peloponnese suggests the possibilities.[90] And there is no reason to believe that the middling strata of rural as well as urban society did not also make demands of the market for the provision of various goods not produced locally, whether these should count as 'luxuries' or not. This will have been the case especially in those areas where rural production for the market was itself an important feature of the local and, in consequence, the supra-regional economy.[91] The ecclesiastical establishment, with bishops spread across the empire, generated similar demands. Naturally, such demands might not always be met, and might only very occasionally be met in the most isolated areas, although this certainly represents one way through which both gold and bronze coins might reach regions distant from the capital or the army. The movement of livestock, in particular sheep, from the grazing lands of central Anatolia to be sold in Constantinople, both to state purchasers and to private households, has been invoked as one probable route through which coin might reach the interior of the region without the army or fiscal system being involved, but the amounts are uncertain, and were probably always relatively insignificant.[92] And it is by no means unlikely that for locally based and regular transactions some arrangements for credit were employed, as had been the case in the period up to the Persian and then

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[90] Kontogiannis 2002. In general on trade and commerce in the late Roman period see the relevant contributions in Mundell Mango 2009.

[91] See in particular the discussion in Kingsley 2003.   [92] Hendy 1985, 565ff.

Arab invasions of the seventh century on large estates.[93] Given that estate management and the organisation of labour appear not to have changed dramatically between the sixth and eighth or ninth centuries, continuity in such micro-managerial arrangements is highly likely.[94] Such means would have radically reduced the need for the petty coinage, with the result that ordinary day-to-day exchange activities may have continued, in spite of the disruptions to production caused by hostile military activity, and again reflecting regional particularities, relatively uninterrupted. The continued minting of a relatively stable gold coinage throughout our period certainly made the employment of such instruments entirely practical. In this respect, therefore, the degree of actual monetisation of the economy as a whole and regionally, in respect of the circulation and velocity of circulation of bronze as well as gold, is less important than the degree to which the gold coinage could be relied upon as a sound basis for the calculation and exchange of notional values.[95]

Local trade and commerce and long-distance trade had flourished in the period before the Islamic conquests. Even if a substantial proportion of the trans-regional exchange depended upon the movement of goods in bulk associated, for example, with the annual *annona* in grain from either North Africa or from Egypt, the evidence from the movement of different types of pottery, both fine table wares as well as coarser transport and cooking wares, shows that there was a high level of commercialised exchange activity realised through a large number of cross-cutting supra-regional, regional, and sub-regional networks.[96] In the period after the Arab conquest of Egypt, the government had as a matter of urgency to locate new sources of grain, especially for the army, and this seems to have come chiefly from North Africa and then Sicily. Some may also have been drawn from the Anatolian hinterland of Constantinople. Thrace and the southern Balkan regions were in no position to supply the demand at this time, even if, at a later date, they continued to provide a good part of the city's supply in

[93] Sarris 2004b, 65–7.

[94] As the accounts in the letters of Ignatios the Deacon for the 820s might suggest, e.g. *Ep*. 7 and 8; and for ecclesiastical estates mismanaged by local bishops, Theod. Stoud., *E*, 11.85–125. See Kazhdan 1992.

[95] See Oikonomidès 1994b.

[96] For a neat summary, see Wickham 1988; and McCormick 2001, 53–63, 103–9. For some reservations about the role of the state transportation system and a critique of the tendency to over-emphasise the role of the *annona* in promoting private exchange, see Sodini 2000. See also Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 206–12, for trade, pottery, and the distribution of goods across the late Roman world up to the later sixth century. On the ships, cargoes and, commerce associated with the *annona*, see the survey of McCormick 1998a.

grains, vegetables, and meat until the end of the empire.[97] The shipping of grain to Constantinople from the western coastal plains of Anatolia, in particular from Bithynia, and as we shall see also from Paphlagonia, along the Black Sea coastal plain, may well have involved private commerce as well as state-regulated demand at a later date. Here, the evidence of ceramics should provide some answers, although in the present state of our knowledge it is still too soon to draw any definite conclusions. In contrast, at Ravenna, as well as at other sites in the region such as the developing port and entrepôt at Comacchio, the ceramic evidence at the end of the seventh century and throughout the eighth century shows quite clearly that wine and other products continued to be imported from as far afield as the Aegean region (amphorae associated in particular with Chios and Sardis), Palestine, and Calabria; while sherds from amphorae of Egyptian provenance indicate commerce with that region as well, and it is most unlikely that much, if any, of this was directly connected with the exarchate.[98]

The relationship between the import of grain by the government and its accompaniment by the arrival of other goods (whether privately or publicly arranged) may be reflected in the results of excavations at Constantinople, where a sudden and dramatic upturn in the amount of African imported wares dateable very approximately to the period between *c.* 655 and 670 may be linked with the import of grain from the west, as the evidence of seals of *kommerkiarioi* at Carthage at this period suggests. Certainly it seems to be reflected in the fact that for various periods between 618–47, just when Egyptian grain was no longer available to Constantinople as a result of Persian or Arab activities, and following the termination of the civic bread ration, the seals of African *kommerkiarioi* make their appearance.[99] It has been plausibly argued that the imposition of various 'afflictions' on the populations of Calabria, Sicily, Africa, and Sardinia by Constans II, during his stay in Sicily (between 663 and his assassination at Syracuse in 668), which involved some of the former being absent on voyages (*nauticationes*) and separated from their families, involved the movement of grain, almost certainly to Constantinople.[100] Given the difficulties which the government in the East must have faced after the loss of the Egyptian grain supplies, it is unclear whether this passage refers to a regular or an extraordinary levy of

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[97] See Teall 1959; Lilie 1976, 201–27; Hendy 1985, 44–54, 561–4; Koder 1995.

[98] See Cosentino 2005a, 428, with further literature; Gelichi 2006, 2007.

[99] See Morrisson and Seibt 1982; Prigent 2006b, 293–4.

[100] For the pottery: Hayes 1992, 7, 100–7; the action of Constans is described in the *LP*, I, 344.2–4 (*Vita Vitaliani*). For the connection between Constans' measures and grain supplies for Constantinople, see McCormick 1998a, 78f.; and esp. Prigent 2006b, 294–8.

grain to be shipped to the capital. The appearance of such a concentration of African wares at this time may be seen – possibly – as an example of how state-commandeered shipping could promote other forms of trade and movement of goods. Carthage and its hinterland certainly were flourishing right up to the conquest of the city in the 690s, and the despatch of a substantial force to recover it demonstrates how significant a loss it was for the government at Constantinople.[101] And as we shall see below, the continuation of some type of government-sponsored contract with ship-owners – *naukleroi* – into the ninth century at least seems fairly clear.

The role of Sicily in this picture has now been shown to have been especially significant. It had always been an exporter of grain, both to Rome as well as other regions of Italy;[102] and its importance is emphasised by the fact that Justinian's novel 104 (issued in 537) placed the island under a *praetor* responsible directly to Constantinople (just as Egypt remained under a *praefectus Augustalis*, within the praetorian prefecture of the East but responsible directly to the emperor at Constantinople).[103] During the second half of the seventh century its population (along with that of Calabria and adjacent regions) was re-assessed in respect of their tax payments, and this seems on at least one occasion to have been connected with levies in grain. In 681, the emperor Constantine IV issued a series of *iussiones* pertaining to these regions, in which the rate of assessment of the *coemptum frumenti* was reduced.[104] The reference is significant first because the *coemptio* or *coemptum* in this text is clearly levied at a regular rate, and second because it is clearly levied in corn (*frumentum*). And whereas it is singled out as a regular annual imposition (along with the *annona capita*), other imperial demands are referred to simply as *alia diversa* which the church of Rome paid each year.

By this time the term *coemptio* (Gr. *synone*) was coming to refer to that part of the land tax levied in kind (referred to variously as the *annona* or, in Egypt and possibly elsewhere also, the *embole*), and this again strongly suggests that corn was levied – as formerly in Egypt – for transport either to the capital or to the army elsewhere in the empire. Indeed, this is confirmed by two sets of evidence: first, the anomalous and early appearance of seals of the *kommerkion Sikelias*, dateable in at least one example to a period when North African grain was not available; and the fact that the term *kommerkion* was in fact understood by this time as an equivalent for *synone* (= *coemptio*),

[101] For Carthage, see Humphrey 1980, and for the imperial expedition of 696/7, Modéran 2003, 688f.

[102] See Jones 1964, 710–11; Stein 1949, 424.   [103] *Iustiniani Novellae*, 104: *de praetore Siciliae.*

[104] *Liber Pontificalis*, I, 366.9–10 (and see Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 250).

so that the term would signify 'grain levy of Sicily'.[105] Second, the numismatic evidence shows that in the period 619/20–41 a very considerable quantity of older bronze coins was countermarked with new values (two older coins being equivalent to one current issue) in Constantinople and despatched to Sicily as recompense to the estate owners who supplied the grain for a dramatically increased Constantinopolitan demand, again following the loss of Egypt to the Persians.[106] The *Liber Pontificalis* records that between 662 and 668 Constans II ordered a tax-census for the provinces of Sicily, Calabria, Sardinia, and Africa, which coincides, of course, with his presence in Italy and Sicily, and this should have involved also the question of Sicilian grain for the field army and court which accompanied the emperor.[107] Although it has been suggested that Sicily cannot have been a very secure source of grain for Constantinople after the loss of Egypt, and particularly after the rise of Arab sea-power in the 650s,[108] the government does seem to have placed some emphasis on retaining a fairly close control over its resources: as noted in earlier chapters, the administration of the papal patrimonial lands was taken over by imperial officials in the mid-720s, a move intended to ensure that the fiscal reforms ordered a year or two earlier would be carried out, and which meant a considerably increased fiscal income for the imperial government in Constantinople (possibly involving grain);[109] and Sicily clearly figured as a source of grain both for Thessaloniki at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century, as well as for other eastern cities at a slightly later date.[110] Importantly, the appearance of countermarked *folles* of Constantine IV which date to the period of the siege of Constantinople and are associated with a sudden increase in the minting of bronze in Sicily seem also to reflect the importance of the island for Constantinople, and

[105] Detailed discussion in Prigent 2006b, 290–3. For the equivalence of *kommerkion* with *synone* (in a seventh-century Latin-Greek lexicon), see Brandes 2002, 319.

[106] Prigent 2006b, 273–89, 294–5.

[107] *Liber Pontificalis*, I, 344.2–4 (cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 234). Further discussion: Haldon 1994, esp. 134ff. Note that the system of compulsory purchase – *coemptio* in the traditional sense – had already been employed on occasion to provide grain from Sicily for Rome in the last years of the sixth century: Gregory I, *Epistulae*, I, 2.ix (115); and that the government at Constantinople advised the city of Thessaloniki to seek grain from Sicily during the reign of Phokas: Stathakopoulos 2004, 339f.

[108] Lilie 1976, 203.

[109] Theoph., 404, 410 (Mango and Scott 1997, 558, 568), and Chapter 2. A census had been carried out; and imperial fiscal officials replaced papally appointed *rectores*. See Herrin 1987, 349–50; Guillou 1980, 74ff. Theophanes' account is confused, and it remains unclear as to which measures were carried out when. For a summary of the arguments and the sources for, as well as the date of, all these events, see Guillou 1969, 218ff.; Brown 1984, 69, 156, 180.

[110] See the evidence collected in Teall 1959, 137–8; and discussion with evidence in Durliat 1990, 390–404.

are probably tied to the same needs as under Herakleios and Constans II. Just as importantly, the appearance of a *strategos*, or generalissimo, for the island at a comparatively early date, *c.* 700, suggests that Sicily figured fairly prominently in imperial priorities. Indeed, more seals and references in texts of military commanders for Sicily for the eighth and ninth centuries are known than for any other single military province of the empire, which is suggestive of the economic as much as of the military strategic value of the island.[111] It is possible that Cyprus also played a role in this respect, although what sort of role exactly remains entirely obscure. At any rate, the presence of coins on the site at Kourion from the reigns of Justinian II through to Leo III suggests not only a continued imperial presence of some sort on the island, but the possibility also that it was pulled into the supply-network of the capital.[112]

Ceramic and other evidence: the background

One of the most important – perhaps the single most important – of sources for understanding patterns of exchange activity, on the one hand, and the level and nature of domestic and household production, on the other, is pottery. The picture for the early and middle Byzantine periods is still only very partially understood, but it is possible even so to derive some provisional conclusions from the available data. To understand the implications of the archaeological evidence for our period, however, we must look very briefly at the developments from the later sixth and through the seventh centuries.

As is well known, North African imports of fine and coarse wares dominated the central and western Mediterranean, in addition to being strongly represented throughout the eastern Mediterranean region, including the southern Aegean, until the late fifth and early sixth century. There then set in a decline in regional North African ceramic production, a reduction in the variety and sometimes the quality of forms and types, especially of amphorae, and a corresponding increase of eastern exports to the West. The incidence of African imports to the east Mediterranean, for example, as reflected in both fine wares (most particularly in African red slip) and amphorae, declines sharply from about 480–90 on, recovering only partly

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[111] See the evidence summarised in Winkelmann 1985, 84–90; McCormick 2001, 627ff., and Chapter 11. For the coinage, see Prigent 2006b.
[112] Hendy 2007b.

after the Byzantine reconquest of the area in the 530s and its partial incorporation into an east Mediterranean-centred commercial and exchange network. Italian imports of African wares fall off even more dramatically, given the geographical proximity of this market, and this has been connected with both a possible redistribution of wealth and control of resources which followed the Vandal settlement and, more importantly, the cessation of the *annona*, which had represented a considerable burden on the African economy, but one which had also – through the state-subsidised shipping and transportation which it required – acted to cushion the costs to the private sector of exporting independently along the same routes. This may not necessarily explain the market for fine wares, of course, but it goes part of the way to explaining why, when the government of the western empire turned to other sources of grain, rather than pay for Vandal supplies, both the market possibilities and the internal distribution of resources may have been affected in North Africa. There is a further complication, in that, while the general decline of North African imports is fairly apparent from the 450s on, tempting one to connect it directly with the Vandal presence and all that that entailed, it has been shown that the reduction in the importation of African fine wares to the southern Aegean can certainly be dated already before the mid-420s.[113]

These changes do not seem to reflect any decline in the market potential of the eastern Mediterranean region and the Aegean as a whole. On the contrary, the incidence of Phocaean (i.e. Aegean) slip-coated wares increases in proportion as that of African wares decreases, while over the same period the importance of imports from the Middle East, especially Syria, Palestine, and Cilicia, increases. Complicating the matter is the fact that North African fine wares continue to appear in quantity on major urban sites throughout the sixth century and well into the seventh, even if on a smaller scale than before, far less frequently on many of the southern Aegean regional or provincial sites where it had previously been found, yet still on occasion at inland sites connected with long distance trade, as at Zeugma on the Euphrates, for example.[114] And while North African coarse wares seem to have been able to recover their position to a certain extent at major centres, local Aegean wares now dominated both the hinterland and competed with the western imports. Indeed, at some sites there is clear evidence of

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[113] See in particular the survey articles of Panella 1989, Panella 1993; Abadie-Reynal 1989. For further discussion of the material dealt with in this section, see also the contributions collected in Déroche and Spieser 1989; the survey with further literature in Gelichi 2000; and the general discussion in McCormick 2001, 67–102.

[114] Abadie-Reynal 2005; Bonifay 2005.

local potters carefully imitating the imports.[115] Phocaean wares were also themselves exported, being found on sites in Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor, precisely those areas from which exports were drawn to match the decline in North African imports at an increasing rate over the fifth century. An Aegean-Middle Eastern exchange zone clearly existed which overlapped and to a degree undercut the exchange with North Africa, which may be suggestive of both shifts in profitability and costs for both the exporters and the importers of North African goods.[116]

But North African amphorae continued to hold an important position in the archaeological record in the southern Aegean area – indeed, at Perissa on Thera only North African types, including Aegean imitative wares, were found, to the exclusion of those associated with the Syrian/Palestinian littoral;[117] and while there existed also a direct line of imports to Constantinople and some other major cities, the northern Aegean region and much of Greece demonstrates a highly localised exchange pattern with very little evidence, except in some coastal centres, of imports from further afield. Local wares seem to hold their own well, so that although African imports are by no means negligible (and at certain sites, such as Argos, for example, and others especially in southern Greece, are found in quantity) they never dominate to the extent that is the case in the southern region. The underlying reasons for this resistance to imports, if that is what it is (and it occurs elsewhere, too), may be found in a more highly regionalised economy, in which the market potential for imports was limited (and in return for which the region may have had little to offer in any case) by the fact that the potential imports could be produced more readily locally. Thus, in the later fifth and sixth centuries, two types of fine wares predominate, North African and Phocaean, but they do not share the same pattern of distribution.

That the routes taken by amphorae and fine wares are different is partly explicable through the different interests of exports for profit and state-backed transportation (for goods associated with the *annona*, for example), and partly also through the resistance to (or unprofitability for the exporters of) imports offered by some regional economic sub-systems. Amphorae

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[115] See Poulou-Papadimitriou 2001, 235; and Anagnostakes and Poulou-Papadimitriou 1997, 270.

[116] The different exchange zones are nicely described in Panella 1993, 663–7. See also Reynolds 1995, 34–5 and 118–21; Abadie-Reynal 1989, 155–7; Hayes 1972, 418; Hayes 1992, 5–8; Poulou-Papadimitriou 2001; and Vogt 2000, 55ff. and 61–4 for distribution of Phocaean ware around the Aegean.

[117] See Geroussi 1990–4.

from both Palestine and North Syria are found in quantity in the Pelo-
ponnese, the Aegean region, and in Constantinople from the middle of
the sixth century, for example, complemented by amphorae from western
Asia Minor, presumably representing imports of olive oil and wine. But not
enough is known about these sub-systems to say anything about the quan-
tities of goods involved.[118] Certain Aegean wares, particularly amphorae
associated with the transportation of oil, had not only a widespread dis-
tribution across the regions in which they were produced, suggestive of a
flourishing local and trans-regional market in the goods they carried, but
have also been found in considerable concentrations at military sites along
the Danube *limes*, almost certainly a reflection of state logistical support for
the army and illustrative of the ways in which state intervention in certain
spheres must have affected patterns of production and transportation.[119]

From the late sixth and early seventh century, new fine wares begin to
predominate locally. The glazed white ware of Constantinople, for example,
in a multiplicity of functional forms, becomes the dominant local fine ware
until the period of Latin domination in the thirteenth century, although
with evolving forms which fully replace the varieties available from the
North African and Phocaean table wares only from the early eighth century.
While the production of lead-glazed wares can be traced back at least to
the fifth century in the central Balkans and Thracian region, it is only at
this point, with the increasing localisation of fine-ware production which
has been alluded to, that it begins to dominate, albeit in a highly localised
pattern.[120]

The ceramic picture is thus one of a number of overlapping networks
of regional production and export/import, with longer-distance movement
of both fine and coarse wares: northern and southern Aegean networks,
for example, the former less open to the longer-distance movement of
pottery, but with specific *foci* at sites which served as centres for local
redistribution of wares, such as Constantinople and Argos, to which both
fine and semi-fine wares from North Africa on the one hand, and amphorae

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[118] See the useful distribution maps for the different coarse and fine wares and their patterns of
movement in Panella 1993, figs. 5(b), 6–8. See also Hautumm 1981, 58–77; Abadie-Reynal
1989, 157–9; and Sodini 1993, 174–7; Reynolds 1995; Panella 1993, 664–6.

[119] See in particular Karagiorgou 2001; Curta 2001, 186–8.

[120] Hayes 1992, 12–34; Spieser 1991, 250; Panella 1993, 658. For useful orientation: François
1997. See also Sanders 1995; and the collection in Déroche and Spieser 1989. Glazed tiles were
produced at or near Constantinople, and the same style of tile produced using local materials
at Preslav in the later ninth or perhaps tenth century: see Mason and Mundell Mango 1995;
Papanikola-Bakirtzi *et al.* 1999, 17–18, for a slightly different interpretation of this evidence;
and Gerstel and Lauffenberger 2001.

from Syria/Palestine, on the other, were directed. Some Constantinopolitan glazed wares also reached Carthage during the middle or later seventh century, illustrating that the connection between the capital and this distant provincial centre was not a one-way relationship. It also points up the fact that markets were determined by the type of goods in demand – the glazed white wares reflected different tableware functions from the red slip wares, for example – as well as by the ways in which food was prepared and consumed.[121]

From the first half of the seventh century the northern region begins also to show the impact of the glazed white ware localised at Constantinople, which shares the field with later Phocaean red slip wares, while evidence from the southern/central Aegean shows that locally produced amphorae types reflect an Aegean-based export network, presumably for olive oil, possibly for wine also. This type (Late Roman 3), and its later sub-types produced locally, appears from the sixth through into the eighth century, with a distribution extending to Chios, Crete, Cyprus, Constantinople, and the western Asia Minor coast; the related Late Roman 2, which disappears by the end of the seventh century, is found over a similar area and as far afield as the southern Black Sea coast and Carthage. From the middle of the seventh century, and occasionally somewhat earlier, these types are found together with imitative types from both the Aegean and North African models.[122]

There is ample evidence of the movement of fine wares from western Asia Minor into the Aegean up to the later seventh century – on Chios, for example, where Phocaean red slip ware has been found in contexts after *c.* 650, or on Thera and Cyprus, where clay lamps or amphorae of a particular type (known as LRA 13) are found up to about the middle of the seventh century, tailing off thereafter (the contexts are not always securely dateable), replaced by local imitations of the earlier types.[123] A similar pattern applies to several coastal sites in the eastern Peloponnese, especially at Corinth.[124] Indeed, it is now possible to interpret the ceramic evidence to suggest that

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[121] Hayes 1980, 375–87, at 378f.; Hayes 1992, 12ff. On the changes in food preparation and consumption which can be read from pottery forms, and the implications this has for rural production, see in particular Arthur 2007; Vionis *et al.* 2009, 204; Vroom 2009.

[122] See Panella 1993, 663f.; Sodini 1993, 175–6; Striker 1975, 316; Megaw 1972, 328, 340; Hautumm 1981, figs. 62ff.; van Doorninck 1989, 248–9 (figs. 1 & 8); Atik 1995, 199. For a general survey, see Arthur 1998 and Arthur 1989.

[123] For example, Boardman 1989, 92f., 106; Prokopiou 1995, 264–7; and the annual reports on the excavations at Perissa on Thera by Geroussi 1990–4; and the summary of Cypriot ceramics of the later seventh century in Touma 2001.

[124] Johnson 1985, 335–6.

inter-regional commerce continued to flourish with very little interruption, even if the patterns shifted, well into the eighth century. The presence of what have been identified by the excavators as flourishing shops and workshops in urban centres into the period after 610 at least would certainly support this picture in part.[125] Amphorae of the LR1 type were produced at a number of sites along the south coast of Asia Minor and in Cyprus, and their makers appear to have been operating and exporting their wares into the eighth century if not beyond.[126] Cooking pots from a substantial pottery factory at Dhiorios on Cyprus are found at a number of sites in the Aegean and in S. Asia Minor as well as in the Levant and, although originally considered to reach into the eighth century, evidence from the site at Kourion would suggest that it ceases production by the middle of the seventh.[127] It may be correct that the proportion of imports of both fine and coarse wares to Cyprus appears to diminish fairly rapidly after about 650, with increasing evidence of an extremely close exchange relationship with Constantinople: some 15 per cent of the amphorae from Saranda Kolones and Salamis appear to be imports, or re-exports, from the capital. It may likewise be correct that ceramic evidence from the excavations at Pseira on Crete shows similarly a concentration of locally produced wares, with little evidence for imports, which were mostly of Aegean origin.[128] Similarly at Sparta the predominant types from the later seventh to ninth centuries were locally produced wares, evidence for which was also found at the Saraçhane site, suggesting some exchange of produce from the Peloponnese to the capital during this period.[129] Yet late Roman forms continued to be produced for more regionalised patterns of exchange without interruption well into the eighth century and often beyond, with production centres located across the Aegean from Boeotia to Samos and across to Crete and Cyprus.[130] While the dramatic effects of warfare on local ceramic production may possibly be inferred from the destruction of a kiln and associated features at what seems to have been a farmstead site near Thermes on Samos, dated to about 670, perhaps the result of a visit by Arab sea-raiders, the effects of this should not be exaggerated.[131]

[125] For a very positive assessment, see for example, Sodini 2000.
[126] Elton 2005; Vroom 2005a; Hayes 2007, 437f.   [127] Hayes 2007, 435.
[128] See Poulou-Papadimitriou 1991.
[129] See Megaw 1971, 131; Hayes 1980, 375–87; Poulou-Papadimitriou 1991, 1123–5; Sanders 1993, 251–86; Waywell and Wilkes 1995, 435–61.
[130] See Megaw and Jones 1983, 246–7; Catling 1972 (although it should be noted that the dating and stratification at this site is problematic); Hayes 2007, 435, 437f.
[131] Geroussi 1992–3.

During the second half of the seventh century the distribution of some fine and coarse wares becomes increasingly localised.[132] By about 700, amphorae from North Africa (where production patterns also changed) had ceased to be imported, as had those of the Gaza type. This tells us little about what was happening in North Africa, however, since wares from this area continue to appear at sites in Rome and Marseille, for example, dateable to the years around 700.[133] On the other hand, it may reflect the final conquest by the Arabs of Carthage and its hinterland in the middle 690s and the severing of what had been until then a preferential link between Constantinople and North Africa (as the evidence, noted already, of seals of *kommerkiarioi* and for Constantinopolitan purchases of grain may suggest). In contrast, however, the import of so-called Palestinian amphorae (Late Roman type 5) continued through the eighth century, and they are found in small quantities in Crete and other Aegean locations. By the same token, although the dating is fragile, Cypriot red slip wares – fine wares – were produced in quantity and, along with the cooking wares associated with the Dhiorios pottery and Cypriot-produced amphorae of the type known as LR1, were exported to the Levant and southern Aegean/Asia Minor regions beyond the seventh century, even if the evidence might suggest that the Dhiorios site itself was no longer producing by this time.[134] Aegean and western Asia Minor imitations of amphorae of types known as LR1 and LR1a, and especially of LR2, begin to appear in considerable quantities throughout the region, and those 'globular' types based on LR2 models are thereafter the dominant form across southern Greece and the Peloponnese, Cyprus, the Aegean region, and Constantinople throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. They are similarly found in large quantities at sites which remained part of the empire during this period or which remained very heavily influenced by Byzantine cultural and administrative tradition: Otranto, Naples, Rome, and Ravenna, as well as sites along the North African coast and Palestine.[135] Perhaps just as significantly, new types of 'globular' amphorae, almost certainly for the transportation of wine, began to be produced in north Syria, probably around Apamaea, and in Mesopotamia, around Zeugma, during the first half of the seventh century, and fragments of both are found at many sites associated with military activity and garrisons in these regions. The conclusion may be drawn that these products are once again associated with the supply of the army, the *annona*, even though it seems also that

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[132] See the summary of material and general trends set out in Sodini 2000; also Vroom 2004.
[133] See Loseby 1998; 2000; Saguì 2002.   [134] Vroom 2005a; Gabrieli *et al.* 2007.
[135] See the excellent summary, with literature, in Poulou-Papadimitriou 2001, 244–7; Hayes 2007, 436f.

they were exchanged commercially and are readily found in non-military contexts.[136]

Ceramic and other evidence: the eighth–ninth centuries

It is this more regionally nuanced pattern which appears to dominate from around the turn of the seventh to eighth centuries and into the ninth, a point which is relatively clear from all the excavated material in the southern Balkan, Aegean, and east Mediterranean basin regions, including Constantinople, as well as to a degree in southern and central Italy, even if, as we have seen, Sicily remains something of an exception.[137] The movement of goods over quite considerable distances thus continued throughout the eighth century and beyond, although the evidence also suggests that some of these networks at least were limited largely to imperial territories or those otherwise within the imperial political sphere. Networks shifted in emphasis and extent. The greater localisation of production is illustrated by the appearance at several coastal sites in southern and western Asia Minor of local imitations of late Roman wares, as well as by the production of relatively crude coarse and kitchen wares for purely local use.[138] Thus in the Peloponnese and the Aegean regions local production of both fine and coarse wares predominates after the end of the seventh century, and this remains the situation well into the ninth century.[139] Coastal sites demonstrate a greater variety of imports, as we might expect, but almost exclusively

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[136] Piéri 2005.

[137] Hayes 1992, 7. For possible connections between Constantinople and Islamic Bostra, for example, see Sogliani 1994, 442f. For S. Italy see Raimondo 2006.

[138] See Vroom 2005a; 2004, 288–308. Crude local coarse wares: Bowden 2003b (Butrint).

[139] The appearance of greater quantities of hand-formed pots on certain sites in the Peloponnese – Olympia, Argos, Isthmia, for example – used to be interpreted as an indication of the arrival of Slav immigrants during the later sixth and seventh centuries and the cessation or radical reduction of the production of the previous Late Roman types of pottery. But it has been pointed out, first, that both hand-formed and wheel-turned wares were produced at the same time and at the same sites, suggesting production of the former for cooking and basic domestic uses. Second, the household-based production of domestic hand-thrown wares, thought to reflect short-term household needs, is found in many other contexts at this time and later – in sixth- and seventh-century Spain, for example – and probably has little or nothing to do with either migrant populations or a 'barbarisation' of cultural forms. Finally, the dates within which these wares are to be located has been subject to considerable revision, so that the wares may in fact be of a much later date. For the traditional view see, for example, Gregory and Kardoulias 1990; Vryonis 1992; Aupert 1989, 417–19. This has been cogently challenged by Anagnostakes and Poulou-Papadimitriou 1997, esp. 252–91; cf. Poulou-Papadimitriou 2001, 240–1. See also Curta 2001; and cf. Gutierrez 1996, esp. 178–86; Völling 2001; Vroom 2005a.

from neighbouring regions of the Aegean. Yet even where local wares can be clearly identified (as at Anemourion, for example, although the chronology remains vague), the presence of substantial quantities of Cypriot red slip ware suggests a continuing wider range of contacts.[140] The fine ware produced at Constantinople reached Crete, the southern Balkan region, and the Peloponnese, and will probably have reached the sites in western and northern Asia Minor from which amphorae found at the Saraçhane site in Constantinople derived, although the evidence for this is still very sparse. Yet its penetration beyond certain clearly defined routes is limited. At Corinth, only a very small amount of such glazed ware can be dated to the second half of the seventh century, and small quantities of Constantinopolitan white glazed ware have been located in late eighth- and early-ninth-century contexts, although they cease thereafter and until after the middle of the tenth century.[141] A high degree of regionalisation is once again evident throughout this period.[142]

International networks thus continued to exist, even if restricted to specific zones, as the evidence from a number of southern and western Anatolian coastal sites suggests – while pottery from North Africa certainly is reduced to nothing or a trickle after the end of the seventh century, the ceramic record indicates continued regular contacts with the Levant through the eighth and into the ninth century in respect of both imported fine ware as well as amphorae.[143] The transformed international situation clearly had an impact on some patterns of trade, of course – finds of late Roman glassware in China cease from the sixth/seventh century, for example, to be replaced by vessels from the Islamic world, or imitations, indicative of the establishment of a new intermediary across the eastern trade routes. By the same token there is solid evidence of imported red slip ware from Egypt to Cyprus at the end of the seventh and in the early eighth century, and it has been suggested that this is evidence for an Egyptian production centre stepping in to fill a void left by the now largely absent North African ware. Likewise wares from Palestine and Syria are also found on the island, suggestive of the open communications within this sub-region. Sites such

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[140] See the survey in Lampropoulou *et al.* 2001, with conclusions at 221f.; and, e.g. Etzeoglou 1989, 151–6, for the production of a range of local ceramic types and the kilns where they were produced. For Anemourion, see the summary report in Russell 1980, 31–40; and esp. Williams 1977, with Vroom 2005a, 249–55. The ceramic profile here is of the dominance of Phocaean and related wares, with an admixture of Palestinian wares, until the 650s, followed by a period of local production and the appearance of some glazed wares, although not from Constantinople.

[141] Sanders 2000, esp. 162–5.   [142] Good summary for the Aegean in Vroom 2007.

[143] Vroom 2004, 2005a.

as that at Kilise Tepe in Cilicia also display contacts with a wider network, including evidence for the (continued) import of dried fish from Egypt, possibly continuing into the eighth century.[144] At the same time, beginning during the seventh century, there developed in Crete a slip painted fine ware which, although limited in its distribution, seems to have been the predecessor of the later slip painted wares which dominated in the Aegean regions from the eleventh century.[145] Another type of fine and semi-fine ware, of good quality and with painted decoration (referred to as 'central Greek painted ware'), appears from the early seventh century around the Aegean and southern Balkans at sites such as Argos, Corinth, Athens, Thessaloniki, and Constantinople. In southern Italy a thriving production of a range of local decorated semi-fine and coarse wares represented an important regional tradition independent of the areas to north and east. The red line-painted and other slipped wares found at sites in southern Italy, in and around Naples, for example, as well as at other southern Italian sites, both those within Byzantine territory and in Lombard-controlled regions, were especially prominent. Many of these bear striking similarities to contemporary decorated wares from Egypt and Palestine. Such wares are found at all these sites and many others in the eastern Mediterranean basin in levels of the seventh and eighth centuries, and suggest contacts, regular if not frequent, between the regions concerned. Even small and relatively insignificant coastal settlements seem to have maintained contacts with areas at some distance, as at Diaporit near Butrint in Albania, for example, or Aphiona on Kerkyra. At Butrint and neighbouring sites in particular the evidence is of an increasing volume of exchange with Italian centres throughout the eighth century.[146]

Inland, particularly in Asia Minor, where it has long been recognised that localised production and distribution predominated throughout the Late Roman period anyway, there is little doubt that the pattern of production will have remained more or less the same at the most general level, although considerable dislocation of both centres of production and of ceramic types, whether coarse, fine or semi-fine wares, must have occurred in the conditions prevailing during the second half of the seventh century, even in the

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[144] For the glassware in China, see Kinoshita 2009. Ceramics: Hayes 2007, 436, 438; Jackson 2009a and b; Van Neer and Waelkens 2007; but it should be noted that the Kilise Tepe ceramic chronology for the late Roman and early Byzantine period remains uncertain; see Chapter 7.

[145] See Poulou-Papadimitriou 2001, 239–40 with literature; and cf. Watson 1992, 242.

[146] Details summarised, with literature, in Poulou-Papadimitriou 2001, 236–7. For the Italian material, see Noyé 1988; and Arthur and Patterson 1994, 409–41; and for a brief overview, Wickham 1999; and Vroom 2007. For Diaporit and Aphiona, see Bowden 2003b, 201–11.

areas nearest to Constantinople – we simply have, at the moment, no real analysis of the regional ceramic types to inform us. At Amorion a red-fabric ware appears to be a local version of the Constantinopolitan glazed white ware I. Dated to the first half of the ninth century and perhaps earlier, it must represent the local ceramic production of the region, and will probably have travelled, at least regionally. Similarly at Kilise Tepe in the Göksu valley a local painted ware, which seems to have been restricted to the valley, was produced and may have continued in production beyond the seventh century, although this is not yet clear.[147] Sagalassos in Pisidia was a major centre for pottery production from the first century BCE, remaining a substantial producer into the very first years of the seventh century CE. In the fourth and fifth centuries its pottery reached much of southern and western Anatolia and its coastal regions, as well as travelling as far as Egypt (and archaeological evidence of the import of Nile fish show that the trade was reciprocal). Yet by the early seventh century it was exporting almost exclusively to centres around it on the Anatolian plateau, including Amorion in substantial quantities, and rarely reaching coastal sites. Conversely, very little African red slip ware or Phocaean ware appears to have reached either Sagalassos, or Amorion, for example, in the sixth and early seventh centuries, although routes across Anatolia from Constantinople were regularly travelled by both military and non-military personnel. This may also reflect the still very limited amount of data available – at a small defended rural settlement at Çadır Höyük near Yozgat (to the south of Euchaita), late sixth–seventh-century African red slip ware has been identified (alongside probably locally produced coarse wares), suggesting a wider-ranging inland penetration, at least (as the archaeological context would appear to suggest) for ecclesiastical needs. At Amorion, only very sparse evidence of the Constantinopolitan glazed white products has so far come to light, so that the cessation of Sagalassos imports may well have stimulated a much higher level of local production of all types of ware, and the red-fabric ware noted above may be part of this picture.[148] A pottery kiln from the upper city may reinforce this impression of relatively localised ceramic production – fine grey table wares and a coarser ware have been identified on the

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[147] See Laiou and Morrisson 2007, 75; Jackson 2009a.

[148] Local conditions were obviously crucial in such cases: at Amorion, there was clearly a specific market and, as the distances involved were not too great (Sagalassos is about 150 miles south of Amorion) goods in bulk were transported. See Mitchell *et al.* 1989, esp. 74–7; and Lightfoot 1995, at 122 (Claudia Wagner, 'Pottery'). For Sagalassos, see Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2004; and for Çadır Höyük: Gorny 2005; Gorny *et al.* 2002; Cassis 2009. See for Euchaita: Haldon *et al.* 2008; 2009; for Kaman – Kalehöyük: Vroom 2006.

site – although the kiln itself dates probably to the second half of the ninth century or later.[149] At Sagalassos itself as well as from several rural sites in the area around it, it seems that from the middle or later seventh century and through into the eighth century and possibly later several types of locally produced coarse wares and kitchen vessels, as well as a semi-fine ware, were being manufactured at household or village community level, suggestive of both the collapse of the older large-scale manufacturing centres and of the relatively high level of localisation which had set in. Whether such wares travelled more widely remains to be seen, but some of the types are very similar to Cypriot products of the same period and may suggest a tenuous connection of some sort.[150] At other inland centres, such as Ankara, highly regionalised production predominated after the middle of the seventh century, with very little evidence for any inter-regional movement. Yet even here there is evidence of established contacts with the wider world, while survey work in the Lycian highlands has revealed the presence of Cypriot red slip wares, for example, and at one such site a small amount of Constantinopolitan white ware has been found. The ceramic evidence from Limyra, 6 km inland from the port of Phoinix in Lycia, shows contacts with Egypt and the Near East as well as Cyprus after the seventh century. At Euchaita, surface survey work has produced a few fragments of what may be Constantinopolitan glazed white wares I and II, the earlier probably of later eighth-century date and possibly imitations, and this is paralleled by the glazed white ware I material from Kaman-Kalehöyük, between Euchaita and Ankara. Such material shows at least some contacts between the capital and these remoter central Anatolian regions, although of course there is no way of knowing whether the sherds reflect commercial activity. In more distant regions which had been tied in with a wider late Roman network, such as Cherson in the Crimea, the ceramic evidence shows a very marked decline in non-locally produced wares after the middle of the seventh century (although Constantinopolitan wares have been identified), with the major exception of amphorae associated with the southern Pontic, especially Paphlagonian, littoral and the city of Amastris, where commercial links – which may also have been supported or directed to some extent by state officials – appear to have been continuous throughout. Likewise at Bosporos/Kerch the presence of ceramics from the southern Black Sea littoral as well as from Constantinople dating throughout the period from the seventh into the ninth century and beyond

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[149] See Lightfoot 1998a, 305–6.
[150] Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2009, 180–1; Vionis *et al.* 2009, 193–7.

demonstrates continuous commercial contacts, even if on a somewhat reduced scale.[151]

The evidence from pottery suggests a range of interlocking or over-lapping circuits, with one or two longer-reaching connections. The most significant circuits seem to be from Constantinople into the Aegean and Peloponnese and around the coast of Asia Minor across to Cyprus; from Cyprus to Egypt and the North African littoral to the west of Egypt, north to the southern and south-western Asia Minor coast and a little inland and across to Syria/Palestine; a pool connecting southern Italy, and Sicily with the eastern shore of the Adriatic; from Constantinople to Cherson and into Asia Minor along certain major routes; a network connecting Constantinople with the southern Pontic coast; and single routes across from Constantinople to Sicily, central Italy, and Rome, and on to Ravenna and the Adriatic region. Although archaeologically barely visible yet, there is some evidence of a Taurus-North Syrian circuit and a network connecting Constantinople with Thrace, which we should probably assume. At the interface between state-directed and private activity it might be expected that some archaeological evidence would support the notion that goods being moved via private means accompanied state-directed transportation, and that ceramic evidence for this might be forthcoming from, say, archaeological contexts of the later seventh and eighth centuries from those regions or regional centres through which grain was taken to Constantinople: as we have seen, apart from Thrace, these were chiefly north-western Anatolia and the south-western Pontic littoral (Paphlagonia), and perhaps the Paphlagonia–Cherson link. The appearance of a concentration of African wares at Constantinople datable to the second half of the seventh century may possibly be associated with the shipping of grain from that region to the capital in the 650s and 660s; and in this connection the role of *kommerkiarioi* or their representatives in North Africa during this period seems clear (see Chapter 10). But the relationship between this state-supported shipping and private traders is entirely unclear so that, while it must remain a possibility that similar movements of goods flowed from these nearer provinces to the capital, it is not yet clearly archaeologically attested. Whether or not this relationship is reflected in the incidence of the standard globular amphorae, the decorated fine wares and glazed white wares of the seventh and eighth

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[151] See Harrison 1992, 216. For the Lycian material, see Mitchell 2000, 146; Armstrong 2009; Vroom 2007, 2008. For Cherson: Romančuk 1981; Romančuk and Belova 1987, 56ff.; and esp. Sazanov 2000 with Romančuk 2005; for the Amastris-region amphorae: Crow and Hill 1995; and for Kerch: Makarova 1998; Aibabin 2006, 32–47.

centuries at sites throughout the Aegean region, or of the stamped or moulded polychrome glazed white wares from Constantinople at sites around the Black Sea coast or with access to the Aegean, and from contexts dating to the middle or later ninth century onwards, is at present difficult to say.[152]

The movement of goods

That the state-sponsored provisioning of resources to the capital ceased after the early seventh century, however, as has often been argued, seems not to have been the case. It is clear that it was very considerably reduced in scope, that the public corn dole ceased, and that this reflected the government's access to appropriate resources as well as finance. The *Miracula S. Demetrii* show that the public provisioning of that city from the Egyptian corn levy certainly had ceased and that Sicily was seen as an alternative market (as also shown in the evidence for Constantinopolitan grain supplies after 618), and it has also been argued that the inability of the government to support larger coastal towns through a public grain supply after the loss of Egypt contributed to the ensuing breakdown of imperial control.[153] But there was certainly a regular annual grain traffic to Constantinople in the first half of the ninth century, conducted by contracted *naukleroi*, from particular regions such as the Aegean and Paphlagonia to Constantinople, and managed through the general *logothesion*. The emperor Nikephoros I introduced a series of measures intended to indemnify or insure the government in respect of the activities of such shipowners or *naukleroi*. *Naukleroi* from the island of Androte, located off the northern Anatolian coast in Paphlagonia, who had defrauded the government of some of the grain they were to transport, are mentioned in a letter of the deacon Ignatios, written in the 820s.[154] According to the tenth-century *On Imperial Administration*, Cherson was supplied by sea with grain from Amisos (mod. Samsun),

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[152] See Walker Trust 1947, 46; Hayes 1992, 12, 19; Sanders 1995, 232–3, 259–60; Waagé 1933, 321–2 (for Athens, Agora excavations); Bakirtzis and Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1981, 422 (various Greek sites); Jakobson 1979, 83–93; Barnea 75, 139; Čimbuleva 1980, 214–28.

[153] See above; and Durliat 1990, 389ff.; *Mirac. S. Demetrii*, I, 75–8 (107f.).

[154] Nikephoros I's measures: Theoph., 487 (Mango and Scott 1997, 668; comm. 670). Ignatios' letter is written on behalf of the ship captains, to Democharis, the general *logothetes* to beg for leniency, and referring to the annual shipment for the public treasury (*demosios logos*), clearly implying that they were subject to the authority of the general *logothesion*: Ignatios diak., *Ep.* 21 (67–8; comm. 178–81). See also *PBE*, Anonymi 34; *PmbZ*, no. 10602 with further literature; and the comment of Laiou 2002b, 711.

Paphlagonia and the *Boukellarion* region, as well as the *Armeniakon*, and there is no reason to doubt that such grain could also be shipped to the capital.[155] The government maintained some (the number is not clear) granaries in Constantinople itself throughout this period, for the officials of which a variety of seals survive, and after the reign of Herakleios under the authority of an official known as the *komes tes Lamias*.[156] The corn was intended presumably to provide supplies both for government officials and their families in the capital as well as for the troops of the garrison and the units based in and around the city, which were supported directly.[157] *Naukleroi* appear in the late sixth and early seventh century still as contracted by the state to deliver corn for the *annona* of Constantinople or other major cities, and were organised from the sixth century under the authority of the praetorian prefects. The *nauticatio* referred to for the reign of Constans II, imposed on the populations of Africa, Calabria, Sardinia, and Sicily, has been correctly understood as a similar (compulsory) contract, and suggests that even if there can be no doubt that the civic *annona* ceased to exist after 618, the government still needed to ensure grain supplies for the city, however it was sold or distributed.[158]

It is clear from later seventh-century evidence also that there continued to be a regular movement of ships transporting grain to Constantinople, although the public dole of corn or bread to the populace had ceased in the time of Herakleios. A miracle of St Nicholas, part of a tenth-century collection but almost certainly based on a story of the eighth or ninth century, refers to a fleet of vessels transporting grain from Cyprus to Constantinople.[159] This is in itself no evidence for whether the transport of corn to the city was still operated entirely under state auspices, but the evidence of the legislation of the emperor Nikephoros and the letter of Ignatios would suggest that it certainly played a significant contributory role, and that some arrangements whereby the government contracted ships and ship-owners to transport and deliver this grain remained in force.[160] The

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[155] *DAI*, §53. 532–5. For Amisos as a port (for which there are a number of seals of *kommerkiarioi*), see Bryer and Winfield 1985, 92ff.

[156] See Haldon 1986b and Mango 1985c, 54–5, for discussion and sources.

[157] Haldon 1984, 316–19; see Magdalino 1995 for the grain-supply of the city from the middle of the ninth century on and the issue of the extent to which the state controlled or regulated the provisioning of the city population.

[158] For the *nauticatio*, see Prigent 2006b, 294–8, *pace* Zuckerman 2005, 80–4, 107–25.

[159] For the fleet of grain-ships: *Miracula S. Nicolai Myrensis*, in Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* 1, 288–93 (see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 223).

[160] We cannot agree with Brandes 2002, 493–8 (and cf. 193–4), that Nikephoros re-invented the *naukleroi* as part of a contemporary tendency to imitate late Roman administrative and

fact that Constans II probably imposed a compulsory grain transporta-
tion from Sicily to Constantinople on local vessels and their crews may
support the contention. The evidence does not inform us as to whether
Sicily remained a major supplier into the eighth century, although again
the interest Leo III had in the island is suggestive, as is the establishment of
an army under its *strategos* already by the year 700.[161] On the other hand,
and as already noted, wine appears to have been imported to Ravenna from
Palestine and the Aegean until at least the beginning of the eighth century,
possibly longer.[162]

There is no evidence that the *annona* itself was maintained, or revived at
a later stage. As we will see in the discussion of the fiscal arrangements of
the empire after the middle of the seventh century, while the government
continued to raise taxes in kind for the army in particular, there is no support
for the notion that it provided a public dole of bread for the populace of
Constantinople. Grain was clearly imported when necessary, for example
before an expected siege, and the private ship-owners would then no doubt
be conscripted to assist here, as well as fulfilling their normal contracts to
supply government officials and the army.[163] The likelihood is, in fact, that as
the general political and economic situation of the empire began to improve
during the later eighth century and afterwards, so the emphasis switched
from predominantly state-supported supplies to privately imported grain.
Private, imperial, and monastic estates around the capital provided all the
city's needs by the tenth century; and there is good evidence that the market,
albeit supervised and regulated in certain key respects by the government
(as set out in the *Book of the eparch*), was the main provider, in the form of
produce brought in by the agents of the large estates around Constantinople
or by independent peasant producers or village communities.[164]

The extent to which the condition of roads affected either the move-
ment of goods overland by the state, or through private commerce, is very

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cultural patterns and nomenclature. In its favour is merely a gap in references to such
arrangements in the intervening years; against it is the undoubted fact of systemic and
structural continuity across virtually the whole range of administrative practices of the middle
Byzantine period, as well as the use of the term in the West: see n. 191 below.

[161] See Teall 1959, 122–6; Durliat 1995, 21, 25–7; Magdalino 1995, 36. For the Sicilian fiscal
situation in the 720s, see Chapter 2; and for its military organisation, Chapter 11.

[162] Cosentino 2005a, 428.

[163] See above; and the discussion in Durliat 1990, 399–406, who argues on the basis of the
account in the *Miracula Demetrii*, mir.2, 4, describing events of the years 676–8, that the
government at Constantinople did indeed supply grain to Thessaloniki, or at least assist with
its purchase, before then buying some of it back again to meet its own needs. See also the
commentary by the editor, *Miracula Demetrii*, 2, 111–36.

[164] See Magdalino 1995, 37–44; and (for vegetables) Koder 1995.

difficult to determine. The fifth- and sixth-century evidence points to the very poor condition of many roads.[165] Yet as often as not alternative routes were brought (or brought back) into use, and were protected – and possibly maintained – by garrisons of soldiers located in strategically placed forts, accompanied by their families. There is a mass of evidence for the continued and frequent use of a wide network of official routes across both the southern Balkans and Asia Minor throughout the period, partially maintained at the expense of the state (through a system of impositions on local communities), carrying an extensive traffic of military and administrative officials, and also private persons. This seems to be the situation along the Albanian stretches of the Via Egnatia and the parallel routes employed after its central sections had fallen into disrepair, where a number of small cemeteries characterised by a type of stone-lined grave apparently employed for members of the same family or kinship group included weapons and other items of personal dress associated with what appear to be military emplacements – forts and garrisons. These goods belong to the so-called Komani-Kruja culture, named after the sites where they were first identified, and have been tentatively recognised across northern Albania and into Macedonia and southern Thrace as well as on Kerkyra and in the northern Peloponnese. Except in the case of the Kerkyra graves, which contained no weapons, they have been associated with either the route of the Via Egnatia or with areas in which a Byzantine military presence continued largely uninterrupted through the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, often closely related to re-occupied fortified hill-top sites. While the association remains to be confirmed by corroborative material, it is possible. In the coastal regions of Istria and along its northern border region likewise, cemeteries accompanied by particular types of grave goods can be associated with military emplacements, and almost certainly reflect the presence of soldiers permanently stationed with their families and drawn from local or 'imported' populations – in this case, an association with 'Avars' from the regions to the north of the Danube basin has been made on the basis of the grave goods, in particular belt-buckles and weapons.[166] Banditry or warfare in both the Balkans and

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[165] On the state of roads in the later fourth and fifth centuries, see *CTh.* xv, 3. 4 (a. 412), remarking upon 'the immense ruin of the highways' throughout the prefecture of Oriens. The western sections of the Via Egnatia, the major route from Constantinople to the Adriatic coast, were according to one report, barely passable in the middle of the fifth century: see Malchus of Philadelphia, *Fragments*, §18 (in: *FHG*, IV, 127 [*Exc. de Leg.*, I, 158]). According to Prokopios, parts of the Via Egnatia were almost impassable in wet weather: *Buildings*, IV, viii. 5.

[166] For the Komani-Kruja materials, see Bowden 2003a, esp. 59–62 and 2003b, 204–11; Nallbani 2004, and for the military association, Curta 2006, 103ff. (but for a different view see Popović 1998, 269–80). For the Istria material, Torcellan 1986.

in Anatolia influenced the pattern of movement. This disruption was both seasonal and regionalised, however, and while it must have contributed to the interruption of the movement of goods across the areas affected, and thus the further localisation of economic sub-systems, in the longer term the movement of goods and resources was only marginally compromised.[167] There appears also to have been an increasing reliance upon beasts of burden for the movement of goods and people, rather than on wheeled vehicles drawn by draught-animals, and this may in turn have had effects upon the ways in which goods, whether in bulk or not, were transported. Large, heavy amphorae, easily stacked and carried on ships or carts, were less easily managed on mules or donkeys, a factor that may have contributed to the increased regionalisation of exchange in inland regions.[168] Ninth- and tenth-century evidence shows that wine or oil could be carried, in considerable quantitites, in large leathern skins of 50 litres' capacity slung on mules, for example; other goods – grain, dried fruits, for example – were transported in panniers slung in pairs, two pairs per animal. It is entirely possible that the disappearance of imported amphorae from certain parts of the Roman world reflects not just changes in patterns of exchange and export/import of goods, but changes in the mode of their transportation. The picture thus becomes even more complicated than it may appear at first sight.[169]

The implications of this material and of the ceramic evidence can be summarised, therefore, very briefly as follows. In the first place, there seems to be a continuity in both medium- and longer-distance commercial exchange, albeit fragmented into a number of distinctive circuits: the distribution of finds of the various coarse and fine wares produced at Constantinople, in the southern Balkans and eastern Peloponnese, in the Aegean and Crete, and across the Adriatic provides good evidence for the maintenance of a considerable degree of maritime commerce or at least exchange. Some of these, but by no means all, seem to have been limited to the territories within the political boundaries of the empire. Commerce across these political boundaries certainly existed, however, and in some cases may have been substantial, as with the imports of wine to Ravenna from both the Aegean as well as from Islamic Palestine in the last years of the seventh century, as the presence of Levantine pottery at sites along the southern coast of

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[167] For a brief survey of the road systems and the economic hinterlands they connected, see Hendy 1985, 69–138; Haldon 1999a, 51–60; Kaplan 2000a; Avramea 2002; Belke 2008.

[168] Bulliet 1975.

[169] See *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, [C] 142–4; and for the capacities involved, Schilbach 1970, 112–13.

Asia Minor and in Cyprus, and of Cypriot wares on Islamic territory, also suggests.[170] The routes followed by the outbreaks of plague also show the traces of commercial and political or military movements – as has been shown, the difference between the rapid spread of plague along major shipping routes in the middle of the sixth century contrasts very strongly with the slower, more gradual, and more limited spread of plague in the middle of the eighth century.[171] At the same time, however, there is little evidence – although this may certainly change with further archaeological investigation in Asia Minor, for example – for much commercial activity extending far inland. In other words, the pattern in the Byzantine world is much the same as the pattern in the rest of the Mediterranean world at this period, with a strong tendency towards localisation of production and regionalisation of patterns of exchange.[172] But while this tells us about the relationships between regions, we must emphasise that it tells us very little about either the levels of production within each locality, or about local patterns of consumption of locally-produced goods, nor again about the relative wealth of the provinces and sub-regions.

Trade and commerce in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries

The evidence for trade and commerce in general may be examined at two levels: the movement over long distances of luxury commodities, such as spices, precious stones and, for example, papyrus (although the latter was certainly state-led and seems to have been paid for in gold coin);[173] and the movement of goods to local markets, or from region to region, within the empire. 'Local' trade can also include cross-frontier exchanges over short distances, of course, although the evidence for this during this period is even sparser.[174] All of these factors must be understood within a context in which the bulk shipment of goods overland was prohibitively expensive, except for the state (and apart from the driving of livestock) and the church, and

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[170] Cosentino 2005a, 428.   [171] Rochow 1991, 162; McCormick 2001, 538–9.

[172] For a good survey of the material evidence for the period, for both the West and the Islamic world, see the essays in Hansen and Wickham 2000.

[173] The import of papyrus faltered in the 690s, when the caliph 'Abd al-Malik ordained that the sheets should be marked with Koranic texts before their export. Justinian II objected, but without effect. See Gibb 1958, 231–2. Yet papyrus remained a significant 'quality' material until the twelfth century: Oikonomidès 2002a, 589.

[174] See the useful short survey of Gerolymatou 2001 for the general picture; and for travel and shipping in general from the sixth to eleventh century, see Dimitroukas 1997, esp. 413–544, on the routes and conditions of travel by sea; Trombley 2001a, esp. 135–48; and Avramea 2002.

possibly the very wealthy – about whom, however, we know next to nothing at this time; in which exchange activity was of necessity, therefore, highly localised (again, apart from livestock); and in which long-distance and bulk transport of goods was both faster and more cost-effective by sea, yet also heavily determined by seasonally variable winds and prevailing currents.[175] In addition to these elements we must also bear in mind the movement of people, with differing demands and habits, from one part of the empire to the other or from outside the empire's territory, whether as individuals – single merchants and traders, imperial emissaries, pilgrims, and so forth – or in larger groups: military contingents, immigrant families or communities, including slaves in smaller or larger bodies. This complicates any picture we may wish to draw of the movement and the production of goods, since immigrant or moving populations invariably brought with them both techniques and habits of consumption which may have contrasted with those of the society into which they were introduced.[176]

Commerce with the wider world

It is not at all clear to what extent the state intervened effectively in the movement of goods, whether within or across the imperial frontiers, throughout the period from the seventh to tenth centuries.[177] If we judge the situation just from the limited evidence of treaty provisions in respect of external trade, then it could certainly play an influential role. The clauses of the Byzantine-Bulgar treaty of 715–18, proposed by the Bulgars for renewal with minor changes in 812–13 (but actually ratified only after the accession of Leo V), nicely illustrate the nature of this influence: not only was trade permitted by each side on condition that certain political arrangements were respected (such as the return of deserters and traitors on demand of their own government/ruler); licences were issued to those merchants permitted to cross the border, and any trader without such a pass was liable to have his goods confiscated. Maxima in the value of exportable goods were also stipulated. While the stipulations reflect the mutual suspicion of erstwhile enemies, similar treaties were renewed on several occasions

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[175] These elements have been discussed in considerable detail and very clearly in Hendy 1985, 44–68, 138–45, 554–613. For a useful overview of the role of trade and commerce in the economy, see Laiou 2002b, 703–15.

[176] For an idea of how complex this picture was, see the material collected in Ditten 1993, and the discussion in McCormick 1998b.

[177] Oikonomidès 2002b, esp. 980–90.

throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, and the trade itself seems to have been sufficiently significant for both sides to take it very seriously, and for the Bulgars to wish to regulate it on their own side.[178] The government needed to import ores of varying sorts, including iron ore, and the discovery of Byzantine gold coins at a Bulgarian mining centre suggests that this was paid for in coin rather than in finished products, although nothing is known about the amount or frequency of this trade.[179] On the whole, however, the evidence now available suggests that the majority of sources of ore exploited by the late Roman state within the empire's territories continued to provide for most of its needs, in particular in respect of precious metals.[180] The government tried to control anything it thought of relevance to its own concerns. The export of weapons and gold was forbidden, under penalty of death, for example; and although it must be the case that control was by no means absolute, there is evidence for fairly strict controls at key emporia and frontier trading centres, including at Abydos, at the entrance to the Hellespont, which served to control and tax maritime traffic, and at towns such as Thessaloniki, exemplified in the seals of local *kommerkiarioi* and of officials such as the *Abydikoi* at key points, or in the legislation of emperors such as Nikephoros I. All this suggests that such commerce was indeed seen as of some importance, that there were numerous points of entry and exit for commercial goods, and that the financial gains to be made through state management of such trade were by no means insignificant.[181] The ceramic evidence we have reviewed above suggests that private trade across the frontier continued, although in general at a lesser intensity than before the middle and later seventh century. By the early ninth century it was in many cases flourishing once again, both on the eastern borders and in the Balkans.

Long-distance trade eastwards was certainly affected by the Islamic conquests, as is shown by the expansion of the northern route to the east, either around the western coast of the Black Sea and thence across South

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[178] Theoph., 497 (Mango and Scott 1997, 681) and note; and see Ferluga 1988, 163f.; Ferluga 1993, 458–60; Oikonomidès 1988a, 29–31; and Philippou 1993. See also McCormick 2001, 604–6 and Litavrin 1995.

[179] Oikonomidès 1991a.

[180] See in particular Pitarakis 1998a; also Vryonis 1962, 14 (and in general on mining Edmondson 1989). For the relevant legislation and further discussion: Hendy 1985, 257–60. For the late ninth-century legislation governing precious metals: *Eparchikon Biblion*, §§2.4–2.6, 2.8. For the various local trade networks from the later eighth and ninth centuries, see Ferluga 1993, 455–7; and Dimitroukas 1997, 158–61.

[181] Even if the overall income from such sources was relatively small in relation to that derived from agriculture and the land: see Hendy 1985, 157–75, 598ff.

Russia and the Caspian route eastwards, or by sea from Constantinople to
Cherson or Trebizond (and possibly also Amastris and Sinope), and thence
onto the eastern route. The dramatic rise in political importance of the
Khazar khanate from the middle years of the seventh century, which thence-
forth dominated the western steppe until the mid-ninth century, at precisely
the point when the southerly routes through the caliphate once more began
to flourish, demonstrates the shift in emphasis.[182] At the same time, there
is some relatively solid evidence from written sources that the commercial
role of some of the major southern Black Sea ports – Trebizond, Amastris,
Heraklea, Sinope, in particular – was flourishing over the same period,
which would add some substance to the overall picture, and this is sup-
ported by the still very limited ceramic material from coastal sites like these
as well as from the evidence from nautical archaeology gleaned from the
location, date, and cargoes of a number of Black Sea shipwrecks.[183] The *Life*
of Theophanes the Confessor refers to a ship carrying some 53 passengers
and sailors passing through the Sea of Marmara which fell into difficulties
and was saved by the prayers of the Confessor.[184] The *Life* of George of
Amastris refers to merchants from Amastris who had been falsely accused
and imprisoned in Trebizond, in about the year 800, and we have already
referred to the evidence in a letter of Ignatios the Deacon to *naukleroi*
involved in transporting grain (although on behalf of the state). According
to the tradition preserved in the tenth-century *On Imperial Administra-
tion*, the commander of the expedition to build the fortress at Sarkel on
the Don, Petronas Kamateros, apparently found plenty of cargo vessels at
Cherson to help him in his enterprise; the archaeological material from
both Cherson and Bosporos/Kerch would suggest regular contacts between
core Byzantine lands and these areas.[185] Other tales of the period refer to
commercial and passenger voyages around the Black Sea, and archaeolog-
ical material demonstrates that contacts with eastern – Islamic – centres
of production continued between quite minor coastal sites in Asia Minor
and the Levant, even if the volume and frequency of such traffic cannot be

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[182] Dunlop 1954, esp. 224–39; see also Pigulevskaya 1969, 155ff.; Patlagean 1993.

[183] Very little archaeological evidence is available in this respect, although work at Amastris in
particular is beginning to provide a fuller picture here. See Crow and Hill 1995, esp. 258, on the
defences of the harbour facility. The written sources are mostly hagiographical: see the survey
in Abrahamse 1967, 277, 302–3, 304ff., 315ff. For the shipwreck evidence, although already in
need of updating, see Parker 1992, and the references to McCormick 2001, in n. 201 below.

[184] *Vita Theophanis* (*BHG* 1787z), §39 (25.6–15); (*BHG* 1791), 395.24–7.

[185] See Gavrituhin 2006; Aibabin 2006 for summaries of a range of material (ceramics and
metalwork in particular).

estimated.[186] An account in the later-seventh-century collection of miracles of St Artemios makes reference to a journey to Gaul involving profitable commercial enterprises (although the story itself probably relates to events of the period 630–60).[187] St Willibald, en route to the Holy Places in Palestine *c.* 723, travelled – apparently by regular merchant ships – from Naples and Reggio to Sicily, where he re-embarked from Syracuse for Monembasia, thence to Kos, Samos, and Ephesos. The ship or ships which brought the epidemic to Constantinople in 745/6 had come from Calabria and Sicily, apparently the same route as Willibald.

Both these accounts, which describe shipping moving from ports under Byzantine political authority, as does that in the collection of miracles of Saint Phantinos, which describes the voyage of Peter, the bishop of Tauriana in Calabria – again Byzantine territory – to Constantinople, probably in 775/6, re-inforce the conclusions derived already from the ceramic evidence: movement of shipping was in many respects determined by political boundaries.[188] Indeed, the routes from Constantinople, via certain Aegean islands, around the Peloponnese and across to either the eastern coast of Italy or around the heel and toe of Italy to Byzantine territory or on to Rome, appear to have been constantly in use, and there is little evidence that piracy or Islamic raiders seriously compromised communications.[189] And

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[186] *Vita Georgii Amastr.*, §27 (42–43); §29 (45); §30 (47; §34 (52). For Petronas at Cherson: *DAI*, §42. 32–5. See, for example, *Vita Nicetae patric.* (*BHG* 1342b), 30 (347), for a voyage from Constantinople to Cherson in the later 830s or afterwards. See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 222; *PmbZ*, no. 10635. For the *naukleroi* from Amastris, see above; and note also Mango 2002 (with Laiou and Morrisson 2007, 81f.) for circum-Black Sea commerce and fairs in the ninth century. Excavations at Classe and Ravenna show that oil was imported from Palestine still *c.* 700, as well as from the Aegean region and southern Italy: Cosentino 2005b, 428. For the ceramic material in general, see above.

[187] *Miracula Artemii*, §27 (the shipbuilder/carpenter who is rewarded with a profitable onward voyage to Gaul): McCormick 2001, 538, notes that this is the last such westerly voyage from Constantinople to the western Mediterranean he can find until more than half a century later. Another westward voyage is reported in the *Mir. Demetrii*, 6. 313ff. (239f.), although may be much earlier.

[188] See *Vita Willibaldi*, 93; Theoph., 422–3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 585); *Vita et miraculi Phantini senioris*, in *AS Jul.* V, 566C–D (*BHG* 1509); see Acconcia Longo 1995 for the text and further literature; Follieri 1969; and *PmbZ*, nos. 6048, 10337.

[189] Other examples of this route being followed in the early ninth century include (1) the voyage of Peter of Athos from Rome to Constantinople, for example (*Vita Petri Athonitae*, §3, 1–4 [23ff.] [*BHG* 1505]; see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 223–4); *PmbZ*, no. 10601; (2) the hiring of a small fleet of five ships to carry Jacob the Deacon and his brother, with other monks, from Constantinople to Rome (the fleet was broken up by a storm; Jacob was wrecked on the Libyan coast, from where he made his way to Sardinia); on his return by sea to Constantinople he hired another vessel to Ostia, but was this time driven off course to Palestine. He later hired a third ship, but was robbed by the captain and abandoned on Corsica: *Vita sancti monachi in Biturigibus*, 142–53 (text 143–53). The story

Byzantine merchants are found outside the empire on several occasions during the eighth century and later, in both East and West. The *Annales Bertiniani* report the activity of 'Greek' pirates who plundered Marseille in 848; the *Life* of Gregory Dekapolites refers to Slav pirates or robbers whom he met while travelling from Christoupolis (modern Kavalla) to Thessaloniki. There are other examples, but they are relatively few in number.[190] A document of 839 refers to a *nauclerus* at Gaeta (one of the ports mentioned in Willibald's itinerary and in Byzantine territory) called Leo, who witnessed a document for a colleague; while there exists a seal of a merchant, John, dateable in the early ninth century, probably a person of some local importance.[191]

Hagiographical and other documentary sources of the eighth, and especially of the ninth century contain many references to trade, sailors, and to different routes and voyages. A letter of pope Hadrian I to the Frankish king, for example, dated 776, refers to Greek slave-traders working along the 'Lombard coast' (the pope had them imprisoned and their ships burned).[192] The slave trade was itself, of course, a significant element in international and trans-regional commerce, especially during this period of demographic and political disruption, and it often continued across political barriers when other types of exchange were temporarily restricted. Slavery appears frequently as an element in contemporary or near-contemporary histories, hagiography, and other documents, and – while the emphasis in the West seems largely to have been from Europe to the markets of the Islamic world, especially north Africa – it was certainly a two-way trade in the eastern Mediterranean, with Byzantine armies seizing both Slav and other Balkan slaves on the one hand, as well as captured subjects of Muslim-controlled towns and territories in northern Syria on the other,

of the voyages, set in the first half of the ninth century, is certainly legendary, but again indicates the possibility for contemporaries in respect of travel by sea. Cf. *PmbZ*, no. 2622, with literature and further references. The discovery in excavations of this period from the lower town at Corinth of a late seventh-century and a late eighth-century coin from the mint in Sicily are suggestive also. See Avramea 1997, 72–81, for the coins and their broader context.

[190] *Annales Bertiniani*, 55.25; *V. Greg. Decapol.*, §21 (ed. Makris). For comment on Gregory's journey, see Kaplan 2000a, 95–6, with older literature. For a general survey with some useful material illustrating the continuity of merchant activity, even if with marked regional variations in time and space, see McCormick 2001, 587–91.

[191] See *PBE*, Ioannes 319; Zacos II, no. 926; and for Leo: Capasso, *Monumenta* I, 263–4 (= *Codex diplomaticus Cajetanus* I, no. V, 10); and see *PBE*, Leo 290. Another seal, dateable to the period ninth–eleventh centuries, is of little help in this context. See *PBE*, Stephanos 95.

[192] *MGH*, E III, 585.9–23 (*ep. Hadriani papae*). See JE 2426. For further evidence and other routes, see Laiou 2002b, 707ff.; McCormick 2001, 543f., 588f., 880, 915.

while subjects of the eastern Roman emperors fell into the hands of Muslim slavers through warfare, as well as through piracy and raiding or even trickery.[193]

Yet it remains difficult to know the extent to which one may generalise from the limited evidence: the Acts of the Council of 787 in Nicaea refer to a commercial voyage from Cyprus to the Syrian coast in *c.* 785, and the presence of the painted wares referred to above across the Aegean and Syrian/Palestinian coastal regions may suggest a more regular and frequent contact, regardless of the political and military situation.[194] The well-known story of the empress Theodora's ship, which sailed with goods for her own consumption from Syria to Constantinople before being seized by the emperor, whether true or not, nevertheless demonstrates that for a contemporary reader/listener such a voyage was entirely normal.[195] During the eighth century various luxury goods, such as spices, seem to have reached Constantinople by sea, regardless of the political-military situation.[196] By the middle of the ninth century, cross-border trade from North Syria and Mesopotamia into the Byzantine provinces and sometimes as far as Constantinople seems to be well-established, although it is impossible to say how early this evolved, or even whether it was never entirely interrupted, which seems to us very probable.[197] Voyages westward from both Constantinople and, for example, Corinth, are taken for granted in a number of texts. The numismatic evidence from a number of Greek sites – Athens, Thebes, and especially Corinth – shows a dramatic increase in the availability of bronze coinage in the reign of Theophilos, a trend that is maintained thereafter. Whether this is really to do with long-distance trade, as has been suggested, in turn resulting from a more secure imperial control over the Gulf of Corinth, or the presence of a substantial military garrison (or both), remains to be seen; it does at least demonstrate the general point that there was an increased demand for bronze coins in the area from this time. By the end of the eighth century, Venetian merchants were trading with Constantinople, Alexandria, the Black Sea, and the Levant, and it is *a priori* unlikely that Byzantine traders could not also be involved

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[193] Survey and statistical tables in McCormick 2001, esp. 244–53; and the discussions of slavery in the late Roman and Byzantine worlds in Browning 1958; Köpstein 1965; Köpstein 1966. McCormick 2001, 733–77, provides a valuable account of the European and Mediterranean slave trade, the sources of slaves and their destinations, and the economic impact of the commerce in slaves in the period from the seventh to the tenth centuries.

[194] See Mansi xiii, 77–80; and cf. *PBE*, Theodoros 77.

[195] Theoph. cont., 89.9f.   [196] Gibb 1958, 231.

[197] See Haldon and Kennedy 1980, 107 (with n. 107), 109; Patlagean 1993; Dimitroukas 1997, 152–3; and Trombley 2001a, 148–68.

in such links, even if the extent and volume of such traffic cannot be known.[198]

The evidence of coins found outside the empire, on the one hand, and of non-Byzantine coins within the empire's territories, on the other, adds somewhat to this picture. Byzantine gold coins outside the empire certainly suggest that long-distance trade continued, whatever the circumstances. The well-known finds from the bed of the Reno (N. Italy), discovered in association with the skeletal remains of what has been supposed to be the body of a trader, and including coins of Constantine V, Constantine VI and Eirene, Arichis I I of Benevento, and a number of dinars of the period *c.* 755–806, are illustrative.[199] The importance of Constantinople as a focus of exchange and of the production of coinage in Italy and the Adriatic is underlined from the later eighth century[200] by the increasing dominance of coins struck in Constantinople as opposed to those from the mint at Sicily, which had hitherto exercised a certain pre-eminence; and the distribution of Byzantine coins in general across Europe, especially along the major corridors of the Danube, the Rhine, and the Meuse, and the valleys giving access north and south across the Alps shows the nature and direction of long-distance trade at this time, in a range of commodities, including amber, which travelled from central and northern Europe south and east. Such routes illustrate at the same time shifting patterns of commerce in the West.

But the presence of both Byzantine and Islamic coins along such routes emphasises the international character of these connections. The evidence of shipwrecks, although often difficult to date precisely, supports this picture, at least in its most general terms. It shows that older routes were broken up, new networks and shipping lanes evolved reflecting changed circumstances, and that the volume of shipping markedly declined from the later seventh into the early ninth century, with the beginnings of a gradual upturn thereafter. It suggests that, in spite of political disruption and the threat from enemy raiders or piracy, many shipping routes in the east Mediterranean basin continued to be used throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, although with new emphases as new centres of commerce and finance began to evolve – the role of Venice and of the Adriatic as a zone of contact between the Byzantine and Islamic world and western Europe begins to become apparent from

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[198] See McCormick 2001, 531ff. and cf. *PmbZ*, no. 3846 (Konstantinos of Konstantia). Venice: Jacoby 2009, esp. 271–37.

[199] See Füeg 2007, 112, who notes, however, that most of the coins show no signs of circulation; Morrisson 2008, esp. 656–65.

[200] Füeg 2007, 105–15, presents a useful summary of hoards of Byzantine gold for the period from Anastasios II to John I Tzimiskes.

the later eighth century. Finally, as we have seen, the ceramic evidence supports this picture very clearly.[201]

Internal trade

Commerce between the regions and provinces of the empire is rather more difficult to gauge.[202] As we have seen, there is good reason to believe, on the basis of the ceramic as well as the documentary record that, in spite of the localisation of pottery production and the regionalisation of exchange patterns, trade or exchange within the empire continued to be carried on throughout the period from the later seventh century into the ninth century, although a trough in the later seventh to later eighth centuries seems to be indicated by the limited sources. The role of the imperial *kommerkiarioi* after the middle of the eighth century, as we will see in Chapter 10, was most probably related to the movements of goods and to external commerce. Leaving to one side their role as fiscal officials managing grain for Constantinople and supplies for the army (a role which they lost after the 730s), seals for such officials associated with ports along the Black Sea coast – Heraklea, Amastris, Ionopolis, Kerasous, Trebizond, Sinope, and others, with riverine emporia such as Charax on the Parthenius river, some 10 km south of Amastris – or with Abydos, Nikomedeia, and Thessaloniki – strongly suggest that trade in some goods at least was regulated and controlled, both between the ports in question and their hinterlands, and Constantinople as well as other regions.[203]

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[201] See in particular the convenient summaries of both the numismatic and the wreck evidence in McCormick 2001, 319–78, esp. 361–78; and 523–47 (on shipping routes); 592–604 (shipwreck evidence). We are not entirely persuaded that this evidence can be used to show the trends outlined by McCormick, however. There are a number of methodological problems in using negative evidence (apparent absence of wrecks): many wrecks which may be of the seventh–ninth centuries are undated; surveys have often passed over wrecks which may belong to this period because they are marginal to the survey aims or simply because they are 'not interesting': see Kingsley 2009. Even Parker's catalogue (Parker 1992) can be misused in this respect: since the date range for wrecks is often of up to 200 years or more, selecting the earlier date gives more early shipwrecks in that period, while the same material can be used to show almost the opposite result. And even if it is also the case that many more wrecks have since come to light, of which a number are also datable, these issues remain problematic.

[202] We have not dealt with the production of precious metal objects – gold – and silverware – other than coin, chiefly because this seems to have represented a tiny portion of the overall pattern of production and demand after the 630s, and even before this can be regarded as very specific and idiosyncratic. See in particular Feissel 1986.

[203] For Charax, see Mango 2002, 259–60, and *ZV*, I, no. 1559, a ninth-century seal of Nikephoros, *kommerkiarios* of Partheniou, presumably the area around the river and the commercial centre at Charax itself.

The fact that grain ships travelled from the southern Black Sea coast to Cherson in the middle years of the seventh century suggests a wider network, and certainly supports the other evidence for the probable movement of grain from the Paphlagonian coastal region to Constantinople after the loss of Egypt.[204] Throughout the eighth and well into the ninth century the evidence for Amastris as an important focus of Black Sea trade especially to Cherson is quite clear. Amphorae associated with Amastris, and found in quantities along the northern Pontic coast, provide good evidence for this, although the commodity they carried is not certain – oil from nuts, perhaps, which seems to have been a major product of the hinterland of Amastris – and the Rus' attack on that port, with its twin harbours and well-defended *kastron*, is suggestive of its importance as a relatively wealthy centre of commerce.[205] The evidence of a lead seal of an imperial *kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of 'Honorias, Paphlagonia and the Pontic coast' of the later seventh or early eighth century, but found in Sudak (Sougdaia), for example, illustrates the relationship, while Amastris had its own *apotheke* or state warehouse/granary.[206] Port-to-port trade on a small scale, and longer-distance commerce around the Black Sea and the Aegean islands and coastal zones, and to Constantinople from these regions, should probably be assumed to have continued with only minimal disruption, although the dominance of Constantinople as a gross importer should be borne in mind. The literary evidence suggests that coastal cities such as Attaleia, Smyrna, Ephesos, Amastris, and Trebizond continued to serve as local market centres and entrepôts for commerce, however much their physical shape was changed. The sigillographic evidence suggests likewise that towns or ports such as those listed above as well as Kerasous and

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[204] For grain ships delivering to Cherson, see *Vita S. Martini Papae*, 261. For a sample of the seals: *ZV*, I, nos. 180 (Paphlagonia and Ionopolis, a. 692/3); 164 (Lazica and Kerasous, a. 689/90); 178 (Lazica, Kerasous, Trebizond, a. 691/3); 179 (Lazica, Kerasous, Trebizond, a. 692/3); 250 (Kerasous, a. 735/6); 2765 (seal of the general *kommerkiarios* of the coast of Pontos, a. 727/8); 2894 (Sinope and the Pontos, a. 832/3 or 847/8); see also Lihachev 1924, 198f., no. 9 (Herakleia, a. 734/5); 199, no. 10, for Kerasous, a. 738/9; 165f., no. 3 (seal of the general *kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of Honorias, Paphlagonia, the coast of Pontos and Trebizond, a. 721/2[?]). The Cherson material is summarised briefly in Romančuk 2005, esp. 205–10 and 235ff. on the ceramic evidence.

[205] Crow and Hill 1995, 251, 261; TIB 9, 142. The date of the attack remains in dispute: see *TIB* 9, 78–9 (a. 941); Markopoulos 1979 (a. 860), with some authorities preferring the authorship of Ignatios the Deacon and thus a *terminus ante quem* of 843.

[206] For the seal: Šandrovskaya 1999, 46; see Brandes 2002, 565, and *TIB* 9, 162, and n. 28. For other seals of either *kommerkiarioi* of the *apothekai*, or the imperial *kommerkia*, of Paphlagonia and/or the Pontic coast, Lazica, Honorias, Kerasous, Sinope, and Trebizond, see the catalogue in Brandes 2004, 601, 603, 605–6, 608–10.

Sinope, for example, were the *foci* of local and longer-distance commercial activities of some sort. The ceramic and other archaeological evidence, where it is available, offers support for this picture.[207] And at Amastris, for example, as well as at Sinope and Ionopolis, substantial structures which have been identified with (commercial) warehouses, converted from original uses which remain unknown and dated, very approximately, to the middle Byzantine period – after the sixth century – may suggest the importance of both grain storage and other related exchange activities, whether state-sponsored or not.[208] Are these the *apothekai* of the sigillographic sources?

Apart from coastal cities possessing port facilities and markets, an important opportunity for trade was offered by the numerous yearly fairs, πανηγύρεις (*panegyreis*), held on particular saints' days in many towns. Trebizond, Ephesos, Sinope, Euchaita, Chonai, Myra, Thessaloniki, Nikomedeia, all held a yearly market and, since this is a tradition which goes well back into the late Roman period, it is highly likely that where conditions allowed they continued through the seventh, eighth, and into the ninth centuries, the more so since many continue to be celebrated today (or, in Turkey, until 1921). There are a number of literary references to such fairs, and to the fact that they took place once a year, suggestive of the limited nature of the commercial activity carried on outside anything other than highly localised trade. A particularly clear example comes from a ninth- or tenth-century hagiography, in which a peasant farmer in Paphlagonia travels to the yearly market of his district with his cart laden with products which he wishes to exchange, 'some by sale and some by barter', and a merchant who bought and sold using substantial amounts of gold coin is also mentioned.[209] The much-discussed example of the annual fair at Ephesos, at which a tax of 100 pounds of gold, representing 10 per cent of the total transactions, is reported by Theophanes to have been raised, at least suggests the local importance of such events, and the role of the government in extracting its share, even if the figure given in the text is suspicious. That the old city continued to function as an attraction for pilgrims and thus hosted some commercial activity is also suggested by the visits of westerners there during the eighth century, as well as by the presence of ships and merchants

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[207] See Brandes 1989, 124–31 ('Städte mit relativer Kontinuität'); and the catalogue of seals of *kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai*, and *basilika kommerkia* in Brandes 2004, A VII and X; the references in n. 182 above; and Shepard 2009, 424–7.

[208] See Crow and Hill 1995, 252; Bryer and Winfield 1985, 81–2; *TIB* 9, 220.

[209] For late Roman antecedents: Jones 1964, 855–6; Vryonis 1981; 1971, 39ff. For the peasant: *Synax. CP*, 721.24–5 ('De Metrio agricola . . . '); and Laiou 1990, 68–70.

in the early 830s.[210] Just as important is the fact that the distribution of military pay may have been co-ordinated with such events, both in order to permit the easier purchase by soldiers of their requirements as well as to allow the coin in which their salaries were issued to percolate into a wider network of exchange relationships. To what extent fairs at towns where soldiers were based were predicated on this event and to what extent the issue of annual pay to the troops followed the calendar of saints' *panegyreis* remains unclear, assuming the relationship can be generalised from the case of Euchaita, where in the year 811 the annual pay of the troops coincided with the festival of St Theodore Tiro in February.[211]

Merchants and traders thus appear fairly consistently in literary sources from the later seventh and on through the eighth century. The collection of miracles of St Artemios, compiled certainly by the end of the seventh century, includes several references to sailors who have travelled to Constantinople – from Rhodes, for example, or from Chios. While most of these should be dated to the reigns of Herakleios or his immediate successors, they nevertheless demonstrate the continuity of both medium- and short-distance exchange activities, even if they do not help to quantify the activities in question.[212] In 715, for example, a mutinous army on the north-western coast of Asia Minor attempted to use merchant vessels to transport itself to Constantinople, but was unable to seize enough for the whole force (probably a few thousand at the most).[213] Most merchants will have operated along the coastal routes and by sea, as we have now seen. Even before the disruption of the seventh century, inland commerce was restricted either to luxury goods (moving by caravan over vast distances) or to the very highly localised exchange of agrarian produce (see below), or goods which could be carried on the back of the imperial *annona*. Only the state could afford anything else.

There were clearly important regional variations: the numismatic, ceramic, and textual evidence for Sicily, for example, shows that the island did not suffer to the same extent as the Balkans and Asia Minor from a dearth of coinage in the later seventh and eighth centuries, that commerce seems to have been fairly flourishing, and that it continued to serve as an important

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[210] See Theoph., 469–70 (Mango and Scott 1997, 645); and discussion in Gerolymatou 2001, 361–2, with previous literature; for westerners: McCormick 2001, 171f.; and for Ephesos in the 830s, see *V. Greg. Decapol.*, 9, 53.10ff.

[211] See Theoph., 489 (Mango and Scott 1997, 672); Vryonis 1981; Trombley 1985b, 72, 85 and n. 51. For the date of the *Miracula*, see Artun 2008.

[212] *Miracula Artemii*, §5 (the Chian merchant); §9 (the Rhodian).

[213] Theoph., 385–6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 536).

stepping-off point for travellers eastwards throughout this period.[214] Although of course from the preceding period, the *Life* of Theodore of Sykeon, whose mother ran an inn on a major east-west thoroughfare in the region of Ankyra in the 580s and after, may offer some indication of inland conditions in general in Asia Minor, for here merchants occur hardly at all – the customers of the inn and others who passed through the village were chiefly imperial officials and soldiers.[215] But that traders did operate inland is evident from occasional references in texts: for example, in 716 the general Leo (shortly to become the emperor Leo III) seems to have had no difficulty in organising a travelling market from the regions around Amorion, through which the Arab armies encamped at that fortress could be supplied under truce.[216] In 782 an Arab raiding force was bottled up by Byzantine troops in Bithynia, but was able to negotiate itself out of difficulties (by the seizure of the two Byzantine emissaries sent by the empress Eirene) – interestingly, the deal included access to markets where the Arab soldiers could buy provisions.[217] But the general situation is probably reflected in the fact that Byzantine troops mustered for the yearly campaigning season in Anatolia had to bring several days' provisions with them, and were thereafter supplied by the provincial authorities through compulsory purchase and extraordinary levies. Provisions were deposited at key locations, in granaries or storehouses according to a ninth-century Arabic report, from which they were collected by the army and loaded onto pack-animals, carts, and the soldiers themselves as they passed through. The same Arab source notes (and in marked contrast to the situation in the Islamic world): 'there is no market in the Roman camp. Each soldier is obliged to bring from his own resources the biscuit, oil, wine and cheese that he will need', a point confirmed by numerous references in Byzantine sources.[218]

A final category of evidence may point to other types of movement across and within imperial territory. The finds of Byzantine belt-buckles, specifically those of the so-called 'Corinth type' and its variants, may well indicate the movement of imperial officials and more particularly soldiers or military officers. Soldiers and those associated with them served both

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[214] The evidence is collected and discussed in Morrisson 1998. See also Morrisson 2001 and Kislinger 1995b with further literature, and the discussion above.

[215] For the expense and problems of land-transport, see Jones 1964, 841–4; Haldon and Kennedy 1980, 87–8; Harris 1993, 27–8. See also *V. Theod. Syk.*, §6, for Theodore's mother's inn on the main route through the village.

[216] Lightfoot 1998b; Brooks 1900, 738.

[217] For the Arab expedition of 782, see Brooks 1900/1, 737–9.

[218] See *Ibn Khurradadhbi*, 83, 85; and for supplying armies in general, Haldon 1999a, 143–76, where sources and further literature are given.

as a conduit for the movement of goods as well as a focus of exchange activity with local populations, and concentrations of such belt-buckles in different locations – Istria, Sardinia, the Peloponnese, Epiros, the Crimea, and of other types in Bithynia and parts of Anatolia – are suggestive of the nature of some of these movements, whether of the soldiers themselves, or of the accoutrements they wore. Some of this material appears to be of Byzantine manufacture, some produced outside the empire's boundaries. But it also shows that the empire continued to attract, settle, and employ as soldiers people from outside the empire, as might possibly be seen in the evidence from the so-called Komani-Kruja culture (see above) in parts of the western Balkans and Macedonia. We should not forget the considerable demands the empire's military personnel made on both local crafts and skills, whether potters, leather-workers, smiths, and so forth, as well as on producers of fabrics, armour, and related items, including belts and belt-buckles. A belt-buckle tongue of so-called 'Avar' type, datable to the eighth century, has been found in one part of the Byzantine settlement at Boğazköy, for example, and while an isolated find, nevertheless points to the possibility of both personal goods moving around the empire, as well as the presence of imperial soldiers at the site.[219]

Commerce, the state, and the economy

In respect of fiscal demands we have already seen the dominant character of the state's intervention. But we should also emphasise that the ways in which fiscal resources were assessed, collected, and distributed generated a particular set of administrative-bureaucratic procedures, so that a whole institutional-managerial apparatus evolved, socially and ideologically legitimated and realised in the imperial system of precedence. The close relationship between fiscal apparatus and military organisation, especially in respect of the fiscal mechanisms through which troops and state officials in general could be supported, is the dominant feature.[220] And although it left little room at the level of production and distribution of wealth for outwardly directed commercial activity or enterprise, there appears to have been room enough within the interstices of these arrangements for a good deal of entirely independent private commercial activity. Even so, the effects on the

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[219] In general see the survey in Schulze-Dörrlamm 2002; and in particular, Nallbani 2005. For the Boğazköy belt-buckle, see Schachner 2008, 131 w. fig. 24 and literature; and for the considerable number of belt-buckles from the Amorion excavations, see Lightfoot 2003b.

[220] See Haldon 1993a, 11ff.

formal public life of the Byzantine state of private entrepreneurial activity were limited, not just by state intervention, but by social convention: what one did with newly acquired wealth was not invest in independent commercial enterprise, or even in land, but rather in the state apparatus.[221] Titles, imperial sinecures or actual offices, and court positions were first on the list of priorities. And although land and the rent accruing from landed property (in addition to the ideologically positive realisation of self-sufficiency, *autarkeia*) were important considerations, it is clear that imperial titles and pensions were just as fundamental to the economic position of the power elite. Until the eleventh century, the effects of investment in commerce, however much there may have been, were entirely marginalised.[222] As we have now seen from all the evidence discussed above, there is good reason to think that there existed a flourishing and successful merchant element in Byzantine society during much of this period, and certainly later, but little is known about them until the later eleventh and twelfth centuries.[223]

Wealth was extracted predominantly from agricultural production, appropriated as rent paid in a variety of forms to private landlords (including the state, the church, and monasteries), and as tax by the state. It was redistributed both through local market exchange and through the disbursements of the central government to the army, bureaucracy, and holders of state titles and pensions, the state elite. While the social elite, both great magnates and smaller-scale landlords or local gentry, derived status both from positions and titles in the imperial system as well as from the possession of land, we should underline the fact that landed wealth alone was not enough, and large amounts of cash were transmitted through membership of the imperial system. And membership of the imperial system was indispensable, both for social status and self-esteem.[224] The wealth which the members of this elite could expect to derive from trade and commerce,

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[221] Oikonomidès argued, for example, that the *kommerkiarioi* farmed out the contracts to supply goods or raise resources, but as we will see in Chapter 10, there is little in favour of this hypothesis. It is, however, clear from their titulature and *curricula vitae*, as far as they can be reconstructed from the sigillographic record, that advancement within the imperial service must have been absolutely crucial to their status and social position. See Winkelmann 1985, 135–7; and Haldon 1997a, 233ff. with references.

[222] The strength of the notion of self-sufficiency, the history of which goes back to the ancient world, is evident in the attitudes of the dominant elite: see Hendy 1985, 567–9; and the discussion in Magdalino 1989.

[223] See Harvey 1989, 235–6, on fairs and markets; also Laiou 1990; Hendy 1989c, 22–3; for the Balkans, see esp. the important surveys of Ferluga 1988; 1987.

[224] On the rise of the local 'gentry' and their relationship to the expanding urban and rural economy in the eleventh century and after, see esp. Angold 1984b, but more generally also Neville 2004.

both during the earlier period of its evolution and at least into the second and third decades of the eleventh century, appears to have been relatively limited in comparison with that derived from rents and state positions.[225] The result was that, while merchants were an active and important element in urban economies by the eleventh century, playing an important role in the distribution of locally produced commodities, they appear still to have occupied a relatively subordinate position in the process of wealth redistribution as a whole. Particularly important is the fact that they are accorded no role *in ideological terms* in the maintenance of the empire and in the social order as it was understood. However important commerce and production may in fact have been, they were effectively ignored as elements in social identity and status acquisition.[226] The social and political elite thus had only a limited interest in identifying with commerce, even where it may have contributed substantially to their incomes or their lifestyle – through the sale of the surpluses from their own estates in local towns or regular fairs, or the capital, or through supplying luxury and high-status items. And even where their estates were involved in large-scale market exchange, the evidence makes it clear that it was more often than not the landlords' own agents who did the selling and buying, rather than independent middlemen.[227] In other words, it was the structure of the state and its functional requirements, in conjunction with the relationship between the state centre and the dominant social-economic elite, which rendered commerce marginal, certainly in ideological terms, but to a degree also in practical economic terms. The degree to which these points apply specifically to the situation between the middle of the seventh and the middle of the ninth century is, of course, open to debate. But given the particularly prominent position of the imperial government in the economy and society of the empire at this time, and therefore on the horizon of elite aspirations, it seems unlikely to have been very different.

This aspect of Byzantine social values should not be seen as monolithic. On the contrary, the very existence of merchants and the willingness of

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[225] See the remarks of Harvey 1989, 226ff.

[226] In the tenth century, for example, descriptions of the political economy of the empire entirely ignored the role of trade: see, for example, the *Taktika* of the emperor Leo VI, xi, 11. In the ninth century commerce was ranked sixth in importance, before wholesalers, and after the priesthood, the law, councils, the state fiscal system, and technicians, according to the opening chapters of a treatise on strategy: *Strategy*, § 2 (12). For later Roman attitudes to commerce and banking, see Hendy 1985, 242ff.; and the general survey in Giardina 1993.

[227] See Svoronos 1976, 65ff. Harvey 1989, 238–41, and Hendy 1985, 567, discuss the direct disposal by major producers of agricultural surpluses of their produce, and the exclusion of middlemen. See also the discussion of Angold 1984b, 240.

local elites during the eleventh century and after to engage very actively in, for example, the production and marketing of silk, shows that there existed levels and nuances within society as a whole, and that these nuances can probably be related to the social geography of the empire as much as to the structuring of social-economic identities. It also suggests that the evolution of such views over several centuries, reflecting the growth of new social-economic relations, was more complex than is usually assumed.[228]

It is very difficult, in dealing with the period from the seventh to the ninth century, to escape the conclusion that, while the role of the state was pre-eminent in certain crucial areas of the economy, not only in respect of the extraction, movement, and distribution of wealth, but also in terms of shaping demand, there were substantial areas in which private commerce and individual market-led production and consumption were the norm. State influence applied at three different levels: institutionally, through the ways in which the fiscal system was structured; geographically, through the ways in which the habitat and social values of the social elite were structured; and ideologically, through the ways in which the very existence of the east Roman imperial system determined attitudes to exchange and production. But to demonstrate the real relationship between the state sphere of activity and influence, and that of the economic activity of society as a whole in all its regional and sectoral variety, we need much more data. Indeed, the sort of evidence required to modify or challenge this model is only very gradually becoming available: detailed ceramic profiles of major inhabited sites, especially of inland sites, and careful analyses of the connections, as reflected in the archaeological and especially the ceramic record, between population centres. Neither is yet available, except on a very small basis for very limited areas of the southern Balkans, Greece, and the Aegean; and even here, the picture is still extremely indistinct.

Yet while it is probable that the results of future research, and especially evidence which can inform us about patterns of consumption of local elites in the provinces, will substantially modify the image of an all-powerful state and its apparatuses, it is also clear that it was only in the middle of the ninth century and afterwards that urban life and a fully monetised social economy began to recover, so that a focus on the state in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries is probably not entirely wrong. Warfare and economic disruption, demographic decline and movement must all have impacted

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[228] See in particular Jacoby 1991/2, who adduces good evidence from the tenth century and after that the presumed anti-commercialism of the social elite did not hinder investment absolutely, and that it has been substantially exaggerated by too uncritical a reliance on the literary sources, especially letters which, in their nature, are highly ideological.

on markets and exchange, because they will undoubtedly have affected levels of production and demand in both agriculture and urban and rural manufactures. That the lack of archaeologically attested bronze coin from the 670s into the early decades of the ninth century in Anatolia reflects an absence of exchange activities remains inherently unlikely, however, even if it indicates a real downturn in production and demand and perhaps also a demographic collapse. But systems of intra-community reciprocity (barter and exchange), and local as well as longer-term credit arrangements between commercial partners or between landlords and tenants, may account for a good deal of hitherto 'invisible' economic activity, while the use of gold at higher levels of transaction and the bulk purchase of goods – which must account for a substantial amount of exchange activity in many contexts – is almost equally as difficult to identify.

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The evidence from the wide range of sources at our disposal shows a marked decline in supra-regional trade and exchange from the middle of the seventh century, with a nadir in the first quarter of the eighth century and a plateau thereafter, until a slow recovery – heavily regionally accented and with a number of false starts – sets in from the 750s and 760s. This was not merely a Byzantine phenomenon: it fits into a broader pattern of revival of commerce and exchange over medium and longer distances, as well as the growth of new routes and networks, across the former Roman world and its peripheries, both in the western Mediterranean and in northern Europe.[229] The expansion of imperial coin production in the 820s and after reflects internal as much as external demands, however, in the context of changes in imperial administration and increased military activity in the regions where the coins were found, as the even slower recovery of urban centres and town-based exchange and production seems in part to suggest. The last years of our period – the 840s and 850s – see the beginnings of a real and permanent recovery, however, but with new networks and routes dominating the pattern of regional as well as international exchange, reflecting very different economic and political circumstances in the West and East from those of the late Roman centuries. The centrality of Constantinople continues to influence the Byzantine regional economies, but the interface between the government's coin, with its strongly fiscal emphasis and function, and non-state enterprise and exchange, into which the state coinage was inevitably drawn, becomes increasingly complex, so that government minting policy had necessarily to take into account market demands and

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[229] See, for example, discussion in McCormick 2001, 580–612; Wickham 2005, 794–824.

commercial use although in ways which we cannot yet fully perceive. And these shifts reflected the fact that, in the course of the seventh to the early ninth century, there had taken place a transformation of the patterns of settlement across the provinces of the empire (see Chapter 7), reflecting the changed roles of different types of site – from the larger late Roman 'cities' through medium-sized administrative centres with a rural but also military function, to fortified and unfortified villages with different roles to play in their own highly localised set of provincial economic relationships.

It seems that it is from the middle and later eighth century, very approximately, that we should date a general improvement in the economic situation of the empire, measured in respect of state revenues, private commerce, and agricultural production. The real winners in this initial stage of greater stability were the state, on the one hand, and private or institutional landowners, such as the church and some monasteries, on the other. But peasant communities may also have prospered as shifting emphases of state activity and demand for logistical support for the army opened up new markets and new opportunities. From the ninth century, and as the 'new' state elite begins to expand its own economic resource base, this begins to change once more; while only in the middle and later eleventh century do commercial and external pressures, and perhaps a real increase in the degree of monetisation of all exchange activities, exert sufficient influence to destabilise the imperial monetary system.

In concluding this chapter, we would highlight certain key features that reflect the general pattern of social and economic as well as political developments. While there are notable exceptions, particularly where ports are concerned, it is significant, first, that the greater degree of localisation of ceramic production, together with the evidence – as far as it can take us in the current state of our knowledge – for relatively limited and low-volume long-distance commerce in either foodstuffs or luxury goods from the later seventh century on offer clear parallels to the localisation or regionalisation of monetary exchange. Second, we would argue that this is, to a considerable degree at least, a clear reflection of the relative weakness of provincial elite society, its levels of consumption, and its demand for luxury goods, as well as of the weakness of its inter-provincial connections,[230] since the many fragmented elements of which it was composed had their focus throughout this period fixed firmly on the capital, on the court, and on their position in the imperial hierarchy of office and rank, a point to which we will come in the following chapters. Yet regional and local exchange

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[230] See Wickham 2000, 372.

was always continuous, even if at very different levels of intensity according to fluctuations in local conditions, and especially where major military, administrative, and/or ecclesiastical centres were located, whether inland or not. Indeed, areas quite close to one another display marked differences in the degree of continuity they supported. By the same token, and on the basis of the somewhat fragile archaeological data reviewed above, we would suggest that Asia Minor can be divided into at least two zones in respect of exchange activity: the first including the coastal plains and the river valleys which penetrated into the higher ground inland, where seaborne trade and contacts with neighbouring and more distant regions could be maintained; and the central plateau and eastern highlands, characterised by a greater degree of localisation and possibly – in terms of general wealth – a relatively poorer economy, but nevertheless with pockets, sometimes substantial pockets, of agrarian and urban wealth. It is perhaps not surprising, but it is certainly very significant, that this also reflects, albeit crudely and imperfectly, the division between the major factions within the social elite after the ninth century.[231] One contributory element in the origins of the middle Byzantine elite and of the middle Byzantine political conflicts that become apparent in the course of the tenth century can thus also be traced back to the transformation in the conditions of existence of the late Roman commercial and exchange network.

[231] A picture which has been proposed also for early medieval Italy, setting the coastal regions and river basins against the inland and upland districts: see Zanini 1998, 320ff. For the division within the social elite as a reflection of its political and economic geography, see esp. Hendy 1985.

7 | Patterns of settlement: urban and rural life

Towns, villages, and fortresses: context

The history of Byzantine settlement patterns in the period from the seventh to eleventh centuries still remains sketchy in the extreme. The lack of extensive surveys of both urban and rural sites in Asia Minor in particular, and the lack of ceramic data, to which we have already alluded, makes it difficult to produce more than generalisations, which must necessarily ignore or conceal the wide range of functional differences between the different types of settlement across the very different regions of the empire, as well as the undoubted regional variations in urban-rural relations. This is especially the case since across the Roman world there appears to be a series of radical breaks with an established pattern of stability or even growth in rural population and/or settlement patterns some time between the sixth and eighth centuries – the exact point is rarely datable. The archaeological and documentary evidence from both Italy and the southern Balkan region provides useful comparative material against which that from Anatolia may be set, and should remind us that the history of urban development and settlement types in the Byzantine world is neither linear nor continuous across the whole empire. Indeed, recent work has emphasised the very great regional variations across the eastern provinces, noting in particular the signs already well before the seventh century of a somewhat different overall trajectory of urban development in Asia Minor, for example, as compared with southern Syria and Palestine, or Egypt, or the central Balkans. At the same time, the rural hinterlands of urban and semi-urban settlement must be kept in mind, again with very different developmental trajectories according to region. While the archaeological evidence from across the Balkans shows a clear collapse of the traditional village settlement pattern, the still limited results of extensive surveys from Asia Minor show significant variations, with evidence for population and settlement expansion in some areas, and the bringing into use of hitherto marginal lands, until some point in the seventh century, when a drastic reduction and curtailment seems to have occurred. Such work has also stressed the long-term processes of change and transformation which directly or indirectly impacted on the nature,

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vitality, and appearance of towns.[1] In addition, the social and economic function of towns and fortresses varied greatly according to the regional conditions, and as these were themselves subject to change over time, so was the role played by towns and other centres of population. Equally, there was a more complex settlement hierarchy than has generally been appreciated, but a hierarchy that was itself subject to constant change. Although we will not pursue the issue here, it is important to bear in mind that the space within which human populations construct their habitations is itself in many respects also a social construct, and that perceptions of space, distance, and time as features which determine how people perceive their landscape and situate their settlements change according to other shifts in perception and beliefs about the world, as well as according to direct economic or political/ideological stimuli. Shifts in the hierarchy of settlement and in the relationships between settlements in the world of seventh- to ninth-century Byzantium thus also reflect broader perceptual changes, and this is an aspect that perhaps deserves greater attention from historians and archaeologists. The traditional dichotomy between urban and rural, for example, is one area where a re-assessment of both the function of settlement centres as well as contemporary attitudes towards them (where the sources permit such discussion) may prove helpful, especially in the context of the changes that took place across the late Roman world from the fifth century onwards.[2] A structured framework has been proposed for the provinces of late Roman Macedonia, for example, which identifies four types of settlement, defined by function and status, and found in various combinations, that can be differentiated from simple undefended rural sites: civic, non-civic, urban, and non-urban (where 'civic' implies the legal status of a *civitas* or *polis*). Such a hierarchy immediately problematises the position of the traditional *polis* – the civic, urban variant – and places it in a more complex and dynamic context, underlining what has been termed the disaggregation of functions associated with civic institutions and life. And as a result of this process it emphasises the fact that upland settlements were far more significant in both patterns of production as well as in administrative and military terms than has generally been appreciated. In particular, the discussion in this

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[1] Niewöhner 2007. See also Chavaria and Lewit 2004 for a summary with extensive literature; and see Baird 2004, for example, for the Konya plain; Trombley 2004 for Syria, Phoenice Libanensis, and Arabia; and Liebeschuetz 2001c, for a regional analysis of urbanism more generally. For villages, see the essays in Lefort 2005.

[2] For the Byzantine world, see the important discussion in Veikou (forthcoming: we are grateful to the author for access to this article prior to publication); and for broader discussion, Leontidou 1993, 1996; Massey 2005.

chapter should also be read in the context of the changes in social structure outlined in Chapter 8, and especially with the role of the middling and elite elements of provincial society in mind and the social relations which they came to represent.[3]

As far as Asia Minor has been concerned, the discussion around 'the city' has been almost exclusively concerned with two categories of settlement only, however – civic-urban and non-civic urban, in Dunn's typology – effectively those identifiable as traditional urban centres in literary as well as archaeological sources. As many studies have now shown, there had been a slow process of transformation in the pattern of late Roman urban society over the centuries preceding both the Persian wars and the Arab conquests, entailing a number of changes in both physical appearance and extent of such towns over the period in question.[4] The longer-term processes set in train during the fourth and fifth centuries were further extended and developed as a direct consequence of these events, especially those associated with the years of endemic warfare in southern and central Asia Minor, the Aegean region, and the Balkans. State involvement in both the financing and design of defensive structures as well as in the scale and function of different types of fortified centres seems clear in many cases, suggestive of a much more carefully considered strategic response on the part of the imperial government to the changing situation than has often been assumed.[5] In this respect, there is a real difference in the trajectories of development of formerly Roman towns and cities in the lands conquered by Islam, and those which were subject to the very different social and political conditions of the Byzantine and medieval western worlds.[6]

Throughout the lands of the late Roman world, the great majority of such 'cities', with a few partial exceptions such as Rome and Constantinople or those especially favoured by geographical location – on the coast, with good harbours and able to function as key centres of exchange – remained, as

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[3] For a useful discussion of definitions: Dagron 2002, esp. 393–6. For the hierarchy of settlement, see in particular Dunn 1994; 1997; and 2005.

[4] Koder 1986; Brandes 1989, 44–131; MacAdam 1994; Tsafrir and Foerster 1994; for its implications for the state and social relations in general, Haldon 1997a; Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 172–5, 184–93, underlining the regional variations and differential rates of change and transformation between, for example, Asia Minor and the Aegean islands. For summaries of the developments of the sixth to the ninth centuries, see Dagron 2002, 397–401; Kirilov 2007; and for a discussion of the whole issue of 'decline' of ancient urbanism and related social structures, see Liebeschuetz 2001c and Ward-Perkins 2005.

[5] See Dunn 1994, 1997, and esp. 1998; Christie 2001; Crow 2001 and esp. Zanini 2003.

[6] See Carver 1996; Walmsley 1996 and 2000 for the development of towns and markets in the early Islamic world; with Ward-Perkins 1996; Halsall 1996 and the contributions in Christie and Loseby 1996; Brogiolo *et al.* 2000 for the West.

before, dependent on their immediate hinterlands for their (usually highly localised) market and industrial functions, as well as for the food from which their populations lived. But they were at once both consumers of local agrarian output as well producers, both of food and related products – since an often substantial element of the populations of a great many provincial urban centres were also landlords or peasant farmers – or of metalwork, pottery, cloth and clothing, leatherwork, and other utilitarian goods, varying by region, locality, and climate. It is unfortunate that for the period from the sixth century on and for much of the eastern Roman world very little archaeology for either rural, village-based or for urban production in this period exists, so that our understanding of this central aspect of town and village life is particularly limited.[7]

The archaeological evidence also suggests a shrinkage, across the empire, of the occupied area of many such urban settlements during the sixth century, a process which speeded up very considerably in the conditions of the later seventh century.[8] The ceramic evidence, as we have seen, shows a marked localisation of exchange activity and, although we should be careful not to assume a change in the role of towns, of whatever size, as local centres of such exchange, there did take place an important shift in the modes of urban living and in the ways in which those with disposable resources invested their wealth.[9] As we shall also see, relationships between urban centres and their rural hinterlands also changed, again with regional variety and differentiation as a key element to be borne in mind. From before the middle of the seventh well into the ninth century in the Balkans and Asia Minor, the only evidence for substantial building activity associated with such provincial urban contexts – as far as the archaeological record in its current state can tell us – concerns fortification work, on the one hand, and on the other the construction or repair of churches or buildings associated with monastic centres; although it is clear that other structures, such as the baths at Amorion, for example, could also be maintained or repaired, serving as a warning against over-hasty assumptions about urban infrastructure.[10] A good deal of the disposable income of the wealthy appears thus to have gone into religious buildings or related objects, and it is important that we

[7] For an example of what might be achieved with the appropriate evidence, see Leone 2003. A few key sites, such as Amorion, are beginning to show results in this respect.

[8] Results of site surveys up to *c.* 1988 in Brandes 1989. For more recent material, see below; Liebeschuetz 2001c; and the brief summary with literature in Dagron 2002. Note also Kislinger 2004, 114–17; Kirilov 2007.

[9] See the account, with literature, in Russell 1986.

[10] Summarised in Brandes 1989, 81–120, 124–31; Amorion: Lightfoot 1998a; Ivison 2008.

bear in mind the fact that this was as much a new and evolving pattern of investment, as it was a 'decline', reflected also in the changing use of public and private space and the disposition of buildings within towns which accompanied the gradual Christianisation of late antique urban topography.[11]

The survival of such civic and non-civic urban settlements during and after the Arab invasions – from the 640s until the 750s – owed much to the fact that they might occupy defensible sites, as well as be centres of military or ecclesiastical administration. Continuous, but seasonally determined warfare and insecurity, economic dislocation, and social change meant that the great majority of urban centres now played a role which might be seen as peripheral to, and derived from, the economic and social life of the countryside, and reflected if anything the needs of state and church.[12] Yet the picture is certainly more complicated than this, partly because the effects of warfare and economic dislocation varied by zone. Three broad zones have been proposed for Asia Minor, for example (see below), which reflect the differential effects of hostile activity in the regions in question. The nature of towns and their relationship to the surrounding rural communities will have varied in each case. In addition, the effects of warfare changed over the period in question as the empire was able to establish a more effective resistance, thus relieving the pressure on many areas, and as the broader economic environment across the eastern Mediterranean basin evolved – the role of the cities and emporia of the nearer Islamic lands is important in this respect.[13]

During the period from the third to the sixth century the Roman world saw a generalised tendency to provide settlements of all sizes with walls and some form of defensive perimeter, where there had hitherto been no such defences, a reflection both of a real threat in those areas most affected by external attack, and a changing set of assumptions about what a 'city' should look like – walls were also monumental architecture and testified to the wealth and prestige of the city and its elite. Indeed, during the following centuries walls became a sign of urbanism, a symbol of both defence and the boundary between two different worlds.[14] As we have already noted, much of this activity was supported by the government, as both the epigraphic and the architectural evidence would seem to suggest, and testifies to the continued significance but changing functions of such sites. In particular

[11]   See especially Spieser 1989, 103f.; Cantino Wataghin 2003; Lavan 2003; Orselli 1999; Gauthier 1999.
[12]   See in general Brandes 1989 and 1999.   [13]   See Lilie 1976, 345–50.
[14]   La Rocca 1994; Saradi-Mendelovici 1988; Christie 2001.

it points to their function in a revised administrative structure that gave them military and administrative significance.[15] In many exposed areas a move from a lowland site to a more defensible situation nearby, or the re-use of older pre-Roman hilltop fortified sites takes place, and although there are a number of reasons for this gradual process in the late Roman period, it increases very dramatically from the later fourth into the later sixth century in the Balkans as a result of the high levels of insecurity, and again during the seventh century in Anatolia in response to the effects of the Persian and then particularly the Arab invasions and raids. That the 'Balkan model', which also entailed the selective fortification of certain settlements in key locations (and not necessarily settlements of the urban type) as *kastra* or (in Prokopios' terms, with regard to his discussion of the programme of extensive provincial fortification undertaken by Justinian in the Balkans and Italy) *phrouria*, was quite consciously promoted by the imperial government, probably through the medium of the regional armies, in the course of the seventh century, is a proposal which makes sense but which requires further investigation.[16]

For the 'city' of the traditional Greco-Roman civic-urban category, archaeologists and historians have proposed several basic types or models of urban transformation which affected the late Roman world: 'ruralised' cities, with substantial areas within the walls devoted to pasture or arable; the 'city in islands', with inhabited quarters separated by abandoned or ruralised areas; the 'transferred' or 'shifted' city, where the population has moved to a different but nearby location; and a variant on this, the 'fortress' city, where the population moves to a fortified site. In addition, there might also be 'continuous' cities, with a very considerable degree of continuity in infrastructure, use of space and so forth; while there is also substantial evidence of large and densely populated rural settlements of a largely non-urban character but with populations often greater than those of nearby 'true' urban centres.[17] Major cities such as Constantinople and Thessaloniki in the eastern empire, or Rome, Pavia, and similar sites in Italy, belong to the former group, although it should be added that in the first case in particular there is substantial evidence that, as the population declined from the later sixth century, considerable areas were depopulated and turned over to agricultural or pastoral use in the eighth to tenth centuries.[18]

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[15] Zanini 2003; Dunn 2004.   [16] Dunn 1994 and 1998.

[17] See Brandes 1989, 82–131, for a town-by-town survey along these lines; Brogiolo 2000, 312ff.; and Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 179–81.

[18] See Mango 1985c; Mango 1986b.

Yet the contrast between the late ancient *polis* and its medieval successors should not be exaggerated: of the large number of settled 'urban' sites in Asia Minor occupied in the period up to the sixth century (that is, sites which can clearly be differentiated from undefended rural settlements), only a small proportion bore the official or unofficial characteristics of a *polis* in the classical sense.[19] A far larger number were marked already in the fourth and fifth centuries, and especially in the sixth century, by features which, from an archaeological and topographical perspective, seem quite familiar from the later early medieval world – exactly the same, in fact, as the later Byzantine *kastron*. We will discuss what this ought to mean below.[20]

In the Balkans, the strategic geography of the region determined the fate of the provincial settlement patterns. Partly as a direct result of government military requirements and the Justinianic defensive building programme of the middle of the sixth century, partly as the result of more gradual and longer-term responses to raiding from beyond the Danube, and partly as a consequence of the constant and intrusive presence and demands of imperial soldiers, the settlement pattern and in particular the nature of urbanism had already been radically altered in the years from the later fourth to the later sixth century.[21] Coastal sites remained prosperous, or relatively so, in comparison with inland sites, as did some of the southern Thracian cities, closer to Constantinople and its market, and a relatively well-protected road network. But away from this region, the nature of inland urbanism and the pattern of rural settlement were transformed, with a dramatic increase in the number of small rural fortified centres and a corresponding decline in open agrarian communities or substantial urban centres. By the middle and later sixth century population decline – and the concomitant reduction in levels of production of all agrarian produce – had become a serious threat to imperial fiscal revenues and to the ability of the army to draw supplies from the hinterland, as the establishment of the *quaestura exercitus* as well as other legislation of both Justinian and Justin II suggest. That the rural population had largely disappeared by the later sixth century is, of course, unlikely. Although the archaeological evidence for peasant settlements centred on forts or 'refuges' is limited, a withdrawal from exposed to

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[19] For definitions, characteristics, and the late ancient concept of the 'city', see the essays in Brogiolo and Ward-Perkins 1999, and the detailed discussion in Liebeschuetz 2001c, esp. chaps. 2–5.

[20] See the discussion in Dunn 1994, critical also of the otherwise useful survey of Müller-Wiener 1986.

[21] For surveys of the archaeological evidence and discussion: Curta 2001, 124–42; Poulter 2007b.

better-protected sites, and the association of military settlements and forts with agrarian production, seems the obvious conclusion in the current state of the evidence.[22]

The seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries

The transformations which affected the eastern part of the late Roman world did not necessarily involve an abandonment of formerly urban sites (*poleis*) in favour of hilltop fortified sites (*kastra*). This certainly occurred in many areas, but it was heavily determined by local context. In any case, the spectrum of recognisably late Roman urban settlements stretches from extensive lowland sites to those situated in less accessible locations. But there were substantial changes in the way populations were distributed between different types of site, their extent, and how they were occupied.[23] Rural communities without defensive potential tended to shrink to become more heavily nucleated and to move location to more easily defended sites, a trend which in the Balkans is especially obvious in the archaeological record from the regions immediately south of the Haemus – a region which became in effect the frontier zone between the empire and the Bulgars after the 680s – where there appears to be a steep decline in rural sites from the later sixth or early seventh century until the later ninth century.[24] Although the process is only very generally dated thus far, it seems that in the Konya plain, for example, a hitherto relatively dense settlement pattern dependent in part on extensive seasonal irrigation retreats fairly radically at some point in the later seventh century or shortly thereafter. In some cases the 'castles' or 'forts' whose ruins have been identified in numerous out-of-the-way locations across central, southern, and eastern Asia Minor may represent in fact fortified village communities rather than military establishments, although we will return to these in a moment. A similar pattern has been suggested for such defended settlements in parts of Byzantine Italy, both

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[22] Dunn 1994; 1999; 2004; 2005a; also Curta 2001, 142–89. For the *quaestura exercitus*, see Chapter 11.

[23] Brogiolo 2000, esp. 312–13; Brandes 1989, 81–131; with Dunn 1994; and Haldon 1999b. On the application of a central place theory analysis to specific regions of Asia Minor, see Koder 1998a and 1998b. There are several examples of smaller settlements where the original urban centre remains partially occupied right through the seventh and well into the eighth century, while at the same time a portion of the population, and many of their industries, such as potteries, had moved to a more secure upland location: see Themelis 2005; Poulou-Papadimitriou 2005, 703 (on Eleutherna in Crete, for example).

[24] See Rašev, Dinčev and Borisov 2005, esp. 353–7.

'urban' as well as rural.[25] But the evidence is scarce and difficult to interpret, in view of the lack of datable material. Those villages nearest a fortress or well-defended walled town may well have been abandoned completely as the population moved into the town and conducted their agricultural activities from a new base, although this will have depended very much on local conditions, the size of the population involved, and the resource-area accessible from the new settlement centre. Thus at Sagalassos in Pisidia, for example, the town seems to have survived in the form of a fort or fortified area, a 'defended hamlet' in the words of one of the excavators, within the perimeter of the sanctuary of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, along with a few related smaller hamlets or settlement areas. Surveys of the rural hinterland suggest that the population drifted to the villages in the territory of the city, removing to specified refuges in times of danger. Surveys in Cappadocia similarly suggest an abandonment of some exposed sites in the period from the later seventh century on, with re-occupation during the ninth or tenth century.[26] Surveys in Greece, on the other hand, in Boeotia, Epiros, and the western Peloponnese, suggest both a reduction in village extent and their movement to less exposed, or less obvious, sites.[27] In general, this highly regionalised and variable pattern of change may suggest that urban centres lost control of their hinterlands economically as well as administratively, and that this was at least in part both a reflection of and a stimulus to the shift in the state's fiscal and military administrative attention away from 'traditional' cities. They were replaced by those sites chosen by the administration and military for their own activities, and which now became the new *foci* for the fiscal, judicial, and military management of the regions in question.

Surveys in Asia Minor, notably in Paphlagonia, Pisidia and Lycia, reinforce this picture for both town and countryside.[28] The sample is still largely limited to a fairly restricted number of civic-urban sites, but may be indicative. With a handful of exceptions, such as Nicaea, Constantinople, and Thessaloniki, most of the major classical cities of the eastern Roman world shrank during the seventh century to the size of their defended citadels, even though the 'lower city' of such towns – the main late Roman inhabited area – may have remained the site of smaller communities. At the same

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[25] See Baird 2004 (Konya plain); Mitchell 2000, 146–7 (example from Pisidia – see below); Brown and Christie 1989, 381–2, 388, 397–8; Martin 2005, 154–5.

[26] Ousterhout 1999, with references.

[27] See, for example, Bintliff 2000, 38–44, Avramea 1997 and 2005, with further literature; and, for Epiros, Veikou 2007.

[28] Matthews and Ganz 2009; Marksteiner 2000; Mitchell 2000; Waelkens 2000.

time, the evidence suggests that where it was practical populations tended to move away from inland areas to coastal regions less exposed to hostile activities, although there are some exceptions and the picture depends on a still-incomplete body of general survey material.[29] Archaeological surveys suggest considerable variety: Ankara shrank to a small citadel during the 650s and 660s, the fortress occupying an area of 350 m × 150 m, the occupied upper town in which it was situated occupying an area not much larger;[30] Amorion, the lower town of which retained a vast perimeter wall and, as far as can be seen, remained fairly substantially occupied, was apparently defended successfully in 716 by 800 men against an attacking army more than ten times larger, the area of the *kastron* occupying some 450 m by 300 m.[31] Amastris, modern Amasra,[32] offers similar evidence, as does Kotyaion, modern Kütahya.[33] Late Roman Pergamon had a settlement area of roughly 12 hectares, and excavation and survey reveal over a thousand houses, corresponding perhaps to a population of about 5,000 inhabitants. Such a population would require an area of at least 50 km² for cereal production sufficient to its requirements, suggestive of the relationship between village and urban *foci*.[34] But during the second half of the seventh century the acropolis was defended with a massive rampart, well-built and with walls 3–4 m thick, almost certainly intended as a strongpoint to be defended by regular soldiers.[35] There are many more formerly major centres that underwent a similar transformation, although it is not entirely clear that this actually occurred in the period after 640 – there is some evidence that a Justinianic impetus existed to shorten the *enceinte* of many towns, perhaps following a Balkan model.[36] Euchaita, for example, proved to be indefensible in respect of its late Roman *enceinte*, although its lower town remained occupied (albeit it is unclear to what extent) but its fortified stronghold – referred to in the text which describes both Persian and Arab attacks as the *ochyromata*

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[29] Koder 1998a, for example, esp. 250–2.

[30] *TIB* 4, 126–30; Foss 1977a, 74–8; Brandes 1989, 107–8; Haldon 1997a, 112–13.

[31] *TIB* 4, 122–5; Lightfoot 1994. For the historical situation of the city in the seventh–ninth centuries, Brandes 1989, 133–5. In the case of this siege it seems most likely that the lower town was abandoned and the citadel defended, in contrast to the later siege of 838, when the whole perimeter appears to have been defended: see Ivison 2007.

[32] *TIB* 9, 161–70.   [33] *TIB* 7, 312–16.   [34] Klinkott 2001.

[35] Foss and Winfield 1986 131–40.

[36] For comparative plans and figures, see Hill and Crow 1992, 87–92. See also the general discussion in Foss and Winfield 1986. For a general survey of the fate of cities and towns in Anatolia in the period from 640, although now to be supplemented by a greater range of archaeological data, see Brandes 1989, esp. 81–141; and the specific studies of Foss and Scott 2002 (Sardis); Rheidt 2002 (Pergamon). For the possibly sixth-century date of circuit wall-reduction, see Liebeschuetz 2001c, 46–54.

or the *kastron* – offered a secure refuge which the attacking forces did not attempt to take. The date of construction of these defences is unknown.[37]

In some Byzantine texts, mostly hagiographical, there occur descriptions of 'cities' with populations inhabiting the lower town. This has resulted in some debate about the interpretation of both the texts in question and the archaeological evidence.[38] Yet these accounts can, in fact, be reconciled with the results of archaeology. Excavations at Amorion and several other sites show that while the small fortress-citadel was established and occupied from the middle of the seventh century onwards, discreet areas within the late Roman walls, each often centred around a church, also continued to be inhabited. In Amorion there were at least three such areas, which may have been extensive, indeed the whole area may have been occupied at times, before the city was refurbished under the emperors Michael II and Theophilos. The original walls appear also to have been maintained, but as at Constantinople, and as seems to have been the case elsewhere also, it is possible that much of the area was taken up with gardens, as well as cemeteries or military encampments. And of course its situation as an important military centre – possibly like other such centres (Nicaea or Ankara, for example, or Dorylaion or Trebizond) – must have made it a more attractive location for industrial activities, commerce and markets.[39] Sardis similarly shrank to a small fortified acropolis during the seventh century, but it appears that several separate areas within the circumference of the original late ancient walls remained occupied.[40] At Ephesos, which served as a refuge for the local rural population, as a fortress and military administrative centre, but also retained its role as a market town, survey and excavation suggest that it was divided into three small, distinct, and separate occupied areas, including the citadel.[41] Miletos was reduced to some 25 per cent of its original area, and divided into two defended complexes,

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[37] The date of the collection of miracles of St Theodore which relate the various sieges and attacks on the city in the seventh–eighth centuries remains contested, although we prefer a seventh-century date, with Trombley and Artun: see Trombley 1985b; Zuckerman 1988; Artun 2008. For the archaeology of the site, see Haldon *et al.* 2008 and 2009.

[38] It has been argued that this means that the whole ancient city area of Euchaita continued to be occupied: e.g. Trombley 1985b; and – with a slightly different dating – Zuckerman 1988. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the text(s) in question consists of *topoi* and that only a citadel is actually meant: Kazhdan 1988. See the comment by Brandes 1999, 47–9.

[39] Lightfoot 1995, 105ff.; Lightfoot 1998b; esp. Ivison 2007, 39. Amorion may well be fairly typical for the provincial military capitals until the ninth century.

[40] Foss 1976, 55–76; Foss and Scott 2002.

[41] *ODB* 1, 706; Foss 1979, 106–113. Note that some doubt has been cast on aspects of Foss's interpretation of the archaeological evidence – that it demonstrates the destruction of Ephesos at the hands of the Persians: see Russell 2001.

but some areas outside the new, much-reduced defences of the seventh century remained occupied.[42] Didyma, close by Miletos, was reduced to a small defended structure based around a converted pagan temple and an associated but unfortified settlement nearby.[43] The literary evidence for Euchaita, on the northern edge of the central plateau, may also support this pattern of development – a permanently occupied settlement or settlements, perhaps concentrated around key features (churches, for example) within the original late Roman *enceinte*, with a defensive focus as the site of military and administrative personnel and the centre of resistance to attack.[44] This evidence is still very limited, and further survey work may confirm or challenge this line of development at other sites. The conclusions we may draw must, therefore, remain tentative. But the evidence does now suggest that, like Amorion, many 'urban' centres which served as *foci* of state activity, both military and otherwise, retained a – possibly substantial – population dwelling in their 'lower city', along with the associated artisanal and domestic production activities necessary to their existence.

This fragmented intra-mural occupation pattern is found elsewhere in the formerly Roman world, in Gaul, Spain, and Italy, where it has been dubbed by archaeologists the 'city in islands' ('città a isole'). Whereas in Gaul and Spain this tendency seems to have led to the fragmentation of the original urban space, in many cases in Italy it can be shown that it did not, that there was no dissolution of the city as a single unit, which retained also, although to varying degrees, an original late Roman street plan. On the other hand, it is also clear that in some parts of Italy – in Calabria, for example – there likewise took place a substantial impoverishment of material culture, a narrowing of horizons, and a high degree of localisation of economic life.[45] The archaeological material now becoming available suggests that this pattern may well also be representative of several sites in the eastern Roman world, in particular in Asia Minor. Distinct communities thus continued to exist within the city walls, while the citadel or *kastron* – which also kept the name of the ancient *polis* – provided a refuge in case of attack or a strongpoint which could be defended until relieved. We would surmise that, while dwelling effectively in separate communities or

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[42] Müller-Wiener 1967; Foss 1977b, 477f.; and Niewöhner 2008a, esp. 187–8, 196–8.

[43] *ODB* 2, 931; Foss 1977b, 479, with literature. There are many other examples: see the survey of Brandes 1989, 82–111, 132ff. with further literature and sources.

[44] See Trombley 1985b; and *ODB* 2, 737; Artun 2008.

[45] See Ciampoltrini 1994; Brogiolo 1987, 27–46; 1984, 52–3; 1994, esp. 556–64 (Brescia and Milan); also Gelichi 1991, 160–2. For Calabria, see Raimondo 2006 (and cf. Uggeri 2006 for Sicily).

villages within the walls, the inhabitants of such urban concentrations saw themselves as belonging to the *polis* itself. In some cases, as the evidence summarised above might suggest, the walls of the lower town area were maintained – irregularly, for the most part – in order to provide shelter for larger than usual concentrations of troops or the rural population of the district.

The re-focusing of settlement across civic-urban and non-civic urban sites was accompanied – although the time-scale is not yet clear – by a re-structuring of the use of urban spaces and facilities. We have already alluded to the growing evidence of change and transformation in the use and functions of space in late ancient towns from the fifth century. What is important also is the fact that the re-use of older structures for new functions – the use of bath buildings for kilns, for example, which provided accessible fire-proof structures, found at many late ancient urban sites – reflected a quite pragmatic re-thinking of the use of urban facilities, perhaps involving issues of security from possible external interference. The archaeological record at a number of sites seems also to suggest a relationship between artisanal production centres and church buildings. This may well suggest the possibility – re-inforced by the importance of the bishop in towns and the role of the clergy in urban society from at least the sixth century – of a more clearly directive role of the church in the re-orientation of inner urban settlement patterns, as well as of the incorporation of small- and medium-scale industrial production locations (for bricks, glass, ceramics and so forth) within areas otherwise occupied by dwellings and domestic buildings. Given the relative insecurity of many urban hinterlands during the sixth century and, in the Byzantine world in particular, throughout most of the seventh and eighth centuries, bringing non-agricultural production inside the defensive circuit of a town or fortress would have been entirely sensible; and it would also entail the process of convergence of rural with urban activities which seems typical of many smaller and middling settlements of the period after the sixth century. But it also implies a considerably reduced population and a fairly limited resource-area for each settlement, except where pastoral farming was a source of income and subsistence. Most of the evidence relates to the late Roman period, but the very limited evidence from some of the medieval Anatolian sites mentioned in this section would at least not contradict this interpretation.[46]

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[46] See in particular the useful discussion of Leone 2003, although limited chiefly to North African sites; and more generally Martorelli 1999; Roskams 1999.

Types of urbanism: *polis, kastron* and other settlements

It is worth emphasising at this juncture a point which is frequently lost sight of, and that is that many sites could have a variety of potential functions, but not necessarily all at the same time. Whether a site offered the facilities of a fortress, town, or a refuge, of an administrative, military or agrarian centre, or a combination of some or all of these, could vary according to local political and economic conditions as well as broader background context. This is especially important when thinking about the refuges, smaller settlements, and *kastra* of the early and middle Byzantine periods which we will discuss next.[47]

Many provincial sites in Asia Minor after the middle of the seventh century, important to state military and administrative operations as well as to the church, were not descended from the traditional 'cities' of the late Roman period. They originated in quasi-urban or non-urban settlements selected for their functional relevance to the state's needs, some of which may have been relatively short-lived. There were a number of factors that played a role in this process of what has been dubbed settlement differentiation[48] – strategic location with respect to the control of important routes or resources, both human and material, or the location of markets, for example. Together with the large number of much smaller garrison forts and outposts of a purely military nature (although sometimes associated with village settlements nearby or below them), such provincial *kastra* (which, as noted earlier, were sometimes referred to by their inhabitants and by many writers who mention them as *poleis*) and frontier fortresses, generally sited on rocky outcrops and prominences, often also the sites of pre-Roman fortresses or hill-forts, typified the east Roman provincial countryside well into the Seljuk period and beyond, and determined the pattern of development of urban centres when they were able to expand once more during the tenth and eleventh centuries. At the supposedly insignificant/abandoned site of Knossos on Crete, a late eighth/early ninth-century seal of a fiscal official may illustrate the administrative significance of such minor centres in this period.[49] Investigation of sites in Cappadocia suggests the nature of this evolution in a frontier district. At Akhisar, some 10 km south of Kolonia (Aksaray), for example, an important hilltop fortress was situated in a defensible position with commanding views across to the Hasan Dağı and to Kolonia, and overlooking the Byzantine road from Tyana to Mokissos

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[47] See the important discussion in Crow 2009; Niewöhner 2008a.
[48] The term is Dunn's (e.g. 1994; 1997; 2004).   [49] Dunn 2005b.

and Kolonia. It played a significant role in the warfare between Byzantine and Islamic forces in the seventh to early ninth centuries.[50] There is a similar arrangement at Selime and many other sites in comparable locations, which would have been within the political/military frontier zone during the period from the seventh to tenth centuries.[51]

The choice of easily defended natural outcrops for *kastra* which also served as refugee centres, administrative and military bases, and sometimes the focus for more extensive but lower-lying civilian settlements, very typical of a number of inland Byzantine sites in the seventh century and afterwards, was also made in south Italy. Here, their location appears to reflect the lack of a clearly defined natural frontier or borderland between the Byzantine and Lombard regions, and the need to cater for highly localised defensive and refugee needs. Several sites in Calabria – on the isthmus of Catanzaro, or at Tiriolo, for example, near Squillace – which were occupied from the late sixth century on, and in the southern Balkan region, typify these developments, and may provide useful parallels to developments elsewhere in the Byzantine world.[52] The process of evolution of *castra* in Sicily in the last third of the seventh century and after illustrates similar traits.[53] In the west Balkan coastal provinces that remained, even if only nominally, under imperial authority across the seventh and eighth centuries, walled coastal towns were protected by a string of hilltop forts offering shelter to local rural populations as well as housing soldiers.[54] Comparative work for a later period in Boeotia has shown that, in a parallel context, warfare between Franks, Byzantines, and Turks during the fourteenth century led to a wide-ranging abandonment of many rural settlements as the population concentrated in the regional fortified towns. This sort of development seems to be reflected in the early medieval south Italian and west Balkan evidence, and there is little reason to doubt that the warfare to which the settlements in the more exposed regions of Asia Minor were subject during the seventh and part of the eighth century produced similar results.[55]

The pattern of fort or fortress with associated settlement is found in different permutations across Asia Minor. Many larger or more important

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[50] *TIB* 2, 72, 277–8 with literature (Hisn Sinan); Lilie 1976, 114; Ousterhout 1997; 2005a.

[51] Rodley 1985. A glance through *TIB* 2 graphically illustrates the point.

[52] For Italy: Noyé 1992, and her summary, Noyé 1994, esp. 728–30; for the south Balkans (Thessaly): Avramea 1974, 119–84; Rhodope area: Asdracha.

[53] See Uggeri 2006, and bearing in mind the multiple meanings of a term such as *castrum/kastron* at this time: Brandes 1999, 29.

[54] Curta 2006, 100f.   [55] See Bintliff 1991, 1996; Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988a, 1988b.

sites in Byzantine Asia Minor fit the model. As well as those already mentioned, such as Amaseia and Amastris, the fortresses at (Pontic) Koloneia,[56] Charsianon,[57] Ikonion,[58] Akroinon,[59] Dazimon,[60] Sebasteia[61] in the central and eastern regions, Priene, Herakleia[62] in Caria, and several others along the western coastal provinces (Herakleia Pontike/Kybistra,[63] on the Black Sea coast), provide good examples, defended by natural features, adequately supplied with water, positioned to control the region around it together with the main routes, or means of access and egress serving the district, but often with a lower town located within the late Roman walls which remained occupied during times of relative peace. As long as the defences of the lower town were kept in reasonable repair, they might also serve as an appropriate refuge for the surrounding rural population during hostile raids, since small raiding parties rarely had the time or the strength to concern themselves with a siege, logistically demanding, very time-consuming, and potentially very costly in manpower.

The re-structuring of the relationship between citadel and town was also represented, with slight variations, by towns where the greatly reduced walled central area was filled primarily with administrative and ecclesiastical buildings and perhaps also barracks or other accommodation for soldiers. The non-civil population was congregated in villages or smaller communities outside. Earlier examples in the Balkans, such as Nikopolis, show that in the fifth and sixth centuries the walled area was occupied chiefly by 'official' structures, with substantial areas remaining free of any standing structures at all, and with dwellings concentrated around the outside of the walls, particularly near the entrances or chief routes. This was not new in the seventh century – such developments can be shown to date from the earlier and middle years of the sixth century at least.[64] But the association of a large number of medium-sized Anatolian towns with an earlier, pre-Roman citadel or stronghold was fairly common throughout the eastern provinces of the Byzantine world. Their continued existence meant both the survival of the Roman or Hellenistic name for the site, the survival of the identity of the residents with the 'city' and thus, in however tenuous a fashion, the survival of the notion of the city as something particular.

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[56] Bryer and Winfield 1985, 145–51.   [57] *TIB* 2, 163–5.   [58] *TIB* 4, 176–8, 182f.
[59] *TIB* 7, 177–8.   [60] *TIB* 2, 88; *IDB* 1, 592.   [61] *TIB* 2, 274–6.
[62] On these see Brandes 1989, 88–110 with older literature.   [63] *TIB* 2, 188–90.
[64] See Poulter 1992; 2007b. The internal structure of urban centres in provincial Byzantium remains obscure for want of adequate data and surveys, although recent work – at Amorion and Amaseia, for example – will make some discussion possible.

The words used in the sources emphasise the complexities of the issue of middle Byzantine towns.[65] *Polis* continued to be used in written sources of most urban settlements which had, in late Roman times, had the status of a *polis*. In most cases, the presence of a bishop was an essential distinguishing element (since from the time of Zeno all 'cities' had had their own bishops).[66] This seems to be reflected in the *Chronography* of Theophanes, for example, where most of the 'towns' mentioned were also episcopal seats.[67] The *Chronography* depended upon a wide range of extracts from sources of very different origins, and the use of the term *polis* very probably reflects the appearance of the word in the original source or document, and thus an awareness – as in the writing of the patriarch Nikephoros – of the official designation for an episcopal see.[68] Such references, however, reflect an administrative, rather than a social or economic, perspective that should be carried over to social perceptions at large only with caution. Official documents, such as imperial edicts, refer regularly to the 'cities' of the empire in this sense, that is to say, as ecclesiastical and civil administrative centres. But this 'episcopal' definition seems to be all that survives, after the middle of the seventh and into the eighth century, of the particular corporate legal attributes formerly held by 'cities'. The notion of *dikaion poleos*, civic jurisdiction/rights, survives as a legal fiction only in codifications and collections of older imperial legislation.[69] This does not mean that urban community identities vanished. On the contrary, there is plenty of evidence for individuals claiming that they belonged to a particular town or city, and two seventh-century seals of the 'communities' of the Dekapolis and of Sinope imply the continued existence of corporate identities in some cases at least. By the same token, there is some slight evidence already from the early ninth century for a clear identity of citizens with their towns, and even competition between some towns.[70]

Hagiographical texts rarely distinguish between *polis* and other types of settlement – most speak of *poleis* without further elaboration, which does not help us to determine what the form of the settlement was assumed to be by the writer or listener/reader of the texts in question. But the term *kastron* appears more and more regularly through the ninth and into the tenth

[65] Brandes 1999; Haldon 1999b.   [66] *CJ* i, 3. 35   [67] Brandes 1989, 38–9.

[68] Brandes 1989, 35–7. On Theophanes' methods, see Rochow 1991, esp. 50–1. Brandes details the chronological divisions in the use of the different terms in the *Chronographia*.

[69] For example, the edict of Constantine IV in late 681: *ACO* II/2, 2, 856.2–3 (Mansi xi, 712D) (cf. *CPG* IV, 9438; Dölger, *Reg.* no. 245).

[70] *ZV*, 1173, with corrections in Cheynet 2001, no. 25; and Laurent, *Corpus*, V/1, no. 423. Cf. the case of the merchants from Amastris who had been falsely accused and imprisoned in Trebizond at the beginning of the ninth century: Chapter 6, n. 186.

century, regardless of the physical type of settlement to which it referred, so that by the middle of the tenth century the dominant descriptive term for Byzantine urban settlements was *kastron*, illustrating the gradual recognition in literary texts of the functional character of fortified settlements and their numerical dominance in the Byzantine landscape.[71] The 'official' recognition of the transformation occurs in a novel of Leo VI (886–912), when city rights were formally abolished.[72] The word *polis* was often used exclusively of Constantinople, as 'the city'.[73] The pre-eminence of writings with literary pretensions means that, until the tenth and eleventh centuries, we have to rely upon the attitudes of the relatively small literate elements of society as expressed in the sources. *Polis*, and similar terms which were held to reflect Roman cultural values, invoked the Roman and Hellenic past, which was very important for Byzantines. The term *polis* was thus a potent symbol from the point of view of evoking a particular culture and its associations. It was also used as a means of demonstrating the writer's cultural and literary attainments, and because many learned Byzantines of the later eighth and ninth century set out to 'revive' what they perceived to be the forms, interests, and motifs of ancient learning and literacy. Yet conversely, the word for fortress in modern Romanian and Albanian derives from the Latin word *civitas*, illustrative of the convergence of functions.[74] The term *kastron*, in contrast, represented day-to-day values and realities. Its use says something of what people associated with it: a fortified refuge, a place of security. *Kastron* represented the needs of a society in which physical security was paramount and economic activity endangered. Whether or not the term *kastron* had a technically precise value at first, in the same way, for example, that Prokopios uses the term *phrourion* for a garrisoned settlement with local security and defensive functions, is as yet not known.

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[71]   Brandes 1989, 40f.

[72]   The fact that this took place only in the last years of the ninth century reflects a very particular historical conjuncture, connected in particular with the legislative and propaganda activities of Leo VI, and thus a token response to a situation already 200 years old. See Leo VI, *Nov.*, 46.183–5; and on Leo's legislation and its context, see Fögen 1987.

[73]   In the semi-'official' document written in a demoticising style, the so-called *De Administrando Imperio* (*On Imperial Administration*) ascribed to Constantine VII (913–59), dealing largely with relations with neighbouring powers. There, the term *polis* is reserved almost entirely for Constantinople; all other urban or fortified centres are *kastra*: see the index to the edition of Jenkins and Moravcsik (*DAI*).

[74]   See Chapter 9; and in particular the discussions of Speck 1984b (see also the review by W. Lackner, in *Südostforschungen* 46 [1987], 516); and Speck 1987d. The Balkan examples: Pillon 1993.

The wider context: towns, fortresses, and refuges

In contrast to these terms, Islamic geographical descriptive literature, often compiled, it is claimed, on the basis of eye-witness accounts, refers to the Byzantine lands of Asia Minor in particular as a region of fortresses rather than of cities; and since Arab technical terminology had a very precise usage in respect of the differences between cities, towns, and villages, this is important. In appearance at least, most Byzantine cities, however they were referred to by the Byzantines themselves, were little more than fortresses to Arab observers.[75] The discrepancy between Byzantine conceptions, Arab or Persian geographers' descriptions, and archaeological evidence on the ground is impressive: the ninth-century historian Tabari uses a source for the events of the year 838 which describes the Byzantine fortress-cities of Ankara and Amorion as the greatest cities in the land of the Byzantines. As we have seen, the archaeological evidence from Amorion at least suggests that the 'city' retained a substantial population, and that its extensive late Roman *enceinte* was maintained and defended, if not on every occasion, then certainly on some. This was probably true for similar important military and administrative centres, and it is reasonable to suppose that it was the strategic location of such towns and the continued presence of military and other state-related functions which gave them a significance beyond the average. In this respect, Tabari's comment is perhaps indicative of the hierarchy of urban forms within the provinces at this time.[76]

Byzantine episcopal lists provide a picture of the structure of the church administration and the numbers of episcopal sees which remained active (at least in theory). In contrast, the Arab geographers of the ninth and early tenth century inform us about the realities of the evolved hierarchy of settlement in Byzantine territory, giving the numbers, and sometimes the locations, of significant fortresses and towns in each region. Their evidence is corroborated, with minor ambiguities or uncertainties, by the list of major centres for each *thema* given in the tenth-century *De thematibus*. It becomes clear that the number of centres in this category is actually very small compared with the pattern of late Roman urbanism. Thus for the *thema* of *Anatolikon* a total of thirty-four fortresses is mentioned (including Amorion), in contrast with over eighty *poleis* of the late Roman period listed in the *Synekdemos* of Hierokles for the provinces of

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[75] See Haldon 1997a, 112–13. For some general considerations on the technology of fortification, see Lawrence 1983.

[76] See Haldon 1997a, 112–13 with literature and sources.

Pisidia, Galatia Salutaria, Lykaonia, Cappadocia II, and part of Phrygia Salutaria, from which the tenth-century Byzantine *thema* was constituted; for the *Armeniakon* the ratio is seventeen (including Koloneia) to nearly thirty; for the *Thrakesion* region, five (including Ephesos), compared with over seventy for Hellespontus, Lydia, Asia, and Phrygia Pakatiane.[77] According to the episcopal lists (*notitiae episcopatuum*) and the numbers and origins of signatories at the ecclesiastical councils of the period 680, 692, and 787, there were marginally fewer bishoprics in the provinces remaining to the empire than there had been in the sixth century, but a very considerable degree of continuity. And although these cannot tell us anything about the settlement status of the places in question, we may reasonably conclude that the small number of fortresses listed in the *De thematibus* and in the Arab geographers more accurately reflects both the importance of the sites mentioned or alluded to, as well as the largely technical-administrative definition employed in the late Roman ecclesiastical lists. The emphasis on defensive and administrative or military properties is perhaps reflected in the fact that the Arab sources mention some nineteen fortified places for the *thema* of Cappadocia, right on the frontier, a region which possessed a much smaller number of 'cities' and bishoprics.[78]

Thus while the *De thematibus* and the geographers, on the one hand, and on the other the lists of conciliar signatories and the various *notitiae episcopatuum* by no means represent the same notions of city, nor are their purposes the same, the disparity is striking. The number of *poleis* as listed in late Roman sources and the later episcopal *notitiae* differ radically from what were perceived by outside observers as well as by a tenth-century imperial commentator as significant centres or fortresses. Yet while this is surely indicative of the enormous changes in both the hierarchy of settlement, and in the functions of the leading category of settlement which had taken place in the intervening three centuries, it should not lead us to assume that the small numbers listed in the *De thematibus* and the Arab geographers represented the only worthwhile centres of population – the very physical form of the vast number of smaller settlements, especially those in highland locations, and perhaps also their lack of formal status, may have blinded contemporaries to their economic and demographic value.

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[77] Ibn Khurradadhbi, 78–80. The figures given in the Arabic sources match those given in the *De Thematibus* of Constantine VII: see the discussion in Gelzer 1899, 100–4. The evidence is set out in the comparative tables and discussion in Ramsay 1890, 104, 120, 134ff., 152, 282, 319, 331, 388, for example.

[78] Ibn Khurradadhbi, 80.

The characteristic features of Byzantine towns and fortresses across the seventh to the ninth centuries were thus a very visible defensive capacity, embodied in a citadel or fortress, usually located on a naturally defensible site, dominating a lower town, often within the late Roman walls, but divided into a number of separate settlement *foci.* Their size, population, physical appearance, military, and social and economic role depended on the zone in which they lay, however, and, importantly, on the political-military conjuncture, as well as their status as military bases at different levels of the strategic hierarchy. The really important centres, provincial military and administrative capitals, places such as Ankara and Amorion, must have been very different in density of population, upkeep of defensive structures, and industrial and market activity, from their less politically important neighbours, a point which the archaeological evidence would seem to corroborate. At Euchaita, for example, which may represent a typical semi-rural, semi-urban site of the period, the provisional ceramic profile from the late Roman period through to the middle of the ninth century suggests a relatively poor but still flourishing centre into the eighth and early ninth century – as long, that is, as it retained its strategic and military administrative value. As soon as this value had diminished – as soon as the region was no longer threatened – it seems to have lost both economic and social importance. This contrasts with other semi-rural centres in the same broad region, such as the small non-military late Roman and Byzantine settlement at Çadır Höyük, near Peyniryemez in central Turkey, where the profile is almost the inverse: the seventh–ninth centuries represent a low point in the fortunes of the site, which recovered from the later ninth through to the later eleventh century and the arrival of the Seljuks.[79] The three zones of Asia Minor referred to above each imposed different conditions of existence upon different types of settlement and, together with the varied needs of the army, church, and fiscal system, stimulated different types of development.[80] The strongly regional character of such developments is exemplified in work carried out for the Balkans on the evolution of settlement patterns and hierarchies in Macedonia.[81] In Anatolia, the first zone, the 'inner zone' around Constantinople itself, was defended by the army of the *Opsikion*, based around the city (probably) from the 640s, and included fortified towns such as Nikomedeia, Nicaea, Dorylaion, Kotyaion,

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[79] See Haldon *et al.* 2009; Cassis 2009, and bearing in mind the still highly provisional nature of the interpretation. It would also appear to contrast with the site at Kilise Tepe: see Jackson 2009b.

[80] For the effects of warfare on the towns of Asia Minor, see the discussion in Brandes 1989, 44–80.

[81] See Dunn 1994; 1997; 1999; 2004.

and Ankara. It also included the *aplekta* or bases of Malagina and Kaborkion, which were certainly in use by the later eighth century, and possibly as early as the later seventh century.[82] This region was crucially important to the empire, because it was the source of much of the food which supplied the capital. While it was raided on several occasions during the second half of the seventh century, and substantial damage inflicted on its north-westernmost areas during the great sieges of Constantinople in the 670s and again in 717–18, much of the imperial military effort went on protecting it as a 'heartland', with the numerous routes from Anatolia which passed through the region to converge upon Constantinople.[83] By the 730s and 740s the structures which had evolved were beginning to offer a more effective resistance to invasion, so that hostile action thereafter only rarely affected this zone. As a part of this 'inner' region we should also include the southern Black Sea coast, which was certainly attacked or raided on occasion and, with the increasingly effective maritime defences facilitated by the establishment of the Kibyrrhaiot army, the Aegean coastal regions. In the Pontos the evidence, limited though it is, for cities such as Amastris, Sinope, and Trebizond, located at well-situated harbours with good facilities for shipping, suggests that, while they also focused on a defensible citadel, they continued to occupy the late Roman lower town and to maintain a degree of commercial and exchange activity not sustainable in more exposed regions. Nicaea and Trebizond continued also to function as entrepôts for longer-distance commerce. While defensive properties were certainly important, they were less clearly the main priority in respect of the organisation of the built infrastructure. It should be noted that the state also obtained a good proportion of the ores it required for the imperial coinage, as well as for weapons, from mines (or through other means such as panning) in the mountains of Bithynia, the Pontic Alps or western Caucasus. The latter counted as part of the more exposed outer zone, but such resources were clearly essential and increased the need to defend such districts.[84]

The second or middle zone was exposed during the period *c.* 660–740 to frequent Arab raiders and invasions, and its settlement pattern largely evolved along a common format, involving the occupation and defence of

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[82] On Malagina, see now Brandes 1999, 49–53. For the *aplekta* in general, see Haldon, comm. to *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, 155–6 with literature.

[83] See Durliat 1995; Magdalino 1995; Koder 1995. For the importance of the road system in Bithynia, see Lefort 1995.

[84] The best account of the warfare which affected these regions in the later seventh and eighth centuries is to be found in Lilie 1976; and for the main military routes and the structure of defense, Haldon 1999a, 56–63, 71–85, with maps. For the sources of ores, see Pitarakis 1998a; Matschke 2002, 117–19.

a fortress which served also as a centre from which the government could administer its tax system and where the army could organise the defence of the region. It was protected from attack in the centre and East by the armies of *Anatolikon* and *Armeniakon*, and in the West by the *Thrakesion* army. Major fortresses such as Chonai, Sozopolis, Akroinon, Amorion, Ankara, Gangra, and Amaseia represent both the fortress-city and the 'city in islands' models, and are found throughout the region, incorporating both high-level defensive possibilities in the citadel, but housing also a local population of primarily service personnel and agriculturalists, with the attendant low-intensity exchange activity required to facilitate their interdependence and to cater to the needs of the citadel. Secondary centres such as Euchaita, which had a strategic function but appear not to have been very heavily fortified, played a supporting role as *foci* of administration. Together, these fortresses formed a defensive line of serious obstacles to hostile advances into the inner region, as well as the key elements in the state's administrative, fiscal, and military infrastructure.

The third or outer zone represents the regions most dramatically affected by the warfare of the period. While there were several major towns in this area – Caesarea in Cappadocia, for example, although taken in 646 and again in 726,[85] Sebasteia to the north-east, Mokissos to the west,[86] Herakleia/Kybistra[87] – which remained more-or-less continuously in imperial hands, they were certainly severely affected by hostile military action during the period up to the middle of the eighth century, less frequently thereafter, and there is in consequence every likelihood that they functioned as economic centres only insofar as they also housed substantial numbers of soldiers and government administrators. The smaller urban centres of this region suffered even more, and were often reduced to simple fortresses with only a residual service populace of non-military or non-administrative people. Many were completely abandoned after being devastated on several occasions, such as Tyana, Phaustinoupolis or Lykandos,[88] and the total of abandoned towns – frequently those which had no defensive walls – runs into well over ten for Cappadocia and nearly three times as many for (much more extensive) central and southern Galatia, the southern sections of the

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[85] *TIB* 2, 193–6; for the capture of the town, Lilie 1976, 63–4, 146.

[86] See *TIB* 2, 238–9 (although Mokissos itself was rebuilt and fortified during the reign of Justinian I, the new site was carefully chosen for its defensive qualities).

[87] *TIB* 2, 188–90.

[88] Tyana: *TIB* 2, 298–9; Brandes 1989, 121–2; Phaustinoupolis: *TIB* 2, 258–9. After over two centuries of warfare in and around the site, Lykandos was described in the early tenth century as 'deserted and uninhabited'. See *TIB* 2, 224–6.

Anatolikon. Western Cilicia was similarly affected, with smaller settlements such as Diokaisareia being reduced to a shadow of their former selves after the middle of the seventh century. The palynological evidence from the region to the south of Nazianzos in Cappadocia is suggestive of the drastic effects such insecurity might have in some areas, in this case apparently affecting land-use and population on a permanent basis. But there never seems to have been a totally emptied 'no-man's land', at least not on a longer-term basis, as recent archaeological surveys of the frontier region are beginning to show, even if the pattern of settlement was dramatically affected and inflected by the warfare of the times.[89]

Strategic and local tactical demands were here the clear priority, often to the detriment of local populations, and these priorities affected both location and density of sites, as well as their size and cultural character. At the same time, the relationship between government policy, the militarisation of the countryside which the billeting of troops across Asia Minor from the later seventh century entailed, and the development of new strategic arrangements remains problematic. The surviving major and minor settlements were far outnumbered by a vast range of minor forts and fortresses guarding major and minor routes, points of access, and the approaches to the more important fortified towns, most of which consisted of a single or double wall protected and reinforced by towers, defended gateways, and natural location, many of which were probably occupied only on an occasional basis, when the situation demanded it, and many of which probably played as important a role in local politics and power-relations as they did in terms of defence against external threats. Different from the major cities as well as the middling defended towns of the empire which we have discussed so far, these fortresses represent a third very distinctive category, and we may reasonably assume that the sites in question were selected and fortified by the state, through its local military administration and officers, using local resources extracted through both regular and extraordinary taxation. It is entirely possible that many of them were in fact established at, or represented an extension of the functions of, pre-existing rural communities. Modern surveys of the Cappadocian frontier suggest at least three bands of forts and fortresses covering, first, the passes through into Roman territory, second, the roads north of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus, and finally, those protecting the more important fortified centres. Even the most important

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[89] See the discussion and list, far from complete, and based on a provisional assessment, in
     Brandes 1989, 120–4; and for the archaeology of the frontier, see Eger 2008; with Jackson 2007;
     Gerritsen *et al.* 2008. For Diokaisareia: Westphalen 2005; Kramer 2005, 127f.; for the Nazianzos
     region: Haldon 2007a; England *et al.* 2008; Eastwood *et al.* 2009.

of these strongholds or guard-posts were quite small. Loulon, for example, which also guarded the mines of the area, essential to the production of weapons and coins, is a classic example. Perched on a rocky outcrop 2100 m above sea-level, its walls encircle an area of approximately 40 m × 60 m, within which shelter for the garrison as well as cisterns for their water-supply were accommodated. The numerous fortified strongholds controlling key routes across the region, such as Kyzistra,[90] Semaluos *kastron*,[91] Podandos, Rodandos (which also protected an iron-producing district),[92] and the many similar outposts revealed by recent surveys, were of a very similar nature, and reflected the equivalent of the defensive-offensive structures of the Islamic *thughur* in northern Syria and Mesopotamia. These seem often to have been the seats of local military commanders – *tourmarchai*, for example – and thus also, probably by the early eighth century, centres of administration and justice. Saniana, situated on a hill overlooking the Halys some 76 km south-east of Ankara, was of similar size, and became the headquarters of a *tourma* in the later ninth century, having served also as the base of Gazarenos Koloniates, one of the comrades-in-arms of Thomas the Slav, in the 820s.[93]

Yet the smaller fortified centres, almost exclusively situated on relatively inaccessible sites, well-protected by natural features, can be divided into two sub-types at least. Those alongside main routes into and across the empire must have had a defensive function, serving to police and protect the local populace, defend particular resources – for example, mines – and to guard strategic roads or routes, as well as serving also – depending on context – as refuges for the surrounding populace and their livestock. Sites such as Neroassos, on the road from Koloneia (Aksaray) to Nakida in Cappadocia, defended by a single wall with towers and enclosing an area 100 m × 50 m;[94] Alaman Kale, on a small route from Tzamandos and Malandara northwards to the Ankara-Sebasteia road, of similar area; Meşkiran Kalesi,

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[90] *TIB* 2, 219–20. Known as Dhu l-Qila' in the Arabic sources, Kyzistra controlled the road from the south – Podandos and Tyana – to Caesarea. Sited on a 1557 m high eminence, its upper fort was some 40 m × 30 m in area, with a lower fortress and defended outwork on the promontories below.

[91] For Semaluos see *TIB* 2, 276; and for Loulon, *TIB*, 223–4 (it was also the site of the first in the chain of fire-beacons which stretched across Asia Minor to Constantinople during the ninth century: see Haldon, comm. to *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, 254–5). It overlooked the road from Caesarea to Ankyra, played a major role in the raiding warfare of the seventh–ninth centuries, yet occupied an area of just 60 m × 30 m.

[92] *TIB* 2, 261–2; 266–7.

[93] *TIB* 4, 222 with sources. For background on the frontier, see Haldon and Kennedy 1980.

[94] *TIB* 2, 245–6. A search through the current volumes of the *TIB* for Anatolia will reveal scores of such sites.

on a secondary route through the mountains from Caesarea to Melitene, occupying an area of some 80 m × 50 m, defended by a curtain wall and towers,[95] are typical. All have at least one defensive wall, often with traces of a *proteichisma* or outer defence, with towers and defended entrance, a cistern (often more than one) and evidence of internal structures suggestive of permanent or at least regular occupation.

While the exact date of such structures is rarely certain, the architectural evidence suggests that they were occupied and in use during the period between the middle of the seventh and the tenth or eleventh century and often later. There are many such sites and installations throughout Anatolia, particularly in the second and third or outer regions mentioned already, many of them located on pre-Roman/pre-Hellenistic sites. Thus places such as Kızılca Kale (walled enclosure approx. 50 m × 35 m),[96] Bahçeli Kale,[97] Sığırlık Kale,[98] and Asar Kale,[99] all on the road from Attaleia northwards to Akrotiri in Pisidia; Asar kalesi on the Via Sebaste west of Ikonion;[100] Kızıl Kale on the road from Amorion to Philomelion in Phrygia;[101] Zengicek Kale (walled area of *c.* 60 m × 50 m) on the road from Kongoustos to Perta in Lykaonia;[102] or, much further north, Masıroğlu Kalesi, covering the approaches to Pompeioupolis in Paphlagonia,[103] are all representative. Many may have been the headquarters of military units – Karanlı Kale in Galatia, for example, with similar defensive features and on a similar site, has been identified with the *topoteresia* or *bandon* of Eudokia, the headquarters for a unit of local troops of between 50 and 300 men and commanded by a *komes*.[104]

Other sites, however, while usually defended, often enclose a larger area, lie well away from any major roads, and probably functioned primarily as relatively inaccessible and out-of-the way refuges – *kataphygia* – for the local populace during periods of hostile military activity.[105] Typical of such sites may be Kız Kalesi, some 6 km to the west of Pompeioupolis in Paphlagonia, situated on a 750 m high isolated promontory, defended by a circuit wall strengthened by circular and quadrangular towers, constructed partially from spolia from Pompeioupolis itself. Cisterns and a chapel can be distinguished.[106] The small fortified enclosure known as Bilecik Kalesi in Lykaonia, to the north-west of Ikonion, near the head of a closed valley with no major route through, probably fulfilled a similar function as a temporary

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[95] It is possibly to be identified with the fortress Phyrokastron mentioned in Basil I's campaign of 878: *TIB* 2, 237.

[96] *TIB* 7, 306.   [97] *TIB* 7, 203.   [98] *TIB* 7, 383.   [99] *TIB* 7, 193.   [100] *TIB* 7, 93.

[101] *TIB* 7, 306.   [102] *TIB* 4, 245.   [103] *TIB* 9, 251.   [104] *TIB* 4, 186 with sources.

[105] Foss and Winnfield 1986, 140–2.   [106] *TIB* 9, 234–5.

refuge,[107] as did the more substantially defended defensive structure at Gavurevi in Phrygia, well off any major roads, of no strategic value, but in a relatively well-populated region.[108] Such sites can be found associated also with more important centres which attracted hostile attention. The small defended site at Kayser Kale, situated on a promontory of the Türkmen-Dağı at a height of some 1400 m above sea-level, for example, is north-east of Kotyaion and would offer shelter to local people wishing to escape Arab raiders in that area as well as serving as a base for local soldiers.[109] A similar but more extensive site at Saruhanlar, 90 km west of Dorylaion, probably functioned in the same way – neither is located in a strategically advantageous position from a military point of view.[110] There are many others. And while the evidence for this period is still sparse, there seems little reason to doubt that the strategy of removing the local population to safe refuges when an enemy raid was expected, described in such detail in the tenth-century treatise *On skirmishing*, and referred to in an earlier treatise drawing on ninth- and possibly eighth-century material, is embodied in such defended sites across the exposed provinces of the empire. This was not an innovation in policy – on the contrary, its main features can be seen already by the sixth century in the Balkans, where similar enclosures have been identified and represent those sometimes described by Prokopios as *erymata*, safe refuges, often fortified with walls and one or more towers, for the rural population in times of danger.[111] The best-known example from our period is perhaps the removal of the non-military populace to the mountain refuges (in the Emirdağ, to the south) around Amorion at the approach of the Arab armies before the siege of 715/16;[112] the towers in the surrounding hills, although not securely dated, may well be associated with Amorion and this strategy, and similar arrangements probably existed for other urban centres.[113]

While little is known of the internal plan of these types of site, most contain cisterns, many also have remains of small churches or chapels. The presence of a church may well suggest a more permanent occupation, since it would appear from surveys in several regions of Anatolia that village

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[107] *TIB* 4, 144–5.   [108] *TIB* 7, 256.   [109] *TIB* 7, 295–6.   [110] *TIB* 7, 376.

[111] Lilie 1976, 171–2. See *De Vel. Bell.* xx, §§9–11; xxi, §1 (Dagron and Mihaescu), and comm., 227f. For the earlier material, see *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, (B) 37, and comm., 158, for the role of the *ekspelatores* whose task it was to evacuate the rural populace to the mountain fastnesses (*ochyromata*) in times of danger. Prokopios: *Buildings*, iv, 1. 34–5 (and cf. iv, 3. 29–30); iv, 5. 3–4, although he uses both *erymata* and *ochyromata* interchangeably at times.

[112] Theoph. 388 (Mango and Scott 1997, 539). For the events surrounding the siege, see Lilie 1976, 124ff.

[113] See Ivison 2007, 34.

settlements nearly always had a church, often located near the centre of the occupied site.[114] In some cases, as well as the towers incorporated into the circuit walls, there were larger towers in the interior – as appears to be the case at the fort at Arısama Dağ in Isauria, for example, one of a chain of such hilltop forts covering one of the main routes northwards out of the Taurus mountains. These central towers – they cannot be called 'keeps' or 'donjons' – may suggest a headquarters building of some sort or, just as probably, the residence of the local military commander and/or a leading member of the local elite. Sometimes these may have been the same person. Whether any of these fortified hilltop sites represent more than refuges or primarily military sites remains unclear – it is not impossible, for example, that some of them did indeed serve as defended homes for members of the local landowning elite, whom we will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 8, while others may in fact incorporate village communities. But until we have more specific archaeological evidence to support such a contention, the question must remain unanswered.[115] And there are a number of similar sites which may have quite different functions – the small hilltop site at Çadır Höyük, already mentioned, may have fulfilled formal defensive functions, but it more likely represents a purely domestic agrarian installation. While there is some limited evidence for sixth-century and possibly later occupation, the securely dated material for the defended area relates to the middle Byzantine period (tenth–eleventh centuries) rather than earlier.[116] We must be extremely cautious, therefore, in making assumptions about the apparent functions of such sites based only on the presence of – for example – defensive structures.

In the Balkans, where the archaeological situation is somewhat better, the pattern is not dissimilar, in spite of a somewhat different strategic geography, with fortified coastal centres, such as Dyrrhachion and Salona in the west, or Methoni, Corinth, Athens, and Thessaloniki, along with some major land routes, protected by groups of fortified hilltop settlements. Like the coastal settlements of Anatolia, these fortified towns could all be supplied by sea, and there is a limited body of numismatic material to suggest that this permitted the continued existence of market activity using the bronze currency, when it was available – as in Athens for Constans II, Philippikos, and Leo III, and Corinth for Constans II and Constantine IV, all of whom sent consignments of bronze for the troops based there.[117] The political

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[114] See *TIB* 5, 132; and the discussion in Belke 2005 (and comment at 433).

[115] And bearing in mind also the discussions in Crow 2009 and Whittow 1995.

[116] Gorny 2005; Cassis 2009.   [117] The evidence and earlier literature in Curta 2005.

frontier in northern Istria, for example, was guarded by a series of small forts or outposts with which cemeteries, containing grave goods which appear to be typical of other sites identified as small garrisons of some sort, can be associated.[118]

For the most part, this picture also reinforces the view that provincial defensive arrangements, whatever their scale, remained the business of the central or provincial military administration, and that there was little room for 'private' fortifications – although many provincial officers must have exploited their authority and officially sanctioned power to their own private and personal advantage.[119] Soldiers certainly appear to have been involved in fortress building, although the evidence is very thin. Soldiers in Constantine V's Balkan expeditions seem to have contributed to the building of the forts with which that emperor protected the borders of Thrace. In 808/9 the disaffected forces under Nikephoros I on campaign in Thrace objected to rebuilding the fortifications of Serdica, which seems otherwise to have been taken as a usual aspect of their duties on campaign. An eighth-century inscription notes that a certain Symeon, imperial *spatharios*, was despatched by the emperors Leo and Constantine to take charge of the repairs to the forteress of Rhodandos on the south-eastern frontier. Later epigraphic evidence also suggests the involvement of soldiers in building and fortification work, while the continued existence and imposition of the obligation of *kastroktisia*, or 'fortress-building' (presumably including maintenance and repair) on local provincial populations is not to be doubted.[120]

Settlement economies

The evidence for any sort of economic activity – production of ceramics or metalworking, for example, or finds of coins, especially bronze coins which might indicate regular monetary exchanges – is very sparse. Yet although we have noted above that the very obvious absence of such coins from virtually all surveyed sites in Asia Minor for the period *c.* 660–800 would seem to indicate a very restricted type of economic activity, we have also noted that the sparse but nevertheless indicative archaeological data from excavations at

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[118] Curta 2006, 98–104.   [119] See esp. Whittow 1995.

[120] See the comments of the editor regarding Constantine's programme of fort-building in Thrace: Nikeph., *Brief history*, § (219); and for Nikephoros I: Theoph., 484 (trans. Mango-Scott 1997, 666); for Symeon: Grégoire 1908; and for later inscriptions, see Haldon 1999a, Ch 7. For *kastroktisia*, see Troianos 1969; and Ahrweiler 1960, 37, n. 2.

urban or fortified sites does not support the notion that there was, therefore, no such activity at all. Indeed, at local and sub-regional levels it would have been possible to carry on substantial amounts of exchange activity using both notional values and equivalences through which to establish prices and using forms of credit or reciprocity, phenomena which occur in many other historical contexts and periods.[121] Even with a drastic reduction in the production of bronze coinage after the reign of Constans II it would have been possible to continue to use older coins still in circulation, for example, which, when located archaeologically, might give the investigator a false impression of when and in what degree these coins were in use.[122] The presence of troops and administrators who were paid, at least in part, in cash, and their needs in respect of clothing, equipment, livestock, and food, even when most of these needs could at certain periods be met by state impositions of one sort or another, must have involved some monetised transactions in most fortresses or fortified urban centres, as well as the activity of some artisans and specialist craftsmen and, as noted above, this was certainly the case in Athens, Corinth, and some other sites for which the numismatic evidence is available. In Anatolia the presence of soldiers and an administration of some sort, and especially with the garrisoning of units along and behind the new 'frontiers' from the 640s, would undoubtedly have enhanced local economic activity for some sectors of the indigenous population. Sporadic finds of coins at sites both in and around urban centres indicate that there was probably always some monetised exchange activity, even in areas quite badly affected by the wars.[123] At Amorion groups of coins from the reigns of Leo III and Theophilos may well indicate military activity, but there is also evidence from the seventh to the ninth centuries which indicates substantial industrial and artisanal production – glass, pottery, metalwork, for example.[124] And Black Sea coastal sites, far from the *foci* of Arab raids, with relatively sheltered hinterlands and access to markets – Amastris offers an excellent illustration, with its close association with the town of Cherson – seem to have maintained a fairly active supra-local economic life, even if the evidence also shows a contraction of site and population at this time.[125]

[121] See above, 484f.

[122] See above, 466ff; Morrisson 2001, 390, with further literature; Reece 2003, 149ff.

[123] See discussion above, 538–48, and Morrisson 2001, 388–92, with the comments in Laiou 2002b, 697–713.

[124] Gill and Lightfoot 2002, 253–8; Lightfoot 2001, 381–6, 398f.; 2003a, 288–92.

[125] Crow and Hill 1995.

The counter-offensive led by the emperors Leo III, Constantine V, and their successors began to change this situation. In spite of the set-backs suffered during the reigns of Eirene and Constantine VI, and the civil strife which affected the Asia Minor provinces in particular in the early 820s, it seems that the early ninth century was a period of relative stability and economic recovery.[126] The limited evidence is contradictory, however. Literary sources can be interpreted to suggest that by the middle of the ninth century, and perhaps already, in some cases, by the later eighth century, the urban settlements of many provinces of the empire were beginning to recover. This is certainly the case for those towns least affected by the wars, such as Nicaea[127] or Trebizond, for example,[128] but it is true also for those which had suffered severely, such as Smyrna,[129] or which had had a primarily military role, such as Ankara, Sebasteia, and similar fortress-towns. In contrast, Amorion, which was sacked in 838 and temporarily abandoned, began to recover only later in the tenth century.[130] The archaeological evidence from the provinces, in particular the ceramic and numismatic material, however, does not provide unequivocal support for this picture of ninth-century recovery and, although it is also true that the archaeology of Anatolian urbanism is still in its infancy in many respects, this is borne out also in the Balkan provinces. And as we have suggested in the case of Euchaita, which lost its strategic value as the frontier advanced and the empire re-asserted its military strength in the east from the ninth century onwards, location and function played a key role in determining what 'recovery' actually meant for any given settlement. More generally, neither the numismatic nor the ceramic record suggests any real change in the situation in urban centres until towards the end of the ninth or the tenth century, with the real upturn in economic activity, as reflected in a very clear increase in the volume of coins, during the eleventh century.[131]

Yet possibly indicative of the changed situation is the fact that a relatively extensive lower fortress was constructed for Ankara in the early ninth century and, although the fortress remained an occasional target for Muslim attacks until after the 850s, the building work suggests a new confidence and

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[126] See our narrative account in Chapters 3–5; and for a survey of the recovery of towns in the ninth century and after, see Harvey 1989, 207–15.

[127] Janin 1925; Schneider 1943.   [128] Cf. Ahrweiler 1962, 30f.; Bryer and Winfield 1985, 178ff.

[129] Foss 1977b, 480ff.   [130] Ivison 2008.

[131] For the numismatic material, see above, 486; and the evidence summarised in Morrisson 2001, 383–4; Hendy 1985, 640ff. For an indicative ceramic record, and discussion of the numismatic data, see the profile from Corinth summarised in Sanders 2000, 163f., 171–3; Sanders 2002, 648–50. See also the summary in Harvey 1989, 210ff.

stability in the region. The point is reinforced by the construction at some point during the ninth century of the church of St Clement outside the walls, while the evidence of coins and ceramics suggests a re-occupation of some areas of the old city by the early tenth century.[132] Similar considerations seem to apply to Amorion before its sack in 838[133] and, further away, the fortified centre at Cherson in the Crimea.[134] As we have also seen in earlier chapters, there is good incidental documentary evidence for an increase in government income from the first half of the ninth century, accompanied by an increase in fiscal administrative effectiveness. But the evidence discussed so far suggests that this had as yet only limited repercussions for the towns.[135]

Many of the towns and *kastra* received an added stimulus from the presence of soldiers and bureaucrats, perhaps with more cash to spend than hitherto, as well as of an ecclesiastical administration. Yet the great majority of these towns were very small. Indeed, they were towns almost entirely by virtue of their function in the government and church administration and military organisation, rather than in respect of their size, and analyses by historians who have employed comparative statistics from the Ottoman period suggest that most of these towns had populations in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Evidence from the form and structure of various buildings within walled centres would support such conclusions for this period.[136]

As for the single largest city in the empire, the demands of the court and population of the city at Constantinople undoubtedly stimulated production in the surrounding provinces, and with relatively uninterrupted production populations will have begun to grow again – already in the last years of the reign of Constantine V there is some evidence that the population of the capital was stabilising and perhaps expanding after the nadir of the middle of the century.[137] While the capital city of the empire is clearly an exception, it is reasonable to assume a generally positive trend from these few facts which, in the broader context sketched out already, and in the context of the evidence for trade and commerce described above, support

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[132] Foss 1977a, 83–4.   [133] See Foss 1977b; Lightfoot 1998a.

[134] See the summary of information in Bortoli and Kazanski 2002, 661–3; and for the Crimean rural hinterland of Cherson, see Aibabin 2005.

[135] Harvey 1989, 31ff., 56–8, 214–15; and for some generalised discussion with evidence for urban economies after the recovery of the ninth–tenth centuries, see Dagron 2002.

[136] See esp. the discussion and evidence presented in Harvey 1989, 198–202; and esp. Bouras 2002 for the built environment and some general comments on the physical characteristics of Byzantine urban centres from the eighth century.

[137] Mango 1985c.

the now generally accepted notion that the first half of the ninth century saw the beginnings of an economic upswing.[138] Equally, of course, it should be borne in mind that the demands of the capital exercised a very particular effect on its hinterland.[139] It attracted the movement of cereals and other agrarian produce from those regions of Asia Minor which had relatively easy access to ports – predominantly Bithynia, Phrygia, Paphlagonia, and the nearer western Anatolian and Aegean regions – and which could be delivered by ship, or from the Thracian hinterland (quite apart from more distant sources, such as Sicily). The city's dependence on its hinterland and on more distant sources of supply is reflected in the rise in prices reported by the chroniclers during periods when these are interrupted.[140] Much of this produce came, by the tenth and eleventh centuries, from imperial estates in Thrace, to feed and provision the imperial household and administration, or from the estates of major private landlords, both individuals and corporate bodies such as monasteries, to feed their own households and personnel. The charitable houses established by the emperors were likewise endowed with substantial properties, and the income was used to support their activities and personnel.[141] These arrangements had their roots in the late Roman world, but the middle Byzantine form in which they appear by the eleventh century probably emerged during the eighth and ninth centuries, as relations with the caliphate finally made north-western Asia Minor secure. The importance of the Thracian districts must always have been vitiated by the Bulgar threat, at least in times of war, and until the destruction of the Bulgars as an independent power much later. Constantinople also attracted a longer-distance trade in meat on the hoof, both pork and mutton, which could be driven over longer distances from the pastures which maintained them. These movements will in turn have enhanced both the monetised economy of the hinterland as well as deformed the regular exchange relationships of the immediate districts from which these products were drawn, affecting prices, for example, in the same way that the presence of a large force of soldiers with demands to be met will also have done.[142]

[138] See above, 455–9; Magdalino 2002.
[139] See Kaplan 2001c (and other chapters in the same volume) on artisanal production at Constantinople.
[140] See Laiou 2002b, 702.   [141] See esp. the discussion in Magdalino 1995.
[142] For the economy of Constantinople and its function as a market, see Hendy 1985, 558–65, and Harvey 1989, 203–7, 208–9; Durliat 1995; Magdalino 1995; Koder 1995; Dagron 2002, 403ff.; Kaplan 2001c. For the effects of the presence of the army on the local economy, Haldon 1999a, 234–9.

Villages, rural society, and local elites

The situation in the rural hinterlands of these fortresses and defended centres is very unclear.[143] It might reasonably be hypothesised that in conditions of general insecurity, in regions affected by warfare or similar disruptive activities, as well as in regions affected by more general changes – long-term demographic decline, for example, which seems to date, with some regional exceptions, from the later fifth or early sixth century across the Mediterranean world – rural communities moved both to more secure locations as well as in towards the regional *foci* to which their non-subsistence production surpluses might normally have flowed. Yet while this may have been the case in areas exposed to constant threats across many years, the degree of continuity and expansion of rural occupation should not be underestimated, even if the evidence is still limited.[144] In coastal regions this appears generally to have meant a movement or withdrawal towards defended but accessible ports or, if the distances involved excluded this possibility, towards well-defended or less-easily accessible or hidden locations, but with access to routes which would permit the population to move goods to local market centres.[145] In inland regions it meant movement towards areas readily accessible from fortified centres, or sites less accessible from major thoroughfares. Communities which produced no exportable surpluses, of course, will have been affected differently, and we must also allow for different patterns of inter-village exchange and communication. The still very limited survey work on parts of Asia Minor, and the somewhat more extensive research on the southern Balkans which has taken this relationship into account, would suggest as much.[146] The degree to which this was in turn both accompanied by and further stimulated an overall reduction in cultivated land, from which the empire began to recover only slowly during the ninth and tenth centuries, remains unclear.[147] Survey archaeology is beginning to have a real impact on our understanding of

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[143] For the late ancient background, however, see the essays on rural survey and landscape change in Bowden, Lavan, and Machado 2004. On the Byzantine village in general, see the essays in Lefort *et al.* 2005.

[144] See Koder 1986, 161–4, for an approach to modelling the relationship between 'central places' and the overlapping spheres of dependent settlements around them; and 164–75 for working hypotheses on the basis of late Roman provincial urbanism; Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 175–9, for the situation in the fifth–seventh centuries; and for the period from the seventh century onwards, see especially the discussion in Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2009.

[145] Koder 1998a, esp. 249–57.

[146] See above, 500ff. with literature; and see in general Koder 1986, 1998; and Lampropoulou 2000, 100–8; Mitchell 2000; Waelkens 2000; Marksteiner 2000, and the discussion at 519–24 above.

[147] Koder 1994.

the countryside in both the Balkans and Asia Minor, but we are still heavily dependent upon literary sources, which are themselves almost entirely silent for this period on the nature and structure of Byzantine villages, although a little evidence can be gleaned from them regarding their economic life.[148]

This is perhaps the more surprising in view of the fact that the village and the land it exploited was the basic fiscal unit of the empire from the early eighth century and probably before, even if it was the local and regional *kastra* from which the system was administered.[149] The little evidence that has been extracted from the available sources shows that many villages of the period were situated on the higher ground near to a good water supply, usually a river or stream, but such that they were afforded some protection from flooding and from severe weather conditions. Many were situated well back from, but with good access to, major roads – a good example has been published from Lycia.[150] Others were situated on promontories or similar sites difficult of access – indeed, it seems from the available literary descriptions of villages that such a protected and defensible or out-of the-way site was to be preferred, in view of the various natural advantages such a location conferred. We read thus of villages situated near marshes and between streams, sites originally selected for the various advantages they were thought to possess. Surveys in parts of the rural hinterland in areas of Bithynia, close to the capital city and well away from any regular threat, as well as around cities such as Sagalassos, in a more exposed region of Anatolia, or around Avkat/Euchaita, suggest a relatively high degree of settlement continuity, with local production of ceramics and other requirements, but with settlements – of indeterminate extent, but probably ranging from farmsteads to larger communities – tending to occupy sheltered or less accessible locations.[151] It is, as we have already noted, very likely that in regions frequently raided by Islamic forces the populations of villages will have withdrawn to those fortified centres which were nearest, although this can rarely have been on a permanent basis. Terracing work was often a feature of such communities, affording both improved land-use and the extension of the settlement, and many villages were defended by walls – indeed, one source of the early eleventh century,

[148] See esp. Kaplan 1992 for the best modern survey and interpretation of the sources regarding middle Byzantine peasant society and village structures, with a detailed analysis of the relevant written sources; supplemented by the essays in Lefort *et al.* 2005.

[149] Kaplan 1992, 185–216; Haldon 1997a, 132–53. For the structure of the rural economy and the social organisation of village life and production, see Lefort 2002; Bryer 2002.

[150] Harrison 1979, 228f.

[151] Geyer and Lefort 2003b, 540; Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2009; Haldon *et al.* 2009.

somewhat later than our period but nevertheless still relevant to the earlier situation, refers to a village as a *kastron*, and it is likely that many of the smaller forts and defended enclosures which recent surveys have revealed, particularly in the frontier zone of Asia Minor, were in effect defended village communities.[152] It is worth recalling, however, that the exploitation of natural resources and the structure of provincial rural economies was a key determinant in settlement site location, and that many settlements of the period before the seventh century were in any case located along the lower slopes of highland regions for reasons connected with the possibilities offered by the local flora and terrain – the exploitation of woodland and scrubland, for example, as well as considerations of water-supply, were two factors that played a role. In other words, we should not assume, on the somewhat limited basis of the evidence currently available for Anatolia, that highland or semi-highland sites were necessarily a response to perceived threats or invasion. As has been shown for the Balkans, patterns of agrarian and pastoral exploitation were just as significant an influence.[153] Not all villages were nucleated settlements, although in some regions the insecurity seems to have stimulated an increase in nucleation as urban populations began to redistribute themselves away from more exposed sites or those which suffered from a decline in essential amenities such as water. Certain areas were characterised by dispersed settlements, connected by a particular road(s) or track(s) and spread across the slopes of a mountainside, a type of settlement pattern typical of predominantly pastoral and mountainous regions.[154] Again, the example of the site at Çadır Höyük may – possibly – represent a type of north-central Anatolian rural settlement. Here was what appears to have been a discreet farming establishment, presumably connected to neighbouring communities or regional market opportunities, producing cereals and raising livestock on a small scale. Other, apparently similar, rural sites may belong to the same class of establishment – at Boğaz Köy, for example, in the central plateau area; or at Kilise Tepe in Cilicia; while in the region around Sagalassos the ceramic survey suggests a variety of rural settlement types.[155]

Towns and many *kastra* were centres of both services and productive activities – carpenters, metalworkers, perhaps potters, all were necessary to town life. But villages were also centres of productive and artisanal activity,

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[152] *Actes de Lavra*, no. 14 (137–8). For further details see Kaplan 1992, 104–10. On village dwellings and related buildings, see Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 177–8.

[153] Dunn 2005a.　　[154] Kaplan 1992, 111–15.

[155] Smith 2007; Cassis 2009 (Çadır Höyük); Schachner 2008 (Boğaz Köy); Bending & Colledge 2007; Jackson 2007, 2009b (Kilise Tepe); Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2009 (Sagalassos area).

and they disposed of their goods with the means appropriate to the times. At Bağsaray, some 20 km south of Sagalassos, for example, a pottery kiln which produced a local semi-fine ware found at a number of sites in the region illustrates one rural manufacture, and it is probably not untypical of many other regions, were the evidence to be available. Where coin was not readily available then potters, for example, could exchange their wares for agricultural produce, oil, wine or whatever the region produced.[156] Indeed, even where coin was to be had, in areas where there were few regular market opportunities (the yearly saint's day festivities and fair, for example) and where coin, especially bronze coin, could not be converted rapidly into gold, exchange was probably a safer and simpler way of carrying out such transactions.[157]

There is also an important difference between undefended rural settlements, on the one hand, and fortresses and other *kastra*-like centres on the other, which made the latter under certain conditions more likely to suffer attack than villages. For they contained soldiers and also administrators, and enemy armies intent on damaging the Byzantines' ability to strike back or to defend themselves were just as likely, if not more so, to concentrate on such targets, in contrast to villages. The latter were certainly a source of booty and above all of forage, but may by the same token have been ignored by raiders with strategic aims in mind, particularly if they were situated away from regular routes of access or transit across Byzantine territory. It has been suggested on the basis of both archaeological and textual evidence that this was the case with much of Boeotia during this period, for example, with relatively flourishing village economies surviving – even if largely demonetised – in the shelter of a number of strongly fortified, well-situated defensible *kastra* such as Thebes or Orchomenos (with the rural settlement at Skripou below the acropolis).[158] It is entirely possible that it applies equally to many other regions of the empire, certainly to those away from the outer zone in Asia Minor which was the object of the most regular small-scale raiding, areas such as Bithynia, for example, occasionally reached by raiding forces but largely unmolested and in the shadow of Constantinople itself.[159]

The role of the small forts and refuges we have discussed above in the rural economy and social system remains entirely obscure in the current state of our knowledge. We may suppose that many of them served as the safe residences of members of the local elite, especially where such individuals

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[156] See Sanders 2000, esp. 170; and for the sixth-century situation, Morrisson and Sodini 2002, 201ff.; for the kiln: Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2009, 180ff.
[157] Sanders 2000, 170.   [158] Trombley 2000; Bintliff and Vroom 2000; Vroom 2004.
[159] Geyer *et al.* 2003.

were military officers in the provincial army, for example, and perhaps also landowners in their own right. These strongholds will have served as ideal bases from which to exercise both military authority and private patronage, reinforcing the power of those who controlled them, whether officially, in their role as provincial military leaders or fiscal officials, or unofficially, as local landlords with their own retinues. They thus constituted a sort of middling 'gentry' or lower elite between the great landlords and members of the state elite, on the one hand, and the rural population at large, on the other. These strata were the source of the lower- and middle-ranking army officers and leaders, some of whom will occasionally have risen beyond this status to high office, improving the fortunes of their family and kin along with them. Combining local vested interests and their military or other state position, they will have formed the backbone of local society throughout the period, investing their surplus wealth in state positions, connections at Constantinople, and, as conditions allowed, in local networks of patronage and power. We occasionally glimpse them in the literary sources, especially during periods of internal strife and civil unrest, and we will discuss some examples in Chapter 8.

The major written sources for the village in the middle Byzantine period are the so-called *Farmer's Law* and the (possibly) tenth-century *Fiscal Treatise*.[160] The former is very problematic in its dating, and while traditionally placed in the eighth or ninth centuries, has now also been attributed to the later tenth century. It sets out the property relations between neighbours in a rural community. Since the text is not localised it is impossible to know whether or not it was meant to reflect all villages in the empire, or only those from a particular region. But it does at least offer some idea of the structure and social relationships within a nucleated village community.[161] The *Fiscal Treatise* was a handbook for tax-assessors, and presents therefore a somewhat one-dimensional view of the village as a fiscal unit. It paints a picture of a densely settled community with a fairly complicated pattern of land-tenure and a varied social composition, including wealthy peasants with substantial holdings, some of which might be sub-let, holdings let out or bought by outsiders, peasants with limited holdings sufficient only to support their families and cover their basic tax-burdens, wage-labourers and

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[160] The question of the date of the *Fiscal Treatise* remains undecided: Oikonomidès 1996a, 44–5, argues for a twelfth-century date.

[161] For the *Farmer's Law*, see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 290–2; also Haldon 1997a, 132ff., with older literature; and Schminck 1999, for a date of compilation in the later ninth century. For the Byzantine village in general and a survey of the literature, see Laiou 2005, esp. 39ff.; and other contributions to Lefort, Morrisson, and Sodini 2005.

artisans, and local craftsmen. Many villagers had their own household gardens adjacent to their dwelling, many did not. Basic crops included cereals, vines and olives, and vegetables, and livestock included sheep, pigs, goats, and cattle, with donkeys and mules as beasts of burden. And although the *Farmer's Law* deals with the village from a different standpoint, and presents a different aspect of the relationships between villagers and their property, the picture it draws is not too different from this.[162]

Archaeological data for whole village communities is still sparse for this period: several village sites in central and northern Syria, Palestine, and Jordan, with continuous occupation until well into the Islamic era, have been surveyed or excavated, and these can tell us something about rural social organisation and economy for those regions. But they may be less relevant to Anatolia and the Balkans in the seventh century and afterwards.[163] Excavations at Olympia in Greece have revealed an early medieval rural community, established in the middle of the sixth century after the destruction (probably by earthquake) of a previous late Roman settlement. Although this community appears to have been displaced during the seventh century, and the site later occupied by a new population (although whence they came remains debated), it may not have been untypical of similar village communities in other regions of the empire through the following centuries: fairly dense building groups along narrow alleys, constructed from spolia, internally plastered, with built-in storage vessels and working surfaces, hearths and simple internal divisions. Individual dwellings were often fronted by open yards. Winepresses provide evidence for part of the economic activities which supported the village, with ovens and kilns, associated with clay moulds as well as lime kilns, pointing to some ceramic production and building activity, while agrarian tools and querns suggest cereal cultivation. Iron slag, as well as bronze and copper ornaments and kitchen vessels, attest to the activities of copper- and black-smithing. In short, it was a well-rounded agrarian community, self-sufficient in many basic requirements. Similar communities are known from other Balkan and Aegean sites, although the chronology of their development, their regional variations, and the nature of their relationships to local urban centres requires a great deal more clarification.[164] From Asia Minor likewise excavation and

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[162] See the account in Harvey 1989, 35ff.; Kaplan 1992, 89–134, 220–31, and esp. 256–80 on the structure of village society; also 2001b. For the *Fiscal Treatise*, see Dölger 1927, 113–23; Ostrogorsky 1927, 4ff.; Oikonomidès 1996a, 44–5.

[163] See Gatier 1994, for example, and other essays in the same volume; Gatier 2005.

[164] Völling 2001; Gregory 1994; Popovic 1982; Avramea 2005; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2005; Rašev, Dinčev & Borisov 2005.

survey of a handful of rural settlements of the fourth to the sixth centuries provide some insight into villages before our period, most notably in Lycia.[165] Recent work has begun to show the nature and extent of both the economic hinterland of such settlements and their physical or spatial organisation, but much remains to be done.[166] Unfortunately, while textual evidence can tell us a little about the shape of rural society, the lack of substantial archaeological material, whether in terms of village structure and building patterns, or in respect of extensive survey and the relationship between settlement and landscape, makes it impossible at the present time to supplement this meagre information.

As well as villages and other types of rural settlement, monastic houses also constituted communities which were actively involved with cultivation and the land.[167] While many were situated in towns, there developed large numbers of monasteries of all sizes in the rural hinterland. Although we have very little information about their organisation and administration before the tenth and eleventh centuries, occasional evidence scattered in letters or similar documents offers some data. As has already been noted, monasteries did not suffer at the hands of Constantine V in quite such a terrible way as described in the ninth-century iconophile sources. Indeed, there were several iconoclast monasteries. But until the later eighth and ninth centuries, the majority of monasteries seem not to have been especially well-endowed with lands and other forms of wealth or investment, although there were undoubtedly exceptions, and Leo III and Constantine V both founded or donated to monastic communities. The expansion of monastic landed wealth begins during the eighth century, and particularly in the years between the first and second waves of iconoclasm, thus between 787 and 815.[168] In the early ninth century the sources speak of monasteries with estates and considerable numbers of tenants, the majority of whom no doubt lived in ordinary villages on or near to the monastic estate, many

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[165] See, for example, the late Roman/early Byzantine-period village of Kanytella (mod. Kanlıdivane), near Korykos (TIB 5, 285–7). The village of Lyrboton Kome (Örenkale), north of Attaleia (*TIB* 8, 2, 696–8), shows evidence of continuous occupation from Hellenistic through to middle and late Byzantine times, but has not been excavated. The major economic activity apart from subsistence agriculture appears to have been olive-oil production to judge from the surviving evidence for oil presses. For the Lycian villages and their layout, see Foss 1991; 1994. There is also a useful comment on the late ancient Anatolian countryside in Wickham 2005, 460ff.

[166] See Koder 2005; for Anatolian rural sites and their layout, see Belke 2005.

[167] For a useful survey of the impact of late antique monasteries on the landscape and in rural society, see Brenk 2004.

[168] This in contrast to the vast landholdings of the church by this time. See Kaplan 1992, 282ff.; Köpstein 1978, 18–21.

employed directly as wage-labourers while at the same time farming their own smallholdings.[169] Monasteries in the region of the capital exported their surpluses, delivering both grain and other goods in their own vessels, often to jetties or wharves which they themselves owned or rented in one of the harbours.[170] Monasteries were consumers of produce as well as of services and often attracted craftsmen and other artisans, who in turn needed feeding and clothing, thus drawing local producers into another market, separate from that of the regional towns and castles.[171]

The dramatic transformation of the urban and rural landscape of the Balkans, the Aegean region, and Asia Minor was not simply a result of the events of the sixth or seventh century. On the contrary, the process reflected at once both the highly regionalised economic and demographic sub-systems of which the Roman world was already composed, as well as a number of much longer-term, regionally differentiated trends. Many of these divergences were already quite apparent by the early sixth century; they had for long served to distinguish one region from another, and in particular they marked important variations between the trajectory of economic and sub-regional development in Asia Minor, on the one hand, and on the other that of the eastern provinces, as well as between the central and southern Balkan provinces and those of the Italian peninsula or the former Roman provinces of the west. By the later seventh century the still somewhat fragile archaeological picture suggests that a new hierarchy of settlement and of urbanism was also rapidly evolving in Anatolia, in which those centres selected by the state for major military and administrative functions, often also occupying significant strategic locations (Amorion is the best excavated example to date), now occupied the senior role, maintaining substantial military and non-military (artisanal, industrial, agrarian, and administrative) populations, impressive defensive *enceintes*, and related structures, as well as a citadel. When the Arab geographer Ibn Khurradadhbi, basing his account on reports from the first half of the ninth century, notes that each province of the empire has a particular number of fortresses and strongholds, rather than cities, it seems that he accurately reflects the perception of contemporaries in this respect.[172] But the archaeology also reveals a high degree of regional variation across the Anatolian landscape, so that the general phenomena generated often very different results and

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[169] Kaplan 1993a; cf. Smyrlis 2002. For the structure of such estates – whether secular, monastic or ecclesiastical, see Sarris 2004a, 2004b.
[170] Magdalino 1995, 41–3 with sources.
[171] Lebecq 2000 discusses this from the point of view of Frankish monasteries.
[172] Ibn Khurradadhbi, 77–80.

different forms region by region. During the eighth and ninth centuries this emergent pattern was to play a key role in shaping the social and cultural landscape of the whole society, its politics, and the way the state secured its survival. More than any other feature, it gave the medieval Byzantine world its physical shape, its context, and its culture-specific texture.

8 | Social elites and the court

How was Byzantine society configured during the period with which this volume is concerned? This is a hard question to answer in detail, partly owing to the lack of sources which shed any direct light on the question. It is not too difficult to gain some idea of the ways in which the government elite evolves, but it is much more problematic to say anything about the composition of this elite and about its origins, or anything about the great mass of the rural population in Anatolia and the Balkans. There are enough scraps of evidence, however, to paint a picture, albeit a somewhat impressionistic one, of Byzantine society in the eighth and ninth centuries, a picture which becomes a little clearer towards the end of our period but which remains, nevertheless, ambiguous.

That Byzantine society changed considerably between the later seventh and mid-ninth century is not in doubt. Not only did the composition, character, cultural values, and political focus of the elite evolve, but the social and economic situation of the mass of the population was also very different from that of the middle of the seventh century and before. The older, senatorial establishment – itself the product of the rise of the late Roman aristocracy of service – transformed itself into an ecclesiastical and governmental service elite, especially in and around Constantinople, where it was absorbed into a palatine hierarchy of rank, status, and office. Warfare and economic disruption, lack of resources, and the localisation of regional economic activity reduced the economic power and independence of these upper levels of society, with a corresponding increase in the power of the emperors. The archaeological data reviewed in the preceding chapters reinforces the picture of a fragmented and regionalised pattern of exchange and production, as it does that of an imperial heartland in Anatolia divided into at least two distinctive zones, one – that of the plateau and eastern inland regions – distinctly less well-off than the other, divided from the centre of imperial power and influence by distance and more difficult overland communications, factors which affected the attitudes of those members of the imperial military and civil elite whose origins or homelands lay there. Such differences had always been present, but in the particular conditions of the seventh and eighth centuries, when imperial territory was largely

restricted to Anatolia, the Aegean basin, and southern Thrace, they were brought out in stronger relief than hitherto. Provincial administration and the leading elements of provincial society were militarised. New solidarities evolved among landowners and imperial officials, or between the military and the rural population. New tensions appeared between different interest groups vying for access to imperial positions and influence at court or in the church, influence which would in turn consolidate or give access to power and wealth in the home province. New kinship groupings and new networks of patronage, essential aspects of any society, begin to become obvious and receive recognition as important markers of social and political status or identity. Social status and power were more than ever before intimately bound up with the imperial household, and social ambitions were focused on achieving and holding on to Constantinopolitan connections and influence. The vestiges of the old elite merged in the course of the eighth century with those of provincial or middling social origins who provided the backbone of the imperial civil and military administration outside the capital. Some of these changes reflected and were stimulated by imperial policy in respect of tax-collection or provincial military administration, others reflected broader trends in the economic structure of the Byzantine world. The conflicts, tensions, and political-ideological upheavals of the period are reflections of this dynamic, changing, and evolving society.

Yet the pattern is by no means constant across the whole period. Up to the 720s, approximately, opposition to the emperors in Constantinople certainly reflected the personal rivalries and vested interests of senior officers, many of them from the old senatorial aristocracy of service. Such rivalries were, however, situated in a general context in which the sentiments and anxieties of a wider section of the provincial and metropolitan population about the political situation of the empire played a key role.[1] Under Leo III and his successors this situation was stabilised as the empire's political and economic situation improved. Instead, and as competition for posts and status became focused entirely on the imperial court, rebellion and opposition reflected the tensions generated by this Constantinopolitan bottleneck among the various individual and kin-based vested interests of regional and metropolitan elites. Yet this situation also achieved greater stability, as the leading elements of provincial society became themselves more firmly established, and evolved their own routes of access to and influence at court and in the capital. It is notable that after the great rebellion of Thomas the Slav there were virtually no more serious provincial rebellions

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[1] See Chapter 1; Haldon 1986a.

of the sort that had marked the eighth and early ninth centuries – plots and rebellions there were, but of a very different nature, restricted for the most part to the efforts of individual members of the state elite, usually in Constantinople itself, to seize power for themselves or a co-conspirator.[2] The scene was set for the rise of the great families of the tenth–eleventh centuries and the struggle for power and resources which that brought with it.

We will begin with the most visible social stratum, those who made up the social, economic, and political elite of the empire. These are the individuals who dominate the chronicles and histories of the period, and who have left their trace in other types of source, such as sigillography, archaeology, and epigraphy; and we will look at their evolution from three different perspectives: their social composition; their access to rank and status; and their access to income and other sources of wealth.

Towards a new social elite

The middle Byzantine elite of courtiers, government, and military officials replaced the late Roman establishment, dominated by the so-called 'senatorial' aristocracy, during the course of the seventh century.[3] The process by which this occurred, the extent to which there was a continuity of families of personnel, and the degree of continuity in respect of land-ownership and offices remain very obscure. The social-economic position of the late Roman senatorial elite was certainly affected by the political and economic changes which the empire experienced during the seventh century. The persecution of some senatorial families during the reign of Phokas (602–10), for example, with the accompanying confiscations of property, has been seen as one contributory factor. Another was certainly the effects of hostile military activity, first of the Persians, then, and perhaps more persuasively, of the Arabs after 640. Political upheavals and further persecutions during

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[2] See the remarks of Winkelmann 1987a, 35, 96f. and Kaegi 1981, 270ff.

[3] For the later Byzantine elite, see the articles in Angold 1984a; and esp. three contributions by Cheynet (2000; 1996; and 1990), with more recent literature; also Kazhdan 1997; Kazhdan and McCormick 1997; Oikonomidès 1997; Stephenson 1994. On the seventh-century situation, the survey article by Ostrogorsky 1971 presents an overly simplified analysis which casts little light on this difficult period; while Yannopoulos 1975 offers a rather unsatisfactory survey of titles and offices and their social context. For an attempt to examine the problem in its broader context, see Haldon 1997a, 153–71, 389–99; Haldon 2004. The best analytical account of the growth of the middle Byzantine bureaucratic elite is Winkelmann 1987a; with Patlagean 1984. See the detailed analysis of Nichanian (forthcoming), which pursues these issues more closely.

the second reign of Justinian II (705–11) in the opening decade of the eighth century have been seen as contributing a further important element. This resulted, according to a generally accepted view, in the decimation of the senatorial elite and a real reduction in the number of large estates in the provinces.[4]

But these assumptions bring with them some difficulties. To begin with, it is clear that, in spite of the encroachment of powerful laypersons on some ecclesiastical lands during the sixth and first half of the seventh century, the estates of the church survived through the period of Arab raids. Quite apart from the tenth-century evidence, which shows that bishops retained their position as the heads of extensive church estates, and evidence from the eighth century onward that makes it clear that they held quite elevated social status, incidental material illustrates the continuity of ecclesiastical lands: the metropolitan of Nicaea, Ignatios, wrote a number of letters in the early years of the ninth century about matters connected with the church lands under his authority, especially in respect of fiscal charges. There is nothing to suggest that these lands had not been in the possession of the church of Nicaea since before the seventh century, even if this is to argue from silence, and there is no evidence of a substantial-enough degree of discontinuity to persuade us that continuity was not the norm for all church lands which remained within the imperial frontiers. A little before Ignatios was writing, Theodore the Stoudite refers in a letter of *c.* 814 to the activities of bishops who enrich themselves through exploiting or seizing the properties of those placed under their authority. Ignatios also refers to the case of a local tax-collector (*dioiketes*) in the district of Taion within the metropolitanate of Nicaea, who had inherited from his father a plot of land that had originally belonged to the church and which had been improperly taken into private hands. The letter is dated in the 820s or 830s, and thus the illegal seizure of the land probably occurred in the later decades of the eighth century.[5] And the church was concerned in the 690s that bishops were leaving their sees because of hostile raids, a worry which reflected both pastoral matters and the economic interests of the church in the provinces.[6]

The imperial household and palace likewise continued as a major landowner in its own right after the seventh century. This is apparent in

[4] See Stein 1919, 157ff; Ostrogorsky 1968, 112. But more cautiously: Winkelmann 1978, 195–200.

[5] Ignatios, *Ep.*, 17, and comm., p. 176.

[6] For the tenth-century material, see the discussion with sources in Kaplan 1992, 282ff. For Ignatios of Nicaea, see Ignatios, *Ep.*; and Mango 1981. For discussion on the content on some of these letters, see Kazhdan 1992, 197–201 and Haldon 1994, 127, 140–3. For the letter of Theodore the Stoudite, see Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 11.85–125. For the 690s: canon 18 of the Quinisext, in Mansi xi, 952B–C.

the existence of considerable estates under various officials in the sources of the ninth century and after (and subject to a variety of administrative changes – most seem originally to have been placed under the *comes rei privatae* or with the *domus divinae* and the imperial *patrimonium*, institutions which were radically transformed during the seventh and eighth centuries). It is clear also in the fact that Nikephoros I is reported to have recovered lands granted from the imperial estates to the church and to monasteries by certain of his recent predecessors. He also insisted on the collection of taxes on such lands. Finally, a considerable number of seals of *kouratores* of imperial lands exist, especially from the mid-eighth century on, but for the later seventh also.[7]

There is, unfortunately, virtually no solid evidence upon which to found any hypothesis in respect of the extent to which the landowning elite of the later sixth and early seventh century retained its lands and survived beyond the middle of the seventh century. Unlike in the late Roman and early medieval west, where a strong degree of genealogical continuity among the elites of the period from the fifth to tenth century has been demonstrated and accepted for some years,[8] such continuities are much more difficult to demonstrate in Byzantium. The most frequently cited text called upon by historians to illustrate the existence of large estates in the seventh and eighth centuries is the *Life* of St Philaretos, a Paphlagonian landowner born at the beginning of the eighth century, whose estates are described in the hagiography as being very extensive. Although much of the *Life* has been shown to be invention based on classical models, the details of the estate, exaggerated as they probably are, may be assumed to have some purchase in the reality of the times, if only for the rhetorical purposes of the text.[9] Given the continued existence, even if in a somewhat altered form, of ecclesiastical and state lands, it has generally been (reasonably) assumed that private landlords of substance and considerable landed property also survived, at least in those regions least affected by Arab raids – Paphlagonia, for example, certainly did suffer, but far less than more exposed regions in southern and eastern Anatolia (the significant role played by certain Paphlagonians in

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[7] For the sigillographical material, see the summary and list in Kaplan 1991. Nikephoros' policy, one of the notorious 'ten evil deeds' ascribed to him by the hostile chronicler Theophanes: Theoph., 487, 489 (Mango and Scott 1997, 668, 672). The history of the imperial estates and their various administrative structures is discussed by Kaplan 1992, 310–26.

[8] See esp. Demandt 1980.

[9] *V. Philareti*, 117. For discussion of the factual content of the text, see Nesbitt 1969, 150ff.; Evert-Kappesowa 1963; and the detailed deconstructive analysis of the text by Ludwig 1997. In his commentary to the new edition, Rydén provides a summary of views on the historical value of the *Life*.

Byzantine palace circles from the ninth century onward may perhaps be, to a degree at least, a reflection of this relatively protected situation, and may also be associated with the fact that Paphlagonia – and therefore its landowners – appears to have supplied corn to Constantinople[10]).

By the middle of the ninth century references to wealthy landed families in hagiographical texts are not uncommon, although there is usually no detail other than the fact that such estates existed or were assumed to lie behind the family's wealth – the *Lives* of Eustratios, Eirene of Chrysobalanton, and Blasios of Amorion, as well as those of Eudokimos and the empress Theodora, all have this in common, and there are plenty of other references to extensive landed properties to suggest that they were quite common.[11] For the eighth century, in contrast, we have only the *Lives* of Philaretos and Theophanes the Confessor,[12] and some hints in the *Life* of Theodore of Stoudion,[13] although it seems reasonable to take the texts as indicative of circumstances which were not unusual. And as we shall see, many other important and powerful persons of the eighth century, about whom we have some biographical details, came from wealthy, landowning families. Theophanes' father, Isaac, offers a particularly useful, if isolated, example – a *drouggarios* in the Aigaion Pelagos division in the 750s and 760s (he died in 763) and a man of substantial property. His son, Theophanes, was engaged to Megalo, likewise from a wealthy neighbouring family. Clearly, substantial landed estates were entirely usual at this period, and there is no reason to think that they had ever ceased to exist where conditions permitted.[14] Whether any of the gigantic properties of the great senatorial aristocrats of the sixth century, which included estates in several different provinces, had survived, however, is unknown. Among the fiscal measures introduced by Nikephoros I, the levying of arrears of taxation on the estates of private landlords is likewise indicative that such private estates, probably quite substantial, existed.[15] Whether the owners of such properties were

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[10] For Paphlagonians at this time, see Magdalino 1998b; and for Paphlagonian grain and the supply of Constantinople, Chapter 7.

[11] See Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 209, 211f., 217, 228f. (*BHG* 278, 606, 645, 952, 607). The properties of the widow Danelis in the Peloponnese are the usually quoted example: see *V. Basilii imp.*, 319 (and cf. 228).

[12] Brubaker and Haldon 230f. (*BHG* 1787z).   [13] See below.

[14] *V. Theoph.*, §§5–6 (4); §23 (16). According to the *Life*, Isaac was treated with great favour by Constantine V – whether his estates were a result of this or were part of a family inheritance is unknown. His wife, Theodote, however, was also from a wealthy family.

[15] See Theoph., 487, 489 (Mango and Scott 1997, 668, 672). Theophanes refers to the landowners as *archontes*, generally signifying persons with imperial titles or posts and/or of substantial social standing, and to their properties as *oikoi*, probably to be understood in the technical sense of 'estates' as used in late Roman documents (cf., for example, Gascou 1985).

the descendants of the earlier provincial elites or had acquired their lands more recently – perhaps through imperial service – must remain an open question.

One way of approaching the question of the composition of the elite in the eighth and ninth centuries is to examine the names of state and ecclesiastical officials for evidence of continuity or change in naming, and thus for evidence for a shift (or not) in the composition of those who made up the dominant elements in society and state; and second, by a brief prosopographical survey of the available evidence to see (a) if there is evidence which will support one of the two contentions noted above; and (b) if any clear elements across several generations of continuity within particular families, for example, inside the imperial or ecclesiastical administration can be found. The results presented in the following represent only a brief sounding of the relevant documentation.

First, it has been remarked that there survives a substantial number of lead seals which can be dated before the eighth century and in which a relationship between father and son is explicitly mentioned[16] while, as we will see below, the later seventh and eighth centuries see the appearance of a substantial number of nicknames or descriptive epithets. Given that the majority of the former group of seals will have belonged to members of the imperial administrative system at some level or other, whether metropolitan or provincial, this may be interpreted as an indication of continuity and of consciousness of continuity. It must have been the case that those leading members of the state whose lands and family interests lay chiefly in the eastern provinces affected most by Arab raiding, or in the Balkans, where 'barbarian' raids or the more-or-less permanent occupation of formerly imperial territory must have led to substantial dispossession, suffered from the effects of the wars. No doubt some were able, through imperial favour or family connections, to obtain lands to replace those that had been lost, but not all can have done this, and indeed many may have died, stayed in their provinces under the new regime, or – in the eastern provinces – even converted to Islam. This political and military instability encouraged the need to appoint competent and able persons to positions of military and political authority, to move such persons around to carry out functions the emperors deemed necessary, and thus to stimulate a shifting and fluid bureaucratic-military establishment. Insecurity in such contexts is usually high, as has been well-established by many studies, both theoretical and empirical, of bureaucracies, encouraging both maximum exploitation of

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[16] Nesbitt 1977.

the possibilities open to the office-holder during their period of tenure, and the building of factions and cliques intended to secure the fortunes of particular – constantly fluctuating – groups of individuals at court and in the provinces. This also introduces an element of insecurity at the level of the ruler, who is usually dependent on his highest officials, and thus needs to be sure of their loyalty. Increasing the dependence on the emperor's person of the highest officials was one way of securing this end; regularly transferring individuals from one post to another was another. It might be said that the more insecure the members of the state establishment were, the more secure the emperor, since he thus maximised their dependency upon his goodwill. Of course, this could work to his disadvantage – a fine balance between pushing too many of the leading elements of the elite too far into insecurity and anxiety for their positions and physical safety had to be kept. The reign of Justinian II provides some useful illustrations.[17]

The question of names, while by no means conclusive, can provide some broad hints as to the nature of the changes. Naming customs and traditions are complex, reflecting both the cultural identities and ambitions of those who bestow names as well as their actual social situation, linguistic context, and cultural knowledge or awareness. Any conclusions we may permit our-selves to draw from this limited body of evidence can be little more than symptomatic of the sorts of changes we are trying to detect. For example, we can take the names of all those bearing the title of *patrikios* – with those of *hypatos* and *apo hypaton*, the highest rank in the system of titles awarded to officials of both the military and civil administration during the seventh and early eighth century – in the period *c.* 650/60–*c.* 720, and compare the names (first names, nicknames, family names) with those of officials of similar rank in the preceding period, i.e. from *c.* 600 to about 650/60. For the period up to 668, the year of the assassination of Constans II in Syracuse, three non-Greek/non-Latin names out of forty illustrate the relative cultural homogeneity of the elite in respect of their broadly 'Roman' identity. If we take into account the adoption of Greek names by some outsiders, the tendency nevertheless suggests that the assumption of a Greco-Roman cultural belonging was important to the great major-ity. In contrast, for the period between 668 and 717 (accession of Leo III) there are some thirty-four named *patrikioi* in the literary sources, of whom, however, fourteen have either non-Greek/non-Latin names, or nicknames

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[17] Analysis of such relationships should begin with Weber's classic discussion of patrimonial power structures, and the tension between centralised, 'despotic' power and decentralised 'aristocratic' particularism: see Weber 1968, 3, 1006–69. For modern discussions, see Kautsky 1982; and the discussion in Mann 1986, esp. 167–74; and Runciman 1989, 155–6, 190–7.

describing physical or personal attributes – such as *Myakios*, 'little mussel',[18] *Bouraphos*, 'palmstitcher', *Rizokopos*, 'root-cutter'.[19] Many of these belong to the period following the deposition of Justinian II in 695 or to his second reign (705–11). They may reflect both his reportedly fierce persecution of those members of the Constantinopolitan and senatorial elite who had conspired against him, as well as his promotion of many men of humble origin to positions of great power and high rank.[20]

Care should be taken in interpreting this information, of course.[21] Nicknames are found throughout the preceding period, sometimes among high-ranking persons, as reference to the index of the *Chronographia* of Theophanes or indeed the *Wars* of Prokopios demonstrates. Furthermore, neither 'foreign names' nor nicknames necessarily indicate newcomers or outsiders: the illegitimate son of the emperor Herakleios was named Athalarichos, for example, although bearing also the Christian name John;[22] while in the year 676/7 a certain John Pitzigaudes, picked by Constantine IV to conduct delicate negotiations with Mu'awiya (which he did with great success), is described by Theophanes' source as 'the *patrikios* John, surnamed Pitzigaudes, a man of ancient lineage in the state and possessed of much experience and excellent judgement'. Whatever 'of ancient lineage' means, it clearly suggests an old-established family with its roots perhaps in the time of Herakleios or earlier, and seems also to apply to several other persons of whom a little is known at this period (see below).[23] Various high-ranking officials appear in the sources for the first half of the eighth century with nicknames or descriptive attributes, such as *Anthrax, Xylinites* or *Monotes*,[24] but there is no way of knowing whether they represent newcomers to the elite or not. What does seem significant, however, is the

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[18] See Patlagean 1984, 29; although it has also been suggested that the name derives from the Armenian Hmayak, associated with various elite clans (see Adontz 1970, 344; 1934, 242).

[19] These names were collected, almost entirely from literary sources, by the French scholar Rodolphe Guilland in the 1950s and 1960s and, although giving only a very partial view, do suggest a change in the constitution of the highest levels of the imperial administration. See Guilland 1960 and 1970.

[20] As noted by Winkelmann, 1978, 207–10.

[21] Methodological pitfalls underlined by Winkelmann 1987a, 197–207; also Seibt 2002.

[22] See Nikeph., 58, 72; *PLRE* IIIA: Ioannes 260. The Gothic name may reflect the origins of the concubine whose son John-Athalarichos was. For nicknames, occupations, and ethnonyms on seals or inscriptions for the sixth and seventh centuries, see esp. Nesbitt 1977.

[23] *PBE*, Ioannes 3; *PmbZ*, no. 2707. For detailed presentation and analysis of the sources, the entries in the *PmbZ* are indispensable; and on individual sources, *PmbZ, Prolegomena*.

[24] Niketas Anthrax: Theoph., 401.1 (Mango and Scott 1997, 552); Nikeph., 126; *PBE*, Niketas 2; *PmbZ* no. 5371; Niketas Xylinites: Theoph., *Chron.*, 400.18–26 (trans. Mango-Scott 1997, 552); Nikeph., 126; *PBE*, Niketas 3; *PmbZ*, no. 5372; Theophanes Monotes/Monotios: Theoph., 415.13 (Mango and Scott 1997, 575); Nikeph., 134; *PBE*, Theophanes 1; *PmbZ*, no. 8092.

fact that members of the older elite or dominant class do not appear to have signalled their ancestry through the use of family names, a reflection, perhaps, of the changed system of values which affected the upper levels of state service and the power elite. In the letters of Theodore of Stoudion, for example, family names play virtually no role in the mode of address; and as has been noted, even in the *Chronography* of Theophanes (written in 813) only nine names occur which become family names – so identified on the basis of their re-appearance as such in the following centuries, although there are over twenty epithets which may also have served this purpose.[25] The names of *patrikioi* thus provide only a faint hint of possible changes in the constitution of the ruling elite.

Names can point to a second indicator, insofar as they can be used to identify those of foreign origins or identity who appear in imperial service at this time. Armenians had frequently filled military positions in the empire well before the seventh century, but beginning with the reign of Maurice, increasing in impetus during the reign of Herakleios, the number of those bearing Armenian names increases very markedly during the middle and later years of the seventh century. The phenomenon has been well studied, and need not detain us here, except to remark that it illustrates both the movement of members of Armenian elite clans away from Islamic pressure, as well as the Constantinopolitan regime's need for experienced and competent officials, in the military sphere above all, for this is where the majority – although certainly not all – are to be found. It reflects also, of course, the increased strategic importance of Armenia to the much-reduced empire of the middle and later seventh century. It is, once again, therefore, a useful indication of a trend, in which the imperial government placed especial emphasis on functional demands and skills.

The increase in 'outsiders' (Iranian, Slavic, and Germanic names show that it was not just Armenians who were involved) reflects possibly a relative decline in the numbers and influence of the traditional Roman elite at court.[26] Names of officials with the titles of *patrikios, hypatos, apo hypaton*, as well as members of slightly lower-ranking groups such as *apo eparchon*, include the Armenian/Iranian Arazates (Razat), Arsakios (Arshak), Artabasdos (Artavazd), Artakios, Mousilios/Mouselios (Musheg'), Saborios (Shahpur), Vasakios (Vashak), Vaanios (Vahan), Kosoroes (Khosrov), Rostomios (Rustam), the Turkic Baianos (Baian) and Tourganes (Turhan)

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[25] See the discussion in Winkelmann 1985, 146ff., with discussion of the relevant literary and sigillographic sources; Cheynet 1996, 273–4; Kazhdan 1997.

[26] See Charanis 1961; 1959; Winkelmann 1987a, 203–7, with further literature. Some nuances to these arguments in Gero 1985. See also Ditten 1983, 100ff.

(although the seal is dated to the first half of the seventh century), the uncertain Onkeatos (perhaps related to Armenian Ontch'rak)[27], and Arabic Oulid (Walid) and Arsaphios (Ashraf).[28] Those bearing other high-ranking titles, *hypatos* and *apo hypaton*, who often seem to have been even more important than *patrikioi* until the middle of the eighth century, indicate a similar tendency.

But 'foreigners' often seem to have become Romanised quite quickly, a process undoubtedly assisted by the need to assimilate in respect of belief: thus the *hypatos* Ziper, very probably of non-Roman origins, named his son Epiphanios, while the *apo hypaton* Meze, of Armenian origins, had a son called John; and the Armenian Serop named his son Nikephoros.[29] Other examples include the *patrikios* Sisinnios Rhendaki(o)s, a high-ranking confidant of the emperor Artemios (and the name re-appears in the tenth century, although it is impossible to ascertain whether or not it represents the same family), undoubtedly a Slav name and therefore a relative newcomer to the establishment;[30] while the clan of the Boilades, Bulgar in origin, and important by the later ninth century, has been traced back tentatively to the early eighth century.[31] A similar case of a high-status newcomer to the central establishment or elite seems to be presented by the emperor and former commander of the Kibyrrhaiot forces, Apsimar, who seized power

[27] See Winkelmann 1987a, 158, for a later eighth/early ninth-century seal of a certain Nikephoros, *protospatharios* and domestic of the Hikanatoi, named Ontz[ou]rak. These names are all evidenced by seals, see: *ZV* 721, 1089, 1672; Seibt, *Bleisiegel*, 1335 (Vasakios); *ZV* 1086, 1671, 2569 (Vaanes); *ZV* 590A (Arazat); *ZV* 591 (Arsakios); *ZV* 1115, 1420 (Arsaphios); Seibt, *Bleisiegel*, 54; *ZV* 986 (Artakios); *ZV* 946, 947 (Mouselios); *ZV* 3046 (Rostomios; cf. 2343); *ZV* 594 (Baianos); Seibt, *Bleisiegel*, 199 (Tourganes); *ZV* 1566, 1567, 3042 (Oulid). They all bear the titles *patrikios, hypatos, apo hypaton*, or *stratelates*, although many of the same names are also found with lesser titles/offices. See *PBE*, Arazat 1; *PmbZ*, no. 583; Mouselios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 5195; Saborios 1/Saburrus 1; *PmbZ*, nos. 6476, 6478; Basakios 2, 5; *PmbZ*, nos. 822, 826; Arsakios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 613; Baanes 12 (cf. also Baanes 16, 17); *PmbZ*, nos. 725, 714, 710; Chosroes 1; *PmbZ*, no. 1074; Rostoumios 1/ Rostom 1; *PmbZ*, nos. 6430, 6429; Onkeatos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 5653. See also *PBE*, Tourganes 1, which may in fact be a non-Greek dignity rather than a proper name.

[28] Other names occur which have not been identified, for example Diazouzis (*ZV* 1281A; *PmbZ*, no. 1333). There are in addition many other 'new' names with lesser or no titles attached: Saperozan (*ZV* 684, 685), Zadon (*ZV* 723; *PmbZ*, no. 8640), Sabour/Saborios (*ZV* 979A) and so forth (cf. *PBE*, Saperozan 1, Sachperozan; *PmbZ*, no. 6483).

[29] See *ZV*, nos. 2572 and 1460 (Ziper and Epiphanios: cf. *PBE*, Ziper 1; *PmbZ*, no. 8651; Epiphanios 37; *PmbZ*, no. 1559); *ZV* 363, 388 for Meze (= Armenian Mec, 'big') and John (*PBE*, Meze 1; Ioannes 338; *PmbZ*, nos. 4988, 2883), and for Serovbe/Serop, *ZV* 2229, with Winkelmann 1987a, 204; *PBE*, Serop 1; Nikephoros 44; *PmbZ*, nos. 6693, 5262.

[30] See esp. Ditten 1983, 104–9, with sources, literature, and an etymology of the name; and Cheynet 1996, 273. Malingoudis 1988, 1994, suggests that Rhendakios was 'from among the Slavs of the Helladic region', but there is nothing to substantiate this claim. See *PmbZ* no. 6752.

[31] See Winkelmann 1987a, 181f., with further literature; *PmbZ*, nos. 3869, 3389, 5209 and lit.

from Leontios in 698, and whose son, Theodosios, later became archbishop of Ephesos and an important iconoclast.[32]

A prosopographical search through all sources, both literary and sigillographic, for the period *c.* 650–750 bears this pattern out. Thus of a sample of approximately 100 persons with the title *patrikios* for the period *c.* 650–700, 12 per cent have Armenian or other non-Greek names, whereas for the following half-century the proportion rises to some 19 per cent; for those with the rank of *apo hypaton*, the proportions are 5 per cent and 10 per cent.[33] Our interpretation of this relative increase in non-Greek names, fragile an evidential base though it may be, suggests a larger number of 'foreigners' or 'outsiders' to the older imperial establishment at the highest levels of Byzantine service around the year 700 than sixty or so years earlier.[34] Given the shrinkage of the empire territorially and the reduction of the central bureaucracy to those departments necessary to administer the remaining territories, this implies a reduction in the proportion of senior posts held by members of the traditional dominant class, and thus a decrease in the number of officials drawn from the senatorial establishment, as far as it had survived the rigours of the political and military upheavals of the middle and later seventh century.

But it is important to note that many of these 'newcomers' already belonged to an elite – the Armenians, for example, were for the most part members of their own nobility or aristocratic elite at various levels, some very senior, others less senior, but certainly not from the humbler strata of society. And in the case of the Bulgarian Boilas clan, which appears at the end of the eighth century, the name derives quite clearly from an elite background. Senior officers of Syrian origin, such as *logothetes* of the *genikon* George, 'the Syrian', an official who had also held the post of general *kommerkiarios*,[35] or the *komes tou Opsikiou*, Isoes (to judge from his

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[32] See *PBE*, Tiberios 2; Theodosios 3 (*PmbZ*, nos. 7845, 8483).

[33] Data drawn from a search in *PBE*. The chronological definitions for this type of search – by title and period – are necessarily very broad (in half-centuries), while it is not always possible to know whether seals belonging to persons of the same name and period, with no other clearly distinguishing features, represent one individual or several. Such a search therefore offers only the crudest of indicators; nor does it or can it take into account the issue of 'fashion' in naming, which may affect naming choices for particular families or groups in particular contexts. But it would appear to support the notion of an increase in the presence in central government of persons bearing non-Greek or non-standard names at this period.

[34] See the remarks on naming traditions and their interpretation for Byzantine Italy at this time in McCormick 1998b, 19–21.

[35] Brandes 2002, 186–7, with sources and discussion; *PmbZ*, no. 2105. George must again have come from a well-educated background, and perhaps, like Isoes, belonged to a group of Syrian

name[36]), probably came from similar high-status backgrounds, in this case 'provincial' rather than 'foreign', if those terms can be employed in this context. Isoes the *komes tou Opsikiou* may also be the same person as the Isoes, *patrikios* and *quaestor* whose seal, dated to the early eighth century, is extant[37] – if so, and since the tenure of such a post necessarily required a good education, including in the law, this is itself a clear indication of a privileged social and cultural origin and membership of the social elite of the empire.[38] Another possible example of a Greater Syrian *émigré* family, if the identification is accepted (and leaving to one side the case of the emperor Leo III's family[39]), is that of the emperor Nikephoros I. Michael the Syrian and other oriental sources (notably Tabari and Mas'udi) preserve a tradition of his Arab origins and connect him with the line of the Ghassanids who, according to this tradition, took refuge in Cappadocia.[40] The reliability of this story may be problematic – Byzantine sources make no mention of his background other than to describe him pejoratively as a swineherd or to associate him with Lycaonians and heretics (a reflection perhaps of the hostility shown to him following his fiscal policies). But another account, passed down in the much later *Patria Konstantinoupoleos*, refers to him as 'of Seleukeia', indicating either Seleukeia in Isauria or in Cilicia, and suggestive of a well-established tradition preserved in the eastern sources. At any rate, there seems every likelihood that Nikephoros' family originated from regions close to the frontier and it seems plausible that his family had moved north at some point, on to imperial territory – perhaps to property they already held in those areas, perhaps endowed with new property by an emperor, or obtained through their service in the imperial armies or administration.[41]

There is also the question of the admission to the higher strata of the state apparatus of persons of humble origins. Here the sigillographic record tells us much less, and we must rely on the few glimpses into the social origins of certain members of the state establishment afforded by the literary sources. In his comment on the activities of the *logothetes* of the

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elite families who had moved from their native land after the Islamic conquests (unlike, for example, the family of John of Damascus).

[36] See Winkelmann 1987a, 38–9; *PmbZ*, no. 3518; *DOSeals*, 3, 39.30.

[37] Laurent, Corpus II, 1096 (and cf. *PmbZ*, no. 3519).

[38] And this applies equally to high-ranking Arab migrants to imperial territory such as the Ghassanids: see Shahid 2001.

[39] See *PBE* Leo 3; *PmbZ*, no. 4242.

[40] See Mich. Syr., III, 15–16. Detailed presentation and discussion of sources and literature: *PmbZ*, no. 5252.

[41] Theoph. 476.29; *Patria*, III, cap. 153, 265.1. On high-ranking Syrians, see Haldon 2007b.

general treasury Theodotos, during the first reign of Justinian II, Theophanes remarks on the fact that his activities affected many officers of the state and prominent persons, not only from among the administrators, but also the citizens of Constantinople – in contrast, it is implied, to Theodotos himself, a man of humble origins who had formerly been a monk and hermit on the Thracian side of the Bosphoros. Theodotos is reported to have extracted money by torturing these highly placed persons, and by confiscating land and property. Oikonomidès has plausibly suggested that in fact these actions were associated with attempts by Justinian to re-assess the tax-base of the empire by extracting information about the property held, especially by the wealthy.[42] If this is accepted, the information in the reports of Theophanes and Nikephoros suggest very strongly that a considerable number of persons in the imperial establishment – members of the 'senatorial' elite – possessed substantial landholdings, accurate records of the extent of which were (purportedly) no longer available. Justinian II is associated in the Syriac historiography also with action directed against 'the nobility and great men', who then turned on him as a result. The opposition was led by the *patrikios* and *strategos* of the Helladic army, Leontios, an old associate of Justinian's father Constantine IV, who had been formerly commander of the *Anatolikon* and was a native of Isauria, together with a group of friends. Although the sources remain very vague, it is unlikely that this reflects a reaction of an Anatolian provincial elite as such. True, given the conquest of the rest of the empire in the east by the Arabs, they provided a greater proportion of the civil and military administration than before this time. Rather, the reaction to Justinian's policies represented the vested interests of senior officers, officials, and members of the Constantinopolitan establishment whose interests were threatened by the emperor's policies. The role and position of Tiberios Apsimar, a provincial officer who in turn replaced Leontios in 698, is perhaps likewise a reflection of this. Justinian's best chance to re-assert imperial authority against such interests would have been to bring in 'new men' from other sources, perhaps from those members of the provincial elite who had hitherto played a relatively minor role in the capital or at court, who would be more dependent on the emperor's own support and willing to carry through policies detrimental to the interests of the old establishment. Such a policy was apparently given increased emphasis upon Justinian's recovery of the throne in 705, when

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[42] Theoph., 367 (Mango and Scott 1997, 513); Nikeph., 94 (*PBE*, Theodotos 3; *PmbZ*, no. 7904). See Oikonomidès 1987. Note that the deacon Agathon, in his brief account of the events surrounding the accession and deposition of Philippikos Bardanes, remarks on the considerable sum amassed by Justinian II before his death in 711: *ACO*, II, II/2, 900. 2–4.

he took revenge on the 'aristocracy' and others who had helped depose or oppose him earlier.[43]

Taken together with the frequent appearance of the senate as a body which the emperors had to take seriously throughout the seventh century,[44] this rather sparse evidence supports the notion that there must have been a considerable degree of continuity in the membership of the senatorial establishment, and in landed wealth, at least until the later seventh century, even if we assume that this was limited to the 'safer' regions of Asia Minor, and in particular Constantinople and its immediate hinterland. And although the prosopographical material adduced above does suggest an increase in persons of non-standard origins in the upper echelons of the state, this increase is actually fairly limited. It would be reasonable to argue that, whether or not there was a high-status senatorial group which retained its position as an identifiable elite group, many individual members of that group were certainly able to maintain their privileged status. Occasional glimpses of continuity among the elite afforded by the sources might reinforce this impression: the *patrikios* and general Leontios, formerly general of the *Anatolikon*, had been a friend of Constantine IV;[45] the father of the patriarch Germanos, the *patrikios* Justinian, had been involved in the rebellion of Mizizios in Sicily in 668, and appears to have been a member of the established senatorial elite;[46] the father of the usurper emperor Philippikos Bardanes, Nikephoros, was a *patrikios*, and may be the same as the *patrikios* and general of that name who commanded an army under Constans II in 667; the name Bardanes suggests an association or direct affiliation with the Armenian Mamikonian clan; it is possible they are also descendants of the family of the Philippikos who was a general and senior figure in the reigns of Maurice, Phokas, and Herakleios.[47] With the reign of Justinian II, however, especially the events of his second reign and the *coups d'état* which followed between his deposition in 711 and the seizure of the throne by the general Leo III in 717, the situation of this group may have worsened. Yet

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[43] See Theoph., 368f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 514f.); Nikeph., 94f. (*PBE*, Leontios 2; *PmbZ*, no. 4547). Cf. also the hostile remarks about Justinian II of the anonymous authors of the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* (relying on earlier traditions): *Parastaseis*, 61. For the Syriac tradition, see Mich. Syr., ii, 473, based on the *Chronicle* of Dionysios of Tell-Mahré, compiled in the mid-ninth century: for a reconstitution with translation of the relevant sections, see Palmer 1993, 206–7.

[44] Beck 1966b, 29ff.   [45] For Leontios, see previous note.

[46] Sources and details in Stratos 1978, 8–14; *PBE*, s.n. Germanos 8, Mizizios 1, Justinian 3 (*PmbZ*, nos. 2298, 5163, 3557).

[47] See *PBE*, Philippikos 1, Nikephoros 1; *PmbZ*, nos. 6150, 5258; Guilland 1970, 291. For the earlier Philippikos: *PLRE III*, 1022–6.

still, in 713, the emperor Philippikos Bardanes is reported to have dined with 'citizens of ancient lineage', so that the notion of genealogical continuity and inherited membership of a social elite clearly remained active.[48] The problem in all this is, of course, the fact that it is impossible to know what really lay behind the use of terms such as 'nobles', or 'aristocracy' or 'of ancient lineage': do they reflect membership of old-established families belonging to what we would recognise as the senatorial elite? Or do they possess merely a rhetorical value determined by the polemical context from which they were originally taken?

Uncertainty and insecurity on the part of usurpers will have given added impetus to the need to appoint entirely loyal and trustworthy advisers and supporters, who may thus not always have come from the 'indigenous' Roman elite – symptomatic may be the appointment by Justinian of his associate Barasbakourios (an influential and powerful member of the Georgian elite of Kartli),[49] along with certain others of whom little is known: Stephanos (Asmiktos?), Moropaulos ('stupid Paul'), Theophilos (Theophylaktos?), Salibas (brother of Barasbakourios);[50] and by Anastasios II of a certain John, a deacon in the Hagia Sophia, to the position of general *logothetes* and later to command of a fleet against the Arabs.[51] John is described by Nikephoros as an educated and able man, but he does not specify that he was a member of the senate in origin (although this should not be excluded). Equally relevant here is the story retailed by Theophanes of the origins of the later emperor Leo III, who owed his career originally to the gift of 500 sheep he made to Justinian II shortly after his restoration to the throne in 705. Leo's family were hardly from the lower strata of society, and it may be that he represented the middling or lower level of provincial landowners from both the Balkans and Anatolia which was beginning to provide an increasing number of higher state officials, about whom we shall say more below.[52] The addition to the names of important figures of a toponym, such as in the case of Theodore of Koloneia, commander of the *Opsikion* and a close associate of the emperor Constans II, may indicate the increased importance of such provincial roots, although few examples are known,

[48] Theoph., 383 (Mango and Scott 1997, 533).
[49] See Toumanoff 1963, 421–7; *PBE*, Barasbakourios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 743.
[50] Salibas 1/Theophylaktos 4; *PmbZ*, nos. 6487, 8272 (but with some doubts as to the identity); Stephanos 3/Stephanos 5 (the identification of the two is not certain); *PmbZ*, nos. 6980, 6981; Moropaulos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 5168; Theophilos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 8175.
[51] Theoph., 385 (Mango and Scott 1997, 535); Nikeph., 116 (*PBE*, Ioannes 10; *PmbZ*, no. 2961).
[52] Theoph., 391ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 542f.) (*PBE*, Leo 3; *PmbZ*, no. 4242).

and in Theodore's case may reflect either a family origin or his military headquarters.[53]

During the eighth century, the number of high-ranking persons of clearly provincial origins and associations becomes much more apparent, and we may perhaps infer from this that such a situation was developing by the beginning of the eighth century.[54] It is very likely that it was given further stimulus by the political vagaries of the period, especially where emperors were concerned to remove potential or actual threats from positions of influence or power and replace them with persons more trustworthy and loyal to themselves, a process in which the promotion to powerful positions of persons from the provincial as opposed to metropolitan or established elite will have contributed to the establishment of a 'new' elite. This can be concluded from an analysis of the reigns of the period *c.* 695–717, for example, or for the reign of Constantine V, especially following the rebellion and usurpation of Artabasdos in 742–4 or the discovery of the plots against Constantine in the mid-760s.[55]

Some indication of the composition of a part of the elite may be derived from an analysis of the higher clergy. Bishops needed to be educated, to possess greater than average literacy, and to be able to defend the interests of the church, and in particular of their own sees, against various external threats – the state (tax-collectors, soldiers etc.) as well as private and corporate landlords (individuals and the state – the imperial estates, for example). We possess far more detail about the higher clergy than any other single group – the lists of signatories to the Acts of church councils or collections of canon law provide important detail, for example. Yet only very rarely is there anything beyond this, so it is virtually impossible to trace the social background and antecedents of these men. Until the early sixth century many bishops had been drawn from the curial class, but its decline, combined with imperial legislation to prohibit *curiales* from entering the

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[53] Theodore was instrumental in preventing the wife and children of Constans II from leaving Constantinople to join the emperor in Sicily, and later served Constantine IV in a diplomatic mission to the soldiers of the armies of the east: see *PBE*, Theodoros 3; *PmbZ*, nos. 7312, 7345, 10698.

[54] Families with such provincial origins traceable to the early eighth or late seventh century include the Rhendakis family (probably Slav, but settled in Greece: cf. Kaplan 1992, 327, and above, n. 18) and possibly the family of the patriarch Tarasios (on his father's side apparently from Isauria). See the discussion with sources and literature in Winkelmann 1987a, 180–207; and in greater detail, *Vita Tarasii*, 6–11 (although the author's conclusions rest partly on hypothesis); cf. *PmbZ* no. 7235.

[55] This is, somewhat simply stated, the conclusion derived by Nichanian in his analysis of the prosopography and politics of the period: see Nichanian (forthcoming).

church, had meant the recruitment of men from all areas of the senatorial order and the middling strata of cities – in Italy in the sixth century several popes were from aristocratic senatorial backgrounds, for example, as was Agnellus, the bishop of Ravenna (557–70).[56] The patriarch Germanos seems to have belonged to the senatorial elite – his father, the *patrikios* Justinian, was as we have just noted instrumental in the plot against Constans II in Sicily in 668.[57] Given that the majority of those appointed to the patriarchate had formerly served in the position of *sygkellos*, *skeuophylax* or *oikonomos*, or a combination of these positions, all of which involved considerable financial authority as well as administrative competence, it is inherently unlikely that many of them, if any, came from the humbler elements of society. Indeed, in respect of the requirements for literacy and education, the senior bishops as well must for the most part have been recruited from the senatorial establishment in the broadest sense, or those groups of urban society which could provide a decent education for their children. Since this seems already to have been the case in the sixth century, there seem few grounds for doubting that the trend continued into the seventh century. The occasional non-Hellenic name of a bishop – such as Segermas, bishop of Orkistos in Galatia II who signed the Acts of the Council of 692 – does not appreciably alter this picture.[58]

On the basis of this material, it might seem that the proportion of 'new men' in the higher echelons of the church was substantially smaller than in the civil and military apparatus of the state. This would accord with the fact that the decline in provincial municipal culture and the concentration of resources (including educational resources) in Constantinople meant that the church henceforth provided one of the most stable environments for the continued influence of the cultural inheritance of the traditional social elite. The structures which had supported secular literary activity were, with a very few exceptions, no longer there, and it is worth recalling here the point made already that, in terms of literary production, it is precisely in the realms of the church and theology, which encompassed an enormous variety of genres and sub-types of literature (ranging from popular apocalypses to theological commentaries on causation, and from miracle collections and hagiography to Christology), that the emphasis is found after the middle of the seventh century and until well into the

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[56] Jones 1964, 923–7; Brown 1984, 181ff.   [57] *PBE*, Germanos 8; *PmbZ* no. 2298.

[58] For the patriarchs in the second half of the seventh century, see *PBE*, s.n. Petros 2, Thomas 2, Ioannes 2, Konstantinos 3, Theodoros 4, Georgios 1, Paulos 3, Kallinikos 2, Kyros 1, Ioannes 4 (*PmbZ*, nos. 5941, 8407, 2704, 3708, 7317, 1968, 5768, 3587, 4215, 2954); and J.-L. Van Dieten 1972. See Guillou 1973. See also *PBE*, Segermas 1; *PmbZ*, no. 6525.

eighth.[59] In the context of the later seventh and early eighth centuries, it would have been precisely the educated members of the old establishment who could have provided the church with the literacy, learning, and cultural capital it needed to maintain this tradition. It is worth noting that the majority of occupants of the patriarchal throne throughout the seventh and well into the eighth century were chosen from among the higher clergy of Hagia Sophia; while the major monasteries in and around Constantinople appear to be associated with the (possibly aristocratic?) opposition to Justinian II.[60]

Rank and title

The prosopography of the state elite in the period after *c.* 660 tells us less than we would like, therefore, about the question of continuity in terms of power and landholding, although it affords a few hints. But there is another indicator of change which we may pursue, namely the history of the system of titles and precedence at this period. Shifts in emphasis within this system add to the picture provided by the sources examined so far.

During the sixth and first half of the seventh century the outward mark of membership of the senatorial establishment was the title held by an individual.[61] In ascending order of importance *clarissimus*, *spectabilis* and *illustris*, with the special grades of *gloriosus/endoxos* or *gloriosissimus/endoxotatos* distinguishing the top level of *illustres*, these titles all signified membership of the senatorial order in the widest sense. Apart from these marks of rank were special titles awarded to individuals by the emperor in person – *patrikios*, *kaisar/caesar* (used in the sixth century to designate the successor to the throne), *nobelissimos*, *curopalates* (the last two reserved for a very few special cases). Each of the chief military, judicial, and administrative posts in the government automatically brought with it one of the higher senatorial grades.

The only partial alternative to this 'senatorial' system was based on palatine or court service – tenure of a position in one of the numerous bodies of palatine functionaries such as *cubicularii*, *silentiarii*, *spatharii*, *stratores* and so forth. By rising through the grades within each such *schola*, an individual could be promoted into the *decemprimi* of these groups, eventually

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[59] Cameron 1992a.   [60] See Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 62–75; 78ff.
[61] For a useful discussion of the late Roman elite, its composition and the relationship between cities, local and imperial elite strata, see Laniado 2002.

becoming the *primicerius* of the whole body. In origin these were strictly functional positions (with the appropriate salaries and other perks of court service associated with such duties), and the evidence shows that by the later sixth century, and much earlier in very many cases, many of these posts carried senatorial status.[62] In addition, many were awarded in a purely titular capacity, so that an important difference arose between officials *in actu* and those *in vacante* or who held the post purely as an honorific, *honorarii.*

Some of the most important changes which can be traced across the period from the reign of Herakleios into the middle of the eighth century concern this system of titles and ranks. Two phenomena are especially significant: first, a slow decline in the importance of senatorial titles such as *hypatos* or *apo hypaton*; and second, the disappearance from the sources of all the grades of the senatorial order – *clarissimus* (Gr. *lamprotatos*), *spectabilis* (Gr. *peribleptos*), *illustris* (Gr. *megaloprepestatos*) (together with *gloriosus* and *gloriosissimus*, Gr. *endoxos* and *endoxotatos*). The rank of *illustris* disappears during the last decades of the seventh and early years of the eighth century. It still represents persons within the highest group of the senatorial order during the reign of Herakleios, as a seal of a certain Theodoros, *megaloprepestatos illoustrios* and *dioiketes* shows;[63] Maximos Confessor uses it in addressing certain persons in a few of his letters, mostly of the 640s and early 650s;[64] it occurs in the collection of miracles ascribed to St Artemios, written in the 660s or shortly afterwards, where a man is described as dressed in the manner of the *illoustrioi*;[65] and several seals of the later sixth and seventh centuries bear witness to its continued use, borne by officials of various grades such as *dioiketai* or *trakteutai* (provincial fiscal officials).[66] Seventh-century seals, of men bearing the title of *illoustrios* and

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[62] See Haldon 2004.

[63] *ZV* 131, dated *c.* 614–31; *PLRE* III, Theodorus 185; Brandes 2002, 155–6, 515 (no. 19), now redated (if not a forgery) to 632–41.

[64] See *PG* 91, 509B (Ep. 13), 608B (Ep. 24 – *PmbZ*, no. 3751) and 644D (Ep. 44 – *PBE*, Theocharistos 1; and cf. *PLRE* III, p. 1225, Theocharistus 2) (and compare a letter of pope Martin, dated 644, to a Peter, *Illustris*: Mansi x, 825A; cf. *PmbZ*, no. 5940. But the authenticity of the letter has been queried: cf. Winkelmann 1987b, no. 114). For seals of such persons, see *PLRE* III, Petrus 70; *PmbZ*, nos. 1199, 2770–2, 2826, 2916, 3367, 3498, 3570, 3741, 3751, 4092, 4558, 5001, 5940 (?), 6183, 6279, 6413, 6547, 6614, 6933, 7270, 7411, 7492, 8415, 10820. With a couple of exceptions, all can be reasonably placed in the seventh century.

[65] See *Mirac. Artemii*, mir. 29 (159) (ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 158.7).

[66] See *ZV* Index V, 1884, under *illoustrios* for some thirty-five persons bearing the title, all sixth or seventh century; also Laurent, *Orghidan*, 273; *idem*, *Vatican*, 52; and *PBE*, s.t. *illustris/illoustrios* (*PmbZ* nos. in n. 64 above).

hypatos or *illoustrios* and *anthypatos*, show that it continued to be associated with men of high status;[67] a late seventh-century seal of a certain Theodore, *illoustrios* and *basilikos chartoularios*, suggests also that the rank could be associated with relatively humble appointments (although an imperial *chartoularios* might be an important personage);[68] while a seal of the period *c.* 650–750 belonging to Leontios, *illoustrios* and *trakteutes* of the islands, who was also an *apo eparchon* – a fairly high-ranking official, therefore – illustrates the personal nature of the epithet.[69] *Clarissimus* disappears entirely by the early seventh century (although it continued in use in Italy for a while).[70] *Endoxotatos* survives rather longer: it is the standard epithet for a number of high-ranking state officials who attended the sessions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 680/1, for example; and it is still used of the senior imperial officials in the introduction to the *Ekloge* of Leo III and Constantine V, issued in 741.[71] Thereafter it disappears.

These senatorial titles are partially replaced by a hierarchy of titles deriving from functional positions at court. The process is quite slow, and may indicate the pace at which change affected the empire's social and political elite. In the second half of the seventh and the first half of the eighth century the order within this changing hierarchy was: *hypatos, apo hypaton patrikios, apo hypaton, patrikios, protospatharios, spatharios, stratelates, skribon, balnitor, apo eparchon, kandidatos, silentiarios*, and several other less important titles (such as *vestitor* or *mandator*). The leading four ranks (*hypatos, apo hypaton patrikios, apo hypaton, patrikios*) are from the older senatorial establishment; as are those of *stratelates, apo eparchon*, and *silentiarios*, which had been awarded as titular senatorial dignities. The remaining titles represent functions within various palatine departments – swordbearer/guards officers (*spatharios, skribon, kandidatos*), bath-attendant, usher, wardrobe

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[67] See Schlumberger, *Sig.*, 519, no. 4; *PBE*, Ioannes 214; *PmbZ*, no. 2772 (*illoustrios kai hypatos*); and Konstantopoulos, *Molybdoboulla*, no. 295; *PBE*, Ioannes 257; *PmbZ*, no. 2916 (*illoustrios kai anthypatos*).

[68] Laurent, *Orghidan*, 273; *PBE*, Theodoros 349; *PmbZ*, no. 7492. Cf. *PmbZ*, no. 3741 (*illoustrios kai chartoularios*); Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 77. It should be noted that the dating of these seals is often difficult and, without any obvious dating element (such as a regnal or indictional year), often quite vague. Most of the seals mentioned here are dated by the editors of the catalogues in which they appear as seventh–eighth centuries, or sixth–seventh centuries, for example.

[69] *ZV*, 914A; cf. Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 232; *PBE*, Leontios 34; *PmbZ*, no. 4558.

[70] See Brown 1984, 133.

[71] See *ACO* II, 2, 752.15–26; *Ekloge*, pr. 40f., 103. The older survey of Koch 1903, 69ff., presents the same picture, although relying almost entirely on literary references.

attendant, messenger (*balnitor, silentiarios, vestitor, mandator*) – and their importance derives from the proximity of their members to the imperial person. Each of these groups retained also a functional aspect, so that there existed in every case two groups, one of whose members bore the title as a description of their job, the others as a mark of rank, with associated privileges. As time passed, further distinctions were developed, usually by attaching the adjective *basilikos* – imperial – to those closest to the emperor and/or those of higher status.[72] This development is underlined by the important observation, implicit in the Zacos and Veglery collection, for example, that, whereas the great majority of archaeologically provenanced lead seals of late sixth-/early seventh-century date bear for the most part merely the name of the person for whom the seal was made, by the end of the seventh century such seals nearly always bear a palatine rank or title also. The imperial court was from this time the undisputed and exclusive hub of social and political power.

During the first half of the eighth century, further changes took place within this hierarchy. The older highest-ranking 'senatorial' titles of *hypatos* and *apo hypaton* lost ground to that of *patrikios*: while the first was awarded to a wider and wider range of officials, a clear indication of its loss of status, the second fell out of use entirely during the period *c.* 750–800. Older titles of the senatorial order suffered a similar fate.[73] It is important to bear in mind that there was no clear hierarchy at the top level during this period – the highest ranks vary in their relationship to one another; while low-status titles are sometimes held by persons in quite powerful positions. At the lower levels, all sorts of combinations of title and rank are found, suggesting no strict hierarchy at all, although the use of the epithet *basilikos* appears, as noted already, probably initially to denote actual palatine service, before becoming also the sign of a sub-set within a grade.[74]

Senatorial titles had thus become part of a single hierarchy dependent upon the imperial court. All these titles could be combined with various functional posts according to the imperial pleasure, and individuals presented themselves on their seals and in official documents by listing their titular ranks in ascending order followed by the title of their functional post, as in the example of Paulos, *apo hypaton* and *dioiketes ton Anatolikon eparchion*, i.e. Paul, *apo hypaton* (honorary rank) and fiscal director for

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[72] See Winkelmann 1985, 28–42, for a detailed analysis; Oikonomidès 1972, 281ff. For the history of titles such as *protospatharios, spatharios, kandidatos, skribon*, see Haldon 1984, 150–64, 182–90.

[73] Winkelmann 1985, 32–7, 41, 48ff.; Haldon 1997a, 396–7.　　[74] Winkelmann 1985, 45–61.

the Anatolic provinces (post).[75] In addition, the 'senatorial' titles in this hierarchy were the only marks of membership of the senatorial order: not only do the classes of *clarissimi, spectabiles,* and *illustres* seem to have disappeared over the course of the seventh century, the only surviving group appears to be that of the *gloriosi* or *endoxotatoi,* a title that was clearly conferred only on the highest officers of the state at Constantinople, on an *ad hominem* basis, and appears thus no longer to reflect an *ordo* or juridically defined body. This is expressed nicely in the description, in the *Prooimion* to the *Ekloge* of 741, of a number of senior state officials, where both the highest-ranking *patrikioi,* holding the post of *quaestor* (*kuaistor*), for example (the highest judicial official after the emperor himself), are *endoxotatoi,* as are also the lower ranking officials such as the *antigrapheis* of the quaestor's department, who bear the titular rank of *hypatoi.* Clearly all those connected with a particular palatine bureau could be referred to under this category as *endoxotatoi.*[76] And as we have noted above, it soon disappears, so that we may conclude that its use by this time was merely a courtesy, a mark of esteem, rather than a reflection of membership of any formally differentiated body.

The first implication of these changes is that these 'senatorial' titles and epithets had become part of the common system of titles based on palatine service. Their survival as 'senatorial' grades was still recognised in the so-called *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, a list of ranks and titles dated to the year 899, grades which continued to confer membership of the by then purely ceremonial body of the senate which played a role in formal imperial ritual and ceremonial.[77] The second implication is perhaps more important for the present question since, if senatorial grades had been reduced to one aspect of an otherwise entirely imperial and palatine hierarchy of ranks, and since the older titles marking out membership of the senatorial order in the late Roman sense had fallen out of use, we may reasonably draw the conclusion that the senatorial order as such no longer existed. 'Senators' were now imperially appointed – there was no hereditary clarissimate[78] – which in turn may suggest that the socio-economic and cultural elements which had constituted the older senatorial order in all its diversity no longer existed or, at the least, was no longer able to dominate

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[75] *ACO* II, 1, 14.32. On Paul, see Haldon 1997a, 198; *PBE,* Paulos 17; *PmbZ,* no. 5769. See Brandes 2002, 154–5, 186, 213.

[76] *Ekloge,* 104f., and cf. 162, 40ff. On the *quaestor* after the sixth century, see Gkoutzioukostas 2001 with older literature119–41.

[77] *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 87.30–3; 99 and n. 57; 295–9.

[78] I.e. body of persons bearing the title *clarissimus,* or its Greek form *lamprotatos.*

the state and government. The senate in Constantinople – which continued to wield influence, if only because made up of a number of high-ranking state officials[79] – thus no longer embodied the economic or political interests of a broad stratum of landowners, an aristocracy of privilege whose urban-based municipal culture was also the elite culture of the late Roman world.

This does not mean that there were no wealthy, large-scale landowners, nor that their vested interests were unrepresented in the activities and politics of the ruling elite at Constantinople. But the evidence does suggest that this element in society no longer dominated the state in the way it had previously, and that service at court and imperial sponsorship was now even more important to social and economic advancement. The collective political-cultural strength of the late Roman senatorial elite had lain in its monopoly of high civil office in particular, the civil magistracies, governorships, judicial posts and so forth, in both the provinces and in Constantinople. But many of these disappeared or were reduced in status and importance as a result of the changes in the role of cities and in fiscal and military administration that occurred over the period from *c.* 640–50 on, which involved a considerable reduction in the status of many posts, a concentration of supervisory authority in the hands of the emperor and a few close advisers, and a focus on service at court for promotion and advancement.

Thus the incorporation of senatorial titles into a single imperial hierarchy appears to develop in parallel with the disappearance of the senatorial establishment and its outward marks of identification, the clarissimate and other grades. Together with the limited evidence of names for newcomers and persons of less privileged or exalted social origins already examined, this suggests that a more court-centred, imperial 'pseudo-meritocracy' was evolving, in which members of the old establishment competed on more-or-less equivalent terms, determined in part by competence and in part by patronage and connections. In the situation of sporadic near-crisis which characterised the empire's administration, both military and fiscal, during the difficult period from *c.* 640 until the 720s, there seems to have been little room for the culture of the old establishment, a factor reflected in reduced

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[79] See Beck 1966b, 31ff, 42ff., who notes that, as the leading officers of state normally held the highest senatorial titles at this period anyway, whether their title reflected an active function or merely titular possession of a specific post, their continued role as a body which could support, advise or oppose an emperor is understandable. This was recognised also in the tenth century (see *De Cer.*, 15.6–7; 174.11–12; 290.16ff.). Further discussion on the senate after the seventh century in Chrestou 1994.

production of many types of non-religious literature,[80] in a hostility to late ancient rationalist approaches to a number of important theological issues,[81] and in the lack of available expertise among many members of the imperial provincial administration in respect of, for example, the law, a factor clearly expressed and regretted in the introduction to the *Ekloge*.[82]

As the importance of the court increased, so the independent status of the senatorial order must have waned, as those who belonged to it came to depend more and more upon the court both for access to power and social status, in turn a reflection of the decline of provincial centres of wealth and society. This is clearly reflected in the fate of the middling and lesser senatorial titles – that of *apo hypaton* vanishes before the end of the eighth century, and those of *apo eparchon* and *stratelates* sink to the bottom of the hierarchy during the later eighth and ninth centuries, to disappear thereafter.[83] Birth and lineage became less important also: the hagiographical writings of the later seventh to ninth centuries, for example, have no commonly employed vocabulary to describe persons of wealth and power, concentrating usually on descriptions of their wealth and status at the time, rather than their lineage (although this does also continue to be mentioned on occasion).[84] In the period 797–802 the empress Eirene issued a novel regarding judicial oaths, and listed those groups from whom witnesses were to be drawn: priests, *archontes*, those in state service (*strateuomenoi* and *politeuomenoi*), the well-off, and the pious.[85] The expression 'those holding imperial office' (*hoi en telei* or *archontes*) is frequently contrasted with the rest of society (the poor or the middling classes – *mesoi*): a position at court or in the imperial administration, whether civil or military, distinguished one from the rest of society, and there is no better illustration of the central importance of the imperial household. Connections with the court and palace had always been crucial ingredients in social advancement, of course, but whereas the older, broadly based senatorial establishment had been able to absorb newcomers and assimilate them to its own cultural norms, the different circumstances of the later seventh century seem to have made this more difficult, in particular the increasing dependence of those with senatorial rank upon direct imperial service at court or in the provinces. Thus the older elite, whatever

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[80] See Whitby 1992, esp. 66–74; Cameron 1992a.   [81] See Haldon 1992a; 1997b.

[82] See the gloomy description of the state of legal learning, and the lack of availability and accessibility of legal literature in the provinces, in the *Prooimion* to the *Ekloge*, 52ff. (and see the editor's remarks and discussion, 3–19).

[83] Winkelmann 1985, 39ff.; Oikonomidès 1972, 295.

[84] See Guilland 1948; 1953 for a useful list.

[85] See Burgmann 1981, 20.54–6; Theoph., 454.14; 467.18–19; 487.22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 627, 642, 668); cf. Nikeph., 154; and the catalogue in Yannopoulos 1975.

remained of it by the later seventh century, transformed itself into part of a new, centralised palatine and, as we shall see, ecclesiastical elite, dependent almost entirely upon the court and the goodwill of the emperor for preferment and position.

Income and access to resources

A final point needs to be made, albeit briefly, which bears on the nature of the relationships within the imperial administrative establishment, whether at Constantinople or in the provinces, whether civil or military, and that point concerns the forms through which they were remunerated. The increasing centrality of the court and the imperial household, in terms of the acquisition of social status, access to power, and wealth which, as we have shown, characterised the imperial elite after the middle and later seventh century, may seem paradoxical in a world in which power was at the same time delegated outward to military commanders in the provinces who are also given authority, or at least priority, over the civil administration, or to the supra-regional tax-collectors or resource administrators, such as the general *dioiketai* or the general *kommerkiarioi*.

But there was an entirely pragmatic and more clearly material reason for this re-focusing. As well as the changes to which we have already alluded, the second half of the seventh century ushered in a dramatically changed economic context and, more importantly, a very different monetary context. It is well-established that, after the late 650s, the imperial government cut back the striking of bronze coinage very substantially,[86] that the economy of the empire became fragmented into a patchwork of local and regional sub-economic systems, that international trade shrank, and that commerce within the empire was highly regionalised also, the evidence for which we have reviewed in the preceding chapters. Particularly significantly, we have already observed a very marked localisation of distribution and circulation of coin – it did not travel far beyond its point of release onto the market or delivery to soldiers, and between *c.* 660 and the middle of the eighth century was distributed to very few centres outside the capital, a situation which could only exacerbate the already marked distinction between the wealthier lowland and coastal regions of Anatolia and the upland and inland zone, and

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[86] Morrisson 1986b, 156ff.; Grierson 1960, 436 and table 2; *DOC* II, 1, 6f.; Hendy 1985, 496–9; 640f. The reasons for this – fiscal and/or market-led – have been discussed in Chapter 6.

consequently the economic potential as well as the nature of the economic activities of the elites from those regions.[87]

There is an extremely important implication of all these changes for the dominant social strata of the empire. Throughout the sixth and early seventh century, the great landlords, state officers, and members of the upper echelons of the imperial service aristocracy and senatorial elite had possessed very considerable economic flexibility in respect of maximising the profits from their activities as well as investing in the purchase of luxuries and services. This flexibility had been facilitated, in the context of a highly monetised and commercialised economy, through their assets, especially in the form of cash derived from production for the market on their estates as well as from state salaries and pensions.[88] It had given members of the provincial elites considerable independence of the central government, while they continued to be reliant nevertheless upon the state for position and status. The geographical extent of the empire, its regional variety, and multi-faceted local traditions and urbanocentric culture meant that the relationship between Constantinople and provincial elites was relatively pluralistic and open, however much the court may have represented the apex of society and the pinnacle of a social and political hierarchy, to membership of which all aspired.[89] The territorial shrinkage of the empire and the breakdown of traditional market networks across the empire as a whole must have impacted on this potential dramatically. First, it curtailed the regular use of the bronze coinage of account for ordinary commercial activities and made the conversion of bronze into gold through market exchange difficult, perhaps impossible in many areas outside Constantinople. Second, it meant that landlords, whatever the scale of their enterprise, must have become increasingly dependent on rents in kind, where their estates survived, just as we know that the government became increasingly dependent on raising its own resources through taxation in kind, particularly in respect of supplying and feeding its armies – indeed, state demands in the crisis situation of the later seventh century probably reinforced this tendency. Third, it dramatically reduced and simplified the scale of the imperial economy as a whole.

The result was that, in the course of the second half of the seventh century, the sources of cash income independent of the court to which the social elite of the empire now had access were also radically reduced.

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[87] Morrisson 2001, esp. 383–7.
[88] See Banaji 2001, 36ff., 100–89; Ward-Perkins 2000, 352–60, 369–77.
[89] See McCormick 2000.

Only the state produced gold coin, and only the emperors issued gold in the form of payments, perquisites, and salaries – the annual *rogai* issued to senior officers and administrators, and the monthly, quarterly or annual payments to the soldiers in Constantinople and the provinces. The net result was, inevitably, to endow Constantinople even more than before with a near-monopoly over liquid assets in the form of cash – primarily gold – as well as status, assets which could themselves only be realised through admission to and involvement in imperial service. The nature of the changes is underlined by the fact that the emperors began to recompense senior and middling officials in precious silks and other vestments as a means of complementing their salaries in gold.[90] In effect, there was a complete transformation of the established balance between central state and government service aristocracy: a new dependency on the imperial household of senior and middling state personnel, in both military and civil service, was forged.

But whereas the fiscal and monetary situation which led to these changes had already begun to fade by the middle years of the reign of Constantine V, as the political and economic situation of the empire stabilised and as a process of re-monetisation, of taxation in particular, seems to have begun, the relationship between Constantinople and the provincial elite which it ushered in had by then become firmly entrenched. A pattern was established in which strict central control over outgoings and the issue of payments, and the appearance in person of senior officers at court in order to receive their remuneration or the award of a title or post from the emperor himself, had become the norm. The government was thereby given an additional means of controlling its provincial as well as its metropolitan officers, so that in spite of the gradually improving economic situation, the political and cultural focus for the social elite of the provinces was firmly concentrated at Constantinople.

It would be incorrect to over-emphasise this focus – there is evidence to show that there were landowning families of substance, important in their own provinces, who seem not to have been members of the palatine hierarchy, at least for the period about which the sources in question inform us. But these are largely of ninth-century date, and reflect a more stable time when commerce and a monetary economy had already begun to recover – neither the families of Eustratios of Augaros and, somewhat later, of Euthymios the Younger, nor the famous widow Danelis herself, again somewhat beyond our immediate period, appear to have connections with the imperial system.

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[90] Oikonomidès 1986a.

In the first two cases this may simply be because the hagiographer did not mention it, or took it for granted, or because the immediate ancestors of the saint or his family had borne titles of one sort or another. But in most cases it seems clear that influence at court had become the dominant, if not the only, route to social and career advancement. Theodore of Stoudion was astonished and impressed by an acquaintance, a certain Philotheos, who had chosen to disregard his high social status and the rank that went with it and live a pious private life.[91] And while Danelis, for example, had no prior influence at court – perhaps because her deceased husband was a first-generation landowner – she goes to considerable lengths to achieve this on behalf of her son and to find an entrée for him. Competition and rivalry between individuals and families over access to the imperial household, the system of offices and precedence, and to the social and administrative rewards it monopolised could only be heightened and sharpened in such a context. The ninth-century situation had already evolved considerably from that of the middle and later eighth century, but it is nevertheless with this highly competitive power-system in mind, a system which tended to channel all political activity towards Constantinople and the imperial court, that we have to interpret the various coups, plots, rebellions, and other evidence of conflict in the period from the later seventh to the middle of the ninth century, and which we will discuss below.[92]

Status and office in the eighth and early ninth centuries

The size of the imperial administration is impossible to calculate precisely, quite apart from the fact that it constantly fluctuated as various offices or subordinate posts were filled or kept vacant or as new posts were established, sometimes becoming permanent, sometimes not. For the sake of argument, however, we may estimate for the early and middle years of the eighth century some 13–15 senior posts at Constantinople, supported by up to 500 middling and junior positions. To this we should then add the provincial military commanders and the fiscal and military administrators in their districts – perhaps a further 500 or so posts, with an unknown number of low-grade or menial jobs dependent on these establishments. By the middle of the ninth century the figure will have grown slightly, but not substantially,

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[91] *Ep.* 525. 16–22. The implication is that he had rejected the values of the court of the ruling iconoclast emperor (Michael II).

[92] See the description and discussion of such conflicts presented in Winkelmann 1987a, 33–97.

although these are very crude guesses.[93] While the inadequate sources for the period prohibit the construction of any hypotheses about the extent to which central bureaux were dominated by particular groups or families, it is not outside the realms of possibility that a large number of the middling posts at Constantinople at least were staffed by people whose families had retained a foothold in the metropolitan elite at some level, given the levels of literacy and educational competence that would have been required.

There are not many examples to illustrate the ways in which this continuity revealed itself, but symptomatic may be the small group of senior fiscal officials who dominated part of the government's administration in the period *c.* 670–730, and who bore the title of *genikos kommerkiarios.* A tabulation of the individuals who occupied these posts shows that their numbers were in fact quite limited (even allowing for the vagaries and the random nature of the sigillographic evidence). Whether such men were able to establish their families at the top of the social ladder on a longer-term basis – for example, through the acquisition of land and access to education – and whether or not they belonged in the first place to an already privileged group (though the latter is probable) is not known. But they clearly represented one element of the social and palatine establishment of the period.[94]

An element of continuity, possibly a substantial element, at the administrative and social centre of the empire seems likely. The example of the family of Theodore of Stoudion provides a useful illustration. His kin – in the wider sense, including collateral lines – can be traced back to the beginning of the eighth century, and both his father's and his mother's families, from prestigious social backgrounds, were intimately involved in the imperial fiscal administration for two and perhaps three generations, possessing property in the form of estates outside Constantinople, and able to ensure that their offspring were educated in a manner appropriate to state service. Theodore's uncle Plato had been educated by his own uncle in turn, an imperial fiscal official, probably the *zygostates*, and eventually attained the same position. Of other members of the family at least three were involved

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[93] The calculations are based on the information in the *Taktikon Uspenskij* (842/3) and in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (899), together with the discussion in Oikonomidès 1972; the discussion in Treadgold 1980; and on the accumulated evidence of offices and titles from lead seals of the period, together with the analyses in Winkelmann 1985 and 1987a.

[94] See the tables in *ZV*, I. The relatively large number of seals issued by a proportionately restricted group of individuals, often indicating a tenure of office over several years, indicates their central position in the government's fiscal management. Their administrative importance and functions have been, and remain, the subject of much discussion: see Oikonomidès 1986a; the comments, with literature, in Brandes and Haldon 2000, 163–4; and Brandes 2002.

in the fiscal administration at Constantinople, and at the highest levels – including a *sakellarios* and a *logothetes* of the *genikon*. The family seems to have been representative of an established urban or at least metropolitan elite, whose roots belong in what was still identifiably, in the second half of the seventh century, the older 'senatorial' establishment.[95]

A similar example is provided by one of the correspondents of both Theodore of Stoudion and Ignatios the Deacon, a certain Democharis. He was *logothetes* of the *genikon*, and later became a *strategos* shortly before his death during the early years of the reign of Michael II. Well-educated and of a 'well-born' family, he left a considerable property to his family on his death, having held many state positions at the highest level. One of his sons or grandsons, John, seems to have been a *sakellarios* in the time of the patriarch Photios. Theodore stresses his learning and, while his educational attainments may have been exceptional, this is a common element in the character of men described in accounts of this stratum of Byzantine society. There is no direct evidence, but such men may well have had their roots in the senatorial establishment which survived the seventh century.[96]

We have already seen that the family of the patriarch Germanos may reasonably be situated in this milieu.[97] The family of the patriarch Tarasios (on his father's side apparently from Isauria), while originally of provincial origin, was of a similar social background, and seem to have established themselves in the capital and to have been involved in the middling and upper levels of the state's administration. His paternal grandfather, Sisinnios, had been a commander of the *Exkoubita*, his maternal grandfather was a *patrikios* also, and both are described as of 'noble' lineage, while his father George became a *kuaistor*, one of the leading judicial officials in Constantinople, and his brother, also named Sisinnios, was a high-ranking military officer.[98] The family of the patriarch Nikephoros likewise provides an example of a degree of continuity – before his elevation to the patriarchal throne he had been a member of the palatine administration, like his father Theodore, who had been an *asekretis* under Constantine V. According to his *Life* the family was well-off, well-established in Constantinople and had been able to provide the young Nikephoros with the education required

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[95] For a full account of the family and its connections, see Pratsch 1998, esp. 17ff. and 45–69, for a detailed prosopographical and social analysis; *PBE*, Theodoros 15; Platon 1 with sources and cross-references; *PmbZ* nos. 6285, 7574. See also Cholij 2002, part I.

[96] See *PBE*, Democharis 1; Ioannes 444 for full references and sources; *PmbZ* no. 1322; Ignatios, *Ep.*, 21–4; Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 426 (and cf. 454, Theodore's letter to Democharis' widow).

[97] Above, 587 and 590 with nn. 46 and 57.

[98] *PBE*, Tarasios 1; with Sisinnios 85, Tarasios 6, George 122; *PmbZ* no. 7235 with references. See the editor's comments in *V. Tarasii*, esp. 6–11. On the *kuaistor*, see n. 76 above.

for government service. Long before his elevation to a position of political prominence, he is reported by his biographer, Ignatios the Deacon, to have founded a number of monastic houses along the eastern littoral of the Bosphoros – if this accurately reflects his family's position, it must have had substantial means at its disposal, indicative of an established and propertied elite family. Again, therefore, we are faced with the possibility, if not the probability, that this is another family which had maintained its status and position through imperial service across the period of crisis which lasted from the 640s to the early eighth century.[99]

Such families, which can occasionally be traced back to the beginning of the eighth century, possessing property in the form of estates outside Constantinople, and able to ensure that their offspring were educated in a manner appropriate to state service, may well be representative of an established urban or at least metropolitan elite, whose roots belong in what was still identifiably, in the second half of the seventh century, the older 'senatorial' establishment. We may need to differentiate between the surviving elements of the older senatorial elite, concentrated in Constantinople and in the central bureaucracies of church and state, and the provincial elites who may have been more susceptible to change through movement towards the capital and through the assimilation of new elements. If this distinction has any validity, it represents the origins of the differentiation between metropolitan and provincial elites which appears in the tenth century and afterwards.

The lack of more detailed prosopographical data about particular families or about specific individuals and their social background makes it impossible to offer any clear-cut answers to the question of the degree of continuity or discontinuity in the elite of the east Roman world in the eighth and ninth centuries. But we can suggest some patterns, which fit the very fragmentary sources from the seventh and eighth centuries, and which also fit in with what is known about the development of the middle and later Byzantine elite.[100] The information available regarding the concentration of social and cultural power at Constantinople, about the decline in status of many senatorial titles, the apparent disappearance of the grades of senatorial identity (and especially of the clarissimate, the one hereditary grade), and the very marked increase in the importance of 'imperial' as opposed to senatorial titles can lead to some tentative conclusions. The political-geographical collapse of the late Roman state into a rump of its former territorial extent, with

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[99]   See *PBE* Nikephoros 2; *PmbZ*, no. 5301 for details of sources and older literature. On his building activity, see further 316 above.

[100]   See Winkelmann 1987a, 143–219; Patlagean 1984.

the concomitant loss or reduction in both absolute numbers and wealth (as a status group) of the dominant class, represents a starting point. The government at Constantinople had to maintain its own power and authority by whatever means were at its disposal – thus the promotion of the interests, and appointment to key positions, of persons upon whom the emperors could rely, who may not necessarily have come from the established elite. It appears thus to have been ready to take into imperial service men of talent and skill in particular types of duty, whether fiscal or military, regardless of their origins.

While the large number of Armenians who appear in positions of military authority, however, must reflect this, it is clear from the evidence that the majority apparently came from privileged – elite or aristocratic – social backgrounds in their home culture. It is difficult to know whether the appointment of persons who may have been of relatively humble background to specific posts, such as finance minister or city prefect of Constantinople, reflected a particular emperor's personal preferences, and thus perhaps an exception, or whether it was fairly frequent. On balance, and although the evidence is poor, it is likely that such cases were not exceptional, if only because the political disorder and uncertainty which several contemporary commentators note can only have encouraged the emperors to rely upon those with the appropriate skills who were brought to their attention, to the detriment of the old elite. The term 'qualifications' could have several nuances, of course: by the later eighth and ninth centuries Paphlagonians appear to have achieved a particular niche in Byzantine elite circles, a niche which has been connected with the trade in and supply of eunuchs for the court,[101] although the apparently new-found importance of the region may owe as much to the fact that it – and, we may assume, its large landlords – now supplied a much greater proportion of the grain supplies of the capital than before the middle of the seventh century and the loss of Egypt (see Chapter 7) – a point which may also be relevant to the possibly pro-imperial attitudes of some at least of its landowners (see below). But there is no reason to believe that the older elite was not present in strength, nor that they did not continue to provide a majority of the personnel who dominated the day-to-day running of the Constantinopolitan governmental administration. One suspects that a large number of families were able to hold on to their lands and thus continue to provide a social/economic/cultural springboard for the next generation, especially in the regions nearest to the capital city. It is also possible that the older elite

[101] Magdalino 1998b.

found a political and cultural refuge in the church and its apparatus, which provided a shelter and an environment within which they could better preserve their traditions and cultural capital. That senior ecclesiastical officials and monastic leaders had close ties with the civilian establishment is once again clear from the biographical information we have regarding both the patriarch Tarasios and Theodore of Stoudion.[102]

With the exception of the use of phrases such as 'of noble lineage' and so on in later eighth- and ninth-century hagiography or letters, there is an absence, in respect of family names, of any evidence for a consciousness of ancestry and social origins among the older elite at this period. This would suggest that until the middle and later years of the eighth century a very different set of cultural priorities dominated, one in which the cultural self-identity of the traditional senatorial establishment was pushed very much into the background.

The provincial and 'outsider' origins of many clans and families which were to become important in the middle Byzantine service elite are quite clear. Yet it is equally apparent that most of these individuals occupied the positions and offices they had acquired as a result of their high-status origins in their own homelands, whether within the empire or outside it. By the same token, many older families survived in both state service and the church because of their inherited wealth, cultural resources, and the access their families had to power and influence. From the ninth century, as evidenced by the adoption by many of them of a family name, this mixed elite begins to evolve into an aristocracy which eventually, during the later tenth to the eleventh century, was able to dominate the central government and even challenge its ability to control the fiscal resources of the empire. It is clear that by this time the outward signs of the old elite had faded into the past (although this did not stop the search for 'ancient' lineages). It is also clear that many of those families which led the way in the process of 'aristocratisation' owed their position in the first instance not to long-term inherited wealth, but to service for the state and the imperial system, the rewards in terms of bullion, titles, and other perks which accompanied it, and – crucially important – the re-investment of much of that wealth, less in land (which might, and sometimes clearly did, create an independent or autonomous economic base for such people) than in the court and its hierarchy. The middle Byzantine elite evolved as a pseudo-meritocracy of service, and it was to such changed circumstances that the individual

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[102] See also the discussion in Kountoura-Galaki 1998 on Theodore's associations with members of the senior civilian administration.

members of the established elite, and their kin, had to adjust in order to maintain their position and to survive. The prosopography of middle Byzantine diplomats, both lay and ecclesiastical, sent on missions to the West, provides a useful illustration of one aspect of the activities of this state elite.[103]

A number of family names have been identified which appear first in the eighth or ninth century and which become well-established in the sources thereafter. Xylinites, Rhendakios, Melissenos, Rhangabe, Sarantapechys, Boilas, Kamoulianos, Skleros, Triphyllios are all names which represent important families in the ninth to eleventh centuries, all with their roots in the early ninth or eighth century. Yet most appear only in the literary sources, and have left little trace in the sigillographic record, suggesting also that family names as a means of identity and as a means of signifying dynastic affiliation were still relatively unusual in our period, becoming normal only in the later ninth and tenth centuries.[104] The Sarantapechys clan, now associated with the semi-legendary 'Tessarakontapechys' who is held to have influenced the caliph Yazid, appears to have been exiled from Palestine, with its roots in the reign of Leo III or his immediate predecessors. They may be typical of one type of (probably high-ranking in their homeland) 'newcomer' to the imperial court circle.[105] The evidence of these names and the roles ascribed to those who bore them suggests that by the middle and later eighth century there existed already a fairly well-defined palatine group which, while it could not yet monopolise posts, clearly made up a central element in the Constantinopolitan administrative elite. By the same token, a large number of names which appear only briefly, yet which attest to the increasing significance of a descriptive or attributive 'family' name, make their appearance, some apparently nicknames, others possibly terms of insult given by later commentators – often iconophile descriptions of iconoclasts or supposed iconoclasts. Thus names such as Aplakes,[106] Kouloukes,

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[103] Cheynet 2000. For envoys to the west, see Lounghis 1980, 283–369, a valuable analytical catalogue, although with no structured prosopography. But the individuals listed may be pursued for this period through the *PBE* and the *PmbZ*.

[104] For the evidence, see *PBE* 1, Niketas 3 (*PmbZ*, no. 5372); Sisinnios 2, Rhendakios 1 (*PmbZ*, nos. 6397, 6752); Melissenos 1, 2; Kallistos 2, Michael 4 (*PmbZ*, nos. 4952, 3606, 5028, 11991); Theophylaktos 7; Theophylaktos 8, Konstantinos 15; Konstantinos 16; Theodoros 14, Demetrios 2, Ioannes 439; Leo 17 (*PmbZ*, no. 4409); Sisinnios 1, Niketas 11, Triphyllios 1 (*PmbZ*, no. 5426); detailed discussion of sources: Winkelmann 1987a, 146–207; and with a critique of Winkelmann's tendency to place the evolution of *nomina gentilia* too early – in the eighth rather than the tenth century – see Kazhdan 1997.

[105] See *PmbZ*, nos. 6529, 6733 (*PBE*, Tesserakontapechys 1).

[106] John Aplakes, who commanded the forces of Macedonia in 813: *PBE*, Ioannes 19; *PmbZ*, no. 3197.

Koutzodaktylos,[107] Lachanodrakon,[108] Mousoulakios,[109] Pastillas,[110] Pikridios,[111] Hexaboulios[112], and Podopagouros,[113] or Ikoniates,[114] Kourikos[115] (and perhaps Hexakionites[116]) make their appearance in the pages of the chroniclers, the last three (like Kamoulianos, noted already) probably associated with the birthplace or official activities of the individuals in question, the first seven describing physical or other attributes.[117] In the course of the ninth century this habit was to become increasingly popular as a means of setting a particular family or kin-group apart and endowing it with a specific identity, a development which may be seen as the next stage in the evolution of competitive strategies within the state elite.[118]

However we choose to define the social elite of Byzantium in the later seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, the term 'state elite' remains appropriate. For it is quite clear from the sources that a position in the administration, whether humble or exalted, gave an individual social cachet and access to power, and that it facilitated upward social movement. As one scholar has expressed it, 'the real power system was that embodied in the functions people held'.[119] The emperors depended on their military and civil functionaries for the maintenance of their position, and invested in consequence

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[107] Leo Kouloukes, the *notarios* of Michael Lachanodrakon, and Leo Koutzodaktylos, a former abbot, in the *Thrakesion* region: *PBE* Leo 7; 8; *PmbZ*, nos. 4310, 4309.

[108] For Michael Lachanodrakon, see Chapters 3 and 4; *PBE* Michael 5; *PmbZ*, nos. 5027, 5049, 5050, 5051.

[109] *PBE*, Gregorios 10; *PmbZ*, no. 2407, commander of the *Opsikion* in 778, in 802 a *patrikios*, and supporter of Nikephoros I.

[110] Sisinnios Pastillas, bishop of Perge: *PBE* Sisinnios 27; *PmbZ*, no. 6781.

[111] John Pikridios, *protospatharios*, tutor of Constantine VI: *PBE* Ioannes 16; *PmbZ*, no. 3110.

[112] John Hexaboulios, *Komes ton teicheon*, *logothetes* of the *dromos* and *patrikios* in the reigns of Michael I, Leo V, and Michael II. See *PBE* Ioannes 81; *PmbZ*, no. 3196.

[113] Konstantinos Podopagouros, involved in the plot against Constantine V in 766: *PBE* Konstantinos 6; *PmbZ*, nos. 3822.

[114] Theophylaktos Ikoniates, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrace, one of those accused of plotting against Constantine V in 766: *PBE* Theophylaktos 2; *PmbZ*, no. 8293.

[115] Sergios Kourikos, captured by Arab raiders near Syke in 773: *PBE* Sergios 7; *PmbZ*, no. 6624.

[116] Nikolaos Hexakionites, described as a 'pseudo-prophet', who lived in the region of the Hexakionion (the seventh hill of the city, outside the Theodosian walls) during the reign of Nikephoros I: *PBE* Nikolaos 2; *PmbZ*, no. 5578.

[117] There are many others from the period *c.* 750–840 which appear to have served as family names, including, for example, Agelastos (*PmbZ*, nos. 139, 1712, 1712a), Anemas (*PmbZ*, no. 772), Lydenos (*PmbZ*, no. 7472), Baboutzikos (*PmbZ*, no. 3932, 7874), Botaneiates (*PmbZ*, no. 413), Chloros (*PmbZ*, no. 7543), Dabaltes (*PmbZ*, no. 8330), Gemostos (*PmbZ*, no. 4451), Hamazaspes (*PmbZ*, no. 1865), Kamateros (*PmbZ*, no. 5927), Krambonites (*PmbZ*, no. 4154; see Popović 2005, for the family after the tenth century), Krateros (*PmbZ*, nos. 4158, 4159), Morocharzanios (*PmbZ*, no. 3199 – the family of the patriarch John Grammatikos), Ooryphas (*PmbZ*, nos. 5654ff.), Persos (*PmbZ*, no. 4401).

[118] Kazhdan 1997.　　[119] Winkelmann 1987a, 139.

considerable effort in ensuring that the members of these branches of the imperial administration, even the most prestigious and powerful, remained under imperial control. Studies of the length of service of the leading military officers in the provinces have shown that as far as possible senior posts were rotated or changed at frequent intervals, presumably with the intention of preventing individuals developing too entrenched a position in any single locality, with the local ties and loyalties which might then develop to compete with those owed to the emperor, the fount of all power within the state. An average period in post of about six years for such officers emerges from the literary sources, supported by the sigillographic evidence.[120]

But as we shall see, many officers in junior or middling positions spent most of their career in the same province or army, moving away only when they had attained the most senior positions. And there were clearly exceptions: under Leo III and Constantine V certain privileged associates of the emperor held a particular post for much longer periods. Artabasdos was successively and over more than two decades commander of the *Armeniakon* and then the *Opsikion* during the reign of Leo III. Under Constantine V several officers, most notably Michael Lachanodrakon, commanded the *Thrakesion* over a very long period.[121] And on the whole, these people remained within a single career framework, military or civil. A somewhat different pattern, with a greater element of variability, applies in respect of senior civil officials. But in the middle levels of the administration, positions seem to have been held a little longer, except in cases where a clear career progression can be seen.[122]

The sigillographic evidence suggests that the number of individuals who attained the highest rank was actually quite a small proportion of all those involved in the imperial administrative system, while at the same time there does appear to have evolved a distinction between a career in the civil administration and a career in the military. Whereas at the higher levels this distinction was not always clear, the tendency towards differentiation is nevertheless there.[123] A number of cases illustrate these points. For the military, for example, we have the example of Kallistos, reportedly (although

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[120] Winkelmann 1985, 72–118, for a survey of *strategoi* in the eighth and ninth centuries.

[121] Winkelmann 1985, 73–4 (cf. *PBE*, Artabasdos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 632).

[122] Winkelmann 1985, 113–20.

[123] Winkelmann 1987a, 103 (the *chartoularios* Paul was made a *strategos* of Sicily and given the rank of *patrikios* by Leo III in 717/18: Theoph., 398 (Mango and Scott 1997, 549); *PBE*, Paulos 7; *PmbZ*, no. 5815); and compare the case of Theodore of Stoudion's correspondent Democharis, who appears to have held both civil and military posts: *PBE*, Democharis 1 and 2; *PmbZ*, nos. 1322, 1323. See also Winkelmann 1985, 139.

only in one later source) a member of the Melissenos clan, who eventually fell into the hands of the Paulicians and was handed over to the Arabs after the fall of Amorion in 838. A ninth-century hagiographical account describes his career. From the rank of a junior officer in one of the palatine regiments he was promoted to the position of *komes* in the imperial *scholai*. He was then moved into the corps of imperial *spatharioi* attendant upon the emperor, and following this was made commander of an independent *tagma*, that of the so-called Ethiopians. Following this he became *doux* of Koloneia.[124] Other accounts describe similar military careers. The majority of middle ranking and senior persons for whom the sources provide information came from fairly privileged social backgrounds, inevitable in view of the advantages accruing from the possession of a certain degree of literacy, a network of patronage, and sufficient wealth to ensure the obtaining of imperial dignities, an essential symbol of social status.

In the provinces, we can thus begin to distinguish a stratum of officers and state officials, possessing both land and influence, able to exercise patronage and build up their own retinue and clientele, and also receive the education and experience from their kin and family for life in imperial military service. Similar to the case of Kallistos is that of Eudokimos, from a wealthy Cappadocian family, educated at Constantinople, and on completion of his studies awarded the dignity of *kandidatos*. He was then given a military command, first in Cappadocia and later in Charsianon.[125] And at a somewhat less exalted level we have the example of the junior *domestikos* (a subordinate position in the *tagma* of the *scholai*), Benjamin, in Bithynia in the early ninth century, whose son Constantine joined the *scholai* in his father's footsteps, initially as a regular soldier.[126] Best-known is perhaps the case of the *drouggarios* Isaac, father of Theophanes the Confessor in the middle years of the eighth century, apparently the owner of a substantial property, himself married to a woman from a similarly wealthy family. Theophanes' mother Theodote betrothed her son to the daughter of another wealthy neighbour, and when he was eighteen the emperor Leo made him an imperial *strator*, later posting him to command the fortress at Kyzikos.[127] Isaac may well typify the middling provincial officers who had

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[124] *De Callisto*: *PBE*, Kallistos 2; *PmbZ*, no. 3606. Whether this Kallistos is to be identified with the Kallistos captured at the fall of Amorion, who was a *tourmarches* of the *Anatolikon*, is unclear: *PBE*, Kallistos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 3606.

[125] *De Eudocimo*, in: *Synax. CP*, 857. See *PmbZ*, no. 1640.

[126] *V. retractata*, p. 111. 1ff.; *La vie merveilleuse de S. Pierre d'Atroa*, 39. 46ff. See *PBE*, Beniamin 1, Konstantinos 103; *PmbZ*, nos. 1009, 4000.

[127] *V. Theoph.*, §§4–6; 10; 15 (although the posting to Kyzikos was ordered as a punishment for Theophanes' later rejection of service as a *strator*).

acquired property through service or inheritance and who were thus able to secure a future at court or in imperial service for their offspring. That merit, within the constraints imposed by social background and family situation, played a significant role in career development, certainly at this middling level of administration, is clear from this and many other examples.[128] The lead seals of a certain Iezeth (Yezid), for example, a man clearly of Arab origin, all dated to the middle of the eighth century, probably illustrate such a career. Although nothing is known of him from written sources, it is likely that he was an immigrant to the empire (since the limited evidence suggests that the second generation of such immigrants were usually given Christian names), perhaps a Christian refugee or a deserter from the caliphate. Beginning with the post of *drouggarios* and the rank of imperial *spatharios*, he was promoted to that of *tourmarches*, and eventually to the post of commander of the imperial stables, with the additional rank of *hypatos*.[129] Background, education, and the connections available through relatives in the military or at court were also key elements in such careers. A combination of merit, competence, and connections determined arrangements for appointments to junior and middling commands or positions of authority.[130]

At the higher level, the administrative machinery was dominated more clearly by the wealthy families and their protégés, whether in civil or military affairs. Literacy was an important aspect of the culture of anyone who aspired to positions of rank, and was a *sine qua non* for a clerk or a member of any government bureau, although it may have been less important, in practical terms, for a military officer. Careers often depended on contacts in Constantinople or at court – several examples from hagiography suggest that the first step for any family, provincial or otherwise, of relatively modest means or well-off, was to secure for the favoured child, usually a boy, the patronage and support of an appropriately placed influential relative. Theophylact of Nikomedeia, from a family of middling means, was sent to Constantinople, where he began his career in the early 780s under the patronage of the then imperial *mystographos* Tarasios; during the reign of Theophilos the young Evarestos was sent to Constantinople to be looked after by his relative (through his mother's family) Bryennios; Niketas of Medikion was sent originally by his father to train as a clerk in the bureau of the general *logothetes*; while the later patriarch Methodios was sent from

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[128] See the comments in Winkelmann 1987a, 99ff.

[129] See Winkelmann 1987a, 101; *PBE*, Yezid 5; *PmbZ*, no. 2656.

[130] For further examples of military careers, see Haldon 1984, 608–9, and n. 1021.

the family home in Sicily to join the imperial bureaucracy in Constantinople as a junior official. Patronage and connections played a key role in all these cases, even if the individuals in question later changed their careers by joining the church or adopting the monastic life.[131] An example of a similarly privileged young man is provided in the *Life* of Blasios of Amorion, whose wealthy family near Amorion sent him in the middle of the ninth century to Constantinople for his education and the first steps of a career in the church.[132] Association with the imperial family was a key element in the development of some families' fortunes – the Melissenoi, for example, who married into the family of Constantine V's third wife Eudokia,[133] or the Serantapechoi (sic), who were related to a branch of the family of the empress Eirene.[134] This did not always bring permanent good fortune: the family of Philaretos of Amnia, whose grand-daughter married Constantine VI, fell into relative insignificance thereafter;[135] the Rhangabe family, which attained power through the acclamation of Michael Rhangabe, the *Kouropalates*, as emperor in 811, seems to end with its greatest member, the eunuch and patriarch Ignatios.[136]

By the later ninth century, certain influential clans had evolved a virtual monopoly over leading provincial military posts, the result of a long, carefully nurtured tradition of military service and a close-knit system of inter-family patronage and clientship. Social mobility, however, remained always a significant aspect of east Roman society. Several key figures during this period rose from the most lowly of positions to high office, raising in the process the position, wealth, and status of their own families – the emperors Michael II, Leo V, and Basil I are but the most obvious cases. By their very success, of course, such figures attracted (and usually deliberately promoted), the attention of chroniclers and historians. They were typical, therefore, insofar as they provided examples of what was always theoretically possible. But it was only exceptional cases where, by good luck or favour, an individual managed to break through the barriers of social and educational status.

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[131]   Theophylact of Nikomedeia: see Ševčenko 1977, 118 (and Beck 1959, 563; *PBE*, Theophylaktos 37; *PmbZ*, no. 8295); Evarestos: Beck 1959, 564; *PBE*, Evarestos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 1618; Niketas: *V. Nicetae Conf.*, 24, 11ff. (*PBE*, Niketas 43; *PmbZ*, no. 5443); Methodios: *V. Methodii Patr.*, 1245B (with Ševčenko 1977, 116) (*PBE*, Methodios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 4977).

[132]   See *V. Blasii Amor.*, 639E, and Beck 1959, 565.

[133]   Winkelmann 1987a, 182–3; cf *PBE*, Melissenos 1, 2; *PmbZ*, nos. 3606, 4952, 5028, 7954, 7962, 8211.

[134]   Winkelmann 1987a, 193–4; *PmbZ*, nos. 6529, 6733.

[135]   Perhaps because the family was invented by the hagiographer.

[136]   Winkelmann 1987a, 194; *PBE*, Ignatios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 2666.

Senior military officers were recruited from among the wealthy provincial landowners, families which had gained power and wealth over several generations by virtue of the appointment of their members to local commands. They were also drawn from among that less wealthy group which provided men such as the officers already described. In the provinces, the former group was in the best position, for it had in addition to its landed resources the support also of the local population, the soldiers from which often placed greater faith in the local officers than in strangers appointed centrally. The frequent provincial risings in support of locally raised officers, especially in the period from the eighth to later tenth centuries, provide ample support for this.[137]

Most senior officers were also 'career soldiers', men who started out with the advantages of an education, a patron, and military experience, and who rapidly attained the leading commands in the capital or the provinces. Many senior officers appear to have begun their careers as provincial commanders, for example, progressing from there to a palatine position, and thence to command of an elite regiment or a provincial army. For the middle years of the eighth century the seals of a certain Leo have been identified as belonging to a single individual, whose career, beginning with the post of *tourmarches* of the *Thrakesion*, with the rank of imperial *spatharios*, progressed through the posts of *hypostrategos* to *strategos*, rising in rank from *spatharios* to *patrikios*. Leo thus remained in the same district or administrative region for much of his career.[138] The high-ranking commander Manuel, who had been a *protostrator* under Michael II, and then *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* army, became *domestikos* of the *scholai* under Theophilos; while Andreas, of Turkic background, had been deputy commander of the *Opsikion* before his promotion to command the *scholai*.[139] Another good example is provided by the family of the empress Theodora, wife of Theophilos: the daughter of a *drouggarios* of the Paphlagonian army, respected and wealthy, she obtained for her brothers Bardas and Petronas important military and administrative posts. The former later became logothete of the Drome, while Petronas became, first, commander of the imperial *vigla*, then *strategos* of the *Thrakesion* army and finally, *domestikos* of the *scholai*, while Bardas had also held this last post for a while. The latter's

[137] As ably demonstrated in Kaegi 1981.

[138] See Winkelmann 1987a, 102; *PBE*, Leo 201, 208; *PmbZ*, nos. 4354, 4361.

[139] For Manuel: Theoph. cont., 24. 2–4, 110.1ff., 120. 21–2; *PBE*, Manuel 1; *PmbZ*, no. 4707. For Andreas, Theoph. cont., 284. 9–15.; *PBE*, Andreas 24, 54; *PmbZ*, nos. 412, 421. The same information is given in the parallel chronicles of Symeon Magister, Leo Grammaticus and the Continuation of the *Chronicle* of George the Monk.

son Antigonos later succeeded Petronas as domestic at the end of Michael III's reign.[140] The earliest commanders of the palatine guards units appear likewise to have come from leading provincial families with strong military connections. Alexios Mousele, the first *drouggarios* of the *vigla*, came from an Armenian aristocratic military background, as did other commanders of the time, men such as Bardanios, *domestikos* of the *scholai* under Constantine VI, or Niketas Triphyllios, *domestikos* of the *scholai* under Eirene.[141] The first commander of the *hikanatoi*, established by Nikephoros I, a certain Peter, came from a wealthy family: his father had been a *patrikios* and *strategos*, and Peter had apparently been appointed to the post of *domestikos* of the *scholai* some time after Nikephoros' accession in 802. Peter's career – holding one of the highest military commands in the empire at the age of about 25 – is illustrative of the advantages which the wealthy, privileged 'military' families possessed through patronage and family influence. The whole story may be partly fictional, but it nevertheless represents what was culturally understood by those who read or listened to it.[142]

The evidence for the civil administration is no better, but certainly confirms the impression that careers tended to be focused in a particular area of government activity, and that at the higher levels some element of fluidity was deliberately promoted. Some careers could thus develop very rapidly: a certain Kyriakos, whose seals are dated to the period 696–704, held the post of *genikos logothetes*, but rose in status from *apo hypaton* to *patrikios* in just eight years. Between 718 and 727 an official named Anastasios held numerous posts as general *kommerkiarios* in Asia Minor and the Balkans – Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Asia, Karia and Hellespontos, Honorias, Paphlagonia, and the Pontic coast – and had the court title of *balnitor*, to which he added later that of *hypatos*.[143] A century or so later the seals of a certain Meligalas illustrate a typical career in the provincial financial administration – he held the posts of imperial *kommerkiarios* and *paraphylax* of Abydos, and at another stage of his career that of *Abydikos*, or customs

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[140] Theoph. cont., 89. 15–19; and R. Guilland 1967, 1, 437–8, 568. Theodora: *PBE*, Theodora 2; *PmbZ*, no. 7286; Bardas: *PBE*, Bardas 5; *PmbZ*, no. 791; Petronas: *PBE*, Petronas 5; *PmbZ*, nos. 5929, 6056; Antigonos: *PBE*, Antigonos 1; *PmbZ*, no. 503.

[141] See *PBE*, Alexios 1; *PmbZ*, no. 193; *PBE*, Bardanes 3; *PmbZ*, nos. 759, 760, 762, 766, 771; *PBE*, Niketas 11; *PmbZ*, no. 5426.

[142] See Haldon 1984, 334–5; *PBE*, Petros 148; *PmbZ*, no. 6046. To what extent the factual account in this hagiography can be relied upon is open to discussion, but it can at least be argued that the example must have been plausible for the listener or reader.

[143] Kyriakos: Brandes 2002, 183–4, 343–5, 538–9 (nos. 137–40a); *PmbZ*, nos. 4191, 4193; Anastasios: Brandes 2002, 546–50 (nos. 176–9); *PBE*, Anastasios 24; *PmbZ*, no. 283. For another similar official, George, *apo hypaton* and *genikos kommerkiarios*, see the study of Brandes 2005a.

officer, of Thessaloniki, with the rank of *hypatos*. Other seals of a Meligalas, datable to the same period, bear the function of *chartoularios* of the *genikon*, and it may be that they belong to the same person.[144] By the same token, however, many officials remained in more or less the same position for much of their career – several sets of seals which appear to belong to the same individuals suggest this – those of a certain Theophylact, for example, whose five seals of the period *c.* 750–820 show a career as *meizoteros* (a supervisor or manager in an imperial workshop or possibly on an estate), rising eventually to the position of *megas meizoteros*. Ignatios the Deacon mentions a local tax-collector in the Nicaea region whose father had illegally taken over some church lands in the same area and may himself have been a state official. We should probably assume that the majority of middle- and lower-ranking officials of this sort remained in their native districts during the course of their career.[145] The letter is a good illustration of one of the ways through which land could be acquired by those in a position to exploit local conditions.

While a key indicator of status was the title or rank an individual attained, the evidence of both lead seals and the *Taktikon Uspenskij* (the only such document from our period, and dating to the very last years) suggests that at the middling and lower levels of the system of precedence there was often little real difference in standing between holders of different titles, and that they functioned in parallel as much as they represented a clear progression. At the highest levels titles such as *patrikios* or *apo hypaton* could be awarded to persons in either military or civil areas. Lower down the hierarchy, however, certain combinations of rank with functional posts do appear to have evolved. The title *hypatos*, for example, is awarded in the later seventh century to as many military as civil officials, but gradually lost its importance for officers with military posts in the following century and a half, and by the later eighth and early ninth century it was normally associated with civil posts. The title of *spatharios*, in contrast, associated for much of the seventh and eighth centuries with military and judicial positions, begins during the ninth century to be associated also with civil posts; most other titles appear in association with both civil and military functions. In similar fashion, individual functional posts are rarely directly associated as a group with a specific title – rather, it appears to be the status and worth of the individual who holds the post, as much as the post itself, which determines the title or rank held.

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[144] *ZV*, 1199–200; but see Winkelmann 1987a, 101–2; *PBE*, Meligalas 1–3; *PmbZ*, nos. 4950, 4951.

[145] *ZV*, nos. 1662, 2537–9, Schlumberger, *Sig.*, 543–4; *PBE*, Theophylaktos 53; *PmbZ*, no. 8333. Note the substantial discrepancies in the dating suggested, however, Laurent preferring a late seventh–early eighth-century date. For the tax-collector's father: Ignatios, *Ep.* 17.

Only during the later ninth and tenth centuries does a more rigid hierarchisation of office and rank develop. Exactly on what grounds a particular title was awarded thus varied according to circumstances. Even among the old-established military corps the precedence of their commanders varied, while commanders of smaller, newer armies could be awarded the highest ranks. Family, age, personal connections, and similar factors clearly played a key role in determining how emperors awarded titles to their military and civil officials.[146] The importance of this uncertainty in stimulating and promoting competition and conflict within the state establishment should not be underestimated.

Society, ritual space, and topography

The evidence we have examined so far thus suggests that key positions in the Constantinopolitan administration could be dominated by a relatively small group of individuals and the networks of patronage and kinship of which they were a part, although not yet to the extent that was later to become the case. It suggests further that patronage, combined with cultural capital and merit, played a role in the selection of such officials and the establishment of a career; and that careers tended to be restricted to a particular facet of the administration: fiscal affairs, or customs and trade, for example, although at the higher levels these career trajectories could merge. Given the political and economic circumstances which prevailed in the later seventh century and into the eighth century, it is highly likely that a substantial degree of continuity of personnel and family existed in the Constantinopolitan palatine administration and among the senior clergy, and that these two groups in fact overlapped to a considerable extent. The evidence from the provinces is less clear. While it seems apparent from the political history of the period that there had already evolved clearly regionalised identities and loyalties by the early ninth century, and while sometimes traditional caricatures or descriptive attributes were associated with particular provincial populations – Armenians or Paphlagonians, for example – it seems that neither had there yet developed at this stage the strongly localised regional elites typical of the tenth century and afterwards. There was, in consequence, probably a greater degree of social continuity at Constantinople and in its hinterland – and thus in the civil and ecclesiastical administrative structures of the capital – than in the provinces.

[146] These points are well made and carefully illustrated on the basis of all the available evidence in Winkelmann 1985, 45–61.

How these developing social strata imposed themselves on their own physical environment, in terms of housing, use of space, and the organisation of resources, remains still very unclear, and study of this facet of Byzantine social life, especially in the provincial rural as well as urban context, has barely begun. But it is clear in general terms that the late antique trend towards a contraction of civic and internal domestic space continued into the medieval period. Some Italian examples show a transformation through which stone-built houses (or wooden upper storeys based on brick or stone lower levels and basements) appeared around the edges of former *insulae*, with the interior space, formerly part of a large town villa or occupied by buildings belonging to several urban dwellings, used as yards or garden plots.[147] Work on medieval Italian and western urban space is more advanced, and although it is not unlikely that comparisons will be very helpful for the Byzantine perspective,[148] the sorts of changes which occurred in Asia Minor or the Balkans are still obscure in comparison, although excavations of sites such as Amorion may enable some answers to be offered (see Chapter 7).

In Constantinople itself changes in the 'psychological topography' of the city accompanied what has been termed the liturgification of imperial ceremonial during the later sixth and seventh century to produce the ritual processional formalism of the ninth and tenth centuries, evident perhaps already in the later eighth century, as reflected in the preservation in the *Book of Ceremonies* of some late eighth-century ceremonies. Just as in Rome between the end of the sixth century and the middle of the ninth century the imperial past was submerged and subordinated to the papal present, so in Constantinople the public functions of institutions such as the chariot racing clubs – Blues and Greens – and other corporate bodies (crafts and professions), as well as of the popular acclamations which accompanied imperial and religious events, were increasingly devoted to emphasising the divinely ordained position and authority of the emperor and the imperial church, and to reinforcing and at the same time legitimating the imperial system. The emphasis on central authority which characterises the rule of Leo III and Constantine V in particular can only have strengthened these developments,[149] and it is not impossible that in provincial towns a re-orientation of built space occurred which took this into account, in

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[147] See, for example, La Rocca Hudson 1986a, 1986b (esp. for Verona); and for general overviews, Ward-Perkins 1983; Brogiolo 1984.

[148] See Brogiolo 1999 with useful discussion and recent literature; Orselli 1999.

[149] Auzépy 1995d; and Cameron 1976, esp. 297–308; McCormick 1986, 64–79, 131ff. For the debate in its western context, see the useful discussion of late Roman/early medieval Metz in Halsall 1996 with literature; and of Arles, in Loseby 1996.

particular the fortress-like character of most of those urban centres which survived the seventh century, in which the military governor or commander's residence, granaries, a central church, and ecclesiastical annexes and civil administrative structures became a new focus for building activities and promoted the creation of a new urban physiognomy, in which the urban elites were also represented.[150]

Towns evolved, in both east and west, also along the lines of an evolving 'Christian topography', in which churches and other types of social space associated with religious activities, the Christian calendar, new funerary and cemetery practices and so forth came to be valued and therefore employed very differently from their late antique antecedents. But while some of these changes, especially those associated with the regular or occasional activities of the church, can be understood to some extent from the existing archaeological and survey record, similar considerations relevant to the construction and form of private houses of town-dwellers, changes in the disposition of industrial and artisanal areas in relation to residential and domestic structures, and more especially relating to the styles of living of the social elite, and the ideological presuppositions which they reflect, remain still to be formulated.[151]

As we have seen in a previous chapter, the much-discussed urban contraction of the end of antiquity is a less simple phenomenon than sometimes assumed. While it can certainly indicate a reduced population, it can also demonstrate a different – perhaps even a more efficient – use of space: the construction of habitations in quarters formerly dedicated to public affairs allowed the populace to fit into a smaller area, and potentially fostered an increased sense of community. It has been suggested that, while population groups shifted, there was no overall population decline in seventh- and eighth-century Constantinople, although we would not align ourselves with this position.[152] But we have argued elsewhere that new uses of urban (and suburban) space both expanded the topography

[150] See, for example, and from the western perspective, the development of early medieval Brescia: Brogiolo 1989. While Brescia offers a clear example of a Lombard royal garrison town, and therefore is not necessarily directly comparable with eastern *kastra*, its urban infrastructure as evidenced in the organisation and form of its major royal and ecclesiastical buildings is suggestive. The existence of two seals, of the 'community' (*koinon*) of the Dekapolis (*ZV*, 1173, and Cheynet 2001, no. 25) and of the community of Sinope (Laurent, *Corpus*, V/1, no. 423), both dated to the seventh century, may suggest the continued existence of a civic identity and corporate activities in some towns. But such seals are extremely rare.

[151] Magdalino 1990; Orselli 1999; Gauthier 1999; Cantino Wataghin 1999; and esp. Brubaker 2001 with literature. On Constantinople in particular, see Magdalino 2002. For further discussion of these developments, see Chapter 7.

[152] Magdalino 1996, 28, 48–50.

field within the public domain and unified the urban network in a new way.[153] For across the eastern Mediterranean basin, concepts of urban space were re-defined in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Condensed and consolidated, public space was concentrated around religious buildings (churches or mosques) rather than around state-dominated civic centres.[154] How this changed urban space interacted with the rituals of urban life – with the topographies of power and processes of urban integration – has been variously interpreted. The dominant paradigm, most clearly proposed by the late Alexander Kazhdan, argues that the contraction of urban public space in the Byzantine east coincided with the 'introspective' enclosing of domestic and family life and the concomitant rise in the importance of family.[155] There are two problems with this thesis. First, the urban pattern was not confined to Byzantium; and, second, a reduction in the areas specifically earmarked for civic activities does not automatically restrain public action and thereby eliminate public social life.

As early as the fourth century, cities across the Roman world began to move away from the old ideal of the *polis*,[156] and by the time of iconoclasm public behaviour in a Byzantine city had become quite different from what it had been in a Roman city. In Constantinople, the city for which we have the most evidence in the eighth and ninth centuries, the procession – an increasingly common form of ritual public behaviour from the fourth century onwards – demonstrates that, far from declining, the public life of the city expanded across the medieval period. Just as the civic heart of the city shifted from state to religious monuments, so too the procession became increasingly focused on ecclesiastic celebration at the expense of imperial ceremonial. Alongside the reduction of civic public space, the focal point of imperial public ritual contracted to the hippodrome,[157] while religious processions took to the streets and appropriated urban space.

The imperial victory processions for which we have evidence during the period of iconoclasm have been catalogued and discussed by Michael McCormick. Three, all terminating in the hippodrome, occurred under

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[153] Brubaker 2001.

[154] See e.g. Potter 1995, 63–73, 80–90; Haldon 1997a; Dagron 1977; and, for the non-Christian East, Kennedy 1985b.

[155] E.g. Kazhdan and Constable 1982, 19–58, following, with modifications, Hunger 1967; see further Dunn 1994, 73–4.

[156] See, e.g., Dunn 1994, Kazhdan 1998, Haldon 1999b, Brandes 1999, and the collection of opinions in Lavan 2001.

[157] On changes in imperial ceremonial, see McCormick 1986, 64–79. State-sponsored processions continued, but they became a prelude to the more weighted event in the hippodrome: see further Lim 1997.

Constantine V; two more, also apparently ending at the hippodrome, took place in 784 under Eirene and Constantine VI, and in 823 under Michael II.[158] Theophilos's triumphal entries are described in some detail in one of the military treatises ascribed to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, which explains that the imperial party entered the city through the Golden Gate, processed to the Milion, and prayed at Hagia Sophia, after which the emperor addressed the crowd from the Chalke Gate; the next day, races were held in the hippodrome.[159] The most unusual triumphal procession took place in 793. Led by Constantine VI, the imperial retinue entered the city not through the Golden Gate, the traditional point of entry, but through the Blachernai Gate to the north.[160] McCormick has compellingly argued that this shift of venue was intended to link the emperor with the Virgin's salvation of the city in 678, celebrated at Blachernai – which housed the most important relic of the Virgin preserved in Constantinople, her robe – the next day.[161] The victory processions held during the era of iconoclasm, in other words, focused resolutely on the hippodrome, and, at least in the cases where we have more than passing reference to the event, included significant religious elements; in the case of Constantine VI's procession, the strength of the cult of the Virgin's relic was allowed to alter the traditional triumphal route.

Constantinople had been the site of religious processions from at least the brief patriarchate of Gregory of Nazianzos, who described one that occurred in 380,[162] and the longer tenure of John Chrysostom, who recorded two, in 398 and 403.[163] The fifth-century historians Sozomen and Socrates, the sixth-century historian Theodore Lector, and the anonymous seventh-century author of the *Paschal Chronicle* provide additional evidence for religious processions in Constantinople and clearly show that they continued without interruption through the so-called 'dark ages':[164] indeed, the 626 procession around the city walls led by the patriarch Sergios, credited with repulsing the Persians and Avars, is exceptionally well-known.[165]

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[158] McCormick 1986, 131–52. The display of booty at Sophianai in 778 celebrated the victory over the Arabs, but was a show of loyalty rather than a victory procession: *ibid.*, 137–41; Theoph. 451 (Mango and Scott 1997, 623).

[159] *Const. Porph., Three treatises* 147–51.   [160] Theoph. 469 (Mango and Scott 1997, 644).

[161] McCormick 1986, 143. On the site, see Janin 1969, 161–71.

[162] *Pace* Baldovin 1987, 181; Gregory described the procession in his autobiographical poem: *PG* 37: 1120–5 (vv. 1325–91). The procession was part of Christian ritual by the second quarter of the fourth century in Jerusalem: Baldovin 1987, 55–64.

[163] *PG* 50:699; *PG* 63:469–70; see Baldovin 1987, 182–3.

[164] See the excellent discussion in Baldovin 1987, 183–7.

[165] The sources are collected and analysed by Pentcheva 2002.

Writing in the early ninth century, Theophanes records several; so also, in two sermons delivered in 860, does Photios.[166] We may conclude that the religious procession was an established practice in Constantinople; indeed John Baldovin has claimed that such processions 'were a part of the whole urban pattern of worship. The liturgy *in* the city was the liturgy *of* the city'.[167]

The early religious processions of Constantinople were factional: the Arians and the Nicenes each attempted to outdo each other in size, props, and imperial participation.[168] Both sides relied on processions to create and to solidify the support of the inhabitants of the city. The Nicenes triumphed, at least in part because, under Gregory of Nazianzos and his successors, they gained control of the topography of the capital through walking it. The Nicenes won the city and its populace through the medium of the procession. Later processions had different agendas, but the re-evaluation of who had authority over the ritual use of urban space remained dominated by the church.

The topographical range of the processions is important for our understanding of urban space in the eighth and ninth centuries. By the fifth century, liturgical processions traversed Constantinople on Saturdays, Sundays, and certain feast days; the congregation followed the bishop to a designated church and received the eucharist. While the exact routes of the earliest processions are unclear, and little information about procession in the era of iconoclasm has been preserved, the key topographical markers noted in the early sources recur in descriptions of processions in ninth- and tenth-century documents, suggesting that, once established, the routes remained relatively constant throughout the period with which we are concerned here.[169] The symbolic topography of Constantinople seems to have been established in the early medieval period, and to have remained largely unchanged until the mid-tenth century: there is no evidence that iconoclasm had any impact on the routes themselves.

Few details make clearer how the imagery of topography in Constantinople had changed since the fourth century, and even fewer highlight more dramatically the lack of public passion that seems normally to have surrounded the issues of iconoclasm. For not only did the routes remain the same, but the procession itself seems no longer to have been thought an appropriate venue for demonstrations of opposition. In the fourth and fifth centuries, rival sides both took to the streets in marches that were overtly

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[166] *Theoph.* 93, 226, 229, 231 (Mango and Scott 1997, 144, 329, 335, 339); for Photios, see Mango 1958, 86, 102.
[167] Baldovin 1987, 211. [168] Brubaker 2001. [169] So, too, Baldovin 1987, 212–14.

sectarian. By the eighth and ninth centuries, the etiquette of the procession – or at least the ways in which one was able to write about public parades – was evidently considered unsuitable for competitive display. On one level, this shift charts a significant change in attitudes toward public behaviour; on another, it suggests that the rituals disputed by participants in the iconoclast debate were felt to belong to a distinctly ecclesiastic rather than a civic sphere. We will return to this point in the conclusion to this book.

The processions themselves, however, continued to link various nodal points within the city together into a cohesive whole, and to impose urban authority on extra mural sites by drawing them into the urban pedestrian network. Processions around the walls continued the rituals of protection, and asserted control over urban boundaries as they had since late antiquity.

The processional routes familiar in early medieval Constantinople describe a type of ritual urban space that is distinct from that defined by the *fora* of the Roman *polis*, though *fora* could be subsumed within processional space. The inert civic spaces of the Roman city gave way to a more diffuse and fluid use of urban space, with symbolic points defined by churches and walls but with ritualised public space constantly redefined by procession routes. Far from a drying up of shared life in communal spaces, the public domain expanded from a centralised core of heavily weighted sites around a forum to a decentralised network of sites connected by the processional routes themselves. Though certain fixed points recur again and again in the itineraries, the processional routes of Constantinople were not static: different occasions were marked by different routes punctuated by different rituals. Over the course of a year, a high percentage of the populated area of the city was traversed. In Constantinople, communal space did not contract; instead, what constituted public space, and how public space was symbolically appropriated, changed fundamentally. As symbolic and ritualisable public space became defined by activity linking the stationary monuments that had, in the Roman *polis*, constituted the civic core of the city, it expanded.[170]

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The imperial court and the government defined their interests relatively narrowly – to protect the empire's territorial integrity, maintain an effective fiscal apparatus through which resources could be extracted for this purpose, maintain the imperial household, and maintain an international diplomatic network which likewise contributed to the preservation of the state. They were less interested in local society and economy – they achieved their aims

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[170] See also Brubaker 2001, 43.

pretty efficiently and successfully, but stopped short of taking an active interest in provincial affairs. Indeed, central administration was relatively apathetic and ignorant in this respect and, in the context of the ability of members of provincial elites to exercise influence, created a great deal of political space within which local affairs could be manipulated.[171]

But the emperors and their court were at no time neutral observers and managers of the empire's resources. The imperial administration in the Byzantine world was embodied in individuals who occupied a multiplicity of social roles. On the one hand, as members of the state establishment bearing imperial titles, they were regarded as, and understood themselves as, members of the imperial household. On the other hand, they had roles in their own households and families – as heads of family, as landlords, as brothers or fathers or sons, and so forth. This meant the imperial 'system' was highly flexible and malleable, since the people who made it up were members of frequently extensive networks of clientage and patronage, connected by family interest as well as local identities to a wide range of intersecting circles of influence. At the same time, prominent provincials could make use of personal connections at the capital among people who outranked the local state officials in respect of access to the emperor or one of his senior confidants. Friendship, social obligation, and gift-giving were the standard and normative forms of expressing social relationships of all kinds, as well as a means of exerting pressure on people or obligating them in some way, locally as well as at the capital. Social power was thus embodied in a series of overlapping networks, and is reflected in the vested interests and actions of various individuals and groups as they sought to negotiate their ways through these relationships. Social power was exercised to secure and improve one's situation in respect of the centre and the imperial household, in respect of one's family situation, and one's position in a hierarchy of associations with other individuals similarly connected, and in respect of access to greater or lesser sets of resources.[172]

What this meant in practical terms was that for members of the Byzantine elite it was their position in a network of relationships dominated by their household and kin, and the prestige of court and imperial posts, which framed their actions and determined how they interacted with others in the different social contexts in which they found themselves. And while most of the evidence for such relationships derives from sources of the ninth

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[171] This point is well brought out in Neville 2004, 99–135; see also the survey by Cheynet 2003b.

[172] What is known of the history of various clans and families illustrates these points: see Cheynet 2003a; and in particular Krsmanović 2001; Cheynet 1990, 261–301; Blyssidou 2001; and especially the careful study by Winkelmann 1987a, 143–219.

century and later, there is no reason to doubt that in systemic terms they existed before and through the major social and economic changes of the seventh and eighth centuries.[173] The point is underlined by the ways in which emperors, too – in many ways the most successful members of the power elite – surrounded themselves throughout our period and beyond with relatives or associates of their families, and by the ways in which those outside this charmed circle strove to gain admittance.[174] This was hardly less true of outsiders who aspired to enter this elite at whatever level – most wealthy households maintained some servants and retainers, the wealthier sometimes considerable bodies of servants and armed retainers, and joining the ranks of such a retinue which, among the very powerful, was organised along the same lines as the imperial palace, could offer many advantages to someone who aspired to greater things – and the stories of Leo, Michael, and Thomas in the retinue of Bardanios Tourkos and later Nikephoros I, or of Basil I, among several, are illustrative, although it should be emphasised that none of these three were in fact of humble origins.[175]

[173] Magdalino 1984; Neville 2004, 85–93; Cheynet 2006b, 32–6 for the tenth–eleventh centuries.
[174] Cheynet 2006b, 13–14.
[175] Beck 1965b; Winkelmann 1987a, 75ff. For Leo, Michael, and Thomas, see Winkelmann 1987a, 77f.; *PmbZ*, nos. 4244, 4989, 8459; *PBE*, Leo 15, Michael 7, Thomas 7; Cheynet 2006b, 12, and notes; 31–5. For Basil I: Winkelmann 1987a, 79ff.

9 | Society, politics, and power

Beyond the margins of elite culture and society, the wider population of the Byzantine world included urban dwellers of all sorts and levels of cultural and economic standing, whose livelihood depended on their skills as artisans, or as providers of services of one sort or another, and the vast mass of the rural agricultural and pastoral populations. Of the former very little is known for this period, except that they occasionally receive mention in letters, historical chronicles, and in hagiographies.[1] Of the latter, it is possible to sketch in a reasonably plausible picture of their social and economic condition, which across the period from the middle and later sixth century had almost certainly, in many areas, become somewhat easier than had formerly been the case, a result of the loosening of landlord-tenant relations that accompanied both the warfare of the seventh century in the provinces and the changed emphases of the state's fiscal apparatus.[2] The two basic categories were tenant farmers or peasants who worked the land of the large estates to which their community, or some of it, owed rent; and independent freeholders. In respect of the former, little is known of the actual organisation of agricultural production, although we do know a fair amount about seasonal patterns. The assumption is that this type of exploitation consisted chiefly of separate cultivation of individual holdings, with the workforce inhabiting village communities which may have been wholly absorbed into the estate, divided among several different estates, or made up of both free and dependent farmers.

But it is also possible that some estates continued to operate on a somewhat different principle, as had been the case for sixth- and seventh-century Egypt, where peasants inhabited nucleated settlements owned by the estate, possessing no land of their own as rent-payers, but being employed in return for the issue of rations and other emoluments as a more flexible (and more profitable) labour force. Such an arrangement is most effective in the context of a highly monetised economy, with market-production playing an

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[1] See Kaplan 2001c, and Chapter 7.
[2] See esp. Haldon 1997a, 132–53; Kaplan 2001c, 166ff., 183ff.

important role, and it is unlikely that such conditions prevailed far from Constantinople for much of our period.[3] From the letters of Ignatios the Deacon, for example, we learn that the *paroikoi* who farmed the church lands of Nicaea in the 820s lived in their own settlement and that the estates were parcelled out amongst them. We also learn that the estate itself possessed no agricultural equipment – neither ploughs nor oxen, which we must assume, therefore, were supplied by the peasant tenants themselves. They paid the *dekateia*, or 'tenth' as a rent (although other customary services and payments may also have been due), their work was supervised by the *kourator* or bailiff of the estate, and they paid their taxes directly, albeit through the estate managers.[4] Thus produce collected for the *synone*, the land-tax in kind for the supply of the local troops, was deposited in a warehouse (referred to as the *oikonomeion*, since it was administered by the *oikonomos* or financial manager of the estates) before being carried to the state granaries or warehouses (*ta tou demosiou tameia*).[5] In the letters in question the tenants had protested to the local state fiscal administrator (probably the *protonotarios*) about fraudulent exactions from them by the bailiff, the *kourator*, blaming the church for their poor treatment and abandoning their plots, with the result that the state intervened to the disadvantage of the church and its revenues. Their settlement is described as an *apoikia*, literally a settlement away from their homes – whether we should understand this in the sense of a seasonal working settlement, for example, such as the 'barracks' of the late antique estate workers, is not clear. Although the *paroikoi* are described as working μισθοφόρων δίκην, 'like hired labourers', they clearly receive a portion of the produce as their reward, and are thus to be seen as tenants paying rent in kind, rather than hired workers.[6]

The status of such *paroikoi* was probably not straightforward – some will have been tenants of only one estate, others may have owned land of their own and also worked plots which they leased out. Villages of independent proprietors were an equally significant element of the rural population, however, and might often comprise communities with considerable internal differentiation in terms of social and economic situation. Many of these may have belonged to that category of peasant freeholder registered for military service or *strateia*, and thus enjoying certain benefits in respect of taxation – in particular, freedom from the extraordinary obligations imposed upon rural communities which made up through indirect means a

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[3] See Sarris 2004a and 2004b.   [4] Ignatios, *Ep.* 1, 9–18; 3, 4–5.

[5] *Ep.* 2, 21–4; 7, 22–30; 8, 10–15. See Mango, commentary, 163–6, 169–70.

[6] On the different types of lease and rental arrangement, see Kaplan 1992, 259–64.

significant proportion of the state's fiscal resources. From the point of view of the government, all those exploiting land were in one way or another sources of revenue, either directly through the taxing of specific communities and their members, and through taxes levied on estates whose occupants had also to pay rent to their landlord, or indirectly through the imposition of particular obligations – fortress- or road-maintenance, for example, billeting of soldiers, officers and imperial officials, feeding passing officials, and providing a range of other services or skills.[7]

Soldiers and society

Throughout the greater part of the eighth and ninth centuries the ordinary rural population was represented, implicitly and informally, through one particular institution, and in a form – the only form – through which they could make their opinions at least partially known to those in power. For it was from the peasantry of the empire that the vast majority of soldiers were recruited, and it was through the army, in its various provincial divisions, that popular opinion could on occasion be given expression. Soldiers became an integral element in many village communities,[8] in a way that they had not been before, because they remained in the district of their own village even during the period of their service (thus encouraging also a certain level of dissent and sometimes mutiny if they were transferred to active service far from home).[9] Regular returns were made to Constantinople about the status of the armies in each district (although evidence for how this worked is available only after the later eighth and early ninth century), but the result of the withdrawal into Asia Minor from the later 630s onwards was that recruitment became highly localised, and soldiers came increasingly to be drawn from the regions where their divisions were based. Further strengthening this tendency, the organisation of military matters at the tactical level – the *bandon* or basic unit (of anything from 50 to 300 or 400 soldiers) – was highly localised also, although the evidence for this only dates from the later eighth century, and for the territorial *bandon* only

[7] The best general account of the middle Byzantine rural community is now Kaplan 1992, with detailed analyses of the peasant economy, the fiscal burdens it bore, the structure of the village community, and its role in the economic life of the empire as a whole. See also Lemerle 1979; Haldon 1997a, 132–53, for summary of the key changes which affected rural populations during the sixth and seventh centuries and promoted the increase in the numbers of independent peasant proprietors and communities. For taxation, see Chapter 10.

[8] Kaplan 1992, 231–53, for detailed discussion and sources.

[9] Useful summaries in Kaegi 1981, 285ff.

from the ninth. Soldiers recruited from particular localities served in the units based in that area, as far as we can tell (and later evidence shows how this worked), and thus tended to share loyalties and political and other views.[10] The changes in the role and character of towns and fortresses in the seventh century had important implications in this respect. For in the absence of populous towns with the possibilities they offered for the expression of the views of ordinary people, the army effectively replaced the urban populace of the empire as the voice of the people. It is perhaps indicative of these complex changes that the decline in the independent political activities of Blue and Green factions in the cities of the East – insofar as anything can be said about their activities outside Constantinople – a purely urban phenomenon and hitherto the most obvious *locus* of popular views and discontent or approbation, more-or-less coincides with the changes in function and form of cities in east Roman culture and government, on the one hand, and on the other with the increasingly vocal appearance of soldiers in politics.[11] And it is in the light of these developments that the activities of soldiers in the later seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries must be understood.

One of the implications of these changes, as we have noted already in Chapter 1, was that the army now became political in a way that it really had not been before, in spite of the fact that there was in 'constitutional' terms always a military element in, for example, the acclamation or choice of a new emperor, so that 'politics' in the very broadest sense was not new for soldiers. Yet the picture is more complex than that. It is very apparent that the politics of soldiers during the period of iconoclast rule were highly provincialised: rebellions, civil wars, and similar disturbances, while often led by political men aiming at absolute or imperial power, had very clearly localised roots, in respect of the sources of discontent, the nature of the opposition and competitive loyalties of one provincial army versus another, and the solidarity between middling officers and leaders and the ordinary soldiery (see below). The absence of any other focus except the armies, for non-metropolitan or provincial opinion, and the central

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[10] For the evidence for this localisation see Haldon 1993a.

[11] For the role of soldiers and the armies during the later seventh and early eighth centuries, for example, see Haldon 1986a, 172, 187ff. On the factions, see Cameron 1979a, esp. 6–15; Cameron 1976 (and for a survey of earlier views: Winkelmann 1976, who stresses the continued importance of the Blue and Green factions in Constantinople during the seventh century; also Beck 1965a, esp. 35–41). But in Constantinople, as Alan Cameron shows, the continued 'political' activity of these organisations was constrained by an increasingly circumscribing imperial ceremonial function.

position of the *strategoi*, the provincial commanders, in imperial politics, were important aspects in this development.[12] The creation of the palatine units (at least, of the *scholai* and *exkoubitoi*) by Constantine V and the evolution of an elite army at Constantinople through the establishment by successive emperors of their own corps, marked a shift in the centre of political attention in the army from the provinces to Constantinople. But this also signalled the intentional involvement of military units by emperors in both ideological and power struggles – virtually every ruler from Constantine V to Theophilos brought into the political arena of the palace and the capital their own military units, whether created *ab initio* or from existing Constantinopolitan or provincial forces.[13] From the second half of the eighth century there took place an explicit politicisation of the army, and from above, accompanied by the creation of a two-tier army: palatine as contrasted with provincial commands.[14] This was re-inforced by the fact that the Byzantine armies of the later seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries were mostly indigenous and relatively homogeneous from the cultural as well as the economic perspective, rooted in local society, recruited regionally from peasant communities, and officered, as far as the evidence allows us to say, by local men.[15]

The interest of soldiers and their leaders in imperial affairs and in the way the empire was being governed – or misgoverned – during the later seventh and eighth centuries is indicated by their involvement in the series of rebellions and coups between the years 695 and 726 in particular;[16] although it had become evident in a number of interesting cases before then, and supports the suggestion that provincial soldiers were conscious enough of matters which seemed to them to be relevant to their own situation and to that of the empire as a whole to make their views known. Such views cannot have been too different from those prevailing among the provincial population, given the origins of the majority of soldiers which we have noted above.

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[12] See in particular Kaegi 1966; 1981, 209–43, esp. 232ff., 270ff.

[13] See Haldon 1984, esp. 245–56.

[14] This is clearest where the *scholai* and similar units are concerned; but, as Kaegi has also demonstrated, it applies to the provincial armies too. See Kaegi 1981, 244ff.; 254–69; and note Speck 1978, 72ff, for example, who comments on the way in which Leo IV's introduction of certain administrative changes is to be connected with the political context of securing his own position and that of his son and successor Constantine VI.

[15] For some examples from the ninth and early tenth centuries, see Haldon 1984, 331, and note 1021.

[16] See Winkelmann 1978, 205ff., and Kaegi 1981, 186ff., for the events in question.

Armies and politics

That the potential for the armies to function as a possible alternative power-base was understood is reflected in the recognition accorded them in official pronouncements: Constantine IV acknowledged their role in his opening statement to the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 680[17] and, even more obviously, Justinian II was clearly attempting to integrate the imperial armies into his scheme of authority when he listed them in his *iussio* of 687 as being present at his ratification of the sixth council. It is notable that in this list, the representatives of the field armies are key representatives of the provinces, along with the metropolitans and bishops – apart from them, the remaining persons listed are either officers of the imperial central administration, the parade-ground regiments of imperial guardsmen, or Constantinopolitan groups such as the *collegia* of the city (which will have included Blues and Greens).[18] This is a striking indication of the central role attributed to soldiers by the emperor at this time, and of the lack of any other significant provincial representatives, no doubt a reflection of the importance they were perceived to hold in the structure of power-relations within the state.

The soldiers themselves cannot have remained unaware of this. Not only were soldiers picked out by their special legal status and other privileges; they and their leaders and officers were involved in facing and repelling the incessant raids and attacks of the Arabs. They were the front line of the orthodox world and, although there is only the faintest reflection of this in the written sources, they must have occupied a central position in the popular mind. These developments had important implications for the relationship between the government, and the new elite which evolved during the seventh and eighth centuries. They also reflect the emergence of new sets of power relationships, both within the elite and between Constantinople and the provinces, particularly between the provincial soldiery and the ways in which they were recruited, on the one hand, and on the other, the elite of imperial office – and title-holders.

Analysis of military unrest in the later part of the seventh, and the eighth and ninth centuries, shows that local loyalties played an important part in at least some of the internecine strife that affected the provincial armies at this time.[19] Although there was always a substantial element of permanent, standing troops, based at key strongpoints or at the provincial commander's

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[17] *ACO* II, 1, 14. 20ff.   [18] *ACO* II, 2, 886. 19–25.
[19] See Kaegi 1981, 201ff., and Haldon 1986a.

headquarters,[20] who may have been drawn from other regions of the empire, this localisation of interests seems to have played an important role in provincial affairs and relations between both commanders and their contingents, as well as the provinces and the capital. The frontier zones, including the passes into Asia Minor through the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountains, or from the coastal settlements inland along the western Balkan littoral, also appear eventually to have engendered strong local identities with the districts from which many of the soldiers will have come and which they had to defend. Archaeologically this shows up in the grave goods and cultural markers associated with the so-called Komani-Kruja culture in the later seventh and eighth centuries in the western Peloponnese, northern Albania, and Macedonia, which appears to reflect the presence of military units and families stationed at key forts and posts, and more significantly their origins in an 'Avar' cultural type located in the regions north and north-west of the Danube basin.[21] There are other, somewhat different, examples of local-regional identities generated by military units, especially in the context of state policy, which could contribute to the creation of new identities. The case of the Mardaites of the Lebanon, who as a local, highly motivated force, with a clear sense of identity and solidarity (both objective and subjective), plagued the Islamic forces and civil authorities in the region during the 670s and 680s, is illustrative.[22] Similarly, the so-called *Gotthograikoi* seem to reflect another example of an identity based in military activity as well as ethnic differentness. Although originally an elite corps recruited from Germanic sources (probably in Italy and the Balkans) by Tiberios II, transferred to Bithynia probably only after the middle of the seventh century on a permanent basis, they seem already by the early eighth to have evolved a strong sense of communal identity, and a reputation to go with it, but represented also a distinct fiscal group, and were placed under a *dioiketes*.[23] Likewise, the various groups of Slav prisoners transferred by Constans II and Justinian II to Asia Minor, from whom soldiers were also recruited,

[20] See Lilie 1976, 315ff.; Haldon 1984, 219–20 with note 546.

[21] See esp. Bowden 2003a for identities; the evidence is summarised in Curta 2006, 98–105.

[22] Lilie 1976, 105–8, notes that that the Mardaites were probably not as effective as later Byzantine stories about them, followed by more recent historiography, would have it. But they provide nevertheless a relevant example of communal identity and solidarity in a military context. For a full account see Ditten 1993, 138–58.

[23] On these, who probably formed an element of the elite force of the *Optimates*, see Haldon 1984, 96–100, 200–2; 1995b; also Zuckerman 1995. The early eighth-century lead seal of the fiscal administrator of the *Gotthograikoi* is no. 232 in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, to be published by J.-Cl. Cheynet, with V. Bulgurlu and T. Gökyildirim, in *Les sceaux byzantins du Musée archéologique d'Istanbul* (Istanbul). See also Haldon 2002a.

generated their own, geographically localised cultural identity.[24] But these are not, strictly speaking, examples resulting from an identity generated by a specifically military institutional status, reflecting rather cultural, ethnic, and linguistic difference, partly in an alien context.

There is little doubt, to judge from the accounts of the warfare of this period preserved in Theophanes' *Chronographia*, that much of the fighting occurred over a very broad front, with the troops equally widely dispersed across the provinces they were to defend.[25] But there is such a dearth of empirical data from the literary record for the nature of the relations between the provinces and the capital during the seventh and eighth centuries that it is difficult to say anything about attitudes or identities. The conflicts in this period between different armies and between the latter and the central government suggest that strongly held views about the status of provincial forces, or about central attitudes to particular armies and their commanders, certainly existed. But with very few exceptions it is impossible to say in what those views consisted. The sources regularly refer to the armies as unitary *blocs* which act as such, which joined together with, or opposed, other divisions according to the political conjuncture, and which clearly possessed an identity based on the regions of their recruitment, their unit traditions and – possibly – also certain local cultural or linguistic characteristics. From the later eighth and ninth century mentions of 'the men of the *Armeniakon* (or *Opsikion*, or *Anatolikon* etc.)' illustrate the nature of these identities and solidarities. In accounts of the various military coups and rebellions of the later seventh and early eighth century certain units are picked out by the commentators as especially troublesome, such as the so-called *Gotthograikoi* of the *Opsikion* army, mentioned already.[26] The *Opsikion* corps appears to have played a central role in imperial politics throughout the second half of the seventh and the first half of the eighth century, partly because of its geographical position (in north-west Asia Minor, covering the approaches to Constantinople) and the fact that its commander was based in both Nicaea and Constantinople, partly because it supplied the garrison soldiers for the imperial capital at this time. It was this very visible identity, and the real threat it posed to the emperors in Constantinople, that encouraged Constantine V (who had suffered

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[24] See Charanis 1959; 1961; Ditten 1978, esp. 151–7, and 152–4. The most recent detailed discussion is also by Ditten 1993, 209–34; but note Seibt and Theodoridis 1999 for a later seal (dated 696/7) relating to the *apotheke* of the *andrapoda* – slaves – of Dekapolis; and the discussion in Brandes 2005a.

[25] See Lilie 1976, 92f., and Haldon and Kennedy 1980, esp. 80–5, with sources.

[26] See Haldon 1984, 96–100, 199–202.

particularly during the rebellion of Artabasdos in 741–2, when he had been abandoned by the *Opsikion* forces) to sub-divide and change the status and power of the commanders of the *Opsikion* region, and eventually to set up his own elite units in the capital as a counter-weight.[27] But its identity as a distinct regional and military entity was no stronger than that of the other regional armies, as is well illustrated by the changing fortunes of the Italian forces under the exarch, based at Ravenna, between the 640s and 650s (when the Italian forces carried out imperial orders with little opposition) and the 680s and 690s (when they refused to support imperial emissaries against the pope).[28] The *Armeniakon* army similarly appears as an important player in this regionalised political jigsaw, frequently adopting a position which conflicted with that of the *Anatolikon* army, for example.

Such choices appear on the whole to reflect the loyalties and vested interests of the senior command in each army. During the rebellion of Artabasdos the three armies of *Armeniakon* and Thrace, under the command of trusted associates, and the *Opsikion*, which he controlled directly, supported his efforts to depose Constantine V;[29] the rebellion of the *strategos* of Sicily, Sergios, in 717, was supported initially by the troops under his command, simply because they were told that the capital had fallen or was about to fall to the Arabs;[30] the rebellion of the Helladic forces in 726 seems likewise to have been inspired by the *strategos*, whose troops followed his lead.[31] In 790 the *Armeniakon* forces under their *strategos* Nikephoros refused to swear the oath of loyalty to Eirene which the empress had imposed on the other provincial armies; and when the *drouggarios* of the Watch, Alexios Mousele, a member of the Armenian aristocracy, was sent to persuade them, Nikephoros was deposed, Alexios was acclaimed commander, and Constantine VI proclaimed sole emperor. Other provincial commanders, supported by their forces, joined in.[32] In 792, and upon receiving news of the blinding of their former general Alexios Mousele at Eirene's order, the *Armeniakon* forces again rebelled, under the leadership of their *tourmarchai*. They were defeated only through the treachery of some of the ethnic Armenian units among their ranks when the emperor marched against them with detachments from several other divisions.[33]

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[27] See Haldon 1984, 191–210, 228ff.
[28] The issue is dealt with in detail by Guillou 1969 and Brown 1984.
[29] See Chapter 3, 157–60.
[30] Theoph. 398–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 549); Winkelmann 1987a, 39–41.
[31] See Chapter 2, 80–1.   [32] Theoph. 465–7; Chapter 4, 287–8.
[33] Theoph. 468–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 644); see Winkelmann 1987a, 54f.

To a large extent the role of lower and middling provincial commanders in the politics as well as the social history of the period has been neglected. From the *komites* or commanders of the *banda* and the *drouggarioi* who organised the annual musters, to the senior *tourmarchai* and the staff of the *strategos*, we can see from the few cases where concrete information is available that it must, in fact, have been crucial. The limited evidence suggests close ties and political loyalties between these men and their soldiers, and they appear certainly as the link between provincial commanders and their soldiers, and thus between the senior elements of the provincial establishment and the mass of the population. Their fortunes depended on the entrenched patronage that existed between them and their senior officers, in turn supported by imperial titles and salaries and by vested interests in the lands of their own districts, probably much more so than on direct imperial patronage or interest in provincial affairs. Occasionally we glimpse some of these middling officers in action, as with the *Armeniakon* officers in 790 and 792, or when the supporters of Thomas the Slav or Bardanios Tourkos rallied around their leader in a local or empire-wide undertaking. In the latter case, the later emperors Leo the Armenian and Michael of Amorion, as well as Thomas the Slav, owed their advancement to membership of the *hetaireia* or retinue of Bardanios, *strategos* of the *Anatolikon* and, upon their deserting his cause for the emperor, to senior positions in the provincial armies or at court. All were of apparently humble origins, but their careers illustrate the importance of service in the retinue of a senior provincial officer.[34] In the case of Thomas, whatever the original motives of his rebellion (see Chapter 5), he received extensive support from his own army, the *Anatolikon*, and presumably his own *tourma*, the *phoideratoi*.[35] His provincial supporters appear to have been men of substance and thus members of middling provincial society – according to near-contemporary sources, Michael II and Theophilos both permitted them to reclaim their properties.[36] And it was probably such men who were responsible for, and lived in, some of the provincial strongholds and semi-urban fortresses which are so typical of the Byzantine provinces throughout this period.[37] One of the provincial commanders who had supported the rebel Thomas the Slav, for example, a certain Gazarenos Koloniates, may have been typical, probably in

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[34] See *PmbZ*, nos. 4244 (Leo), 4990 (Michael), and 8459 (Thomas) for biographies and literature.

[35] Descended from the late Roman formation of the same name (*foederati*), established in the region settled by the army of the *magister militum per Orientem* after the 630s: see Haldon 1984, 236ff.

[36] *V. Petri Atroae*, §12 (97); *V. Antonii iunioris*, §31f. (209ff.).

[37] See below; and Chapter 7 above, esp. 555ff.

origin from Koloneia in the *Armeniakon*, although he may also have held a military command there – perhaps as *tourmarches*. He was appointed to the command of the fortress of Saniana in the *Anatolikon* region; one of his fellow rebels, a certain Choireas, was commander of the fort at Kabala near Ikonion in Lykaonia, perhaps as *tourmarches* or possibly as *drouggarios*.[38]

Not infrequently, when the sources speak of 'the men' of a particular army, therefore, it seems to be the senior and middling officers who are meant, as well as the mass of the soldiery – as in 803, for example, when it was presumably the officers of the Asia Minor armies who pushed Bardanios Tourkos into rebellion;[39] or in 790 and more particularly in 792 on the occasion of the Armeniak rebellions. And this may also have been the case in the rebellions of the later seventh and early eighth centuries which had a clearly military origin: in 690 when the *Anatolikon* troops and their leaders demanded that Constantine IV rule jointly with his two brothers;[40] in 698 when the soldiers of the *Kibyrrhaiotai*, 'incited by their own officers (*archontes*)' proclaimed their *drouggarios* Apsimar emperor, as Tiberios, eventually gaining access to Constantinople through the betrayal of the 'provincial commanders' (probably *Opsikion* officers and their units who had been guarding the city);[41] while again in the various coups which resulted in the deposition of both Justinian II in 711, Philippikos in 713, and Anastasios II in 715 the lead of the middling and senior officers of the contingents involved can be assumed to have been essential in directing the soldiers and in co-ordinating the actions which led to the replacement of the rulers in question. How these soldiers – and their kin – were disposed in terms of geography is impossible to say. If the example of the outposts in Istria, or those represented by the Komani-Kruja culture in Albania and Macedonia are at all representative (and if they are indeed correctly understood as reflecting the presence of 'imperial' military communities), they were frequently isolated and dispersed, entirely dependent on their own resources and those of the immediate locality. Rebellions and coups which occurred in such provincial settings cannot have taken place without some organisation and leadership, and the officers of the divisions in question were the only source of such leadership (there is never any mention of the involvement of provincial clergy, for example), as some of these examples

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[38] Theoph. cont., 71–3; cf. *PBE* Gazarenos 1; Choireas 1; *PmbZ*, nos. 1941, 1072 with literature. The name Choireas may possibly be a nickname or a deliberate misunderstanding of his real name.

[39] Theoph. 479 (Mango and Scott 1997, 657).   [40] Theoph. 352 (Mango and Scott 1997, 491f.).

[41] Theoph. 370f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 517); Nikeph., 98f.

make explicit. We know of few such rebellions on the part of troops in the Balkans, apart from that of the Helladic units in 725/6, and this may in itself reflect a greater degree of dispersal, or more local autonomy, than existed among the armies of Asia Minor. The most telling indication is, perhaps, the fact that the provincial forces tended to act as united bodies, under the command of their leaders, in both military and political contexts. The evidence of the *placitum* of Rizana, an early ninth-century document from Istria, while not concerning a rebellion, nevertheless shows that the local elite gave strong leadership and was in its turn in receipt of solid support from the soldiers and population of the area in their efforts to maintain the established modes of governance and social organisation after the Carolingian take-over of the province.[42]

The great majority of military revolts and attempted coups seem to fit into one of two categories – those with a Constantinopolitan origin, among senior palatine officials and military officers based in the city; and those with an obviously provincial origin, in which the role of provincial officers as described above appears to be the dominant element. It is worth pointing out here that iconoclasm and the issue of holy images seems never to have played a key role – even if, in the case of the rebellion of Artabasdos, or of the plot of 766, or the rebellion of Thomas the Slav, it may have been ascribed such a role, or possibly have been adopted by some of the participants in an effort to broaden the base of the movement.[43] The motives for both types thus appear largely to be chronologically and politically specific to the context. In the case of Constantinopolitan plots and coups, they are generally associated with the reaction of particular officials and members of the local elite to imperial policies or actions which are usually obscure (the decision to depose Theodosios III and accept Leo III as emperor a clear reflection of the dangers posed by the Arab invasion of 716; the plot against Constantine V in 766 associated with specific interests among the Constantinopolitan establishment[44]). In the case of provincial rebellions, they are associated with local vested interests, attitudes or responses to real or imagined slights, about which again we usually know very little. The exceptions where we do have some information are probably typical: in the rebellion of the *Armeniakon* officers, resentment at Eirene's rule or Constantine VI's blinding of their former *strategos*; in the case of the

[42] Petranović and Margetović 1983; Krahwinkler 1992, 202.

[43] As has been amply and very clearly demonstrated by Kaegi 1966; see also Winkelmann 1987a, 44–9, 66–7. Blysidou *et al.* 1998 still cling to the now discredited notion that some armies were more iconoclast than others – see, e.g., 43–4.

[44] Chapter 3, 237–40; Winkelmann 1987a, 47f.

rebellion of Bardanios Tourkos, anger at the supposedly unjust division of booty by the emperor Nikephoros;[45] and in that of the senior metropolitan and provincial officers in their response to what they perceived as the lack of respect shown to them by the eunuch Aetios, Eirene's 'first minister', in 801.[46]

Rivalries between provincial forces again seem not to reflect entrenched polarities. Each rebellion involved a different constellation, although it is the case that the *Anatolikon* and *Armeniakon* were generally found in opposite camps, perhaps a reflection of local perceptions and rivalries which may reflect both traditional regional identities going back into the late Roman period as well as more recent differences.[47] But it is perhaps indicative of such rivalries or tensions that the plot of 766 involved both the *komes* of the *Opsikion* and the *strategos* of Thrace (as well as a *strategos* of Sicily), and the leadership of the first two divisions had both been punished for their support of Artabasdos in 742–4. Here, therefore, may be an example of resentments harboured by members of a provincial elite against a particular ruler and his policies or closest associates.[48] The establishment of the Constantinopolitan units is one facet of Constantine V's need to protect himself from some of these threats,[49] as we have already noted, and it is again not insignificant that the first recruits to these units were from the *Anatolikon* command, with which the emperor had had a close connection since the revolt of Artabasdos – surely a reflection of their political loyalty, which set them apart from soldiers nearer the capital.[50] Later emperors, from Eirene on, followed a similar policy – Eirene herself promoted a field unit from a different region, very probably the *Thrakesion* army, to be her own bodyguard, the *Vigla*;[51] Nikephoros I introduced the *phoideratoi* to Constantinople for a while, by this time a *tourma* of the *Anatolikon* region based in, and closely identified with, Lykaonia, possibly because of his own family connections with the region; and so on.[52]

The extent to which provincial soldiers and, more importantly, the local elites who provided their officers, might feel more or less alienated from the capital and the imperial government, thus depended as much on such factors as personal loyalties and disappointments, imperial favour or disfavour

[45] Theoph. cont. 8f.; see Winkelmann 1987a, 59f.
[46] Theoph. 475 (Mango and Scott 1997, 654f.).   [47] See Kaegi 1981, esp. 229–38, 265–7.
[48] See Winkelmann's comment, 1987a, 48.
[49] As well as the subdivision of the original *Opsikion* division: see Haldon 1984, 209–14.
[50] See Theoph., 462.15–17; 463.15–19 (Mango and Scott 1997, 636, 637), for example, and detailed discussion in Haldon 1984, 297–9.
[51] Haldon 1984, 240f.   [52] Haldon 1984, 236–52.

and the distribution of honours and largesse, as it did on issues of imperial politics in the broader sense. This must be understood in the context of the competitive struggle for access to influence and power at Constantinople, for it was at Constantinople that provincial and metropolitan interests, personal ambition, and public career opportunities, collided or coincided. It is possible that the provincial troops which were allowed by the garrison to enter Constantinople in 698 with the newly proclaimed Tiberios Apsimar, and who then plundered the city, were giving vent to some hostility or resentment of the imperial capital, its inhabitants, and their privileged position,[53] just as the victorious Constantine V purportedly permitted his provincial soldiers to pillage parts of the city in 743.[54] But many interpretations of these passages are possible. Whether we should speak at this stage of provincial vs. metropolitan interests is open to question, except in the sense in which we have already situated some of the conflicts of the period. From much later evidence, it is clear that a distinctively provincial culture did evolve, and that a mutual suspicion and, on occasion, antipathy, between capital and more distant provinces did exist. The strict central control exercised over distant military commanders through centrally appointed fiscal and administrative officers described by Leo VI in his *Taktika* at the end of the ninth century may even at that time have been more theoretical than real.[55] As we noted above, however, the emperors of the seventh–ninth centuries do appear to have been largely successful in rotating the higher military provincial commands on a fairly regular basis, in order to avoid too close an identity between local population, local army units, and commanding officers. The exceptions are represented by those generals who were especially trusted friends and associates of particular emperors, and who are particularly picked out by some of the literary sources.[56] In contrast, this probably applied less rigorously to the middle- and lower-ranking officers, who – like the peasant soldiers they commanded – came to be rooted in local society and identify with local interests.

As well as their position in respect of the political life of the provinces and capital, ordinary soldiers also had a particular social status, and possessed a

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[53] Winkelmann 1978, 218; Theoph., 370 (Mango and Scott 1997, 516f.); Nikeph. 98–100; and Cumont 1894, 30. The garrison soldiers themselves were very probably a division of the *Opsikion* army: see Haldon 1984, 197ff.

[54] Theoph., 420.25 (Mango and Scott 1997, 581). In both these passages, it is *exotikoi archontes*, i.e. provincial officers (presumably with their soldiers) who are responsible. But these have nothing to do with 'half-barbarian provincial nobles' (Speck 1981, 310, n. 98) or foreign soldiers in the forces of Constantine V (Lilie 1976, 320).

[55] Leo, *Taktika*, esp. iv, 31.

[56] This question has been addressed by Winkelmann 1987a, esp. 113–20.

relatively privileged position in comparison with the ordinary inhabitants of towns or countryside. They constituted a fairly clearly identifiable group institutionally and, while there existed considerable differences in economic status and situation between and among soldiers, they had certain privileges in terms of their legal status and in respect of inheritance and the transmission of wealth, as well as in terms of their fiscal liabilities. Foreign mercenary soldiers were assimilated usually into Byzantine-led units, even where they constituted distinct groups within such units – the Khazars and Pharganoi in the *hetaireia*, for example. And non-Byzantine soldiers recruited from foreign refugee settlers, such as the 'Persians' under Theophilos, were also assimilated by being settled and subjected to the same conditions of fiscal and civil administration as native Byzantine populations.[57]

This homogeneity was reinforced by the fact that the property of soldiers acquired through their military service continued to be protected by a special status, while all property belonging to soldiers (as well as to certain other categories of state official) was deemed to be protected by state law – the state undertook to make good property lost or damaged as a result of the owner's absence on public service. The active troops received donatives and a share of booty and, in respect of imperial political theory, and along with the church and the peasantry, the soldiers held a special position: 'the army is to the state as the head is to the body; neglect it, and the state is in danger', was the way in which Constantine VII expressed this role in the middle of the tenth century. Likewise, in the late ninth-century *Taktika*, Leo VI described peasants and soldiers as the two pillars upon which the polity was founded.[58] The emperors were seen symbolically as the father of their soldiers, the soldiers' wives as their daughters-in-law; they were comrades-in-arms.[59]

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[57] For more detailed discussion, see Haldon 1993a; 1999. Not all 'mercenary' soldiers and their leaders were easily absorbed, of course, as the example of the Armenian noble Tatzates shows. He attained the position of *strategos* of the *Boukellarion* army, yet deserted to the Arabs (having abandoned the Muslim side in the first place) with his retinue in 782. See Theoph., 456 (Mango and Scott 1997, 629); Ghevond, 152ff. and the examples of the Slavs and their leaders who changed sides in 665 (Theoph., 348 [Mango and Scott 1997, 487]) or the Armenians settled in Cappadocia under Constantine V, who likewise abandoned the Byzantines (Theoph., 430 [Mango and Scott 1997, 594]; see Lilie, 1976, 246, on Armenian desertions and the Byzantine reaction thereto), provide good examples of the potential dangers inherent in employing 'outsiders'.

[58] For Constantine's comment, see *JGR* (Zepos) i, 222, proem. (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 673); and Leo, *Takt.* xi, 11. On testamentary privileges of soldiers, on their property, and on their ideological position, see Haldon 1993a.

[59] For example, *Const Porph, Three treatises*, (C) 453–4, and commentary, 242–4. The motif reaches back into Roman times.

Apart from these rather abstract ideas embodied in Christian political theory and inherited, ultimately, from the classical past, there were also day-to-day practical advantages to being a soldier, particularly in respect of taxes owed to the government. Soldiers and their immediate family (and hence any property directly owned/held and exploited by them) were exempted from extraordinary fiscal burdens or corvées, paying only the basic state demands, in the later seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries the land-tax and (depending upon when it was first introduced) the hearth-tax, or *kapnikon*. The difference in later Byzantine texts (largely tenth-century) between 'military households' and 'civilian households' (*stratiotikoi oikoi, politikoi oikoi*) has its origins in the usual late Roman distinction drawn between those groups which enjoyed specific immunities in respect of certain state demands and those which did not. Those owing service in respect of the post (*exkoussatoi tou dromou*) of provisioning military personnel (*prosodiarioi*) and those who worked in imperial armouries were similarly immune from certain state corvées in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and may well have been similarly privileged before this time.[60]

These privileges gave soldiers a particular social standing, at least in formal terms. But we have very little idea of whether this status and attendant privileges were actually observed until the tenth and eleventh centuries. On the other hand, just as in the late Roman period and before (where the evidence is better), soldiers were probably able to bully civilians, both in their own communities when either on or off duty, and in the regions through which they passed when on campaign. There is not much evidence, admittedly, and what there is comes from exceptional or unusual circumstances (the violent behaviour of soldiers in Constantinople during the reigns of Constantine V, Eirene, Nikephoros I, and Michael I, for example, or that of Nikephoros II), but behind the biased and slanted reports of the historians, chroniclers, and hagiographers who recorded such events lies the reality of armed force, backed by legal privilege and state power, in a civilian context. Conflict over the question of billeting and provisioning, for example, must have continued to present the authorities with problems in the Byzantine period, just as they had in the preceding centuries, although there is virtually no evidence to speak of. Certainly, the presence of soldiers in either town or countryside was usually felt to be oppressive by local populations, and tension and conflict between the two must have been endemic. Their privileged

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[60] On fiscal privileges, see the discussion with sources and literature in Haldon 1993a. But note that in Leo's *Taktika*, xx, 71 (*PG* 107, 1032C), soldiers drafted for state *aggareiai* or compulsory service when other non-exempt subjects were not available were to be paid for their labour, suggesting that they may not always have been appropriately recompensed.

juridical status must have given them *de facto* a considerable potential for getting their own way.[61]

The term 'soldier' represented a whole range of different economic and functional strata. Social status usually accompanied wealth, for example. The better-off among the provincial armies occupied a position of importance or influence in their communities, but they remained at a relatively humble level. Possession of an imperial title was just as significant in securing social recognition, and it is clear from the surviving documents of the later period (tenth century and after) that most soldiers did not belong to this level of social achievement and recognition.[62] Military function also played a role. Border garrisons and watchtowers were manned by local forces, men of relatively humble status, on a rotational basis. Such men as these will have been socially far inferior to the better-off cavalrymen of the provinces, or indeed the full-time soldiers who formed the core of each provincial army. Which categories are represented in the burials tentatively identified as of soldiers, belonging to the Komani-Kruja culture in the western and southern Balkans, can only be tentatively known from variations in the quality and number of grave goods.[63] It is probable that substantial differences in wealth and status within the army developed from the seventh and eighth centuries, as those in cavalry units differed from those in infantry units, as metropolitan elite units differed from provincial units, and perhaps also as the size and productivity of those landholdings which supported military service varied. But no source throws other than the dimmest light on this question.

Writers of the period, at least those of the early ninth century and later, distinguish between soldiers and the poor: Theophanes, for example, lists them separately.[64] By the early ninth century, if not long before, there existed a wealthier category of registered *stratiotai* (soldiers) who could afford to furnish their own provisions as well as to help those who were less fortunate than themselves. This is in contrast to the situation reflected in the later tenth-century legislation, in which ordinary soldiers are generally bracketed with other less well-off peasants.[65] But it is certain that during the eighth and ninth centuries soldiers constituted a significant element in many village communities, and were probably able to influence opinion in

[61] See Haldon 1984, 232f. for sources. For conflicts over billeting and supplying soldiers in the late Roman period, see in general MacMullen 1963, 86ff.; as well as Jones 1964, 631f., with the comments of Patlagean 1977b, 279–81; and Rémondon 1963.

[62] Haldon 1993a.   [63] Nallbani 2004; Bowden 2003a; 2003b, 204ff.

[64] Theoph., 494.9–10 (Mango and Scott 1997, 677f.); Theoph. cont., 443.

[65] See sources and literature in Haldon 1993a.

ways which may have had more than purely local implications.[66] How these different developments and tendencies fit together to explain the path taken by Byzantine society over this period will be dealt with in our concluding chapter.

Beliefs, attitudes, and action: who were the iconoclasts and iconophiles?

The question of the degree to which different elements of society were involved actively on one side or another of these political-religious debates is a major issue for the social and political history of the period. It is still generally believed – although there is a growing tendency to challenge the assumption – that imperial iconoclasm fired the imagination and stirred the emotions of a majority of Byzantines, and that people were actively engaged in political action, physical or intellectual resistance to the government or to the emperor's policies, or in support for the imperial position and the active promotion of iconoclasm. As we have seen in the historical survey above, however, there is very little evidence to support this position for the first period of iconoclasm, while the political and intellectual activities of the opposition although they take a much clearer and more directed form during the period from *c.* 785 onwards, and especially after the inauguration by Leo V of a second period of iconoclasm, are in their turn fairly restricted in their extent.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, there is no reliable evidence for opposition to any form of 'imperial' iconoclasm during the reign of Leo III, and this is in our view most probably a reflection of the fact that whatever opinions Leo held were expressed mildly. Leo's remarks about the cross and about images – if they were in fact aired publicly – may have aroused some public debate and even disorder, and the later iconophile legends about the mob response to Leo's policy in 726 may reflect this.[67] That there was some debate within the church is clear from the letters of Germanos to Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Klaudioupolis. But the pilgrim Willibald's report makes absolutely no mention of the mass persecutions, exiles, and destruction of images which later accounts claim were taking place during these very years.[68] According to both the correspondence of Germanos and the sermons of John of Damascus, the clergy were at first

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[66] See Kaplan 1992, 231–51.　　[67] Stein 1980, 152ff.

[68] As in the accounts of Theophanes, Nikephoros, and the *V. Stephani iun.*

divided on the issue, but increasingly accepted the critique of images. There is no evidence of mass popular support for either the pro- or the anti-image side. The story of the iconoclast soldier who threw a stone at an icon of the Virgin during the siege of Nicaea in 727 is, as we have seen, probably apocryphal, although should not be dismissed entirely out of hand – there may well have been a more 'grass roots' hostility to images about which we know little, but upon which later iconophile propaganda could draw. Sacred images were by no means exempt from criticism: when the Kamoulianai image was employed in helping to quell mutinous soldiers in the later years of the sixth century, it is reported to have been pelted with stones.[69] The extent to which the issue of images spread beyond the church – the letter of Germanos to Thomas of Klaudioupolis clearly implies a lively debate and a real split within the ranks of the clergy – is difficult to assess. The homilies of Andrew of Crete show that opposition certainly existed within the church, but the fact that Germanos and Andrew (and possibly others, although we do not know how many, nor their names) were simply dismissed from their posts and sent into internal exile illustrates the level of imperial response (in contrast to the lurid tales recounted in later iconophile literature) – indeed, they were treated like any other person who resisted or opposed imperial policy in whatever area. The limited evidence certainly supports the notion that the emperor Constantine V took a direct interest in ensuring the pro-imperial character of the episcopate; yet this is hardly exceptional for any ruler with strong views on theological matters or ecclesiastical policy.[70]

The reign of Constantine V represents for the iconophile propagandists of the later eighth and ninth centuries the high point of persecution, destruction of images, and so forth. Yet again, as pointed out in Chapter 3, the evidence to support this view is extremely slim. Artabasdos does not, in fact, appear to have 'restored' images, and there is no reliable evidence at all for his religious ideological views. In the case of Constantine himself, the evidence suggests an initial stimulus to consider the issue of images and related problems during the outbreak of plague in Constantinople in the later 740s. The first sermon of John of Damascus, which may date to the late 740s, refers again to divisions within the church, but also makes the point that the majority has already adopted the new position. The second sermon, in contrast, refers to the punishments and exile inflicted upon those members of the church who opposed the emperor and his teachings, and

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[69] Theoph., 405.25ff., 406.5ff. For the Kamoulianai image: Theoph. Sim., iii, 1.11–12 (111, De Boor).

[70] See Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 119–43, for the evidence for episcopal support for iconoclasm.

refers probably to events of the period leading up to the synod of 754.[71] The majority of bishops in the church clearly supported, however indifferently, the decisions reached at the synod of 754, while several of those re-admitted to the church during the Council of 787 were actively involved in promoting iconoclasm; and in the crisis of 765–6, when Constantine faced a plot or series of connected plots from senior military and administrative officers, on the one hand, and certain monastic circles in Constantinople, on the other, the opposition seems to have been crushed fairly easily. More importantly, although the later tradition associated this opposition to Constantine with iconophile sentiment, there is no evidence that this was actually the case, and the sources in fact give the impression that it was more narrowly personal and political motives that were at play.[72]

The evidence improves somewhat with the reigns of Leo IV and then of Eirene and Constantine. Yet the general picture of a relative apathy among the majority of the population at all levels is reinforced. While it seems clear that Leo IV attempted to distance himself a little from the strict policies of his father's reign – the appointment of the 'neutral' patriarch Paul is indicative, for example – and that the attempted coup against him in 779/80 had nothing to do with imperial policy towards images,[73] the majority of bishops in the church appear to have been tolerant of or favourable to the established policies, for Leo was able to make a number of appointments to metropolitan sees in his first years. His wife Eirene, generally portrayed as an avowed iconophile from the first, seems in fact to have belonged to the great majority of those who had no strong views on the topic of icons, or who kept their views to themselves.[74] Only after the abdication of the patriarch Paul in 784 and the appointment of Tarasios, a member of the metropolitan elite, do her policies as regent suggest a different perspective. Eirene appears in fact to have taken the opportunity offered by Paul's abdication (which, according to one tradition, may have involved his expressing regret about the schism between Constantinople and the other patriarchates) in order to re-integrate Constantinople into the wider church. At the same time this permitted the court to defuse the possible resentments and the passive hostility towards the establishment which official policy had probably engendered, certainly among certain circles such as some monastic communities, whose members could be influential.

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[71] See Chapter 3, 185 and n. 107.   [72] Chapter 3, 237–40.

[73] See Theoph., 453.10–20 (Mango and Scott 1997, 625). See Speck 1978, 100; 1988, 476 and n. 1037; and Rochow 1991, 226–7 and Chapter 4, 249–50.

[74] See 261–6.

It is interesting that the patriarch Nikephoros notes in two texts, the third *Antirrhetikos* and the *Apologetikos major*, that 'most people' had not taken into account the fact that the iconoclasts were evil and ignorant people. These remarks, written in the first 20 years of the ninth century, are particularly significant, for they give the impression, first, that not many people had a close familiarity with the nature of iconoclast ideas and those who supported them; and second, that there cannot have been that many iconoclasts. Nikephoros goes on to note that, while some of these evil people were monks and priests, they were supported by the members of the chariot-racing fan clubs, those who watched the races in the hippodrome, the lower strata of Constantinopolitan society, retired veterans from the army, and priests who had been defrocked as a result of their uncanonical behaviour. Thus we learn also that Nikephoros' experience of the iconoclasts, at least in the context in which he writes, is confined largely to the metropolitan area rather than the provinces – we should recall that Nikephoros was himself the son of an imperial official, an *asekretis*, and had in his turn been recruited into the palace administration.[75] But we also see that Nikephoros' objections are to ignorance and impiety in general, and that he is most disturbed by the participation of the poor in political affairs and by the pastimes and occupations through which they could be characterised, or rather, caricatured. As others have pointed out, the same elements in urban society were no doubt also to be found on the 'other' side, and it was their social position and mores as much as their actual beliefs which inspired Nikephoros' contempt.[76]

Of those individuals who can certainly be described as iconoclasts little is known in detail. The families of many members of the upper reaches of society whom we have already mentioned maintained often highly successful careers under the iconoclast emperors, in particular Constantine V: the parents of Theophanes the Confessor were wealthy landowners during Constantine's reign, and the father held a senior military position during Constantine's reign until his death in 763.[77] Both Theodore of Stoudion (a candidate for the patriarchal throne in 806, we should recall) and his uncle Plato of Sakkoudion came from a wealthy and privileged family, whose relatives occupied a range of powerful posts in the government financial administration, and similar considerations apply to the families of the patriarch Tarasios, as well as those of Makarios of Pelekete, Euthymios of Sardis, and Hilarion of Dalmatos. There is no evidence that Plato ever

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[75] *Apologetikos major*: PG 100, 544–56; *Antirrhetikos III*: PG 100, 488–92.
[76] E.g., Speck 1978, 64.   [77] *V. Nikephori patr.*, 145ff.

opposed iconoclasm, and indeed he supported the patriarch Tarasios' efforts to reconcile the predominantly hostile monastic groups to a compromise position.[78] The vast majority of all the bishops in the empire went along with or actively supported imperial iconoclasm from the very beginnings, and many of them made important theological contributions to the debate. All the bishops at the Council of 787 began the first session, nominally, as iconoclasts. The bishops of the Balkan dioceses as well as those of the eastern provinces accepted publicly during the Council of 787 that they had been born and brought up under iconoclasm and that they had sinned, and asked for pardon.[79] The list of participants at the synod of 754 is illustrative.[80] The opposition referred to in the letters of Germanos seems not to have had a major impact on the course of events – one of the complaints of the iconophile monks at the Council of 787, and one of the major bones of contention between the 'moderate' position adopted by Tarasios and Eirene, on the one hand, and the 'hard-line' monks on the other, was that bishops who had changed sides were being allowed to recant and to stay in their positions.[81]

Interesting in this respect is the case of Philaretos of Amnia, grandfather of the empress Maria, wife of Constantine VI. It was argued long ago that the *Life* of Philaretos, written by the saint's grandson, almost certainly belonged to a genre of iconoclast saints' lives (or at least, to a genre that paid no attention to the issue of icons). The saint was not a monk but remained a layperson; the *Life* is constructed as history (but in fact has more the tone of legend, based on ancient models and paying little attention to the

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[78] For Theodore, Plato, and Tarasios, see 278ff. above. For the others, see *PBE*, Makarios 9, Euthymios 1, Hilarion 1 (respectively *PmbZ*, nos. 4672; 1838; 2584) for sources and literature.

[79] Mansi xii, 1034 (*ACO* III, 1, 88.1–4).

[80] See the detailed discussion in Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 119–43. The Acts of 787 name a number of iconoclast bishops who are mentioned in the various sessions: Mansi xii, 1010D (*ACO* III, 1, 52.16); xiii, 400A, 416C (Basil Trikakkabos, of Antioch in Pisidia); Mansi xii, 1054A, 1114D–E; 1118B (*ACO* III, 1, 114.8ff., 224.10ff., 228. 13ff.); xiii, 173D (Gregory of Neocaesarea); Mansi xiii, 400B, 416C (and see Speck, *Konstantin VI*, 56 and n. 42 (p. 431): John of Nikomedeia); Mansi xii, 1010D (*ACO* III, 1, 52.15); xiii, 400A, 416C (Sisinnios Pastillas, of Perge); Mansi xiii, 36E (Theodore of Myra); Mansi xii, 1007C (*ACO* III, 1, 48.26); xiii, 173D (Theodosios of Amorion); Mansi xii, 1010D (*ACO* III, 1, 52.15); xiii, 400A, 416C (Theodosios of Ephesos), and several others (Mansi xii, 999D–E, 1018–51 [*ACO* III, 1, 62.15–110.18]: George of Pisidia, Gregory of Pessinous, Hypatios of Nicaea, Leo of Ikonion, Leo of Karpathos, Leo of Rhodes, Nicholas of Hierapolis). See *PBE*, Basilios 29, George 68, Gregorios 38, Gregorios 39, Hypatios 1, Ioannes 140 (cf. Atzypios 1, *PmbZ*, no. 691), Leo 51, Leo 53, Leo 52, Nikolaos 10, Sisinnios 27, Theodore 83, Theodosios 14, Theodosios 3 (respectively *PmbZ*, nos. 866; 2163; 2405; 2410; 2615; 2444; 4314; 4307; 4315; 5555; 6781; 7596; 7845; 7846) for sources.

[81] Acts of 787: cf. the opposition expressed by Sabas, the abbot of the Stoudios monastery: Mansi xii, 1022A, 1030–1 (*ACO* III, 1, 68.15–16; 82.20–25; 84.18ff.).

traditional hagiographical framework), and was written to praise the hero of the narrative and, by implication, the family as a whole. For Niketas, the author, wrote the *Life* in 822, while in exile in the Peloponnese (thus under Michael II and during the second iconoclasm), and it may be that it was written to defend his family against criticism from the court.[82] Regardless of this, sacred images make no appearance in the tale, Philaretos is presented as not in the least concerned with the issues raised by iconoclasm, and the issue of images makes no appearance in the text. Philaretos belonged to a relatively privileged group of provincial landowners in Paphlagonia, but had few obvious associations with the capital before the selection of his grand-daughter as the emperor's bride.

The absence of any reference to the question of images suggests that he, like the majority of his peers and possibly like the rest of provincial society, had no burning interest in the issue, and indeed went along with imperial policy without question, even if he or others like him also ignored some of the imperial ordinances when it was appropriate to do so. There was no Michael Lachanodrakon in Paphlagonia. It has also been observed that many of the names of Philaretos' family are based around the term *anthos*, 'flower' – Euanthia, Myranthia, Anthes, for example – and that this appears both in the family of Constantine V – Anthousa, Anthimos – and among senior court circles – Anthes, the representative of the emperor in Constantinople. If it is the case that this naming element represents an iconoclast or 'Isaurian' family fashion, then Philaretos' family may have been representative of such provincial *archontes*, loyal to the imperial family and its policies.[83] Although the factual aspect of the *Life* of Philaretos raises numerous problems, the complete absence of the issue of images in the text makes it likely that Philaretos was an iconoclast because, like most subjects of the emperor, he chose to accept imperial policy. In

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[82] Ševčenko 1977, 126–7; Ludwig 1997. For the idea that Niketas wrote to defend his family's reputation, see Auzépy 1993, 122–3.

[83] Auzépy 1993, 121, with sources and further discussion. She also notes that there are no traditional saints' names (excluding names of apostles, of course) in the Philaretos family, again a possibly fashionable reflection of iconoclast/imperial preferences. For the persons listed: *PBE*, Euanthia 1, 2 (*PmbZ*, nos. 1616, 1617); *PBE*, Myranthia 1 (*PmbZ*, no. 5208); *PBE*, Anthes 1 (*PmbZ*, no. 497); *PBE*, Anthousa 1 (*PmbZ*, no. 499); *PBE*, Anthimos 1 (*PmbZ*, no. 487); *PBE*, Anthis 3 (*PmbZ*, nos. 470, 471). Of some twenty eight different persons bearing a name with 'anthos' or a derivative as the first part of their names, twenty can be placed in the period 730–840 approximately, and most were either state officials or belonged to iconoclast circles. Of the remainder, only two appear to pre-date the first iconoclasm. Of those bearing 'anthos' as the second part of a name (e.g. Chrysanthos, Myranthos, etc.) only one pre-dates iconoclasm (see *PBE*, Chrysanthos 1; *PmbZ*, nos. 1148–51). None of this is conclusive, of course, but it is indicative of a certain trend.

this respect, he was probably in a majority until the changes introduced during 787.

There is no evidence to suggest, therefore, that these particular, socially privileged, groups were in any way openly hostile to imperial iconoclasm. And quite apart from these, along with the episcopate, are the numerous leading civil and military officers, who supported Leo III, Constantine V, and Leo IV during their reigns and continued in office after the death of each ruler, drawn from the provincial and metropolitan elites we have already discussed above. At the other end of the spectrum, apart from those lumped together by Nikephoros in his attack on the character and mores of the poor, were people such as the parents of Ioannikios, for example, described as iconoclasts in the two versions of the *Life* of the saint, and in a context which allows us to believe that they were by no means isolated or unusual in their beliefs.[84] It has long been recognised, further, that there were no obvious or lasting factions within the army either for or against iconoclast policies. Neither eastern nor western forces can be shown to have been particularly supportive of one position or the other but, like the great majority, followed imperial policy so long as it did not conflict obviously and detrimentally with their own specific factional or regional interests. The 'evidence' for regional loyalties in either direction is both very limited and largely ambiguous.[85] And while it has been noted that there is only one leading iconoclast bishop from the *Armeniakon* district (Gregory of Neocaesarea), and that the *Armeniakon* only seldom makes an appearance during the reign of Constantine V,[86] the last point is almost certainly to be connected with local regional attitudes, inter-regional rivalries, and the relationship between Constantine himself and his brother-in-law, the rebel Artabasdos, and the legacy of that conflict. Indeed, dynastic loyalties and pre-iconoclast regional local vested interests should be seen as far more significant in determining support for the emperors than the question of whether or not the people, clergy or soldiers of a particular region were for or against imperial iconoclasm as a *religious* policy.[87]

What limited evidence there is suggests that continued loyalty to the government at Constantinople was the norm – we have already noted (Chapter 3) that the regional administration at Naples remained firm in its support of the Constantinople regime, for example, even where its bishops were appointed by Rome and where friendly relations between the *doux*

[84] *PBE*, Ioannikios 2 (*PmbZ*, no. 3389).
[85] Kaegi 1966. See also Kaegi 1981, 221ff.; and the short survey for the Peloponnese by Konte 1999.
[86] Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 139–40.
[87] This is the major point of Kaegi's analysis (1966, 1981).

of Naples and the popes were maintained, thus throughout the period from Hiereia in 754 until the mid-760s, when attempts to establish a greater degree of autonomy from Constantinople for local political reasons were only gradually accepted by the ordinary populace of the city.[88] The imperial regiments at Constantinople appear to have been particularly 'iconoclast' in their loyalties, recruited first under Constantine V and employed specifically in the assertion of his authority in the capital and its hinterland. But even in this respect it is likely that loyalty to the emperor himself and to his successors or family was paramount. The letters of Theodore of Stoudion refer to a number of individual men and women, some senior state officials, many private persons, who offered succour and refuge or other support to members of the monastic community who had been imprisoned or exiled, some of whom had themselves suffered exile or confiscation of their property for their support of the iconophile view.[89] But by the same token he writes to or mentions many who accepted the imperial policy, implying that they were by far the greater number,[90] including the majority of senior ecclesiastical and monastic leaders.[91] Theodore mentions a certain acquaintance of his, Sergios, the *hypatos* of the *aerikon*, a senior fiscal official, who had sided with the iconoclasts; he refers in another letter to a *strategos* and *patrikios* whom he warns, through his wife, to remain orthodox at heart even if he must behave differently in public; while there are several cases of officials who accepted imperial policy under Leo V but returned to the iconophile position after his death in 820.[92] He also suggests that many did so out of fear rather than conviction, although it is difficult to know to what extent this was actually the case.[93] As perhaps with most of the government and court, iconoclasm was a convenient vehicle for the public expression of that loyalty.[94] On the whole, Theodore's letters give the impression that the

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[88] See the brief survey, with sources and literature, in Auzépy 1999, 276–9; and esp. Luzzati Laganà 1989.

[89] See, for example, *Ep.* 86, 87, 95, 97, 98, 102, 143, 191, 207, 256, 260, 261, 293, 295, 299, 300, 330, 440, 521, all addressed to laypersons, male and female.

[90] *Ep.*, 60 (an abbot who had accepted iconoclasm but since changed his mind), 90 (referring to the fact that many monastic leaders had accepted iconoclasm), 98 (many acquaintances of Theodore had ignored him for fear of punishment), 149 (several abbots had accepted the imperial position), 163 (to the priest Gregorios, who remained the only priest in Constantinople to maintain orthodoxy, until his exile).

[91] *Ep.*, 112 (the metropolitans of Smyrna and Cherson as well as the abbots of Chrysopolis, Dion, and Chora and nearly every abbot in Constantinople).

[92] *Ep.*, 282 (Sergios); 508 (the *strategos*); 463 (a *spatharios* who had returned to orthodoxy); 437 (a *kourator* who had similarly returned to orthodoxy).

[93] For example, *Ep.*, 437 (the *kourator* Niketas), 463, 484 (the *strategos* Theodoros, who had been forced to comply with imperial policy).

[94] Haldon 1984, 232ff.; 343–5; and Rochow 1991, 188.

support rendered to those who voiced their opposition to imperial iconoclasm was from people who preferred to keep their views to themselves, who may even have been unconcerned or perhaps neutral in respect of the theological rights and wrongs of the case, but who objected to the ways in which the government went about imposing its views and punishing those who objected.

While no obvious organised opposition to iconoclasm in secular society or the church can be reliably identified, convinced and committed iconoclasts are equally hard to find: the emperor Constantine V, and a few of his closest supporters and dependants, such as Michael Lachanodrakon, for example, accused in the iconophile literature of such outrageous persecutions of monks and nuns, among others. Yet Michael was a loyal general under Leo IV and Eirene and Constantine VI, even after the Council of 787 and the formal establishment of a theologically much more explicit 'cult' of images than had ever existed before. Did he publicly renounce his views? Or was he never in fact as profoundly iconoclast in his beliefs and actions as the later tradition would have us believe? It is difficult to say, but the contradiction between his supposed earlier beliefs and those of the government of Eirene and Constantine after 787 would cast some doubt on such claims.[95]

Church and monastic opposition to imperial iconoclasm: myths and realities

Two other associated groups played an important role in the everyday life of most Byzantines, namely the clergy on the one hand, and monastic communities on the other. Wandering 'holy men' and ascetics occupied a somewhat different role, although the real extent of their influence – as opposed to the importance claimed for them by their hagiographers, upon whom we are almost entirely dependent for information about them – is unclear. That the regular clergy played an influential role in day-to-day matters is not to be doubted, even if explicit statements are scarce. Their role was taken for granted. They regulated the liturgical and the community's religious calendar, they acted as formal intermediaries between human society and the divine, and they were the main source of spiritual as well

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[95] See the detailed discussion in Speck 1978, 228–30 with sources; also *PBE*, Michael 5 (and cf. *PmbZ*, nos. 5027, 5049, 5050, 5051).

as practical guidance for the vast majority of the population.[96] But it must be admitted that their role was part of a relatively long-term development. During the sixth century, village clergy were a rarity, with the local towns acting as a magnet to the regular clergy and the affairs of the provincial bishops. As a result, the role of local monks or individual wandering holy men or similar took on a particular significance, filling this functional gap. By the tenth century the sources show a regular rural clergy in those areas for which documentation is available, often persons of relatively humble status, but nevertheless fully integrated into the village community. Whether this was already the case by the eighth century is very hard to say, but if we assume that the role of the late Roman local town was a major factor in the failure of the church to promote the regular and permanent presence of a rural clergy in many provincial villages, then the changing role of towns in the economy and cultural life of the empire after the middle of the seventh century may well have led to a change in this situation.[97]

The clergy also had an economic influence – perhaps far less so at village level than at the level of episcopal affairs, but nevertheless the church was a significant economic force within the empire – a major landlord whose bailiffs and administrators could directly intervene in local economic affairs, for example, through promoting local commercial demand as well as longer-distance exchange for luxury or semi-luxury wares for ecclesiastical use.[98] The acceptance by the clergy of the official policies of church and government must have been massively influential for most people, and certainly for those outside the metropolitan regions around Constantinople, so that acceptance, passive or not, of imperial iconoclasm will have depended to a large extent upon how the provincial clergy and their leaders reacted. The efforts of the government to ensure a loyal clergy are readily understood in this context.[99] Monks, both as individuals and in communities, played an equally significant role, less perhaps in respect of day-to-day affairs than in terms of the way of life they represented, the ideals to which they aspired, and the spiritual level at which they were seen to, or supposed to, carry on

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[96] Beck 1959, 67–9, 79–86; *CMH* IV, 2, 106–18, for the administrative structures of the church; see also Cunningham 1990 for the role of the clergy in preaching and communication with the ordinary believer; and Herrin 1990 for the church's charitable and philanthropic activities.

[97] See Kaplan 1992, 202–3, with 228–31.

[98] See Beck 1959, 65ff.; and Kaplan 1976; 1990; 1992, 282–94; 2001b, with further literature. Cf. the seal of a grand *oikonomos* of the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople found at Amaseia, suggestive of the fact that the Great Church owned lands in the *Armeniakon* regions, discussed in Cheynet and Morrisson 1990, 111 and 122.

[99] Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 106–43.

their lives.[100] On the one hand, the clergy were directly influenced by the patterns of behaviour demonstrated by monks, who set a standard, so to speak, against which the former might at times be measured.[101] On the other hand, the tension between monastic establishments and the episcopacy, which had a supervisory authority established in canon law, is well-known and led to frequent conflicts over rights and jurisdiction.[102]

Monasteries also had economic power and, like church estates, monastic properties could directly impact upon local economic relationships.[103] The social role of individual monks and holy men – as advisers, as spiritual patrons, and occasionally as workers of miracles or foretellers of future events – appears to be less focused on communities and more on individuals than had been the case in the late Roman world, although the hagiographies show them active at both levels.[104] There is also – although this may well reflect the bias of the sources which survive – a clear metropolitan concentration after the middle of the eighth century.[105]

But their political role, much emphasised in the iconophile literature, is open to serious question, as we have seen and as we will elaborate further below, although there can be no doubt of the influence of certain individuals – whatever the real background to the political intrigues with which he was involved, Stephen the Younger clearly had some influence over those in his circle; the monk Andreas before him may similarly have influenced laypersons with whom he was acquainted. Yet even in these cases it has plausibly been argued that Stephen in particular was out of his depth and had got himself involved in affairs of which he had little real understanding.[106] In contrast, the occasional really great figure of Byzantine monasticism, such as Theodore of Stoudion, has left in his letters a vivid testimony to his activities and the role he played in influencing both the humble and the great men of his time. Here again, however, we may be misled by Theodore's estimate of his own importance. When the emperor(s) turned against him, Theodore struggled in vain to obtain the secular (and even the monastic) support he needed to redeem his situation and that of his immediate supporters (see Chapters 4 and 5). He had a wide and, apparently, effective range of friends in high places – yet they were unwilling

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[100] See the somewhat dated but still useful general survey of Savramis 1962.
[101] See Dagron 1994.
[102] See the discussion in Mango 1980, 108ff., 120ff.; and see the survey in Kaplan 1996.
[103] See esp. Kaplan 1992, 294ff.; 1993a; also Charanis 1948; Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 205ff.
[104] Patlagean 1981; Auzépy 1992; Hatlie 1999.
[105] Efthymiadis 1998 for a helpful survey, and the evidence assembled in Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 185–204.
[106] Hatlie 1999.

to expose themselves too obviously when imperial authority was at issue. And, although his initial success in being recalled by Eirene may later have encouraged him to adopt a hard-line position under Nikephoros I after 808, it has been pointed out that ultimately this was an approach doomed to failure, at least in terms of Theodore's avowed political aims.[107] But given the normal roles of clergy and monastic communities in east Roman society, what then was their contribution to the debates which occupied these groups as well as members of secular society over the role of images and the imperial policies which had evolved during the eighth century?

One of the enduring myths of the period concerns the strength and obduracy of the monastic opposition to imperial iconoclasm. Yet upon examination it quickly becomes apparent that, while there certainly was a core of opposition, it was limited both in numbers and in effect, although enormously exaggerated in the iconophile hagiographical and historiographical tradition.[108]

In considering the issue of who was iconoclast or not, and why, it is worth examining briefly the issue of the effects the imperial policy had on relations between the various elements involved, in particular of the relations between emperor and court, on the one hand, and society at large on the other. The response of the clergy at large, and the response of certain monastic circles, is especially relevant, as is the response of the wider world – the church in Rome and the other patriarchates in particular. So far, it would appear that both support for and opposition to iconoclasm depended very much on closeness to the court and the emperors themselves. It reflected, in other words, the degree of dependency of those who were willing to support iconoclast notions upon the emperors and their court. But why did individuals or groups oppose or publicly object to iconoclasm? Until now, it has generally been seen as a question of conscience – those who opposed imperial policy did so because they had a particular view of, or understanding of, sacred images, and they saw iconoclast ideas as a fundamental challenge to their understanding of orthodox belief. But other motives may have been at play. After all, if many of those who were most loyal to imperial policy acted as they did because of their relationship to the emperors, might it not be equally true that those who opposed imperial policy were also motivated by reasons other than the purely theological?

A partial confirmation of this assumption is the fact that one of the most fiercely critical groups was that led by the Stoudion monastery during the

[107] Kountoura-Galaki 1998. See Pratsch 1998, esp. 118ff., 153ff.; Cholij 2002.
[108] See the discussion in Chapters 3–5.

period immediately preceding, as well as during and following, the Council of Nicaea in 787. Yet as we have seen, there was no united monastic 'party'. On the contrary, the monastic establishment was split into at least three factions during and after the Council of 787. Whereas one, which included the abbot of the Sakkoudion monastery, Plato, was relatively moderate in its position, and supported Tarasios' efforts to achieve a compromise, Sabas of Stoudion and his supporters were strongly opposed to re-admission of iconoclast bishops to their sees, while we have seen that the third group, represented by a certain abbot, John, refused even to attend the council. It is interesting to note what little is known of the composition of these groups.[109]

It is clear from the evidence of the Acts of 787 that the great majority of monks who attended the council were from regions near to the capital. The 132 monastic signatories accompanied ten abbots, who are named after the second session as those of six monasteries in Constantinople, two in Bithynia, one from Nicaea, and one of unknown location.[110] That this bias towards the metropolitan region is simply a reflection of difficulties of travel and communication seems unlikely, in view of the number of distant bishops as well as representatives of other patriarchates who were present. That it represents both the density and concentration of monastic houses within the empire at this period is more probable, and it is therefore not surprising that these communities, some of whom had indeed suffered at the hands of the imperial government, for whatever reason, would wish to be represented at such an important meeting. It might also have reflected the interest of monastic communities in the issues to be debated, however, and in addition the nature of the invitations to attend the council issued by the patriarch Tarasios himself. As we have seen, the chief aims of those monks who attended the council appear to have focused on personal animosities as much as on issues of principle. Whether Tarasios specifically invited those whom he knew were most likely to be receptive to his proposals remains unknown, but is unlikely, given his careful preparations and the deftness with which he countered the arguments of Sabas of Stoudion.

This may well be explained less in terms of religious politics in the strict sense, therefore, than in terms of wider political, social, and cultural politics. Leadership of the monasteries of Constantinople and Bithynia was largely the preserve of the well-educated offspring of relatively well-off families from Constantinople and its hinterland. Plato of Sakkoudion and

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[109] Detailed analysis in Auzépy 1988.
[110] See Janin 1975, 427–41; discussion in Auzépy 1988, 9–10.

his nephew Theodore are obvious examples, and many of the leading figures of monastic houses in the region during the period from *c.* 790–840 were from similar backgrounds. This was by no means a new phenomenon: there had existed a close relationship between wealthy founders and patrons of monastic foundations, along with their abbots and leading members, and the social elite of the capital and its hinterland, from the sixth century and before.[111]

Is it not possible, therefore, that taking up the monastic vocation, and more importantly, achieving a position of authority and leadership in metropolitan monastic circles, was also one way of facilitating real influence upon, or opposition to, imperial policy, whether in terms of religious issues strictly speaking or in respect of policy issues more broadly? For whereas officials in the army or palace, dependent ultimately for rank, function, and position upon the emperor, were entirely bound to support imperial policy, and whereas bishops were almost as closely bound to the imperial court, through the patriarchate, and could offer little opposition (or could not hope to get away with it, as the plots of 765–6 illustrate), monastic communities had a greater degree of freedom and were protected or shielded to a degree at least by convention and popular piety. It is certainly very clear from the Council of 787 that the monks had no intention of sitting quietly until matters were resolved; yet although they had an overtly 'political' agenda, insofar as they wanted the question of readmission of iconoclast bishops to be at the top of the list for discussion, they were tolerated by Eirene (even though she excluded them from the final meeting in the Magnaura), perhaps because they had dissolved into factions, which could easily be separated and dealt with – as indeed events, as steered by Tarasios, demonstrated. Nevertheless, the connection between Theodore of Stoudion and the *magistros* Theoktistos, both associated with the 'senatorial' elite in the last years of Eirene and under Nikephoros I, and in turn connected with a wider circle of senior state and palatine officers in civil administration (see above) may reflect this elite metropolitan politics. Had Theodore succeeded in his ambition, supported by his uncle Plato, of becoming patriarch, he would have been able to influence imperial policy directly and at the highest level.

During the period of the second iconoclasm, it was a small number of monks who once again attracted the limelight in respect of opposition, while the great majority of bishops once more sided with the emperor. And once again, while there are some very well-known examples of iconophile monks from areas outside the metropolitan hinterland (the brothers *Graptoi*, for

[111] Kountoura-Galaki 1996, *esp.* 187–96. For the background and earlier period, *ibid.*, 57–75.

example), the great majority of those who appear most clearly in the sources to head the opposition come from the regions nearest to Constantinople or the city itself, represented chiefly by Theodore of Stoudion and his uncle Plato, who had close connections within the secular elite establishment. Theodore's network of friends and monks is dominated in his letters by those of his own community and monasteries in Bithynia.

Given these intertwining relationships, it is not surprising that the debate over images and more especially the contingent issue of whether or not iconoclast bishops – thus virtually the whole episcopate of Asia Minor and the southern Balkans – could or should continue in their sees, immediately prior to and after the Council of 787, became so intense and impassioned, especially if, as we have suggested above, those members of the elite who felt most strongly about iconoclasm as well as other aspects of imperial policy found the monastic life the most convenient form through which to express their opposition. We might recall that although the patriarch Anastasios appointed by Leo III belonged to the Constantinopolitan clergy, his two successors, Constantine of Syllaion and Niketas, did not – indeed, later iconophile writers explicitly mention the fact that they were chosen by the emperor and forced upon the church without the usual electoral procedures – but seem to have been of provincial background, at least in respect of their appointment and therefore their ecclesiastical power base.[112] What for some oppositional contemporaries might have been seen as the 'hijacking' of the patriarchate by Constantine V in particular, and the apathy towards or positive support for iconoclasm among the episcopate in general, may thus also have contributed to the focusing of opposition in the monastic establishment, even so far as encouraging particular career decisions on the part of certain individuals, if not during Constantine's own reign, then in those of Leo IV and Constantine and Eirene. The importance of metropolitan monastic opposition to Justinian II a century earlier has already been noted and, while it would be incorrect and inappropriate to suggest a tradition of monastic hostility to emperors, the context within which monastic houses in and around Constantinople operated certainly gave them an increased opportunity directly to involve themselves in palace and metropolitan politics.[113] The sudden decision to enter a monastery on the part of such a high-ranking fiscal official as Plato of Sakkoudion, for example, and that of his equally well-placed nephew Theodore shortly afterwards, may well be a little more complex than has usually been assumed.

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[112] *PBE*, Konstantinos 4, Niketas 1; *PmbZ*, nos. 3820, 5404.
[113] Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 62–75; 78ff., and above, 591.

Thus it seems that monastic opposition to iconoclasm hardly existed until the issue was raised by the empress Eirene and perhaps more importantly by Tarasios. There was no such opposition to Constantine V – both Stephen the Younger and the monk Andreas[114] were arrested and executed for reasons largely political (even if the later assertion that images were implicated has some truth to it). In 786–7, monastic opposition to iconoclasm was a largely opportunistic attempt on the part of certain monastic leaders, led by Sabas of Stoudion, to obtain a tactical advantage, both over Tarasios (whose appointment as patriarch Sabas appears to have objected to), on the one hand, as well as over other monastic circles with influence, on the other hand – perhaps those led by Plato of Sakkoudion, for example, who certainly acted as an adviser to Tarasios during the council, and later advised on Tarasios' successor.[115] In the atmosphere generated by the Council of 787, and in the context of the imperially sponsored cult of images which now developed, it would have paid other monks to develop a similar position, so that the rapid development, and retrospective attribution to the monks of a committed anti-iconoclast political position becomes very understandable in the context of the times.

There remains no really convincing evidence, therefore, that there was any particular group explicitly opposed to imperial iconoclasm until the months preceding the holding of the abortive Council of 786 and the more successful gathering of 787, although there is every reason to think that there were a number of committed iconoclasts among the higher clergy. Only when it became clear that the emperors' own position was no longer favourable to iconoclasm did their resolve fade, and the Acts of 787 show that the great majority of iconoclasts was very rapidly persuaded to adopt the new orthodoxy which Eirene and Constantine VI preferred. Iconoclasm was and remained throughout its history an entirely imperial phenomenon, therefore, with few roots in popular opinion and with only the vested interests of those dependent upon the emperor or unreflectively loyal to the ruler (although this must often have been the great majority) as the basis for its continued existence. Yet as long as it remained the official policy of the government and of the emperors chosen by God, it retained the loyalty of the great majority of the empire's subjects.

The second period of iconoclasm offers a slightly different picture. As we have seen, Leo V re-imposed a policy hostile to the display and honouring of

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[114] Andreas was executed in 762 for making treasonous statements about the emperor's orthodoxy. It is an isolated case and is only loosely connected with iconoclast policy. See Chapter 3, 235 and note 332.

[115] *V. Theod. Stud.* B, 240C–D; C, §7 (261); Theod. Stoud., *Laud. Platonis* vi, 34 (837A–C).

sacred images because of the simple assumption of a relationship between iconoclasm and political and military success. Iconoclasm, it was clearly thought, must be orthodox, because when the empire was iconoclast it was successful in these regards. But by this time the evolving self-image of the monks as the defenders of orthodoxy was growing into an important motif in the re-writing of the history of the eighth century. Monks – or at least, some of them – do appear as heroes of the resistance to this heretical position. Yet as we have seen in Chapter 5, the numbers were in fact remarkably limited, led by Theodore of Stoudion until his death, but with few real opponents thereafter. Under Theophilos, for example, men such as Ioannikios remained entirely passive in this respect, as far as their hagiographies and other written sources inform us. Even Theophilos' persecution produced few victims, mostly not imperial subjects. And what is also interesting to note in this period is that, while a handful of senior ecclesiastical officials objected to the emperor's plans, there is very little evidence of any substantial opposition from the majority – as Theodore of Stoudion himself notes, former generations had certainly not felt that rejecting the adoration shown to images and images themselves was heretical; while many otherwise orthodox believers did not find such rejection either wrong or problematic.[116] Those who were punished by the emperor were accused of political crimes. The metropolitan of Nicaea, Ignatios, was in this respect probably typical of the vast majority of churchmen, accepting imperial policy and changing his position as the official position changed. He must mirror the actions and attitudes of the great majority of clergy in both periods of iconoclasm. In the secular world, the great majority of government officials, soldiers, and administrators simply accepted the imperial commands as formulated and presented at the Council of 815, and we may reasonably assume for similar reasons: in part because they accepted the ideological position adopted by the emperor, in part because it was convenient or necessary, from the point of view of career and position, to do so.

Opposition entailed passive resistance as well as direct criticism, with all the consequences that this brought with it – exile, imprisonment, and physical punishment, often severe. But from the imperial perspective this response was as reasonable and justified a reaction to challenges to imperial authority as the opposition view was a logical theological challenge to the imperial position. From this point of view, monastic opposition to iconoclasm was no different in principle from the monastic opposition led by Theodore of Stoudion against Constantine VI's betrothal and marriage to Theodote (which as we have seen entailed also a serious conflict with

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[116] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 393 and 546 (l.35); and see Chapter 5.

the patriarch Tarasios) or against the ecclesiastical and fiscal policies of the emperor Nikephoros I. Nor was such opposition, in this comparative context, any fiercer than opposition to other facets of imperial policy. It was only in retrospect that it aroused a myth-laden tradition of resistance.

Yet as we have also noted, there remained a substantial number of people of all walks of life in the capital favourable to the iconoclast rulers of the previous age – the plot of 811/12 involved both senior officials and possibly churchmen as well as a number of monks, one of whom at least had been active under Nikephoros I – and although it is unlikely that the senior clergy and court officials involved in the plot against Nikephoros in 807/8 were pro-iconoclast, his relative neutrality as regards the two camps is itself suggestive.[117] A leading figure in the affair of 811/12 was Nicholas of Hexakionion, described as a 'magician' and 'false hermit', but clearly a leading spokesperson of the iconoclast camp, who exercised some considerable spiritual and political influence. His openly iconoclast sympathies and activities were tolerated by Nikephoros I, he is reported to have dishonoured an image of the Virgin (unlikely for anyone at all, whether an iconoclast or not), and his activities were quite open and apparently popular, and he was stopped only when he was punished by having his tongue cut out by Michael I.[118] Yet still the popular sentiments he had represented continued to be expressed when, in the following year, a crowd forced open the door of the imperial mausoleum in which Constantine V's body lay and urged him to arise and lead them against the Bulgars. It is interesting to note that, while those responsible were indeed arrested, they were punished not for their iconoclast sympathies and sentiments, but for breaking into the tomb and deceiving others with their false miracle of Constantine's having arisen.[119]

In such a context, therefore, it is not surprising that, as we have noted in Chapter 5, Leo had considerable success in winning over most of the initial opponents to the new policy. The patriarch Nikephoros and Theodore of Stoudion were fairly rapidly isolated. The emperor, together with the abbot John the Grammarian, is reported to have spent much time and energy persuading those who were hostile of the logic of the imperial view. In a letter composed during the persecution under Leo V, Theodore lists the categories into which those who had accepted iconoclasm could be divided:

[117] For the plot of 807–8, see Theoph., 483–4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 664); and for that of 811–12, Theoph., 496–7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 679f.).
[118] Theoph., 488–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 671f.); 496–7 (Mango and Scott 1997, 679–80) – and bearing in mind the incident of the dishonouring of the image of the Virgin may well be an iconophile exaggeration or fabrication.
[119] Theoph., 501 (Mango and Scott 1997, 684–5).

those who accepted it voluntarily, those who accepted it after punishment, those who succumbed to threats, those who accepted it out of fear, those who accepted it for fear of losing their property, and those who were simply ignorant.[120] And Theodore's correspondence suggests that the whole Constantinopolitan clergy along with nearly all the monasteries of the city adopted the imperial position. The leading churchmen in many provinces – Bithynia, Thessaly, Lydia, Cherson, Phrygia, Isauria and the Aegean islands, as well as in southern Italy – accepted or even promoted the iconoclast position.[121] The *oikonomos* of the Hagia Sophia, for example, a certain Theodoros Krithinos, acted as imperial ambassador to the Franks in 824 and 827, accompanied by other senior churchmen and imperial officials loyal to the emperor, eventually being appointed to the archbishopric of Syracuse.[122] Contemporary hagiographies suggest similarly that Leo's iconoclasm met with widespread and general acceptance – the example of the Paphlagonian provincial family of Philaretos of Amnia may thus be quite typical. Perhaps especially significant is the fact that many monasteries conformed with imperial policy, too, so that there was no 'monastic' opposition of the sort which it was later (and perhaps even already in the early ninth century) believed had taken place in the eighth century. Indeed, John the Grammarian's own community, the monastery of Sergios and Bakkhos, functioned as a focus for the spreading of iconoclast ideas, to the extent that recalcitrant iconophiles were sent there for 're-education'. Even monks in the Stoudion monastery accepted the imperial position and were rewarded accordingly.[123] And the various monastic establishments at Constantinople associated with the family of Philaretos, well-endowed and supported in the reigns of iconoclast rulers, certainly conformed with imperial policy, and had at a later date radically to re-present themselves and re-fashion their histories in the light of the changed circumstances.[124] As we have also seen, Leo V and Michael II were more interested in getting everyone to take communion together than in what they wanted to do with regard to sacred images in private. From the imperial perspective, this was an issue of imperial authority and legitimacy, as much as, if not much more than, an issue of theology and dogma.

On the basis of this evidence, it would be difficult to see iconoclasm any longer as an issue which split the empire from top to bottom. It was

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[120] *Ep.*, 393 (concerning their re-admission or not to communion with the orthodox).

[121] *Ep.*, 60, 90, 112, 149, for example.

[122] See Winkelmann 1987a, 166, and *PmbZ*, no. 7675, as well as for discussion and details of his companions in 824, the bishop of Myra, the patriarch of Grado, and the *kandidatos* Leo.

[123] See the summary of the evidence in Chapter 5.   [124] Auzépy 1993, 124–35.

certainly an issue, and it certainly aroused passionate responses. But the people for whom this was the case were really very few in number. Iconoclasm was an instrument of imperial politics, intended to achieve certain aims, different in both periods, deriving its strength from the common-sense convictions of certain emperors and their advisers, and accepted by the vast majority of the empire's subjects because it was convenient to do so (and dangerous not to do so). As we noted in Chapter 4, the fact that Tarasios and Eirene felt that they could succeed in what was, in fact, the relatively dangerous enterprise of totally reversing over thirty years of official imperial policy suggests that there must have been some latent hostility or resentment of the imperial position, fertile ground in which to cultivate new ideas. But apart from one or two, probably isolated, examples, we have no real knowledge of the extent to which any sort of serious iconoclast policy was imposed in the provinces, except through the preaching of the clergy (for example, Theodore of Stoudion's reference to the enthusiasm of the metropolitan of Smyrna). The mention in the *Life* of Gregory the Dekapolite of a bishop who had fled from his see upon the restoration of iconoclasm, is balanced by a mention of the iconoclast abbot of the monastery in which Gregory had taken up residence in the 820s, illustrative of the divisions within the religious communities of the empire, but certainly not supporting the idea of anything other than the normalisation of iconoclast politics within the church and within many monastic communities as long as the imperial government was iconoclast.[125] And in view of the lack of any evidence to substantiate the later iconophile claims about the nature of the popular opposition to imperial iconoclasm, we can only conclude that iconoclasm was, for the great majority of the population of the Byzantine world in the eighth and early ninth century, either irrelevant or unimportant. In this respect, it may perhaps usefully be compared with the imperial monotheletism of the reign of Constans II.

Although artisanal production was certainly not limited to urban Constantinople, the role of the imperial court as the centre of politics and establishment culture is very clear throughout the period with which we are concerned in this volume. Not only does the evidence demonstrate the crucial place held by the emperor and court in determining public attitudes and fashioning ideological loyalties, it also illustrates the ways in which opposition could be marginalised into specific areas.[126] Elite dependence

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[125] See the discussion in Mango 1985b; Karlin-Hayter 2001, esp. 174ff.; and see Chapter 5, 377f.

[126] The ways in which imperial propaganda and the imperial perspective on issues such as this were propagated has been analysed thematically in Koutrakou 1994; and cf. also Koutrakou 2001.

on imperial patronage left little room for public opposition to imperial policy in the civil, military or indeed ecclesiastical administration of the eastern Roman state. Opposition to specific individuals or to policies had to find alternative and less easily managed sources of support, and it is for these reasons that those members of the social elite who found themselves disagreeing with the emperors appear to have launched their criticism from the somewhat less readily controlled context of metropolitan monastic houses, on the one hand or, where support could be assumed, from provincial military contexts. This tendency was perhaps stimulated by particular events – the failure of the plots against Constantine V in the 760s, for example, and the punishments meted out to those involved, or the fact that the oaths of loyalty sworn to the emperor, such as that extracted by Leo IV in 780, were felt to be somehow less binding on members of the monastic community. It may also be that it was merely the opportunistic response of individuals with particular objections to government policies and the search for an appropriate social, cultural, and political context for the expression of their opposition. While we would not dismiss any religious motivations and ideals which may have been held by individuals and by groups, we would emphasise that deeply held faith, piety, and pragmatism are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Monasteries were themselves, in consequence, drawn into the elite politics of the empire, less because their inhabitants were more orthodox or more pious than others, than because of the social and political origins of their leadership and their enjoyment of a certain tradition of intellectual independence, even if this was very much determined in its scope and potential by the individuals who led such communities, which could be exploited by those who had reason to object to imperial or official policy in one form or another. There is no reason to doubt that men such as Sabas of Stoudion, or Theodore some years later, were genuinely critical of iconoclasm, but it is important that their opposition to iconoclasm is put in a comparative context: Sabas led a group which was distinctly hostile to the patriarch Tarasios for reasons which appear to have had little or nothing to do with iconoclasm as such; Theodore was no less active, and suffered as much for his opposition to Constantine VI's second marriage or the fiscal policies of Nikephoros I, as for his opposition to simony and to iconoclasm, and his support came from the same circles in all three cases. But the propaganda successes achieved by those writing on behalf of the patriarchate,[127]

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[127] As Auzépy notes (1998, 99f.), the majority of key anti-iconoclast texts of the later eighth and early ninth century are a product of people associated directly or indirectly with the

and by a small group of monks opposed to imperial policies (and not just iconoclasm) during and after the second period of iconoclasm, indelibly affected the views held by later generations. They massively reinforced the position of the patriarch in relation to the emperor, and gave the church an independence in respect of ecclesiastical politics and dogma which it had not hitherto enjoyed. They certainly encouraged monastic communities in general to establish their firmly iconophile credentials, if possible by associating themselves with one or another of the supposed martyrs to the cause. What has been seen as a 'golden age' of Byzantine monasticism, with its roots in this period, owes much of its reputation to these efforts and the ways in which they were echoed by later generations. The success of many monasteries from the early ninth century onward in expanding their landed wealth and increasing their attractiveness as recipients of donations should clearly also be associated with these developments.[128]

In this respect, therefore, we should view monastic opposition to imperial iconoclasm as as much a part of an elite opposition to imperial policies, as any entirely ideological, simply theologically grounded opposition. There is no reason to doubt that the latter also existed, and that it was inextricably bound up with other motives. But when opposition to imperial policy was displaced or transferred to a more amenable or less easily controlled institutional context, and also, and very importantly, furnished thereby with a noble tradition of theological autonomy reaching back into late antiquity, it could, in the hands of monastic leaders, be presented as something quite independent of the social and political interests through which it was formed.[129]

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It is apparent from this brief survey of society at large in the eighth and ninth centuries that we lack the sort of evidence we need to arrive at a clear image of social and economic relations, certainly for town-dwellers, whether in the

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patriarchate – the authors of the *Nouthesia gerontos*, the *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, the letters attributed to pope Gregory II, the *Life* of Stephen the younger, the *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros, and the *Chronographia* of Theophanes (compiled largely by George, patriarchal *sygkellos*).

[128] See the useful summary in Kountoura-Galaki 1996, 208–28, although we believe the author accepts too readily the iconophile view of the supposed persecution of monastic establishments. On the issue of monastic wealth and its expansion at this time, see esp. Kaplan 1993a.

[129] For some discussion of the forms of opposition, see Koutrakou 1994, esp. 224–34 (although again the details provided in the *Life* of Stephen the Younger are taken at face value, where a greater element of critical scepticism is perhaps warranted); and 88–90, 135–8; and Koutrakou 2001 for some discussion of the use of political defamation of iconoclast rulers based on Old Testament parallels.

provinces or in Constantinople, but equally for the rural populations upon whom the court and administration depended so heavily for their resources. We have left aside a number of important topics – for example, issues such as the nature of the family, a more detailed account of village society, issues of kinship, and the transmission of property (except insofar as they are touched upon in Chapter 8), and so forth – chiefly because they have been or will be treated, even if only in a preliminary manner, by others, and because such issues need to be understood in a much broader and a longer-term context, which this volume cannot undertake.[130] Nevertheless, we hope we have been able to reveal the texture and to demonstrate the relative complexity of Byzantine society during this period and, more importantly perhaps, to underline the fact that many standard assumptions about the attitudes and beliefs of ordinary Byzantines – in particular relating to religious politics and iconoclasm – are in need of substantial revision.

[130] See the contributions to Haldon 2009.

10 | Fiscal management and administration

Provincial government

In this chapter we will deal primarily with the structural and organisational aspects of the Byzantine state during our period. The considerable changes in the empire's military structures at the level of strategic organisation, alongside the transformation of the fiscal apparatus of government, were only one aspect of the overall picture of the evolution of Byzantine society during this period. In the following, we will argue that the so-called 'theme system' was actually a product of early ninth-century measures taken by Nikephoros I, and is paralleled by a number of changes in financing and recruiting the imperial armies in the provinces. Until then, the late Roman commands subsisted, in their Anatolian bases and along the frontiers, increasingly regionalised and identified with particular sets of provinces. They were supported by an evolved version of late Roman fiscal administrative arrangements. Indeed, the changes in fiscal management which can be traced through the evidence of lead seals, for example, are an essential element in, and to some degree permit us to track, the changes in military arrangements.

The changes in economic activity, commerce, and settlement patterns discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, and the shifts in social relations which we have discussed in greater detail in Chapters 8 and 9, were intimately connected with these developments, and indeed in very many respects they go hand in hand. As the needs of the state for defence and counter-offensive warfare were reflected in the redeployment of soldiers across the provinces, so the nature of fiscal administration of resources, the ways of assessing and distributing such resources, and the means of equipping and arming the armies changed accordingly. The role of the general *kommerkiarioi* and their warehouses were crucial ingredients, and their eclipse from the 730s onwards demonstrates how the government was able to capitalise on their activities to enhance central control over resources and to facilitate the territorial expansion of the state.

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At the same time, these changes made possible and further stimulated the generation of a new social and administrative service elite in both the provinces and at Constantinople, a process which itself heightened social competition between different elements and led to, or contributed to the need to develop, new administrative arrangements or different ways of maintaining central control over resources. The constant need for a trained body of effective provincial administrative personnel stimulated social changes and promoted the rise of the new elite, with its own individualised vested interests and agendas in respect of how the system worked, who had access to it, and the directions in which it might best be allowed to develop, in the light, of course, of the interests of those who constituted it. It was the people whom we have described and discussed in the foregoing chapters who constituted this system, these structures, and who brought with them to their occupations a range of socially and culturally determined values and ways of working which impacted directly on how the arrangements as a whole actually worked. The role of the provincial *strategos*, for example, evolved not simply as a factor of the needs of imperial military administration, but also as a product of the ambitions and social and economic interests of the individuals themselves and the families from which they were recruited, and the same applies to all other officials of the state, as well as to the clergy. We do not possess the information to say how, for example, the shifts in provincial fiscal and administrative structures in the period *c.* 810–40, in particular the rise to prominence of the *protonotarioi*, and the change in formal status of the *strategoi*, reflected in detail either the plans or ideas of individual emperors and their advisers, or the designs and ambitions of leading palatine officials and the interest-groups they represented, or both. Yet it is unlikely that the two were distinct.[1] The administrative changes and institutional arrangements which we will examine in this chapter and which had, by the 820s, led to the establishment of the first *themata*, were thus not separate or isolated from society as a whole – on the contrary, it must be borne in mind that all these arrangements, structures, and institutions were made up of people who had their own concerns, loyalties, and identities, who worked in an intensely competitive environment in terms of access to the emperor and senior government officials, and who carried out their duties with a view to meeting both their obligations to the emperor, the court, and the system, as well as those of their own family

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[1] The difficulties are compounded by the 'casual use of functional and rank terminology' in Byzantine sources, upon which H. Hunger in *BZ* 68 (1975) 137 has remarked.

and themselves. It is easy to see the empire's military administration or its fiscal arrangements as abstract systems which are somehow detached from the day-to-day lives of ordinary people, economic activity or cultural life. They were not.

The sixth- and seventh-century context

An administrative system which has to deal with the sorts of tasks necessary to the survival and existence of a political formation such as the late Roman/early Byzantine state necessarily involves a whole range of complex, intersecting functions covering different sorts of fiscal operation, manipulation of resources (in materials and people), and so on. We would argue that there were considerable variations in the nature and rate of change or transformation of many of these arrangements during the period from the seventh to the tenth century, especially in respect of the evolution of the thematic administrative structures which had clearly come into being by the later ninth century, variations which have still not received adequate recognition. In order to suggest some possible answers, it will be necessary to recapitulate here and to emend arguments already made in greater detail elsewhere.

First, the administration of the fiscal affairs of the state appears to have undergone a fairly drastic process of centralisation during the first half of the seventh century, beginning probably before the reign of Phokas (602–10). There took place a major re-organisation of the imperial mints, which in turn resulted in the phasing out of the independent activities of the old department of the *sacrae largitiones* at the diocesan level of fiscal administration. Further consequences were the rise in power of the *sakellarios*, and the appearance during the reigns of Phokas and Herakleios of high-ranking *logothetai* marks the independence of the *sekreta* or departments of the *genikon* and *stratiotikon*, and possibly the *eidikon* (although the evidence for its early appearance – middle or later seventh century – is ambiguous), and the breaking up of the older prefectural fiscal administration into its constituent elements.[2] These departments were eventually directly subordinate to the *sakellarios*, who represented the personal supervision of the

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[2] On the *sakellarios*, see Brandes 2002, 429–79, who prefers to see his central position as a later (eighth-century) development. But for an earlier beginning to this process, Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 75 (seal of Philagrios, *koubikoularios*, and *sakellarios*), with comm., 99–100; Haldon 1997a, 183–6, with literature. For mints, see Hendy 1985.

emperor, although it is not clear how soon this position was attained – certainly by the later eighth century. Equally importantly, the departments of the *sacrum cubiculum* or bedchamber, i.e. the emperor's personal household establishment, in particular the officers in charge of the imperial table and the private wardrobe, become more important. The general bank of the prefecture, now the *genikon logothesion*, takes over most of the functions of the older department of the *sacrae largitiones* in the provinces, including the local or diocesan treasuries or *arcae* and the *commercia*. From the perspective of the central administrative organs, particularly the fiscal apparatus, it seems that several fundamental features familiar from the later ninth century – as represented, for example, in the *kletorologion* of Philotheos – were already evolving by about 700.[3]

Shifts in the pattern of provincial administration can also be traced, although they remain only vaguely known. To fill the gap left by the diocesan tier of fiscal administration, general supervisors of all the provinces of the prefecture of the east seem to have been appointed, to oversee provincial tax-assessment and collection. A seal of the first official of this type is dated to the reign of Herakleios, just the period at which the major mint reforms, and their related consequences, were taking effect.[4] By the 720s and 730s, the establishment of the field armies in Asia Minor, the posting of new divisions to other territories, and the fixing of the provincial groupings over which these divisions were based seems to have lent to

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[3] Haldon 1997a, 183–94, for detailed discussion and sources. For the fate of the diocesan level of fiscal administration, see Jones 1964, 281, 374. Asia Minor, north of Isauria and Cilicia I and II, was divided into two dioceses. That of Asiana consisted of the provinces of Hellespontus, Asia, Lydia, Lycia, Phrygia Pacatiana, Phrygia Salutaris, Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Pamphylia, with Caria, which was also within the *Quaestura exercitus*; Pontica was made up of Armenia I–IV, Helenopontus, Cappadocia I and II, Galatia I and II, Paphlagonia, and Bithynia. Brandes 2002, 62–116, traces in detail the late Roman structure of the praetorian prefecture, and shows that it is difficult to determine the functional basis for the difference between its general and special 'banks'. But while he accepts a seventh-century origin for the *genikon logothesion* out of the *genike trapeza* of the prefecture of the east, he argues that the lack of specific early references to the *eidikon/idikon*, or the lack of a clear connection between the later duties of the military *logothesion* and the earlier military department of the prefecture, make any assumption of continuity doubtful. The evidence does not permit a clear conclusion. Since the *stratiotikon* appears already in the second half of the seventh century, and in view of the systemic continuities which can be demonstrated throughout the palatine administrative structures, an earlier appearance is possible. Yet the lack of sigillographical evidence is problematic, and may indicate a much later hiving off the *eidikon* from the prefectural fiscal administration and the *genikon*. See *ibid.*, 225–35, 166ff., 172ff.

[4] *ZV* 131: Theodore, *megaloprepestatos illoustrios kai dioiketes* of all (?the provinces), a. 614–31; although this seal may well be a forgery: see Cheynet *et al.*, *Collection Seyrig*, 402, for the evidence for these general supervisors, most of whose seals date to the period *c.* 650–750; Haldon 1997a, 196ff.; Brandes 2002, 153–61; Cheynet 1999, no. 11 (and nos. 12–15).

these new territorial commands an administrative identity, insofar as they represented an intermediate level of administration.[5] They could replace, in practical administrative terms, the functional level of the older dioceses. As a result, fiscal supervisors could be appointed to these groups, the provinces of the respective military commands, and to their individual provincial elements, thus superseding the general – prefectural – supervisors ('of all the provinces'). General *dioiketai* for all the provinces cease issuing seals at about the turn of the century; *dioiketai* of specific territorial groupings – approximating to military command zones or *strategides* – begin to issue seals shortly afterwards.[6] Subordinate officials of these officers also continued to produce lead seals well into the eighth century.[7] These changes again coincide with a major change in the system of provincial fiscal warehouses (*apothekai*) and in the role and responsibilities of centrally appointed imperial *kommerkiarioi*, a point to which we will return below.

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[5] There can be no doubt that, by the second decade of the eighth century at the latest (the date of the earliest seals with named commands), the army corps had a distinct geographical identity and recognisable provincial boundaries, since the various groups of provinces began to be known by the name of the army corps posted to them: *ZV* 2290 (*c.* a. 700, of Paul, *hypatos kai dioiketes ton Anatolikon*); *ZV* 222 (a. 717–8, of anon., *genikoi kommerkiarioi* of the *apotheke* of Koloneia and all the *eparchiai* of *Armeniakon*) together with *ZV* 155 and table 18/2 (and see Seibt, in *BS* 36 [1975] 209); *ZV* 242 (the *kommerkia* of the provinces of the *Anatolikon*, a. 732/3); *ZV* 258, 259 (for the provinces of the *Thrakesion*, a. 741/2); *ZV* 263 (the *kommerkia* of the provinces of the *Opsikion*, a. 745/6). See Brandes 2002, 601, 605, 608, 610. We have not given references to the *PBE* and *PmbZ* for all the individuals mentioned by name on seals or in other documents referred to in this chapter, in view of their numbers. Further details, where such exist, will be found in the appropriate entries for each person in these prosopographies. In particular, the appendices to Brandes 2002 offer a systematic catalogue of all the dated seals of *kommerkiarioi* and many related officials and institutions, including the *basilika kommerkia*.

[6] Haldon 1997a, 196–200. On the fiscal *dioiketai*, who remain throughout the period up to the twelfth century the chief officials connected with the collection of taxes, see Dölger 1927, 70–3. For a summary of the sigillographic material, see Winkelmann 1985, 133f.; discussion in Brandes 2002, 205–25. More recently published collections confirm the pattern: see the seals of *dioiketai* of specific provinces from the early eighth century on in, for example, *DOSeals* I–IV; cf. Koltsida-Makri, *Molybdoboulla*, no. 46; and the survey in Brandes 2002, 205–17; Kislinger and Seibt 1998, 15–16; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, nos. 126–30, 133. On the basis of a comparison of episcopal lists and extant seals of *dioiketai* it is possible that until the later eighth century the major fiscal *dioikeseis* may have been more-or-less consonant with episcopal sees, since both were originally based on urban administrative *territoria*. Further work will elucidate this issue. Although Brandes 2002, 159–61, rejects the notion that these officials represent the provincial fiscal supervision, he offers no alternative explanation other than that the older administration disappeared in the mid-seventh century and that a new system appears in the ninth.

[7] See *ZV* 836, seal of George, *Stratelates* and *diskoursor* (sic), dated to *c.* 700–30; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 7, seal of Sergios, *chartoularios* and *diskoursor* (sic) dated to the same period. The *discussores* were local fiscal officers responsible for checking tax-assessments. Cf. Brandes 2002, 80.

But the process whereby army divisions or corps, established or posted in a given geographical location, came to be identified with the name of the region in question, is not necessarily the same as the establishment of a new administrative system. The evidence of the seals of *kommerkiarioi* or *kommerkia* and other officials, as well as literary sources, shows that the traditional provincial names continued to be employed well into the eighth century and in some cases beyond. Of the twenty-seven Justinianic provinces in Asia Minor and the southern Balkans, twenty-six are found on seals of *kommerkiarioi* or *apothekai* for the period *c.* 650–740.[8] They continue in use thereafter.[9] Traditional provincial names occur very occasionally also on seals of military officers, as a seal dated to the first half of the eighth century belonging to a certain officer with the titles *stratelates* and *topoteretes* of Kapatiane (for [Phrygia] Pakatiane).[10] Provincial names occur also in literary sources, too, alongside the thematic geographical descriptions – when wishing to specify an area more exactly, writers often used the traditional civil administrative boundaries. This is no proof that they retained their original administrative identity, of course.[11] Nevertheless, the continued use of traditional provincial designations on seals, which reflected at least in part 'official' structures,[12] does suggest that the administrative apparatus which accompanied those structures also survived to a certain extent.[13] How far this continues to be the case is much more difficult to determine, and no consensus has yet been reached on this issue.

The consequences of these developments for the praetorian prefecture of the east remain unclear, but they are important for any consideration of the development of and ultimate shape of military administrative structures at a later period.

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[8] See *ZV* 165–81, tables 19–29; see also tables 5ff. arranged by name of *kommerkiarioi*. On these officials, see below.

[9] Thrace, Hellas, Sicily, Euboea, Seleukeia, Cyprus, Lydia, Bithynia, Galatia are all specifically mentioned on seals covering the whole of the eighth and extending well into the ninth century: *ZV* 1044, 2114, 2081, 2082, 2078, 2079, 2019, 2020, 1895, 2183, 2426, 1628, 1642, 3189 (dated *c.* 700–850). For further examples see Winkelmann 1985, 134–5; Brandes 2002, 601–10 (App. X). Not included here, of course, are seals of *dioiketai* of named towns or cities.

[10] Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 339. The function probably reflects a temporary command.

[11] E.g. *V. Euaresti*, 297.5f. (Galatia, in Asia); *V. Petri Atroae*, 4.24; 20.5–6 (Phrygia, Bithynia); 23.5 (Lydia); *V. Petri Atroae*, 109.1f. (Lydia); *Mirac. Theod.Tir.*, 201.3f. (Paphlagonia); *Synax. CP.*, 121.58f. (Galatia); 84 (Cappadocia II); *V. Ioan.Psichait.*, 105.1['the region towards Galatia, which they call *Boukellarioi*']; Theod. Stoud., *Epp.* 112. 29 (Bithynia).

[12] This usage is not dependent upon that of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy, which continued to employ the traditional provincial and diocesan forms for its own administration.

[13] See Haldon 1997a, 194ff. For a more sceptical view, see Brandes 2002, 131–36.

The survival of late Roman structures and titles:
eparchoi and *anthypatoi*

The praetorian prefecture had been – through the three fiscal bureaux already referred to – the most important element of imperial administration until the reign of Herakleios. The praetorian prefect of Oriens is mentioned in a novel of Herakleios for 629.[14] Although the evidence is slight, the prefectures do seem to have survived as the main administrative units within the territories remaining to the state for a while. The praetorian prefect of Illyricum existed until the second half of the seventh century, although his prefecture effectively disappears and he becomes, in practice, the eparch or prefect of Thessaloniki, for whom seals from the later seventh until the later eighth century survive.[15] The last reference in a text to a prefect of Italy is for the year 639, but seals of two officials identified as praetorian prefects of Italy for the seventh and eighth centuries suggest a degree of continuity there – these seals may provide additional support for the continued appointment of praetorian prefect-like officials to supervise some aspects of fiscal administration after the first half of the seventh century.[16] Another seal, of Marinos, *apo hypaton kai eparchos ton...* (probably: *praitorion*) dated to the second half of the seventh century, suggests that the post continued to be occupied during these years.[17] There is no prefect mentioned specifically in the lists of those high officials who accompanied the emperor Constantine IV at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680. But a number of high-ranking officials were present whose posts were not given, and it is quite likely – since, for example, the *magister officiorum* was present, an officer whose various bureaux and competences had been equally drastically affected by the changes which had occurred since the reign of Herakleios – that the current holder of the post was among them. Unless indeed, as

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[14] *JGR* I, coll. 1, nov. 25.2 (Dölger, *Reg.*, no. 199).

[15] Haldon 1997a, 195 n. 86, for literature; *DOSeals* I, nos. 18.18–23; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 135 (with comm., 148); *ZV* 957, 2412.

[16] See Brown 1984, 11, with n. 21; *DOSeals* II, 2.1, 2 with the editors' remarks, seals of two officials who are respectively *hypatos* and *eparchos* and *apo eparchon* and *eparchos* of Italy: see *ibid.*, 16 and discussion.

[17] *ZV* 1179. Four other seals appear to belong to the same official, first as *apo eparchon* and *dioiketes ton eparchion* (*ZV* 1178), then as *apo hypaton* and *dioiketes ton eparchion* (Konstantopoulos, *Molybdouboulla*, no. 586; Lihačev, *Bogomateri*, nos. 259, 260. See Brandes 2002, 52, and n. 204; 157; *PmbZ*, no. 4785). Zacos and Veglery, 743, suggest that their no. 1179 should be completed either *ton Anatolikon* or *ton praitorion*. In view of the ranks and posts held (promotion – apparently – from *apo eparchon* to *apo hypaton*, and from *dioiketes ton eparchion* to *eparchos*, almost certainly within the same area of administration), a move to the post of praetorian prefect – *eparchos (ton praitorion)* – seems far the most likely interpretation.

is perfectly possible, the position of *dioiketes ton (anatolikon) eparchion* is in fact merely another form of expressing the function of the praetorian prefects themselves. In which case Paul, the most glorious ex-consul and *dioiketes* of the eastern provinces in the conciliar list of 680, is the praetorian prefect.[18] This may provide additional support for the continued appointment of praetorian prefect-like officials to supervise some aspects of fiscal administration after the first half of the seventh century. As we shall see, this fits with a pattern of administrative change reflected also in the slow evolution of military and strategic organisation.[19]

Thereafter there is only minimal evidence for the existence of a praetorian prefect until the early/middle ninth century, when a ceremony which must have occurred after the year 809, preserved in the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies*, includes in a list of participating officials the praetorian prefect, the quaestor, and the eparchs of the *themata*.[20] Much discussion about the significance of this passage has taken place, but the officials who are named are clearly stated to be the praetorian prefect (*ton hyparchon ton praitorion*) and proconsuls who were also eparchs of the *themata*.[21] What their functions were is more difficult to establish. But it is significant to note that the officers most characteristic of the civil administration of the later *themata*, the *protonotarioi*, appear only in the ninth century (see below). We would suggest that in fact the post of praetorian prefect survived until towards the middle of the ninth century and, shorn of many of its original fiscal administrative functions, continued to possess a nominal responsibility for certain levels of judicial administration in the provinces, where the office-holder was represented by proconsular supervisors, and eparchs, two posts which were eventually combined.[22] The grounds for these suggestions may be set out as follows.

In the first place, it became the custom during the fifth and sixth centuries to appoint *ad hoc* praetorian prefects, or deputies to praetorian prefects,

[18] See *ACO* II, 2, 14.19ff., and Brandes 2002, 153–5. Several high officers whose posts were almost certainly in existence at this time are not mentioned. Their absence from the list proves nothing in this respect. See Haldon 1997a, 192.

[19] See *DOSeals* II, 2.1 and 2 (*ZV* 1163 and 2923), seals of the seventh/eighth century for the two officials who are respectively *hypatos* and *eparchos* and *apo eparchon* and *eparchos* of Italy: see n. 16 above.

[20] *De Cer.* 61.15–16. Discussion in Brandes 2002, 628–37, who prefers a date in the early years of the second half of the ninth century.

[21] For a detailed analysis of previous discussion, see Haldon 1997a, 201–2, n. 110; Brandes 2002, 118–36.

[22] Although in the Acts of the council held at Constantinople in 869/70 a certain Paul, 'praetorian prefect' appears. It is not clear whether this is anything more than a titular position. See Mansi xvi, 309D. See Brandes 2002, 130f.

officers of high rank, over regions in which troops were active, specifically in order to organise more effectively the requisitioning and delivery of supplies, but sometimes also to represent the praetorian prefect in a range of other duties. In Justinian's reign, the temporary prefect on the eastern front became semi-permanent, and the practice of appointing such officials appears to have been continued into the seventh century. In the conditions of almost constant warfare in which both the Balkan and Anatolian lands of the empire found themselves in the second half of the seventh century, the need regularly to co-ordinate military and civil administrations, which had already been the case in several regions during the sixth century, became generalised.[23] It has been argued that the eparchs of the *themata* who appear in the ninth-century ceremony referred to as well as in the *Taktikon Uspenskij* are the descendants of these special prefects. That they bear the title of *anthypatos*, proconsul, however, is more significant than has generally been appreciated.

This brings us to the second point; but in order to understand the process of change, it will be necessary to return to the sixth century. The title of *anthypatos* signified a senatorial grade, and from the time of Valentinian persons who held posts to which this grade was attached were generally referred to as *spectabiles*, including *comites rei militaris* and *vicarii* (governors of dioceses). The title of proconsul was held also by certain provincial governors of *spectabilis* rank, which in practical terms meant that they had a much wider jurisdiction than simple governors of *clarissimus* rank. In 535–6, during the tenure by John the Cappadocian of the praetorian prefecture of the east, Justinian had greatly increased the number of provincial governors of *spectabilis* rank, in order to improve the efficiency of provincial civil and judicial affairs and to attempt to get to grips with outlaws and banditry in the various provinces in question. But these reforms had mostly been reversed by the 550s:[24] only the governor of the province of Asia – who retained his title of proconsul – in the diocese of Asiana,[25] and the newly re-established *vicarius* of the diocese of Pontica[26] now held *spectabilis*

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[23] See Jones 1964, 673–4; Kaegi 1982, 103ff.; Scharf 1991; Haldon 1997a, 222f. Brandes 2002, 136–53, makes some corrections and clarifications to the position argued by Kaegi and Scharf, but in challenging the idea that such *ad hoc* prefects or representatives of prefects were regularly appointed, in fact assembles enough evidence to show that Kaegi's original suggestion is entirely plausible.

[24] See the relevant material referred to in the literature cited in note 3 above.

[25] Consisting of the provinces of Hellespontus, Asia, Lydia, Caria, Lycia, Phrygia Pacatiana and Phrygia Salutaris, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia.

[26] Consisting of the provinces of Bithynia, Honorias, Paphlagonia, Helenopontus, Armenia I–IV, Cappadocia I–II, Galatia, Galatia Salutaris.

rank.[27] The pre-reform establishment was restored, although it would appear that those provincial governors entitled *praetor* retained this title, even though they lost their *spectabilis* rank.[28] Both officials, of course, were direct subordinates of the praetorian prefect; both exercised proconsular authority over all the provincial governors of their dioceses. In addition, the *vicarius* of Pontica was also given authority over officials of the imperial estates, which extended over several provinces (but which were particularly concentrated in Cappadocia), over soldiers under the authority of the *magistri militum* as well as those under the *magister officiorum*.[29] His powers involved, therefore, a real plenipotentiary authority such as has traditionally been assumed for the *strategoi* of the ninth-century and later *themata*, and indeed the edict grants him all the authority of a *magister militum*.[30] Although the evidence referred to above strongly suggests that the diocesan tier of provincial *fiscal* administration had become effectively irrelevant to the central administration by the 630s at the latest, therefore, there is no evidence that diocesan governors of *spectabilis* or equivalent status did not continue to be appointed and to exercise their *judicial* authority after this time. Indeed, at the end of Justinian's reign there were two proconsular officials responsible to the praetorian prefect of the east for the civil and judicial administration of the various provinces in their dioceses.[31]

Now it is clear from both literary and sigillographic sources that *anthypatos*/proconsul still retains a functional significance, even in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, and is not yet a rank embedded in the system of precedence.[32]

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[27] For Asiana, see *Nov.* 145 (a. 553); for Pontica *Edict.* 8 (a. 548). For discussion, see Stein 1949, 749–51.

[28] This conclusion is suggested by the fact that Justinian's novel 145 and edict 8 make no mention of a return to the former titles for provincial governors; and that the successors of these provincial governors within the *themata* in the middle of the ninth century are referred to as *praitores*. See below. In this respect, Jones 1964, 374, went too far when he suggested that 'the diocesan system . . . ceased to function effectively'. This was true of its fiscal instance. But the re-establishment of officials with full diocesan judicial authority after 548 shows that it was only the fiscal level that was affected in this way. Brandes 2002, 123–6, discusses the proconsuls of the fifth century in further detail.

[29] Justinian, *Edict.* 8, 1.pr.; 3.3.   [30] Justinian, *Edict.* 8, 3.4.   [31] See above.

[32] Oikonomidès 1972, 287, 294; Winkelmann 1985, 35–6. See *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 51.25–6, for the *anthypatoi kai eparchoi ton thematon*, who are ranked among the *protospatharioi*. For the sixth-century use, see Jones 1964, 386–9. Stein 1920 discussed this evidence in depth, arguing that the *De Cer.* text dated from the later seventh century, and thus proving that the praetorian prefect and the thematic proconsuls existed at that time. This attribution is clearly incorrect (see Haldon 1997a, 201–2); but Stein's discussion of the role of the thematic *anthypatoi* (78ff.) remained the best until Brandes 2002, and is certainly correct in respect of the continuation of a shadowy post-prefectural thematic administrative structure after the seventh century, although Brandes 2002 disagrees with his interpretation (Brandes 2002, 118ff.). See also Bury 1911, 28f.; and less convincingly on this aspect Guilland 1957, esp. 9–10.

Equally importantly, provincial *anthypatoi* are evidenced on two seals for the *Anatolikon* dated to the first half of the ninth century. And although it has been pointed out that no other such seals with a provincial association are known, the fact that such officers existed for the *Anatolikoi* suggests that they may have existed for other military provinces also.[33] Other seals of the seventh to ninth centuries of officials with the function of *anthypatos*,[34] together with the continued existence of a praetorian prefect in the period 811/12–13 (the revised date for the *Taktikon* Uspenskij),[35] whatever the actual functions attributed to the position, thus provide very good grounds for thinking that officers bearing the title of *anthypatos* after the Justinianic period and well into the ninth century occupied a real office and continued to exercise some sort of authority over groups of provinces. That there are seals of the *anthypatoi* of a specific army command likewise suggests that at some point the older diocesan circumscriptions lost their functional relevance entirely, to be replaced by new provincial groupings – organised by military command – of similar stature, with an officer of equivalent status for each such group of provinces. But it is likely that this, too, may have been a somewhat later development, with the two officials of *spectabilis*

[33] *ZV* 1901: Eustathios, imperial *spatharokandidatos* and *anthypatos* of the *Anatolikoi*; *ZV* 2049: John, imperial *spatharios* and *anthypatos* of the *Anatolikoi*. Arguing from the rank held by these two officials alone, we might suggest that John held office before Eustathios, and that both predate the *Taktikon* Uspenskij by some years, since by the time of its compilation the order of precedence, from the highest down, ran *protospatharios, spatharokandidatos, spatharios*. See Winkelmann, *Rang–und Ämterstruktur*, 37–9. But as Winkelmann 1985, 42, 61, also points out, this might equally reflect not the importance of the post or function, but the value attributed by the emperor to the individual who held it. Dunn 1993, 7 and n. 17, is more cautious in respect of the possible functional significance of these *anthypatoi*, as is Brandes 2002, 130–2, both noting that these seals, of the period *c.* 800–50, are the only clear evidence of such positions. But what is clear from the fact that they are ranked as *protospatharioi* is that the *anthypatoi kai eparchoi* of the *themata* in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij are functional posts, not ranks.

[34] See *ZV* nos. 2882 (John, *anthypatos, c.* 550–650); 775 (Constantine, *anthypatos, c.* 550–650); 1085 (Tryphon, *stratelates* and *anthypatos*, late seventh *c.*, an interesting combination: if the first title is a function, it points to the close relationship between military and prefectural responsibilities at this time; possibly the same person who owned a seal for Tryphon, *illoustrios* and *anthypatos*: Bulgurlu and Ilaslı 2003, no. 4. If the first title is a rank, then it also points to *anthypatos* still retaining a functional value); Schlumberger, *Sig.*, 438.4 (David, *anthypatos*, eighth–ninth c.) and *Sig.*, 438.2 (Andreas Botaneiates, imperial *spatharios* and *anthypatos* – cf. the seal of John, imperial *spatharios* and *anthypatos*, *ZV* 2049, see note 32 above); Konstantopoulos, *Molybdoboulla*, no. 295 (John *illoustrios* and *anthypatos*, seventh–eighth c.).

[35] See Živković 2007. While it is impossible to summarise the argument here, the author demonstrates persuasively that the traditional date of *c.* 842/3 cannot be correct, and that in fact all the evidence fits an earlier date. We accept this, but would not exclude the possibility that revisions and changes were made to the document thereafter, and that the later scribe who copied the document (and also added the misleading title containing the names of Michael III and Theodora) miscopied or misunderstood many entries, generating the somewhat problematic and contradictory document we possess today.

rank in Asia Minor – the *anthypatos* of Asiana and the *vicarius* of Pontica – continuing to wield authority across the boundaries of the provincial strategic groupings, at least until the later seventh or early eighth century, by which time, as we have seen, the newer militarised provincial groupings had clearly taken on a geographical identity. Although it carries only limited evidential value, it is perhaps also worth noting that the tenth-century compiler of the *De Thematibus* attributed *anthypatoi* to several *themata,* including both the *Armeniakon* and *Thrakesion* regions.[36]

What sort of authority did these *anthypatoi* wield? There is a strong probability that, fairly soon after the withdrawal of the field armies to their new frontiers during the middle of the seventh century, it had become a judicial authority only. The grounds for this conclusion are quite straightforward: civil and diocesan governors had two areas of competence (excluding temporary authority over soldiers) – fiscal and judicial. It is quite clear that by the middle of the seventh century the fiscal administration was already under the various separate and independent bureaux of the general, special, and military *logothesia* and the department of the *sakellarios,* with their provincial representatives discussed above, the *dioiketai.* There remains only the judicial. There are no known judicial officials for the provinces in the historical record for the period between the mid-seventh and the mid-ninth century; yet it is precisely as provincial judicial officials that the thematic *praitores* – the former provincial governors who functioned below the *anthypatoi* who appear in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij of *c.* 811–13 – survive beyond the ninth century (and are later known as *kritai* – judges). The probability is that this was their chief role before this time, given that they are the provincial governors of the period up to the middle of the seventh century. And given this degree of continuity, it is a reasonable supposition that the *anthypatoi* (who had been formerly the highest non-imperial judicial instance at diocesan level) had likewise maintained a predominantly judicial function. That there was a judicial presence in the provinces in the eighth century is clear from the introductory sections of the *Ekloge,* issued in 741, where reference is made to the ignorance of the provincial judicial officials, which is to say, the provincial governors.[37]

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[36] See *De Them.,* I, 29f., iii, 1–3; see Pratsch 1994, 41ff., 79, 99ff. While some of Constantine VII's information may be of antiquarian relevance only, it is worth noting that had he read Justinian's novel 145 or edict 8, he could have discovered a great deal about the mid-sixth-century administration of these regions. His knowledge is thus not to be dismissed as mere invention (cf. Brandes 2002, 129).

[37] *Ekloge, prooimion,* 52–95; and for references to the civil governors (*archontes*) see VIII, 1.6; VIII, 3; XVII, 5; XVII.21 and the discussion in Haldon 1997a, 266ff., and 275–6.

We would argue not that the thematic *anthypatoi* survived as civil fiscal and administrative officials, but rather that their competence was of a predominantly judicial and supervisory nature, exercised over the groupings of provinces under each military command. They were prefectural judicial officials with a higher authority than the simple provincial governors themselves, the *praitores*. In this respect, and in view of the mention in the ninth-century ceremony of a praetorian prefect of some sort at Constantinople, it is likely that he survived also as a purely judicial official. His function and authority was most probably absorbed into the competence of the *quaestor* or the prefect of the city.[38]

We must also explain how it is that thematic officials with the function or post of *anthypatos* are also *eparchoi* in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij. That they are not provincial governors is clear from the fact that the *Taktikon* includes also the *praitores ton thematon* who, it is generally agreed, must have been the successors of the civil governors, again under the disposition of the bureau of the praetorian prefecture of the east at Constantinople in the sixth and first half of the seventh century, and as we have argued were probably in the ninth century still in charge of the civil/judicial administration of each of the provinces within the different *themata*.[39]

What may well have occurred is that the functions of the *ad hoc* prefects or the deputies appointed to represent the prefects, responsible for coordinating the supply of the armies, and those of the leading civil officials – in effect, diocesan officials – of the provinces within the territory of the *strategis* for which these prefects were responsible, were at some point amalgamated. Both groups of officials were originally under the authority of the praetorian prefect, and both fulfilled functions which were in practical respects very closely related. Indeed, in the case of the vicar of Pontica, he is expressly made responsible for the movement of troops through the provinces in his jurisdiction, the control of weapons, and is given the same judicial authority over the soldiers as their *magistri militum*, in addition to his civil judicial functions.[40] The amalgamation, or tenure by the same

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[38] Whether one such official could have authority over more than one *thema* cannot be known, although this seems likely to begin with. As noted already, Dunn 1993, 7 n. 17, doubts the continuity of existence of this prefectural judicial structure on the grounds that only two seals of *anthypatoi* definitely associated with a military district (*strategis*) are known, from the first half of the ninth century. But the very fact that they exist at all shows that the institution was a reality – and one can think of any number of reasons for the (apparent) non-survival of other such seals.

[39] *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 53.3; Oikonomidès 1972, 344, following Jones 1964, 280ff. But these officials did not have the *spectabilis* rank and judicial authority of the original *praetores* established in 535, as we have seen.

[40] Justinian, *Edict.* 8, 3.pr.; 1.pr.

individual, of these two offices – diocesan proconsuls and *ad hoc* prefects – would have had the result that the *ad hoc* prefects at the disposition of the department of the praetorian prefect in Constantinople, responsible for on-the-ground liaison between civil and military authorities in respect of supplies, billeting and so on, became the same civil officials with responsibility for supervising aspects of the civil administration of a specific group of provinces, for which they exercised an overall judicial authority. It is not clear when such an amalgamation may have taken place, and indeed it may have varied from region to region. It is conceivable that it was a relatively late development, and that the separate existence of eparchs should be assumed until into the ninth century, officials who were in effect provincial praetorian prefects, responsible for liaising at the provincial level with the local military command within the districts occupied by each army corps over lodgings, supplies, and provisions. This might be suggested by the existence of the two seals of officials who are simply *anthypatoi* of the *Anatolikoi* in the early ninth century, as well as those other seals of this period of officials who are simply *anthypatoi*.[41] Other seals of the seventh–ninth centuries of simple *eparchoi* with no other identification might belong to just such officials.[42]

There is continuous, if sparse and ambiguous, evidence, therefore, for the continued existence of provincial governors, and of formerly diocesan officials called *anthypatoi*, right through the eighth and into the ninth century. From the years after 809, a series of major changes in these arrangements becomes obvious. But the implications of this for the ways in which we understand the function and role of the thematic *strategoi* are considerable. Three points are crucial: that there continued to exist a prefectural judicial authority in the provinces within each military command, and a higher

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[41] See above, notes 33 and 34.

[42] See, for example, *ZV* 462A (of a *patrikios* and *eparchos*, seventh c.), 512 (of Theodore, *apo hypaton* and *eparchos*, c. 550–650); 677A (of Peter, *eparchos*, seventh c.); 791 (of Demetrios, *apo hypaton* and *eparchos*, seventh c.); 1094 (of a *patrikios* and *eparchos*, seventh c.); 1228 (of Zacharias, *eparchos*, c. 650–700); 1331A (of Constantine, *eparchos*, early eighth c.); and many others. Some of these may, of course, be prefects of the city, i.e. of Constantinople, especially those with relatively high ranking titles such as *apo hypaton*. On the other hand, several seals of such officers are known, and the urban prefects normally appear to have employed a fuller form of title: see esp. the discussion of *ZV*, I/3, 1690–1; and Laurent, *Corpus* II, nos. 993ff. Equally, officials such as John *eparchos* and *tourmarches* (*ZV*, 1508, c. 600–50, possibly later seventh c.) are clearly provincial. Since the title *eparchos* never served as a rank, this officer appears to have combined two provincial positions, one military and one civil – exactly the sort of combination we might expect in the context described above. See also *ZV*, 1812 (seal of Constantine, *hypatos* and *eparchos*, c. 750–850) and 1855 (seal of Dometios, *hypatos* and *eparchos*, eighth c.), for example.

authority placed over those provinces, in the form of the *anthypatoi;* that the officials referred to as *eparchoi* in these regions had the probable function of liaising between the military and fiscal authorities; and that the chief fiscal departments of the state – the *genikon* in particular, which was responsible for tax-assessment and collection – were independent of prefectural control. If we accept these arguments, then – in contrast to traditionally accepted views of their role as governors with both civil and military powers – it is hard to see in the *strategoi* anything other than purely military commanders. And importantly, this impression is only strengthened by the evidence we will review below relating to these officers and their commands.

Thematic *protonotarioi:* fiscal structures and resources

The interpretation of the position and significance of *anthypatoi* offered above receives a certain amount of confirmation from the evidence for the changes which occurred, probably, in the period *c.* 809–13. For it is significant that at about the same time as thematic eparchs and *anthypatoi* appear in the sources *for the last time* – i.e. in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij (*c.* 811–13) – thematic *strategoi* bearing the epithet *anthypatos* appear in the historical and sigillographic record *for the first time.*[43] These all date from the early decades of the ninth century and after.[44] Equally significantly, it is at about the same time that the thematic *protonotarioi* first appear in some sources,[45] and on lead seals.[46] We would take this as evidence of a significant

[43] See the discussion in Winkelmann 1985, 35–6.

[44] *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 51.25 (ranked among the *protospatharioi*). The entry for a *patrikios kai anthypatos* at *ibid.*, 49.1, is an exception. While it used to be generally admitted that this represented the title specifically created for Alexios Mousele by Theophilos, see Theoph. cont., 108.1; and the discussions of Oikonomidès 1972, 294; Bury 1911, 28; Guilland 1967, II, 71, this argument is not necessary – the title should be taken together with another exception, Gregory Mousoulakios (*ZV* 3113A), *komes* of the *Opsikion* for the first years of the ninth century: see Haldon 1984, 360 and n. Both examples may illustrate the fact that the combination of functions for which we will argue here was already a possibility in the period preceding Theophilos.

[45] For the first references to thematic *protonotarioi,* see Ignatios, *Ep.* 7, 8 (the *spatharios* Nikolaos); Theod. Stoud., *Ep.,* 500 (the *protonotarios* Hesychios), both dated to the 820s. See also *V. Ioannicii,* 368A (for the reign of Theophilos, 829–41); *V. Petri Atroae* (*Vita retracta*), 125 (for the reign of Michael II, 820–9).

[46] For the seals, see Winkelmann 1985, 120–1, 122ff., with full lists of seals for *protonotarioi* for the *themata;* Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel,* nos. 222, 226, 230; *DOSeals,* III, 86.41; IV, 1.23; 22.29, 33, 38, for example (all ninth c., none earlier). But note Winkelmann's comment, 24, regarding the fact that Zacos and Veglery based their dating of the seals of *protonotarioi* on their absence from the *Taktikon* Uspenskij. In view of the re-dating of this document to *c.* 811–13, and more especially since some *protonotarioi* at least existed before this time, as the

new development: the establishment of some of the military commands as *themata,* with implications for both fiscal administration and recruitment, accompanied by the subsequent creation of a new provincial administrative apparatus with authority delegated to 'thematic' officials, in contrast to the highly centralised system which had prevailed up to this time.

Now it has traditionally been argued that the thematic *protonotarioi* were originally the chief clerks of the earlier *anthypatoi* and the thematic eparchs, whom they now replaced.[47] This would make the *protonotarioi* members of one of the prefectural bureaux. Had this been the case, however, they would not at a slightly later date (in the *kletorologion* of Philotheos of 899) appear as members of the *sakellion,*[48] but rather, in view of the judicial role which appears to have been the main concern of the eparchs and proconsuls of the *themata,* in the bureau of the *quaestor* or even the prefect of the city, at Constantinople. The proof of this lies in the fact that this latter location is precisely where we find the *praitores* of the *themata,* later known as *kritai,* by the late ninth century.[49] But, as the evidence shows, *protonotarioi* were not created *ab initio* at the same moment that the *anthypatoi* and *eparchoi* disappear, having existed already before this time, probably since the 800s, certainly from the 820s. A seal of a *notarios* as well as a *protonotarios* of the *strategos* of the *Thrakesion* army are known from the later eighth century, but it is important to bear in mind that this official is attached to the *strategos* rather than the military command area as such: we need to distinguish between such an official and his staff, on the one hand, and on the other the later thematic *protonotarioi,* who were officials of the *sakellion,* as noted. Presumably many, if not most senior officials had *notarioi* on their staff, headed by a *protonotarios:* there were groups of *notarioi,* headed by a *protonotarios,* in several palatine departments, such as the *dromos,* for example.[50] The *notarioi* of the *sakelle* are listed, along with

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letters of Ignatios and Theodore demonstrate, their dating of all the seals of *protonotarioi* to the period after 842/3 must be revised. Equally, seals dated broadly '750–850' should be interpreted as products of the early ninth century on the whole, at least where they include a specific geographical/provincial name, since all the available evidence points to this period as the time at which *protonotarioi* first begin to exercise the authority with which they are later associated. See Brandes 2002, 162f.

[47] E.g., Ostrogorsky 1968, 205–6, and esp. Stein 1920, 79ff., followed by e.g. Kaegi 1982, 109ff.

[48] *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 121.6. There were *protonotarioi* in other departments, of course, in charge of the *notarioi* (e.g. in the *genikon:* see Laurent, II, 183ff., not listed specifically in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos).

[49] For the *praitores,* see Leo, *Takt.,* iv, 33 (*PG* 107, *c.* 705; Vari, 62); Ahrweiler 1960, 43f.; Oikonomidès 1972, 322f. (*kritai*).

[50] See n. 46 above; *DOSeals* III, 2.35 and commentary; *PmbZ,* no. 291; Brandes 2002, 164, and notes. For other notaries, see *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 57.24; 61. 8, 16, 17.

the *notarioi* of other fiscal departments, in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, and most departments had a chief notary, or *protonotarios* to head these officials.[51] It is quite possible that the *protonotarioi* addressed in the letters of Ignatios are Constantinopolitan officials exercising their supervision distantly from the capital, and that *protonotarioi* were only appointed for each *thema* as part of the changes discussed here. This would certainly explain why *protonotarioi* of *themata* are not separately listed in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, especially if its earlier date is accepted.

In fact, if we accept the argument outlined above, that the *eparchoi* represented prefectural officials originally appointed to each provincial command – *strategis* – in the sense of both army corps and territory, to liaise with the central fiscal bureaux in order to facilitate the supplying and provisioning of the army, then the new thematic *protonotarioi* came exactly to fulfil this role.[52] What was involved was, in effect, the removal of an intermediate tier of administration, the eparchs attached to the armies or the districts in which they were based (the 'thematic' eparchs of the *Taktikon Uspenskij*), and the establishment of a more centralised supervision through the metropolitan department of the *sakellion*, and through officials who were already in existence and who already carried out most of these functions. In the light of the discussion below on the first evidence for the establishment of *themata*, we would argue that the two developments are closely connected, indeed that the appearance of *protonotarioi* signals the last stage in the process of transformation of *strategides* into *themata*. This must also underlie the equally important point that thematic *protonotarioi* remain at first relatively lowly officials, with the rank of *hypatos, spatharios, kandidatos*, for example.[53] This contrasts strongly, not only with the former *anthypatoi*, who were in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij classed nominally among the *protospatharioi*, but with the thematic *strategoi* who at the same period were usually at least *protospatharioi* and often *patrikioi*.[54]

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[51] *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 61.16. Only the *protonotarios* of the *dromos* appears in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, however – 57.19; 59.19.

[52] This is described accurately both in the passage of Leo's *Taktika* cited below, and in a description deriving from later ninth-century practice incorporated into the treatise on imperial expeditions compiled by Leo Katakylas in the early years of the tenth century and later revised on the order of Constantine VII: see Haldon, *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, (B) 101–6; (C) 349–58 and comm., 167f.

[53] See *ZV* 3118, 2496, 3214, 1727, 2324, for example; and Winkelmann 1985, 122ff.

[54] Winkelmann 1985, 137–8, points out correctly that the rank held by even the highest functionaries varied at all times. Even so, there are few exceptions to the general tendency for most *strategoi* to hold more-or-less equivalent ranks.

This is important, for we would see a directly related phenomenon in the disappearance of the older functional provincial *anthypatoi*, and the re-appearance of the epithet *anthypatos* as a title for thematic *strategoi*. In view of the later authority wielded by thematic *strategoi*, this must surely have involved the transfer of the judicial authority wielded by the former to the latter, if not in all cases, then in many.[55] The chronological coincidence between these two developments has already been pointed out. The changes would have been part of new administrative arrangements in newly established *themata*, insofar as the former *anthypatoi kai eparchoi*, who as bearers of both administrative and judicial functions, crossed the boundaries of several departments. The new arrangement placed thematic fiscal affairs firmly under the control of the *sakellion*; the *praitores* became purely judicial officers, and the *strategoi* were given overall authority in this respect in their own *thema*. The position of the *strategos* at the end of the ninth century as reflected in the *Taktika* of Leo VI sums this situation up: 'For the *protonotarios* of the theme and the *chartoularios*, as well as the *praitor* or judge of the theme (the one being head of the civil administration, the other being in charge of the registration and recruitment of the army, the third resolving the cases of those brought before the courts), although they are necessarily subordinate to the *strategos* in certain matters, nevertheless look in regard to the affairs of their own departments to our majesty, so that through them we are able to learn the situation and conditions of both civil and military affairs and conduct them without faltering'.[56] The award of the title *anthypatos* to *strategoi* is a reflection of a significantly re-structured provincial fiscal and judicial administration.

Kommerkiarioi and *apothekai*: from customs to crisis-management

One of the most debated issues in the history of east Roman fiscal administration at this period is that of the part played by officials referred to in texts and on seals as *kommerkiarioi*. During the fifth and sixth centuries it is generally agreed that officials referred to as *comites commerciorum* (in the fifth century) and (in the east and in Greek) *kommerkiarioi* (thereafter)

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[55] Thus we would argue that the title, which stayed in continuous use, along with the functions it implied (whether actively exercised or not), were transferred to *strategoi*, rather than re-invented as part of an 'administrative protorenaissance' in the middle of the ninth century, *pace* Brandes 2002, 480–98.

[56] Leo, *Takt.*, iv, 33 (62 Vari).

operated as supervisors and controllers of trade between the Roman empire and neighbouring territories or states. The evidence derives from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a small number of laws incorporated into the *Codex Iustinianus*, and an inscription of the emperor Anastasios (491–518). From this evidence, there appear to have been originally three *comites commerciorum*, one each for the east, Illyricum, and for the Danube and Black Sea ports. They had a particular supervision of the trade in silk, although they exercised other tasks as well. The *comes* for Oriens was placed under the authority of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*. Some of the revenues for which such officials were responsible were drawn upon to pay the salaries of the *duces* commanding frontier provincial forces.[57]

During the sixth century the number of *kommerkiarioi* in Oriens appears to have increased; they were certainly closely associated with the control of imports of and trade in silks, although none of the evidence suggests that this was their only duty; they seem to have had responsibility for considerable sums of money; and they seem to have been high-ranking persons of status.[58] From the reign of Justinian lead seals of *kommerkiarioi* have survived, and these show very clearly that such officials were not based only at 'frontier' positions where trade between the Roman empire and its neighbours might occur, but also at towns such as Tyre and Berytos, as well as Antioch.[59] The importance of *kommerkiarioi* is particularly emphasised

[57] For the *comes commerciorum* in Oriens and the connection with the *sacrae largitiones*: *Not. Dig.*, *Or.*, xiii, 6–9; and Kent 1961; see also Delmaire 1989b, at 271. The literature on these officials is large. Key secondary treatments include: O. Seeck, in: *RE* IV (1900) 643–6 (and 671–5 for the *sacrae largitiones*); Zachariae von Lingenthal 1865, 530f.; E. Stein 1949, 214f., with n. 1; Karayannopoulos 1958, 159; Jones 1964, 429, 826; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963. Most of these commentators have argued that *kommerkiarioi* and *comites commerciorum* were collectors of customs dues and trade-related taxes only. For the Anastasian inscription (known only from a large number of fragments from different copies set up in three different locations), see Sartre, *IGLS* xiii/1, no. 9046 and comm. 114ff. and Patlagean 1977b, 303–4.

[58] See the summary of their position for the period up to the end of the sixth century in Oikonomidès 1986a, and the text, possibly an epitome of a Justinianic novel (although the date is problematic) discussed by Zachariae von Lingenthal 1865, according to which *kommerkiarioi* were the chief state officials involved in regulating the sale of silks. The *dux* of Mesopotamia drew part of his income from the revenues collected by the *kommerkiarios*: see Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963, 87 and 159; Sartre, *IGLS* xiii/1, 115; see also Kaplan 1986, 88–91; and esp. Brandes 2002, 239–81.

[59] See Prok., *HA* xxv.14; Oikonomidès 1986a, 33–8. The seals: (i) *ZV* 214 (5) (dated before 565 by Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, see 19–21 and no. 2; and between 538 and 552 by Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 425, 433 [no.4]); (ii) Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 21, no. 3; Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 425, 433 (no. 3) (dated before 565/538–52); (iii) Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 426, 433 (no, 3) (dated 538–65); Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 21–2, no. 4; (iv) Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 426, 433 (no. 6) (dated 538–65 and before 578).

by the seals of a certain Magnus, who held a series of high-ranking positions in the imperial financial administration, combining the position of *curator* of imperial estates with that of *kommerkiarios*, for example.[60] The presence of the emperor's effigy on these seals has been associated with the need to guarantee the genuineness of the commodities involved, and to authorise their commercial exchange: silk, as an especially precious commodity, specifically fostered by the imperial government in the sixth century, would have been treated as such a product.[61]

During the later sixth and seventh centuries there is some evidence for an expansion of the role and functions of *kommerkiarioi*. Lead seals of *kommerkiarioi* are increasingly common, and several more from Tyre are known.[62] The term *apotheke* or warehouse also occurs for the first time in the last years of the sixth century; and several sources suggest that an *apotheke* was a storehouse which could be used to store both perishable and non-perishable goods, often in considerable bulk. In some cases, the term *apotheke* was also applied to particular rooms or sections of a larger building; while there is some evidence that it was rendered also by the Latin word *horreum*, generally taken to refer to a granary.[63] The later evidence, from the later ninth century on, suggests clearly that *kommerkiarioi* were officials of the general *logothesion*, responsible for supervising the levy of the *kommerkion*, a tax on transactions and goods.[64] But their role in the intervening period, especially during the years *c.* 640–730, remains very problematic.

From the middle years of the seventh century there appears to be a very considerable increase in the number of seals attributed to high-ranking

[60] See *ZV* 130; Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 22–3, no. 5; Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 428, 433 (no. 9) (dated variously 565–78): see Feissel 1985, 465–76; Kaplan 1986, 88–91; *ZV* 130 bis; Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 24, no. 7 (possibly marked also with Antioch/Theoupolis).

[61] Oikonomidès 1986a, 36–7.

[62] (i) Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 23–4, no. 6 (mention of an *apotheke*; dated by Oikonomidès to 590–602; by Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 433, to 574–78); (ii) *ZV* 214 (1) (mention of an *apotheke*): see Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 433; (iii) *ZV* 214 (2) (550–*c.* 600, or 565–78: see Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 433); (iv) *ZV* 214 (3) (dated 550–*c.* 600, and 565–78: Morrisson, 'Collection Henri Seyrig', 433); (v) *ZV* 214 (6) (dated 550–*c.* 600). These officials all bear high-ranking titles. See Haldon 1997a, 188.

[63] For *apotheke* see Preisigke 1925, 178–9; Millet 1930. On the concordance of the term with *horreum*, see *Lexikon des Mittelalters* iv (1989) 1508–10 (M. Lapidge); and for *horreum* and its Greek forms, see Mercati 1950. For *apotheke* in particular as a bulk storage facility, accordingly also for grain, see Brandes and Haldon 2000, 165–9; Brandes 2002, 291–302.

[64] See *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 113.33 for their position in the bureau of the *logothetes tou genikou*; and the descriptive analysis of this department by Oikonomidès, *Préséance*, 313. For the *kommerkion* see Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Douanes*, 97–104 and Oikonomidès 1991a, at 242ff. as well as 1986a, 48: the *kommerkion* seems to have been introduced *c.* 800.

genikoi kommerkiarioi associated with an *apotheke* for one or several provinces.[65] One official, sometimes a group of officials, had jurisdiction over a number of dispersed areas.[66] For the seventh century, it has been suggested that the *apotheke* 'system' and its *kommerkiarioi* also came to have a key role in supplying the imperial armies. Thus dated seals of *kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai* for particular areas can be related to specific military undertakings mentioned in the sources and connected with those areas; and the inference is that the *kommerkiarioi* were entrusted with the provision of equipment and weapons to the soldiers.[67] Indeed, the flexibility and *ad hoc* nature of this arrangement appears to be borne out by the fact that the seals of this institution seem in several cases to follow the warfare. Both specific examples and general tendencies can be highlighted. Thus, in the context of the defensive operations undertaken by Byzantine forces during the presence of Arab armies in north-western Asia Minor between 674 and 678, involved in the siege of Constantinople, for example, there exist dated seals of *kommerkiarioi* of the *apotheke* of Honorias for the years 673–4 and 674–5.

[65] The best summary of the sigillographic evidence is Oikonomidès 1986a. Several stages in the evolution of this system can be observed in the seals: first, the appearance of high-ranking *genikoi kommerkiarioi*, with no specific provinces attached, during the first years of Constans II (from the years between 641 and 654): see Oikonomidès 1986a, 38; Brandes 2002, 306f.; second, the association of such officers with the *apotheke* of specific provinces or groups of provinces (from 654–9 until 728/9): Oikonomidès 1986a, 38–41; and third, the introduction of an indictional date from 673/4: Oikonomidès 1986a, 39.

[66] See *ZV* 135–6, 153f.; W. Seibt, in *JöB* 30 (1981), 359 (review of Haldon 1979); Lilie 1984, 32–4; Hendy 1985, 626ff.; Oikonomidès 1986a, 627–9, suggested that the *apothekai* may represent a system for the disposal of surplus materials from state workshops (silks, gold- and silverware, dyed cloths, and so forth), rather than simply centres for imperial control over trading in luxury or other goods (although there is no reason for assuming that private merchants might not also have had an interest in such state depots and the system with which they were associated. Virtually all the provinces of the Justinianic period are represented on the seals: see the tables at *ZV* I, 1, 162–89). For a detailed survey and catalogue, see Brandes 2002, 511–89.

[67] Hendy 1985, 654ff. (but note the justified critique by Oikonomidès 1986a, 34ff., supported by Bendall 1989, 41–2, in respect of the unsatisfactory chronology of a particular group of seals presented by Hendy 1985, 630–3: see Haldon 1997a, 247–9). Seibt, in *JöB* 30 (1981), 359, suggests that the *kommerkiarioi* were also responsible for the actual provisioning of the armies. This now seems very probable in view of the fact that the term *commercium* by the middle of the seventh century could clearly mean a levy in grain, equivalent to *coemptio* or *synone* (see below); and of the need to collect a certain amount of produce in kind for the support of the armies, along with the need to establish granaries or warehouses for such produce: see below; and Haldon 1994. For the association of seals of *kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai* with military undertakings, see Hendy 1985, 654–60, 667–9, and below. On the question of seals of *apothekai* of *andrapoda* (slaves), see Seibt and Theodoridis 1999. There are seals for the *apothekai* of the *andrapoda* of several provinces dating from the early 690s into 696–7, showing that such storehouses or depots existed for a number of such groups. That these were established to sell such slaves, as maintained by Oikonomidès and others, has been shown to be extremely doubtful by Brandes 2002, 351–65; 2005a.

Given the Arab occupation of the Thracian hinterland of Constantinople as well as the Bithynian coastal regions, the city would have been able to arrange the continued delivery of supplies from this region, which included the port of Herakleia Pontica.[68] As the strategic priorities of the empire move from one front to the other in the first half of the eighth century, for example, the evidence of seals of *kommerkiarioi* and *kommerkia* is no less telling.[69]

The beginnings of this arrangement seem to lie in the efforts of the imperial government to deal with the crisis in supplying Constantinople with grain after the loss of Egypt to the Persians in 618. In this year the civic *annona* for the capital was cancelled.[70] At exactly this time – 618–20 – a number of seals of *kommerkiarioi* associated with Carthage and North Africa – major producers of grain – testify to the activities of these officials who, it has reasonably been assumed, were associated with the measures taken to supply Constantinople with grain from North Africa during the years after the Muslim occupation of Egypt from 641.[71] Crucially, this 'new' role of officials called *kommerkiarioi* appears to be confirmed by the, at first sight unlikely, equivalence by the middle of the seventh century of the terms *commercium* and *synone*, or *coemptio*. For whereas the latter referred before this time to the compulsory purchase of military supplies, it is clear that

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[68] See *ZV* 152 and 153; Lilie 1976, 74–80. That the coastal regions were explicitly viewed as a resource area is confirmed by the existence of a slightly later seal, of Anastasios, *hypatos, basilikos balnitor,* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of Honorias, Paphlagonia, the Pontic coast and Trapezous: Lihačev, *Pečati,* 165–6 no. 3 (dating probably from 721–2). Note that Honorias had been incorporated by Justinian into Paphlagonia in 535 (Just., *Nov.* 29.1), but in 548 this reform was probably cancelled: see Stein 1949, 749 and n. 1 (750) and Just., *Edict.* 8.

[69] For the movement of the main front to the Balkans from the 730s and 740s, see *ZV,* I, 1, 138ff.; followed by Hendy 1985, 654, note 438; generally, Ostrogorsky 1968, 139ff. Other examples, not cited by Hendy, tend to re-inforce rather than weaken his proposal. A seal of 741/2 for the imperial *kommerkia* of the *Thrakesion thema,* for example (*ZV,* 195 and no. 261), may well represent Constantine V's efforts to prepare a counter-attack against the usurper Artabasdos, whose rebellion in the *Opsikion* district began soon after the death of Leo III in the summer of 741 (see Speck 1981, 71ff.; for Constantine's support in *Thrakesion* see Theoph., 414..31–3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 575); Rochow 1991, 147). Equally, a seal of either 741/2 or 742/3, for the imperial *kommerkia* of Thessaloniki, and issued under Artabasdos and his son Nikephoros (*ZV,* 195, and no. 262), may be connected with the same events (Artabasdos sent via the *patrikios* and *magistros ek prosopou* in Constantinople, who had taken his side, to his son Nikephoros, who was *strategos* of Thrace at the time, asking him to collect his troops for the defence of Constantinople: see Theoph., 415.12ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 575) and Rochow 1991, 148). Similarly, a seal of the imperial *kommerkia* of the eparchies of the God-guarded imperial *Opsikion,* dated 745/6 (*ZV,* 195, and no. 263), may well be connected with Constantine V's attack on north Syria and Germanikeia – see Ostrogorsky 1968, 139; Theoph., 422.11–13 (Mango and Scott 1997, 584); Rochow 1991, 159f.

[70] Durliat 1990, 271f.   [71] Morrisson and Seibt 1982; in detail Prigent 2006b, 293–4.

by the later seventh century it referred to regular – annual – levies of grain in kind (*coemptum frumenti . . . annue minima exurgebat persolvere*, as the *Liber Pontificalis* puts it).[72] This reference, in a Latin-Greek lexicon of the seventh century, seems to offer the missing link: *commerciarii* could be, on this understanding of the term *commercium*, responsible for levies in grain, whether annual or not, part of the state's revenue raised to maintain its armies. A reflection of this then appears in a group of anonymous seals of the *kommerkion Sikelias* which have been tentatively dated to the years from 652–72/3, and which again, following the equivalence between *commercium* and *synone*, would be understood as seals of officials dealing with a levy of grain from Sicily. Significantly, they date to the years after grain from Africa became temporarily unavailable (after the defeat of the exarch Gregory by Muslim raiders in 647–8), and thus suggest the alternative source from which the government attempted to supply Constantinople.[73] On the logic of this argument, which seems to us conclusive, the attempts to exploit sources of grain for the capital city of the empire led directly to the expansion of the system of *kommerkiarioi* and their storehouses to supply both the capital and the armies.

Thus the *apothekai* were by no means connected *only* with the provision of goods and supplies related to the military – indeed, it seems clear that their first priority had been Constantinople itself, and to some extent this continued to be the case: the likelihood already noted above that the *kommerkiarioi* of the *apotheke* of Honorias were associated with supplying the city of Constantinople with provisions during the years 672–4 makes this clear (and see Chapter 6 for the later importance of Paphlagonia in provisioning the capital). It is also likely that they continued to have other functions, too, probably connected with the movement of a wider range of goods or resources, as is suggested by the presence of *kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai* in provinces next to the borders or frontiers, as in the Pontos or Lazica, for example, as well as in the Balkans, or of their seals in places far from their bases of operation.[74] The coincidence of date, place, and event

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[72] *LP* I, 366; see Haldon 1994. The equivalence *commercium-synone* appears in a mid-seventh-century Greek-Latin lexikon, first noted and discussed in detail in Brandes 2002, 319.

[73] The argument is presented in detail by Prigent 2006b, esp. 290–5. For Sicily as a key source of grain at this time, see Prigent 2006b, and the discussion in Chapter 6. Prigent rightly notes that the need to protect the grain supply of Constantinople may have been a prime motive in the decision of Constans II to campaign in the West and establish his base of operations in the island.

[74] See *ZV* tables 29 (*apotheke* of Lazike); 30–1 (*apothekai* of Mesembria and Thessaloniki); and cf. seals of *kommerkiarioi* for the *apotheke* of Kerasous or of Paphlagonia found in Bulgaria and Sudak, for example: Jordanov 2003, no. 40.1 (and see also 12.1, a seal of the *apotheke* of the

with the needs of Constantinople and with military undertakings of many of these groupings nevertheless remains quite striking.

Although it seems generally agreed that the state faced real difficulties in providing its soldiers with regular cash payments at this time, the despatch of consignments of bronze to specific locations for military use suggests that cash payments for some purposes could still be made when necessary.[75] Nevertheless, the *apotheke* system provided an appropriate, available, and expandable structure for the redistribution of produce and materials of all kinds, both in respect of supplying and equipping the armies, as well as in other aspects of the state's fiscal redistributive activities and needs.[76] Soldiers also needed to be supplied with weapons, and since nearly all the known arms- and armour-manufactories of the empire lay by this time in hostile territory, or areas so exposed to hostile action that they can hardly have remained operational,[77] it is most probable that the state turned

prisoners-of-war of Asia, dated 694–5); Stepanova 1999, no. 20; *SBS* 8, 161, nos. 2–3, seals of *kommerkiarioi* of the *apothekai* of Kappadokia I and II (dated between 659 and 668) and of Hellespontos (dated 729–30), respectively, found at Cherson. For the later seventh century onwards Curta traces a similar association between *kommerkiarioi* and Balkan 'gateway' or port towns: Curta 2004; and for commerce across the political frontiers more generally, Chapter 6, 511ff.

[75] For discussion of the economic and fiscal situation faced by the state in the middle and later years of the seventh century, and in particular the very marked reduction in the production and circulation of copper from *c.* 658–68, see Hendy 1985, 619–20, 640–5; Haldon 1997a, 224ff.; Morrisson 1986b, 156ff.; Brandes 2002, 315ff., and our discussion in Chapter 6. Grierson (discussion to Oikonomidès 1993b, 661f.) suggests that, in view of the known longevity of circulation of copper coins, their disappearance from the numismatic record from the end of the seventh century until the time of Michael II may actually reflect a massive and deliberate withdrawal of such coins from circulation at this time in order to facilitate the new emissions. But this would still not account for the archaeological profile, upon which these conclusions about the state's reduction of issues of copper from the end of the reign of Constans II are based. It is worth noting also that the Byzantine state seems to have exported massive numbers of copper coins into north Syria during the reign of Constans II, and that one type of Constans II is found almost entirely in Cyprus and north Syria, suggesting a clear policy of coin production for specific areas: see Phillips and Goodwin, 75ff., with the evidence and further discussion. The evidence of collections, hoards, and archaeologically stratified finds supports the Byzantine archaeological evidence: these coins cease to appear in north Syrian contexts from the late 650s and early 660s, and have to be replaced by local imitative coinages. See Morrisson 1989, 191–200; Album 1993, 9, although there is some evidence that the supply continued until *c.* 660: see Mackensen 1983, 29–30, note 98. For the imitative series, see Oddy 1987; Goodwin 1993; and esp. Phillips and Goodwin 1997.

[76] The first known high-ranking *kommerkiarios* associated with an *apotheke* is a certain Theodore, *hypatos* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of Galatia, dated to *c.* 654–9: *ZV* 136. See Hendy 1985, 628f.; Haldon 1997a, 233f.; Brandes 2002, 290f.; *DOSeals* IV, 4.1.

[77] See Haldon 1997a, 239. In the tenth century, at least one of these establishments – that at Caesarea in Cappadocia – appears to have been operational once more, and may therefore have

to provincial, and therefore private (even if supervised), production. The *kommerkiarioi*, with their local subordinates and their storehouses, would have made ideal intermediate functionaries to whom the state could farm out this task, although whether the troops were issued with coin to make such purchases or not remains unknown.[78] Some objections to this idea have been voiced, but no structurally viable alternative has been proposed.[79] From 673/4 the seals of *kommerkiarioi* were marked with the indictional year, suggestive of a further evolution in this aspect of state fiscal administration (and possibly a reform or change introduced for the first time in that year, since it is the first year of a new indictional cycle of fifteen years; possibly also connected with the Arab siege of Constantinople which began immediately thereafter). These changes may be connected with broader changes in the system of tax-collection and assessment which may have been introduced at about the same time, and are probably part of the same larger picture.[80] The continued presence of the imperial effigy on such seals, together with the indictional date, might indeed suggest the continued association of such officials with imperially monopolised commerce in a variety of specific products such as silk, but it would certainly reinforce the suggestion that such officials were associated with both the grain supply of Constantinople, on the one hand, and with supplying the army with both supplies as well as military equipment and arms, on the other. For the latter constituted also, from the reign of Justinian, and probably still in the later seventh century, an imperial monopoly, the movement of which was in theory at least strictly controlled. The *kommerkiarioi*, who would undoubtedly have had access to the transport systems of the state – whether the *dromos* or any other department (see below) – will have had to arrange for the transportation of such products, and possibly raw materials as well, and their seals will have been an essential authorisation for such state-controlled activities.[81]

been only temporarily disrupted: see the reference to imperial armour-makers as *exkoussatoi* in a mid-tenth-century letter of the archbishop Basil Elachistos (Cantarella 1926, a letter to the emperor Constantine VII).

[78] Hendy 1985, 633ff., suggested that the state sold weapons and equipment, through the *kommerkiarioi*, to the soldiers, who paid from the revenues from lands which he argued the state had granted them. As we shall see, this is most unlikely.

[79] Oikonomidès (1986a, 1993b, 640, n. 13) voiced the most coherent critique, which revolves around the notion that the *kommerkiarioi* were connected chiefly with the silk industry, except on rare occasions when they dealt with other wares; and when they were also involved with taxation. There are very serious problems with this, however. See Haldon 1997a, 235–8; Haldon 1993a, 16–17; further supported by Jacoby 1991/2, 454 n. 7; Brandes 2002, 395ff.

[80] See Haldon 1997a, 148ff., and 1994, 134f.; Brandes 2002, 323–9, although the issue remains contentious.

[81] Haldon 1979, 68f., and n. 123.

At this point we should underline the fact that the dramatic expansion in the field of activity of high-ranking *kommerkiarioi* associated with provincial *apothekai* appears to have taken place in two stages. The first was in association with the need to supply Constantinople with grain, to which the first seals of *kommerkiarioi* of Carthage or Africa, and those of the *kommerkion Sikelias*, testify. The second phase accompanies, or very closely follows, the cut-back by the imperial government of the production of copper coinage from 658 onwards, a reduction in production, if that is indeed what it was, which also shortly precedes Constans II's move to Sicily. This is all suggestive, as we have said, of a major policy decision in respect of imperial fiscal administration and the role of the *kommerkiarioi*.[82] Yet it is notable that, from the evidence of the names of the various officials who held these posts, there were relatively few *kommerkiarioi*, suggesting that they were centrally based officials residing in Constantinople, reflecting in turn a strong element of central planning and co-ordination in respect of both where and when an *apotheke* was established. That a fairly strict rotation of posts or responsibilities was exercised appears also from the seals, with a one- or two-year period of office – where a sufficient number of seals is available – predominating. In some cases, for example with the *kommerkiarioi* Kosmas, Thomas, John, Ioulianos, George, and Theophylact under Constantine IV and Justinian II, a very few officials seem to have monopolised the key posts, a situation which can also be found under Constans II and probably represents the availability, merit, and proximity to the emperor of leading officers: the same was true of other aspects of the imperial establishment.[83]

This is important, since – even though the seals represent only a partial picture of the full extent of the activities of these officials[84] – the irregular or

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[82] An association first properly discussed first by Hendy 1985, 641.

[83] See *ZV* I, 1, tables 1–16 (145–61); and Cheynet 2001, nos. 21, 22, 23, 36. For the named *kommerkiarioi*, see *ZV* I, 1, tables 4 (147), 5 (149), 6/1, and 6/2 (149–50). For Constans II, see the seals of Stephanos, for example, *ZV* 138–49 and I, 1, table 1 (145), who seems to have dominated the group of *kommerkiarioi* from 659, but appears not to have continued his career into the reign of Constantine IV. We see no reason why this should necessarily be connected with the hypothesis that there was 'corruption' in the system, as suggested by Oikonomidès 1986a, 41 (which depends in any case to a large degree on the idea that the *kommerkiarioi* were contract farmers, for which there is no evidence: see below), although this cannot be disproved. For the systemic constraints on recruitment and appointment of high-ranking officers and the crucial importance of proximity to the emperor, see the results of the analyses undertaken by Winkelmann 1985, 1987a; and Chapter 8.

[84] There exist some 60,000 known lead seals for the whole Byzantine period; the vast majority belong to the period from the sixth to the eleventh century, with a clear emphasis on the seventh–ninth centuries. See Oikonomidès 1983, 149; and Seibt, *Bleisiegel*, 34.

occasional nature of the association of an *apotheke* with a particular province or group of provinces is strongly suggestive of irregular and non-cyclical requirements: military expeditionary needs, supplies for a siege, and so on, as exemplified already. In addition, the groupings of provinces subject to a particular *kommerkiarios* or *apotheke* also vary. On different occasions, for example (and the examples can readily be multiplied), the following combinations are found:

Lykaonia: with Isauria (691/3), with Kappadokia I and II and Pisidia (689/91), and with Kappadokia II (690–2) (all in the *Anatolikon*);[85]

Pisidia: with Kappadokia I and II and Lykaonia (689/91), with Pamphylia (690/1), and with Lykia and Pamphylia (720/1) (all in *Anatolikon*);[86]

Lydia: with Hellespontos (720–9), with Phrygia Pakatiane (696/7) and with Bithynia, Phrygia Salutaris, and Phrygia Pakatiane (733/4) (provinces from *Thrakesion*, *Opsikion* and *Anatolikon*);[87]

Phrygia Salutaris and Pakatiane appear usually with Bithynia, but Phrygia Pakatiane appears on one occasion with Lydia;[88]

Hellespontos: usually stands alone (in 691/2, 708/9, 713), but also with Constantinople (695/6), with Lydia (720–9 and 727–8) and with Asia (732/3) (thus in both *Thrakesion* and *Opsikion*);[89]

Asia: with Karia (691–3), with Chios and Lesbos (690/1), with Karia and Lykia (695–7, 713–15), with Karia, the Islands and Hellespontos (721/2), with Karia, Lykia, Rhodes, and the Chersonnese (694/6), and by itself (732/3, 755/6 or 770/1).[90]

Generalising from this material is, of course, hazardous in the extreme, since a single new seal may alter the picture. But certain constellations are fairly constant: Galatia usually stands alone, as do the Armenian provinces, Helenopontos, Honorias (on occasion with Paphlagonia), Isauria (but on one occasion with Lykaonia), and Cilicia.[91] The provinces of Armenia are

[85] *ZV* 177; 166; 172. [86] *ZV* 166; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 182 no. 16; *ZV* 225a and b.

[87] Lihačev, *Pečati*, 170 no. 7; *ZV* 195; 248.

[88] Lihačev, *Pečati*, 164–5 no. 2; *ZV* 235; 243; 248.

[89] Lihačev, *Pečati*, 182 no. 17; 183 no. 18; *ZV* 206; 190; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 170 no. 7; *ZV* 226.

[90] *ZV* 176; 168; Regling, *Siegel*, 97 no. 1; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 178 no. 8; 168 no. 6/5; *ZV* 189 (the identity of the Chersonnesos mentioned is not certain); *ZV* 246; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 203.

[91] Galatia: *ZV* 136; 139; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 185 no. 22; 205–6 no. 2; Armenia IV: *ZV* 155; 191; 219; Helenopontos: *ZV* 193; 141; 156; 2762; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 183–4 no. 19 (but see Cheynet 2001, no. 36, for Helenopontos and Armenia II, dated 688/9); Honorias: *ZV* 152 (*DOSeals* IV, 6.2); 153; 180 (*DOSeals* IV, 6.1: Paphlagonia and Honorias, dated 692/3); cf. Lihačev, *Pečati*, 165–6 no. 3 (for Honorias, Paphlagonia, the Pontic coast, and Trebizond, dated 720–41); and V. Šandrovskaya, 'Die Funde der byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Sudak', in *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 3, ed. N. Oikononomidès (Washington DC 1993) 85–98, at 86 (no. M-12458);

Map 3. Provinces associated on lead seals with general *kommerkiarioi* and their warehouses, *c.* 660–732

on one known seal grouped together, otherwise they are generally under separate officials.[92] This pattern further emphasises the irregular or *ad hoc* nature of the activities with which the *kommerkiarioi* seem to have dealt, and increases the likelihood that their business must have been connected with state requirements of a non-yearly character, which might vary both geographically from year to year, as well as in nature, quantity, and function. It also has consequences for our understanding of the

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88–9 (no, M-12457), and cf. *ZV* I, 1, p. 158, table 13; Isauria: *ZV* 154; 158; 2763; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 176 no. 5; Oikonomidès 1993a, 181, no. 2053; 199, no. 114; 204, no. 492; Cilicia: *ZV* 212; 159; 149; with I, 1, 149 n.; Lihačev, *Pečati*, 179–80 no. 10; 180 no. 11. See also the detailed lists in Brandes 2002, App. X (601–10); Cheynet, *Spink*, nos. 12, 13; Stepanova 2003, no. 6 ('the imperial *kommerkia* . . . as far as Polemonion'); *SBS* 8, 161, nos. 2 and 3.

[92] Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 147, seal of Peter, *apo hypaton* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the Armenias (probable, although not definite, reading), dated indictionally to 675/6. For other dated seals of separate provinces of Armenia see Brandes 2002, nos. 66, 77, 80a, 131, 171; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, nos. 148, 149 with commentary.

extent of the original areas allotted to the field armies withdrawn into Anatolia.[93]

The implications of these considerations seem clear: the *kommerkiar-ioi* and their *apothekai* are most unlikely to be associated with the regular fiscal demands and taxation of the state, which required at least in principle an annual and above all regular collection, redistribution, and – certainly if much of the tax was collected in the form of perishable produce – consumption of the produce collected. Regular fiscal demands and assessments would also promote fixed or at least reasonably predictable areas of collection and allocation, which these groupings again cannot be said to reflect.[94] The appearance of the various fiscal *dioiketai* implies in any case that regular taxes remained their responsibility. This does not exclude the possibility that the *kommerkiarioi* could at times co-ordinate the collection and distribution of fiscal demands in kind, such as grain and livestock, when the context required it – a military expedition, for example, or supplies required for a particular purpose (provisioning Constantinople, for example). Similarly, if silk production and distribution, either through a market mechanism or state exploitation, were the focus for these activities, we should surely expect a greater degree of regularity, repetition, and continuity, reflecting the main silk-producing regions and their markets. But this is hardly the case. On the contrary, the flexibility, the high degree of irregularity, the occasional concentration of time and place followed by a refocusing elsewhere, which is obviously represented here, fits very well with the variable requirements of different types of state activity involving the military, whether plans made for defensive or offensive campaigns, or the *ad hoc* response to an unexpected (or unexpectedly large) hostile invasion. Of course, the pattern of seals is highly inflected by collection, loss, and destruction; nevertheless some generalisations may be made. In particular, it is notable that the great majority of seals of *kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai* are clearly related to internal administrative activities, not with the traffic of goods between the empire and its neighbours.

The interpretation offered here by no means excludes the collection, movement or redistribution of commodities such as silks from the (very limited) areas of production to and through the (more numerous) points of exit or export; nor does it deny the importance of silk in the issue of largesses (although the concrete evidence for this is mostly from the later eighth and

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[93] Haldon 1997a, 216–20; Hendy 1985, 623ff. See also the illustrative list in Brandes 2002, App. IX (599–600).

[94] As suggested, for example, by Dunn 1993, 9; Brandes 2002, 322f.

ninth century and after).[95] Indeed, the association on lead seals probably from 713/714 and continuously from 749/50 of *genikos kommerkiarios* and *archon tou blattiou* shows that the department of the general *logothesion* treated the activities of the *kommerkiarioi* and the production of silk at Constantinople as compatible, although it must also be said that this is a relatively late phenomenon.[96] It is significant that the general *kommerkiarioi* associated with the *apotheke* of Constantinople on a number of seals for the years 688/9 until 727/8 never combine their office with that of *archon tou blattiou* (although they do hold both offices at the same time and issue separate seals to denote the different functions), suggesting that the *apothekai* on the one hand and the silk-producing workshops on the other should not automatically be connected.[97] Given the distribution of the *apothekai* across provinces of the empire, most of which were climatically not suitable for the maintenance of silk production, and at times and in contexts in which trade and commerce were most unlikely to have flourished or have played a significant role in the state's economic and fiscal concerns, the notion that the *kommerkiarioi* and the *apothekai* represent a form of fiscal crisis management becomes much more probable. This is particularly clear where high-ranking state officials combined the position of *genikos kommerkiarios* with their post: thus in the period 659–68 a certain Stephen was *apo hypaton, patrikios, stratiotikos logothetes*, and *genikos kommerkiarios* of an unknown province or group of provinces. This seal dates from the early phase of this development, and suggests the close connection between the *apothekai* and the military requirements of the state at this time.[98] There are several more seals of officials who combined the post of *genikos kommerkiarios* with that of general logothete: suggestive not necessarily of the fact that *kommerkiarioi* were involved with fiscal administrative affairs, but with the fact that the extraction, movement, and redistribution of agrarian resources – tax, whether usual and annual, or of an extraordinary variety (military supplies for a campaign, for example) – had to be co-ordinated between both areas of the state's fiscal administration. It should be emphasised at this point that there is no evidence to support the notion that these officials were any more than regularly appointed state

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[95] See Oikonoimidès 1986a, 34–8, 47–9, and Haldon, *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, (C) 225ff., 289ff., 501ff., etc.

[96] It is first observable on a seal dated 713/14: *ZV* 215; see also *ZV* 267 (749/50), 268 (755/6 or 770/1), 272 (776/80), 275 (785/6).

[97] *ZV* I, 1, table 21 (170); see the discussion in Brandes 2002, 394–406; and App. VIIIb (598).

[98] *ZV* 144. See below for seals of officials who held the posts of *genikos logothetes* and *genikos kommerkiarios*.

officers and members of the bureau of the general logothete.[99] But we may conclude with some reason that the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* of the period from *c.* 640 to the early 730s were centrally appointed fiscal officials of high rank and status, responsible for a range of activities associated with the collection and distribution of resources, managed from Constantinople on the same principles as the older praetorian prefecture of the east had managed its resources and the supplying of the field armies and *limitanei.* Provisioning military campaign forces, supplying the city of Constantinople, and controlling the movement of precious and non-precious commodities within as well as into and out of the empire, all appear to have come under their auspices. They were, in effect, the financial crisis-managers of the period.

The imperial *kommerkia* and *kommerkiarioi* in the eighth and ninth centuries

These organisational arrangements appear to have experienced an important administrative change in or just before the year 730/1 (significantly, the penultimate year of an indictional cycle): henceforth, the great majority of seals no longer bear the name of one or more *kommerkiarioi*; instead, they are ascribed to the *basilika kommerkia* of a province or group of provinces (or military command).[100] This change appears to coincide with or follow on from other fiscal measures taken by Leo III in Italy (and possibly elsewhere – the eastern sources are silent) in the 720s, with the appearance of

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[99] For the examples of the general logothete himself holding the post of *genikos kommerkiarios*: see *ZV* I, 1, 143; and nos. 195, 197, 203–4, 232–7, dating to the years from 696/697 to 727/728. The question of whether or not *kommerkiarioi* were tax- or contract-farmers was first raised by Nesbitt 1977, 111–21, and followed by Hendy 1985, 26, and Haldon 1997a, 240 (tentatively), and more definitely by Oikonomidès 1986a, 35, 43. It is based on the fact that (a) many seals bear the name of more than one *kommerkiarios* (suggesting a syndicate of contractors) and (b) the same officials are often found in consecutive years dealing with different regions. But this is obviously very circumstantial. That the *kommerkiarioi* were supervised by the general logothete during the seventh and eighth centuries is a reasonable assumption based on the fact that they had been under the *sacrae largitiones*, a department which had been subsumed into the prefecture during the sixth and early seventh century (see Haldon 1997a, 187–90); that they are in the general *logothesion* by 899 (see *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 113.33); and that – as noted – the *genikos logothetes* could also be a *genikos kommerkiarios*. Brandes 2002, 305f., has argued that the very use of the epithet *genikos* is an indication of this relationship. In view of the existence of seals of such officials as a *genikos logothetes* of the *apotheke* ... of Constantinople' (*ZV* 220a) for 715–17, this is not improbable.

[100] See *ZV* I, 1, table 33 and comments; discussion in Oikonomidès 1986a, 41–2; and Brandes 2002, App. VII (594–5).

fiscal *dioiketai* of military commands and regional provincial groupings, all of which seem to reflect wider fiscal administrative changes which were continued to the end of the reign in 740/1 (introduction of the *dikeraton*, for example).[101] The latest known seal to bear the term *apotheke* is dated to the year 728/9, for a certain Theophanes, who was *patrikios, basilikos protospatharios, genikos logothetes,* and *kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of Bithynia, *Salutaria, and Pakatiane,* an official for whom other seals exist, and whose activities have been connected with the revolt of the Helladic army on the one hand, and the presence of Arab forces in Bithynia in 727/8 and the siege of Nicaea, on the other.[102]

The exact nature of the change is impossible to determine, given the lack of evidence. It seems to have involved a gradual reduction in the importance of individual *kommerkiarioi*, however: instead of seals of a limited number of high-ranking *genikoi kommerkiarioi* associated with *apothekai* and often holding a series of consecutive appointments, there are from the 730s instead a number of seals of named *kommerkiarioi* who vary in rank, with no indictional dating and no imperial portrait, and who are associated with no specific region and with no *apotheke*. The term *basilika kommerkia* appears occasionally before this time – as in some seals of the mid-690s, for example – and is thus not entirely new.[103] From the 730s,

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[101] Theoph., 410, 412 (Mango and Scott 1997, 568, 572); Rochow 1991, 132; Dölger, *Reg.*, no. 300; and Chapter 2. Seals of the imperial officials involved demonstrate the change in the administration: see, for example, the seal of George, *hypatos, basilikos protospatharios, dioiketes,* and *rhaiktor* of Calabria (dated *c.* 750–800): *DOSeals* I, comm. to 4.10; *ZV* 1477 (and see *PBE* I, Georgios 199; *PmbZ*, no. 2187); 2635. A census was carried out; and imperial fiscal officials replaced papally appointed *rectores*. Taxes were increased (perhaps, as Guillou 1980, 74ff., suggests, back to the levels before the reduction ordered by Constantine IV in 681. See Haldon 1997a, 148 and n. 67). On the *dikeraton*, see below. That the fiscal administration took account of particular functional or occupational groups is demonstrated by the existence of an early eighth-century seal of Theodore, *silentiarios kai dioiketes* of the *Gotthograikoi*: Cheynet, Bulgurlu and Gökyildirim 2007, no. 232. See Haldon 2005, 132.

[102] Lihačev, *Pečati*, 164–5, no. 2. Cf. *ZV* I, 1, table 16 (161); and Hendy 1985, 660, n. 469. See also the discussion and analysis in Brandes 2002, 365–94.

[103] See *ZV* I, 1, 138 and no. 225 for the last *genikos komm.* and *archon tou blattiou*. The disappearance of this office is to be connected with the fire which swept through the imperial workshops in 792/3, and seems to have produced a restructuring of the departments affected: see Theoph., 469.2–4 (Mango and Scott 1997, 644) and Rochow 1991, 259; Berger 1988, 588ff.; Oikonomidès 1986a, 50–1. For simple *kommerkiarioi*, see, e.g. *ZV* 968, 1811 (of Petros and of Konstantinos, both *hypatos and genikos kommerkiarios*), 1862 (Eirenaios, *diakon, archon tou blattiou, kommerkiarios* of Abydos), 1599 (Sergios, *kommerkiarios* of Nikomedeia), 2182 (of ?Michael, *genikos kommerkiarios*), 2264 (of Niketas, *basilikos silentiarios, archon tou blattiou* and *genikos kommerkiarios*), 2635A (anon., with the same titles as 2264), all from the eighth century. For the earlier seals of the *basilika kommerkia*, see Brandes 2002, 341, and App. I, nos. 132, 134, 136.

however, the seals of the *basilika kommerkia* carried both an indictional date and the imperial portrait. They continue to be issued until the 830s – the last known seal with an imperial portrait and an indiction is dated to 832/3.[104] Some seals with no portrait but with an indiction date to the years up to 840/1 at the latest.[105] At the same time, seals of general or imperial *kommerkiarioi* attached to specific commands or, more usually, specific ports or entrepôts, are produced, a connection which underlines the association of such officials with trade and exchange activities with lands outside the empire.[106] From the later eighth century, there is sound evidence for the levying of a duty on trade, referred to as the *kommerkion*, and there is no doubt that *kommerkiarioi* were associated with its collection.[107] The single exception to this development is represented by a group of seals on which the position of *archon tou blattiou* is combined with that of *genikos kommerkiarios* or *kommerkiarios*. These continue through from the later seventh to the later eighth century. But they appear to reflect a specific position in respect of the general supervision of the imperial silk weaving workshops and storehouse at Constantinople, and they cease after the year 786.[108]

An important feature of the seals of the imperial *kommerkia* is that there is a clear reduction in the coverage of their activities in comparison with those of the earlier *kommerkiarioi*: in Anatolia they are restricted almost entirely to the three commands of *Thrakesion, Opsikion,* and *Anatolikon,* and limited areas of the *Armeniakon,* other regions being entirely unmentioned.[109] This suggests a significant shift in their focus of attention, and implies also that

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[104] *ZV* 285, for the *basilika kommerkia* at Debeltos.   [105] See Oikonomidès 1986a, 41–2.

[106] Oikonomidès 1986a, 48–9; cf., for example, the seals of *kommerkiarioi* of a variety of ports or frontier regions through which merchants and traders passed: *DOSeals* IV, 23.1 (Amaseia); 32. 15ff. for Chaldia (which included Trebizond); seals of *kommerkiarioi* attached to Cherson in the period *c.* 830–70, for example, bear no titles at all: see Sokolova 1993, nos. 17–18 and further references. For other seals for specific ports or entrepôts for the period from the later eighth or ninth century onwards (e.g. Abydos, Debeltos, Dekapolis, Thessaloniki, Nicaea, Christoupolis etc.), see the index in Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel,* or indeed any of the other major catalogues.

[107] See Theoph., 469–70 (Mango and Scott 1997, 645) (Constantine VI reduces the *kommerkion* of 100 lbs in gold levied on the fair at Ephesos); 475 (Mango and Scott 1997, 653) (Eirene reduces the *kommerkia* levied at Abydos and Hieron); 487 (Mango and Scott 1997, 668) (Nikephoros I offers high-interest loans to the Constantinopolitan shipowners while still levying the 'customary *komerkia*').

[108] See *ZV* 267, 269; 275; and *ibid.,* I, 1, table 36 (203–5); Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals,* 50f. and 1986a, 51ff.

[109] Evidence summarised by Oikonomidès 1986a, 44, and maps 3 and 4. See *ZV* table 34 (192–7); Brandes 2002, 384–8; Cheynet 1998, nos. 15, 16.

the activities they had formerly carried out in these other regions – the southern and eastern districts of Asia Minor especially – were henceforth to be carried out by other officials (or not at all). And at the same time the western (i.e. non-Anatolian) regions of the empire begin to preponderate: of some 59 seals of imperial *kommerkia* for the period *c.* 730 to the 820s, 39 relate to this institution in Hellas, Thrace (with Macedonia after 820), and the towns of Mesembria, Thessaloniki, Debeltos, and Adrianople. From the reign of Leo IV this tendency becomes even more marked.[110] This is again important in relation to the creation of the first *themata*.

The establishment of *basilika kommerkia* in certain provinces of the empire, and the increasing association of those provinces with the military circumscription to which they belonged, is suggestive of the acquisition by the districts within which the armies had come to be permanently based of a clear geographical and administrative identity.[111] It is probably not a coincidence that, with one notable exception, the first seals for specific commands occur at about the same time as the first appearance of the *basilika kommerkia*: for the provinces of the *Anatolikoi* in 734/5; for the *strategis* of Hellas in 738/9; for the *strategis* of the *Thrakesioi* in 741/2; for the provinces of the imperial God-protected *Opsikion* in 745/6; and (the territorial aspect can reasonably be taken for granted at this stage) for Thrace (and Mesembria) in the years 730–42.[112] The only, and early, exception is the *Armeniakon* district, a seal for 717–18 for the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* of the *apotheke* of Koloneia and all the provinces of the *Armeniakoi* suggesting that perhaps the geographical extent of the regions over which this army

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[110] See the comments and analysis of Zacos and Veglery, *ZV* I, 1, 138. For Hellas: Lihačev, *Pečati*, 197, nos. 5 (for 736/7), 6 (730–41); *ZV* 254 (for 738/9), 266 (for 748/9); for Thrace: *ZV* 258, 259 (with Mesembria) (for 730–41), 270 (with Hexamilion) (for 751–75), 274 (for 785/6), 276 (for 787/8), 279 (for 800/1), 280 (for 801/2); Lihačev, *Pečati*, 201 (for 802/3), Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 55, no. 46 (with Macedonia) (for 831/2); *ZV* 281 (for 810/11), 282 (with Macedonia) (for 820/1); for Mesembria: *ZV* 244 (for 731/2), 247 (for 732/3), 251 (for 736/7), 265 (for 747/8); Lihačev, *Pečati*, 200, no. 13 (for 735/6); Kislinger and Seibt 1998, 13 (Syracuse, no. 87740) (for 736/7, or 738/9); Ebersolt, *Musées impériales Ottomanes*, no. 334 (for 751–75); for Thessaloniki: *ZV* 252 (for 737/8), 255 (for 738/9), 256 (for 740/1), 262 (for 742/3), 264 (for 746/7); Oikonomidès, *Dated lead seals*, 49, no. 38 (for 770/1); Lihačev, *Pečati*, 202, no. 1 (755/6 or 770/1), *ibid.*, no. 2 (for 773/4), *ZV* 271 (for 778/9); for Debeltos: *ZV* 285 (for 832/3); for Adrianople: *ZV* 283 (for 822/3), 2103 (for 838/9). For all these centres, see *DOSeals* I, chaps. IV, VI, VIII; and the detailed discussion in Curta 2004.

[111] See the evidence cited in Haldon 1997a, 198 and n. 98 (for 717/18).

[112] *Anatolikon*: *ZV* 245 (see *ZV* I, 3, 1955 and I, 1, table 34 [192]); Hellas: *ZV* 254 (and see table 24, no. 2); *Thrakesion*: *ZV* 261; *Opsikion*: *ZV* 263 (and before the fragmentation of the *thema* into *Opsikion, Optimaton*, and *Boukellarion*: see Haldon 1984, 209ff). The province also loses its epithet '*theophylaktos*' after the reforms of Constantine V: see Haldon 1984, 485–7, nn. 515–24, and below 741–3; Thrace: *ZV* 258, 259.

was based became fixed at a relatively early stage.[113] To refer to a group
of provinces as of a particular command must mean that the latter had
by the time of the reference a known geographical identity. But again, we
emphasise that this by no means implies any independent administrative
existence.

This reinforces in turn the impression that by the 730s/40s, but not
much before in the majority of cases, the formerly *ad hoc* nature of the
grouping together of provinces under one or more *kommerkiarioi* for a
limited and chronologically specific purpose – a particular set of events –
was being replaced by a more permanent arrangement by army-groups or
commands, whereby groups of provinces came to be permanently associ-
ated and were drawn upon as needs required: the stabilisation of the system
of producing, distributing, and issuing those products or provisions for
which the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* had hitherto had a general supervisory
authority. The impression is that the centrally directed supervision of one
or more *apothekai* was no longer necessary; that the totality of activities
with which the *kommerkiarioi* and their *apothekai* in the provinces had
been connected was now summed up in the regional *basilika kommerkia* (a
term which appears to include both the activities and the physical establish-
ments involved), although directed of course from the general *logothesion*
in Constantinople; and that this institution was now operated for a fixed
group of provinces, identified by the name of a military command: the
Anatolikoi, the *Opsikion*, the *Thrakesioi* and so forth (note the use of the
term *strategis* or *strategia*, not *thema*: this is a crucial point, which we will
discuss below in further detail). This is further underlined by the fact that
the last known grouping of provinces under the *basilika kommerkia* which
transgresses, so to speak, the demarcation between military circumscrip-
tions, is the seal of 733/4 for the *kommerkia* of Bithynia, Phrygia Salutaria,
Phrygia Pakatiane, and Lydia, provinces which belong to the *Thrakesion*,
Opsikion and *Anatolikon* districts.[114] This may be an exception, or it much
more likely reveals the still flexible boundaries between the areas allocated
to, and the requirements for supplying or equipping military units from,
different divisions at a given moment.[115]

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[113] *ZV* 222a (*DOSeals* IV, 22. 27), and see Seibt, in *BS* 36 (1975) 209, for redating supposedly
early seals of this region to the eighth century. For another seal, see Oikonomidès 1993a, 179,
no. 1766.

[114] See above, and *ZV* 248.

[115] Arab expeditionary forces raided western Asia Minor in 733 and 735 and 'Asia', i.e. Asia Minor
(unspecified, but probably involving the usual double column directed towards the eastern
and western Anatolian provinces), in 734: see Lilie 1976, 149–50; Rochow 1991, 133f.
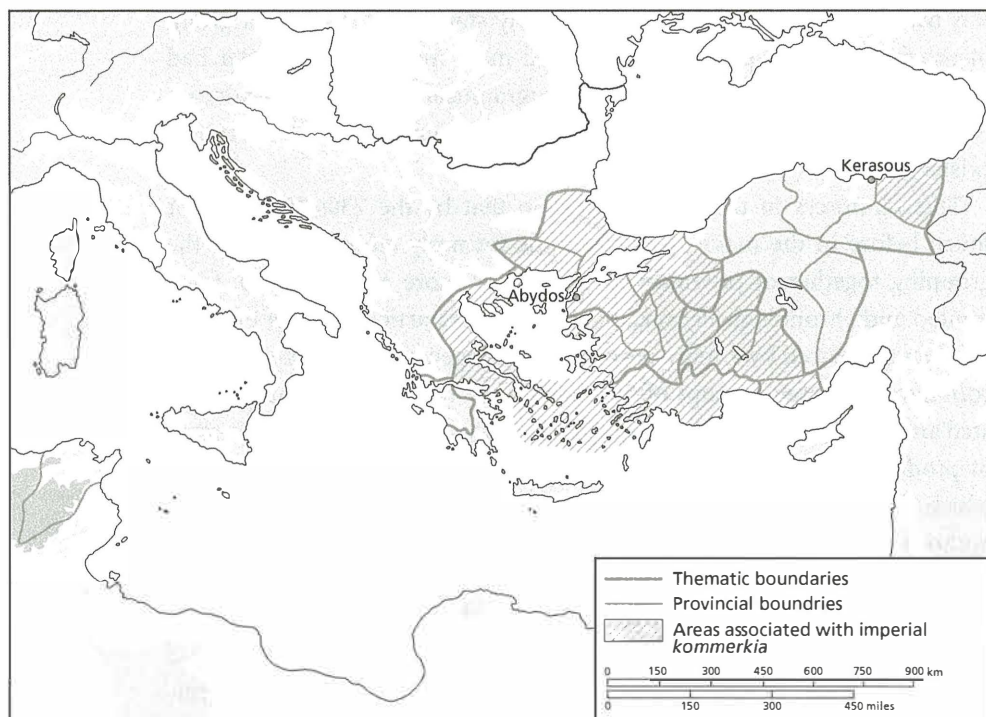
Map 4. Provinces/ports associated with imperial *kommerkia* from *c.* 730

Whatever the answer to this particular 'overlap', the coincidence of sig-illographically identifiable military commands with both the appearance of the imperial *kommerkia* and with the cessation of seals of multiple provincial *apothekai* is important. Significantly, it also follows, at least as far as the dating suggested for the relevant seals is concerned, the change in fiscal administration: from the appointment of general supervisors (*dioiketai*) of all the provinces of the eastern prefecture, to specifically regional supervisors whose remits were coterminous with military commands, a change which seems to have been completed by the middle of the reign of Leo III. Significantly, and in the ninth century, a number of these officials also held the position of *kommerkiarios*.[116]

We will return to the implications of this for provincial fiscal and military administration below, but it must be connected with a whole range of changes in the first thirty or so years of the eighth century, including the creation of fiscal structures which had evolved sufficiently by the middle of the reign of Leo III to cope efficiently and effectively with the demands of both

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[116] See Dunn 1993, 10 and n. 26.

the state's military requirements as well as with any other redistribution of resources with which it may have been required to deal. If our interpretation thus far is plausible, it underlines the role of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* from the late 640s and 650s as crisis managers in the context of the Arab assault on the empire's Anatolian provinces.

As has been shown, seals of *genikoi kommerkiarioi* of *apothekai* do not occur after 730,[117] while seals of *kommerkiarioi* and of some of the *basilika kommerkia* appear increasingly to be associated with specific locations at which the import or export of goods could be supervised – Mesembria, Thessaloniki, Kerasous, and so forth.[118] This includes also seals for specific provinces within military commands (such as Asia, for example, which appears on a seal of the *basilika kommerkia* in the second half of the eighth century[119]). This tendency contrasts very clearly with the strongly internal accentuation of the activities of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* and the associated provincial *apothekai* in the period from the 650s to 730s. The later *kommerkiarioi*, usually of lower rank than those of the period *c.* 650–730, are closely associated with ports such as Abydos and Thessaloniki, and with regions such as Chaldia, the Peloponnese, and Cherson, in other words, with points of exit or entry for commerce, whether in kind or involving money transactions. The connection with the levying of a duty on market exchange – the *kommerkion* – has already been noted.[120]

Here it is worth reflecting again on the general context for the appearance of the *apothekai*, the *genikoi kommerkiarioi*, and then the *basilika kommerkia*, and the possible structural role we would attribute to them. Four points can be emphasised. In the first place, while there is no need to doubt the possibility of an exchange-related element at liminal points around the empire's territory, it has been remarked that the transfer of geographical emphasis within this system also parallels an increased involvement and interest on the part of the imperial government, evidenced in the literary sources, and particularly from the reign of Constantine V, in its military as well as other dealings with its Balkan provinces and neighbours.[121]

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[117] There are isolated cases of officials with the title/function of *genikos kommerkiarios* from the later period, although they are not associated with an *apotheke*, and they presumably held a more general or supervisory authority. Cf., e.g., *DOSeals* IV, 32.17, a ninth-century seal of Eugenios, *genikos kommerkiarios* of Chaldia.

[118] Cf. the list in Brandes 2002, App. VII, and App. I, nos. 206–81; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, cf. selected seals in the series nos. 142–67.

[119] Lihačev, *Pečati*, 203, dated to either 755/6 or 770/1.

[120] See Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963, 182ff., 232–4; Oikonomidès 1986a, 48–9; 1991a; Sokolova 1993; and Dunn 1993, esp. 11–12.

[121] Hendy 1985, 654f.

Although Mesembria and then Mesembria with Thrace appear from the 690s,[122] and Hellas in 689/90, other towns or regions in the Balkans appear first in 712/13 (Thessaloniki), and then only from the 720s on more frequently.[123]

In the second place, the nature of the economic activities which might be assumed to accompany the presence of the *apothekai* or the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* needs to be taken into account, since the overall context for their appearance, their association with the needs of supplying or contributing towards the equipping of the armies, and the geographical or provincial locations with which they are associated, is – with the exception of Constantinople – that of a largely de-monetised economy. After the late 620s, the provincial mints were closed as part of a general restructuring of coin production. Constantinople was the main centre of all coin production within the eastern and Balkan regions of the empire and, as noted already, there appears to have been a deliberate fiscal administrative decision taken in the late 650s – possibly in 658 – to reduce the production of copper coins (probably for targeted distribution to specific centres only).[124] In other words, the *apothekai* and *genikoi kommerkiarioi* seem to appear most prominently in areas and at a time when the archaeological evidence suggests that low-denomination coins – copper – had an extremely restricted circulation, and where the state would have needed in consequence to extract resources, especially in order to support its military and administrative presence, in kind – agricultural produce, finished goods, raw materials etc. – rather than through the mechanism of coined money. As a general rule, therefore, we might expect that, in areas where the evidence suggests that coin was not available, or available only on a very restricted basis, *kommerkiarioi* or their equivalent might play a significant role in this respect, and until these conditions altered.

In addition to their original function as officials supervising certain aspects of state commerce, especially silk, expanded from the middle of the seventh century to take in also the appropriation and redistribution of a range of other state requirements in kind (including *matériel* for military purposes), *kommerkiarioi* would thus have continued to remain important wherever the exchange of goods and services not directly connected with

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[122] E.g. *ZV* I, 1, table 30 (182ff.), table 32 (188f.).

[123] Thessaloniki again in 723/4, Hellas in 736/7: see the discussion in Hendy 1985, 655, who has made the case for the military connection and the evidence for associated military activities in detail. For a more nuanced discussion which emphasises the commercial and customs-controlling elements, see Curta 2004.

[124] Hendy 1985, 417–20 (for the East); 420–4 (for the slightly different pattern in the West).

the regular taxation (where such existed) for the state was necessary. Thus in the Peloponnese, for example, it has been noted that seals of *kommerkiarioi* are particularly prominent for the first half of the ninth century, in other words, in the period following the effective political and administrative re-incorporation of that area (as a *thema*) from the time of Nikephoros I, but that they become less prominent as the province was integrated into the more monetised economic zone of the empire; similar considerations apply to the region/*thema* of Nikopolis in Epiros in the later years of the century, and the same point has been made for a number of other economically and geopolitically peripheral areas.[125]

Many of these provinces or places, for which *kommerkiarioi* are known for the period during and after their incorporation into the empire, may also have been centres of exchange or commerce, of course, and there is no reason to cast doubt on the exchange- and commerce-related functions of *kommerkiarioi* in such contexts. But it is worth underlining the possibility that they also operated as intermediaries between the state and the indigenous population, as well as between the state and non-Byzantine merchants or others who had items for exchange (local peasant populations, for example, from the non-Byzantine side of a frontier).

In the third place, it is surely no coincidence that the imperial *kommerkia* disappear at approximately the same time as the government begins to issue a reformed copper coinage once more on a massive scale, the latter being a phenomenon which has attracted the attention of both numismatists and economic historians for some time. During the reign of Michael II and Theophilos the weight of the *follis* was increased, while there is clear archaeological and numismatic evidence for a very considerable increase in the volume of low-denomination coinage in circulation from a number of Balkan sites, becoming especially apparent during the reign of Theophilos. There is also evidence from the coins themselves for the operation of a second, probably non-Constantinopolitan, mint (and probably at Thessaloniki), all of which strongly suggests that the government had responded to a perceived demand for this medium, which in turn suggests an improvement in the conditions and possibilities for market exchange. This demand, and the volume of coinage in circulation, increases through the ninth century, beginning clearly but on a limited basis at sites such as Corinth.[126] Of

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[125] See Dunn 1993, 11–14, for this point, and the relevant sigillographic evidence, argued also by Oikonomidès 1986a, 47–8 and 1991a; followed by Brandes 2002, 383f., and elaborated by Curta 2004.

[126] See Hendy 1985, 424f. and 503; and especially Metcalf 1973; 1967a; 1968; Harvey 1989, 85–7; Morrisson 1991a, 294f., 299–303.

course, differences between rural and urban contexts, and between regions –
in particular, between the southern Balkans and western and northern Ana-
tolia – make simplistic generalisations about 'improvement' in the econ-
omy of the empire as a whole dangerous.[127] Nevertheless, this evidence
has reasonably been interpreted as an indication of an increasing degree
of monetisation of transactions at this time. Since it has been pointed out
that *kommerkiarioi* more or less disappear from the sigillographic record
by the middle of the eleventh century, a time by which the transforma-
tion of taxation and state exactions in kind into demands in cash had
made considerable advances,[128] the conclusion that they had still derived
much of their importance from their role as intermediaries between state
and producing population until that time is difficult to ignore. They con-
tinue to be active as commercial agents and regulators, as the evidence of
eleventh- and twelfth-century texts demonstrates. But again, this aspect of
their activities at points of entry to and exit from imperial territory, is not in
doubt.[129]

But whereas these latter considerations apply to the *basilika kommerkia*
also, their restricted geographical incidence needs to be explained. Indeed,
the *basilika kommerkia* in Asia Minor, concentrated around Constantinople,
form in effect an extended hinterland, together with the district of Hellas
(linked to the capital by sea), up to the mid-750s; the *basilika kommerkia* in
Thrace/Macedonia – again forming the hinterland of the capital city – then
appear to replace these Anatolian establishments from *c.* 755/6 up until the
beginning of the ninth century. The *basilika kommerkia* of the *Anatolikon*
also make an occasional appearance, but can again be seen as part of the
extended hinterland of the capital.[130] This concentration can hardly reflect

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[127] See esp. Hendy 1985, 300–2.
[128] Requisitions or extraordinary demands in kind were always an element of the extraction of
resources within the empire, but the frequency and intensity of the state's demands were very
much determined by local economic conditions (including the supply of coinage), the
particular political context, including the military situation, and the nature and type of the
materials needed: see Dunn 1992, esp. 268ff., and Haldon 1994, 149–51. For the general
economic situation across the period, see Chapters 6 and 7.
[129] See the list drawn up by Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963, esp. nos. 129ff. (although as Dunn 1993,
15, points out, the dates attributed are for the most part unreliable, and the seals should be
dated to the period before *c.* 1050).
[130] Brandes 2002, App. VII, nos. 212 (730/1), 215 (734/5), 254 (758/9), 255 (760/1), 257 (773/4),
257a (776), with full details (including also seals of the provinces of the *Anatolikon* – Phrygia
Salutaria and Pakatiane, for example – see nos. 213, 218). In addition, the imperial *kommerkia*
of groups of provinces around Constantinople or within easy sailing of the capital also occur –
the Aegean isles, the provinces of the *Thrakesion* or of the *Opsikion*, sometimes named
specifically (Bithynia, Asia, Caria, Lydia, for example, as well as particular towns such as
Prousa, Herakleia) (Brandes 2002, App. VII, nos. 219, 220, 227, 229, 237, 240 etc.).

silk production alone (if at all), since Thrace and Macedonia were subject to Bulgar raids and attacks in the later eighth and ninth centuries on a scale which will certainly not have attracted silk production. It most probably reflects the needs of the state in respect of both supplying and defending the capital, in the context of some of the administrative reforms introduced by both Leo III and Constantine V. And, just as the seals of *kommerkiarioi* cluster in time and place (as with the case of the Peloponnese already mentioned), so it is noticeable that the last seals of imperial *kommerkia*, dating from the years 785 until the early 820s, are all for Thrace or Debeltos, an area of crucial concern at just this period in respect of both Byzantine efforts to reinforce the frontier with the Bulgars, and with Bulgarian attempts to challenge Byzantine control in the region.[131]

Finally, it is worth emphasising once more two important parallel developments. First, there is a clear coincidence in the development of empire-wide *dioiketai* (of all the provinces) with the rise of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* and the *apothekai*. But equally, there exists a coincidence between the disappearance of these two institutions and associated officials, and the appearance of provincially attached *dioiketai* (who might also be *kommerkiarioi*), on the one hand, and of the *basilika kommerkia* on the other. It is difficult not to assume that the two are connected, a point to which we will return below. And the *basilika kommerkia* seem to have been phased out at the same time as thematic *protonotarioi* begin to be attested sigillographically. This coincidence is again suggestive of a deliberate change, or the culmination of a process, and of a structural connection between the functions formerly carried out by the *kommerkia*, those later associated with the *protonotarioi*, and the actual establishment of *themata* in the early ninth century.

The role of the *dromos*

The important role of the state transport system, the *dromos*, during this period has long been recognised, although rarely discussed.[132] Until the reforms carried through by the praetorian prefect of the East, John of Cappadocia, in the first years of the reign of Justinian,[133] it had been organised in two divisions, regular (*platys*) and fast (*oxys*), responsible both for the

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[131] Listed in Brandes 2002, App. VII, 595.
[132] See, for example, Hendy 1985, 602–13, and more especially Dunn 1993, 16ff.
[133] Prok., HA xxx, 5–7; J. Lydos, *De* Mag., iii, 61. See Hendy 1985, 294–6 for an account of the changes and their effects.

rapid movement of messengers and imperial officials of all kinds around
the empire, but also for the transportation of goods in bulk, whether by
ox-cart or by mule and pack-horse.[134] Thereafter, and although the details
remain obscure, it appears to have been reduced largely to its 'fast' division:
later sources – from the tenth and eleventh centuries – make it clear that
a system of post-stations, with small teams of riding- and pack-animals,
continued to be maintained; and the distances between the different stages
seems also to have remained much the same as in the sixth century, in spite
of the cut-backs of John the Cappadocian.[135] In the later fifth and early
sixth century, the post had been maintained by state-funded purchases of
provisions (paid for in return for gold from landowners and, presumably,
other producers); the animals were supplied by the state ranches on which
they were bred and raised; and they were staffed by hereditarily inscribed
personnel exempted from extraordinary state taxes and corvées. The use
of the animals attached to the post-stations was strictly controlled by the
issue of state warrants (*evectiones/tractoriae*) issued either by the praeto-
rian prefects of the appropriate prefecture – who were responsible for the
administration of the system – or the office of the *magister officiorum* (who
was in charge of the state's messengers and couriers).[136]

By the eleventh century, the system was maintained in the same way
as military units on active service, by the attribution to them of a por-
tion of the land-tax assessment in kind from the locality they served.
Those producers who thus contributed were in turn inscribed as a special
category – *exkoussatoi tou dromou* – in the fiscal registers, freed from other
state burdens, just as were soldiers' properties.[137] The extent to which this
system had always operated is unclear: no doubt after the abolition of the
system of paying for provisions and maintenance described by Prokopios
and John Lydos in Justinian's reign, the state had to revert to a system of
extracting resources locally and in kind, and this is the system described
by Psellos in the eleventh century. It is essentially the same as the system
operated in the fourth and fifth centuries (before the system abolished by

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[134] For a detailed account, see Jones 1964, 830–4.

[135] The reduction to a single service is probable, but not certain: Hendy 1985, 608–10, with
sources and literature. It is quite likely that a much-reduced bulk transport system remained
in operation, although there is no explicit evidence for it from the middle Byzantine sources.
See, for example, *DOSeals* IV, 22.9 and 10, tenth-century seals of imperial *protospatharioi*, and
chartoularioi of the *oxys dromos* of the *Armeniakoi*.

[136] Details in Jones 1964, 831f.

[137] See Hendy 1985, 612, where the evidence is conveniently summarised; Lemerle 1979, 175–6;
Harvey 1989; and Oikonomidès 1996a, 119–20, 164ff.

John the Cappadocian was introduced)[138] and, just as with the supplying of the armies in kind which the state was compelled to adopt during the seventh century,[139] represents both an initial desire to make savings in state expenditure (John the Cappadocian), as well as a rational response to a crisis in the state's fiscal affairs.

It is clear from the middle Byzantine evidence that the *dromos* was a major element in the state's operations. Originally under the authority of the praetorian prefects, by the 760s, and probably by the middle of the seventh century, it was an independent department under its logothete, a high-ranking officer for whom numerous seals survive.[140] The operations of the *dromos* were closely associated with those of the *logothetes ton agelon* (logothete of the herds), the officer in charge of the imperial stud ranches, in particular the *metata* of Asia and Phrygia, and successor of the older *praepositus gregum*.[141] He was also associated with the supplying of horses and pack-animals to the army, although he can have provided only a small proportion of the total needed, and for the imperial household and stable service.[142]

Now it has also been pointed out that the department of the *dromos* also had *kommerkiarioi* attached to its service, attested by a number of lead seals from the ninth century on, and had provincial or regional sections, certainly from the later ninth century,[143] and that it may have played a role in the movement and redistribution of imported goods, as well as in the control of foreign merchants and, to some extent, of trading centres (since the *logothetes tou dromou* is well attested in his function of supervisor of foreigners within the empire).[144] Given the transport system available to and administered by the department of the *dromos*, a connection between it and officials dealing with the import and movement of goods should be expected. And while we may assume with a reasonable degree of confidence that the *dromos* continued to exist during the second half of the seventh and

[138] See *CTh* xi, 1.9.   [139] Haldon 1997a, 220–44; 1994, 132ff.

[140] See Laurent, *Corpus* II, 195–243; Oikonomidès 1972, 311–12; Hendy 1985, 608 and n. 238, who (probably rightly) disagrees with Laurent that the slow and fast postal services survived the seventh century, and that there were two fully fledged departments thus named, each with its own *logothetes*.

[141] Oikonomidès 1972, 338; Laurent, *Corpus* II, 289ff.; Bury 1911, 111.

[142] See *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, comm., 161 and 184. Animals belonging to the *metata* for the use of the military baggage-train or the imperial cortège were strictly excluded from private use and were branded or given an identifying marker to make sure they were not purloined by individuals in this way: *ibid.*, (C) 402–10 and commentary.

[143] Listed and discussed in Dunn 1993, 18–19; and see Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 134.

[144] See Oikonomidès 1972, 311.

first half of the eighth century, perhaps under the continued authority of the provincial/thematic governors, it is interesting that seals of its *logothetai* occur only from the second half of the eighth century, suggesting perhaps that, as with several other departments of the central administration and the army, this department too was re-structured, removed from the direct authority of the residual prefecture, and placed on a new footing, from about this time.[145] By the tenth century if not before it had a thematic or regional element, as seals of the *dromos* of different *themata* would suggest.[146]

In view of the coincidence between the first appearance of the logothete of the *dromos*, the apparent shrinkage of the areas associated with the *basilika kommerkia*, and their almost complete absence from Asia Minor from the 750s (and association with the European regions of Thrace and Macedonia), some specific changes in the ways in which the state moved goods around the empire can reasonably be assumed to have taken place, with the *dromos* replacing the imperial *kommerkia* in Asia Minor from the middle of the eighth century in whatever functions they had exercised in this respect. Of course, other departments of the late Roman regime had operated their own transport arrangements: both the *res privata* and the *sacrae largitiones* had services staffed by a transport corps of *bastagarii* who appear to have been voluntary contractors of military status; and the operations of the *largitiones* seem for the most part to have been absorbed by the praetorian prefecture during the seventh century.[147] But it is also clear that officials from several branches of the state's service could, with the appropriate warrants (and also without), make use of these different transport services according to need.[148] In addition, the army also maintained pack-animals and carts when on active service, supplied by compulsory purchase or through special levies, while provisions had to be delivered to the state warehouses and granaries by the provincials, an arrangement that certainly survived into the seventh century and probably beyond.[149] The imperial *armamenton* likewise maintained its own pack-animals in the sixth century, and probably thereafter, as bronze plaques from Cilicia and Africa, exempting such beasts from other state corvées, make clear; and there is no reason to suppose that this practice

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[145] See above, 667f.; and Haldon 1984, 209f., 222ff.

[146] Cf. *DOSeals* IV, 22.9–10; 40.4–5, for example, and discussion in Laurent, *Corpus* II, 195; Dunn 1993, 18ff.

[147] See *CJ* xi, 8.4 (*CTh.* x, 20.4); *CJ* xi, 8.8 (*CTh.* x, 20.11); *Not. Dig., Or.*, xiii, 19; xiv, 5 (and *Occ.*, xi, 78–85; xii, 28–9).

[148] See Jones 1964, 830, 833.

[149] For the military pack-animals and carts, see *CTh.*, vii, 1.9. For the transportation of supplies, see the detailed account in Jones 1964, 671ff.

was not continued into and beyond the seventh century.[150] Nevertheless, the continued existence of the *dromos* represents both a significant element in the continuity of practice which is so fundamental to Middle Byzantine institutions, and a fundamental but – for lack of more precise evidence – still unquantifiable element in the overall pattern of state fiscal and resource management in the period from the seventh through to the tenth century. It is to this overall pattern that we shall now return.

General tendencies in the evolution of the middle Byzantine fiscal system

We can now review the results of the foregoing in an attempt to draw together the various strands which have been examined so far, and to present a broader and more coherent picture of developments in the period from the seventh to the middle of the ninth century. The key elements to be considered, in chronological sequence, can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, in the 640s and 650s, three developments occurred over approximately the same period:

(1) the withdrawal to new defensible lines around the southern and eastern regions of Asia Minor of the field army of the *magister militum per Orientem*. Armenia remained within the orbit of Byzantine power, and we should assume that the forces of the *magister militum per Armeniam* remained very probably in their pre-conquest locations for a while;

(2) the appearance of *dioiketai* of all the provinces of the eastern prefecture (that is to say, of all those still under imperial control), suggesting a continuing prefectural supervision of taxation under new conditions; and

(3) the appearance of *genikoi kommerkiarioi* associated with *apothekai* for flexible groupings of provinces. Seals of the latter two groups of officers, and some textual references, provide the chief evidence.

Secondly, these developments are to be understood in the context of:

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[150] Cf. the late sixth-century bronze marker-plaques (*tabulae ansatae*) for animals of the *armamenton*, bearing the inscription: 'animal belonging to the sacred *armamenton*, by imperial decree not to be conscripted for *aggareia*' (i.e. by the army or the public post) (*Année épigraphique* 1992, no. 1945 = *SEG* 36, 1506; cf. D. Feissel, in *BCH* 116 [1992] 397; no. 1825 = *SEG* 9, 871).

(1) the somewhat earlier appearance of *kommerkiarioi* associated with sup-plying Constantinople with grain from either Sicily or North Africa (and the associated phenomenon of counter-marked bronze issued from Constantinople to establish a specific equivalence between bronze from the capital and from the mint on Sicily, which has been connected with the needs of the capital for grain);

(2) an apparent reduction in the quantity of copper coinage minted from 658 onwards; and

(3) Constans II's move to Sicily, from where he could both defend the grain supply of the capital and draw upon western fiscal resources

Thirdly, in the period *c.* 700–30, three further phenomena can be detected, affecting each of these three primary developments:

(1) the groups of provinces into which the field armies of the *magistri militum* had been located begin to be referred to, as distinct groups, by the name of the military division or command (*strategis*) located there (the first example, for the provinces of the *Armeniakoi*, is dated to the years 717/18);[151]

(2) the *dioiketai* of all the provinces of the eastern prefecture begin to be replaced in the sigillographic record by *dioiketai* of specific regions and single provinces, sometimes identified also as of a particular army command or *strategis*, and sometimes also holding the post of *kommerkiarios*;

(3) the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* and the *apotheke* are replaced by the *basilika kommerkia* in about 729–30 throughout the empire, but with a notable concentration in the regions adjacent to Constantinople.

Finally, during the period *c.* 800–40, these arrangements can be shown to have evolved one stage further:

(1) new officers referred to on their seals as *protonotarioi* and attached to each military province (now called a *thema*) have appeared (who, from later evidence, can reasonably be assumed to have been in charge of the fiscal administration, and thus of the thematic/provincial *dioiketai*);

(2) the *themata* more-or-less completely replace the older provinces as basic administrative units, and the term *thema* replaces that of *strategis* or command (on these changes, see below); and

(3) the *basilika kommerkia* disappear, a development which is accompa-nied not only by the appearance of thematic *protonotarioi*, but also

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[151] It is important to note that the term *thema* never appears on the seals.

by the beginnings of a process of re-monetisation of provincial urban economies and their rural hinterlands in at least some regions of the empire – to begin with, those in proximity to Constantinople.

The position of the prefectural, diocesan, and provincial representatives of the old praetorian prefecture which we have already examined, and the ways in which they fit into this pattern, may now be integrated into this picture. For although each of these developments was almost certainly closely related to others in the parallel sequences, it will be helpful for the moment to maintain the distinction between them to see just how the process evolved.

The first point to emphasise is that these developments were all intimately connected with the needs of the state in two major areas: to maintain, equip, and provision its armies; and to raise the resources necessary to do this, from the sources of wealth at its disposal, and in a constantly evolving economic environment. As part of this, it also had to maintain the administrative apparatus which was thereby required. On examination, three elements of this process seem to be represented, each of which can be followed through from its late Roman context. The key to the whole development lies in the appearance and known function of the thematic *protonotarioi*.

We know from the ninth-century evidence that these *protonotarioi* had three primary concerns: (1) a general supervision for the bureau of the *sakellion* over the business of the fiscal officials in each *thema* responsible to the *logothesion tou genikou*; (2) arranging for the provisioning and equipping of the thematic armies, liaising between the military, general, and special *logothesia*, a position for which they were, of course, ideally equipped, as representatives of the *sakellion* with oversight over the whole fiscal apparatus in each *thema*. This role is particularly apparent in respect of the administration of the *synone*, that portion of the state's tax – primarily the land-tax – demanded in kind. Finally, (3) they were responsible for the supplying of the armies with the equipment and mounts they required, achieved by means of state impositions and requisitions on craftsmen and others for this purpose.[152]

Until the appearance of the *protonotarioi* in these roles, however, the responsibility for these different functions had lain with three quite separate

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[152] See Haldon, *Const. Porph., Three treatises*, 167f. (to [B] 103ff.; 236 (to [C] 349f.); Haldon 1994, 128ff. Although the earliest evidence relating to the actual functions of *protonotarioi* comes from a tenth-century account using information from the reign of Basil I, this evidence is certainly reliable, and there is no reason to doubt that the structural position of *protonotarioi*, while it may have evolved somewhat during the course of the ninth century, had always been focused around these concerns.

groups of officials. On the one hand, the regular tax-collecting machinery of the state is reflected in the history of the general *dioiketai* of all the provinces, within the department of the *genikos logothetes*, from the middle of the seventh century until the early eighth century, and their successors the provincial or thematic *dioiketai*, similar officials with a more obviously provincial and regional brief and of lower or unspecified rank. Their assessors and fiscal record officials, the *anagrapheis, epoptai*, and *chartoularioi*, are all attested sigillographically from the early ninth century on for most of the *themata*, somewhat earlier in a very few cases, and in the style: (*Name), basilikos balnitor kai anagrapheus Opsikiou*, or *basilikos spatharios kai anagrapheus Peloponnesou*, or simply of (*Name), epoptes Asias*, side by side with the numerous seals of local *dioiketai*.[153] Their existence attests the continued functioning of a fiscal apparatus supervised initially by province, then by *thema*, and administered from Constantinople within the general *logothesion*, just as officials with very similar, and often the same, titles had operated under the auspices of the general bank of the praetorian prefecture until the early seventh century.

At the same time there existed a closely related set of parallel arrangements, originally represented by the *ad hoc* praetorian prefects sent out from the capital, designed to ensure the supplying and provisioning of the armies. As we have already seen, these prefectural officers were amalgamated at some stage, probably in the eighth century, with the (originally) diocesan *anthypatoi*, to be represented in the *Taktikon Uspenskij* as the proconsuls and prefects of the *themata*. On the basis of the system as it functioned in the sixth century, their role in the period from the seventh into the first half of the ninth century can be assumed to have consisted primarily in making sure (a) that sufficient provisions were supplied by the local population for the army's needs, from the portion of the land-tax assessed and collected in grain (referred to as the *embole* in Egypt and perhaps elsewhere) and through compulsory purchase (*synone*: although the two seem by the 680s to have become conflated, so that thenceforth the term *synone* referred

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[153] E.g. *ZV* 2095; Konstantopoulos, *Molybdoboulla*, 76. For a fairly full list of such officials and their seals, together with relevant secondary literature, see Winkelmann 1985, 119–35. Whereas the majority of officials have the name of the *thema* to which they are attached, this is rarely the case for the *dioiketai*, who continue to be named after the traditional provincial name (see Haldon 1997a, 197, and nn. for the development in the seals of *dioiketai*; also Winkelmann 1985, 134–5). There is some unclarity about the relationship between *anagrapheis* and *epoptai*, since the former are attested sigillographically, often with relatively high rank, but appear in none of the treatises on precedence, unlike the *epoptai*. See Winkelmann 1985, 119f.; and for a seal of Myron, *epoptes* of Asia, see Oikonomidès 1993a, 186 (no. 1485).

to that part of the land-tax collected or demanded in kind); and (b) that the resources extracted for this purpose were properly registered with the general *logothesion* (originally under the praetorian prefecture) so that they could be deducted, as appropriate, from the tax assessment for the following year, or compensation offered through compulsory purchase.[154]

Finally, and until the loss of many of the regions where they were to be found, and the disruption of the internal economy of the state as a result of the warfare of the 640s and afterwards, most of the weapons and related military equipment, uniforms and so forth had been supplied directly by imperial workshops (*fabricae*) or through requisitions in kind as part of the regular taxation. As we have also seen, it has been suggested that the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* replaced this system as a source of military equipment, acting as supervisors and contractors in the process of requisitioning or compulsory purchase of military equipment and weapons, and providing storehouses for its deposition until needed.

Now in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, thematic *protonotarioi* have not yet appeared, whereas thematic *eparchoi* and *anthypatoi* are still listed. By 899, the date of the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, the *eparchoi* and *anthypatoi* have vanished, and the *protonotarioi* are firmly attested. Since we know that the functions of the *protonotarioi* at thematic level included both a general supervision for the bureau of the *sakellion* over the business of the fiscal officials in each *thema* responsible to the *logothesion tou genikou*, and responsibility for the provision of military supplies through the *synone*; and since this latter was a role which we have surmised was carried out by the *anthypatoi kai eparchoi ton thematon*, it is a reasonable assumption that the former post superseded the latter, earlier function, in this respect, the title of *anthypatos* being awarded thereafter to many (but by no means all) of the thematic *strategoi* as a symbol of the fact that they were henceforth endowed also with the judicial authority formerly held by the diocesan, and later thematic, proconsuls.

By the same token, the appearance of *protonotarioi* on seals during the first half of the ninth century and the disappearance of the imperial *kommerkia* at about the same time might suggest that the former replaced the latter in their functions. This cannot, in consequence of the first supposition made above, have been connected with the regular taxation; nor again can it have been associated with the provisioning of the army with foodstuffs, in consequence of the same supposition. There remains only the third function

[154] For the details of this process, see Haldon 1994, 118–22; for fuller discussion, although not necessarily in agreement with this view, Brandes 2002, 106–7, and notes; 315f.

of *protonotarioi*, namely, the supply of military equipment, weapons, and related material, and – in regions adjacent – provisions for the city of Constantinople.

It is remarkable that we have no explicit evidence, for the period from the middle of the seventh century until the appearance of *protonotarioi*, and accounts of their functions in the reign of Basil I, for this aspect of the state's military administration. The only titles of officials explicitly connected with military equipment and production from the seventh until the tenth century are found on ninth-century seals of *archontes* of the *armamenton*, and references to the same officer in documents of *c.* 811–13 (842/3) and 899 testify to the important position he held. But this is a purely Constantinopolitan post.[155] Tenth-century evidence makes it clear that he controlled both storehouses for weapons and equipment as well as workshops in which weapons such as axe-heads, for example, were produced.[156] The same evidence also makes it clear that the bulk of production had to come from provincial sources, for which there is no evidence in the seventh to early tenth centuries.[157] Clearly such production was carried on, and by specialist craftsmen in some cases. Some evidence from the tenth century is suggestive of a degree of continuity of the provincial arms-producing establishments, since there appears at that time to have been such an establishment at Caesarea in Cappadocia, just as in the sixth century and before, although there is virtually no evidence for the intervening centuries.[158] That the amount of material required could be provided by 'domestic' production, with soldiers fabricating their own lances, spears, arrows, bows, and other weapons, quite apart from costly and technologically complex items such as mail and lamellar, is unlikely. Yet the bulk commissioning, production, and distribution of such materials was crucially important to the survival of the state.

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[155] See *ZV* 2491, for example, and the discussion at Haldon 1984, 320, and nn. 973–4; Dölger 1927, 35–9. He may be one of the *archontes ton ergodosion* attested by seals of the ninth century, and one of the *ergasteriarchai kai archontes* who appear on some seals of the seventh/eighth century: see Bury 1911, 100.

[156] *De Cer.*, 673.20–674.4; Haldon 2000b, 229.166–71.

[157] See the detailed discussion in Haldon 1984, 321ff. and sources.

[158] For provincial production, cf. the tombstone of a bowmaker, possibly from the seventh or eighth century: Grégoire, *Recueils*, no. 308 (= *CIG*, no. 9239); Haldon 1984, n. 980 (594). For a possible reference to an arms-factory in the tenth century at Caesarea in Cappadocia, see Cantarella 1926. After the Arabic conquests of the seventh century, only the towns of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Nikomedeia in Bithynia, Sardis in Lydia, Thessaloniki and, at times, Adrianople, which had all possessed arms factories, remained in Roman hands, and these all fell within areas for which seals of *kommerkiarioi* and/or *apothekai* exist.

Now the distribution of the activities of the *basilika kommerkia* seems to have been too restricted – in contrast to those of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* – to have had a connection with military supplies or equipment. On the other hand, the fiscal *dioiketai* of the provinces/*themata*, who are later found as subordinates of the *protonotarioi* (who were responsible for military equipment and weapons production in their provinces), might well have replaced the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* in this aspect of their duties as the situation of the state was stabilised during the reign of Leo III. Given the coincidence in the appearance of *dioiketai* firmly identified with provinces or towns, some of whom were also *kommerkiarioi*, and the demise of the *apothekai* and *genikoi kommerkiarioi*, this might seem a reasonable hypothesis.

Finally, given the functions of *protonotarioi* from adjacent regions in catering for the supply of the capital, the coincidence in their appearance and the demise of the *basilika kommerkia* might also be connected, although in what ways exactly remains unclear.

Provisional conclusions

We would thus see the following schema for the evolution of these aspects of the state's fiscal administration from the sixth to the middle of the ninth century: in the sixth century and well into the reign of Herakleios, *kommerkiarioi* represent in effect the older *comites commerciorum*, officials responsible for the export and commerce in silk within the empire, whose functions were associated in particular with major entrepôts.[159] During the early years of Constans II, certain high-ranking *kommerkiarioi* appear to have been given empire-wide responsibilities of uncertain scope, and from the mid-650s, they appear, singly or in groups of two and sometimes three, associated with one or several provinces on a yearly basis. This coincides from the early 660s with a dramatic reduction in the minting of bronze coins but the continuing need, we may reasonably assume, to facilitate the transfer of wealth in all forms from the producers to the state and its apparatus, especially the army. For the distribution of responsibilities of these *kommerkiarioi* is not compatible with silk commerce alone, and would appear to represent a much wider competence for other imperial administrative requirements, including liaising with fiscal officials for supplying the armies with *matériel*. There is, of course, no reason to doubt that some of them continued to be concerned with silk and/or other luxury goods throughout

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[159] This has been summarised by Oikonomidès 1986a, 34–5, but see also Brandes 2002, 238–63.

this period, a relationship which is made explicit between the early 750s and 780s in the linkage of *kommerkiarioi* with the *archontes tou blattiou*, the silk-weaving workshop at Constantinople, noted above. Central planning is quite evident in these developments.

The individual *kommerkiarioi* and their *apothekai* are replaced from the 730s, and in limited regions only, by *basilika kommerkia*, reflecting a rationalisation possibly connected with the needs of the capital, a change which is also paralleled by the clear emergence of military commands or *strategides* as geographical-administrative entities, and the regionalisation of the activities of fiscal *dioiketai*, henceforth in many cases identified with a specific command, who may have taken over the former functions of the *kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai* with respect to equipping the field armies (a function manifestly associated with the *protonotarioi* of the ninth century). *Kommerkiarioi* continue to be appointed, but are associated almost exclusively with ports or towns situated along the empire's borders, and can reasonably be assumed to be connected with trade and the import, export, and exchange of commodities of various sorts, and the levy of the associated duty, the *kommerkion*, which appears in the sources from 795. Imperial *kommerkia* in the same places must similarly have been so engaged, whatever their other duties.

From the 830s, however, imperial *kommerkia* disappear, a development which also follows on or coincides with (1) the appearance, first, of military commands and districts referred to as *themata*, and second of thematic *protonotarioi*, who may thus have also taken responsibility for supplying the capital; (2) (but somewhat earlier, from *c.* 809–13) the granting of the title *anthypatos* for the first time as an honorific to thematic commanders; and (3) the phasing out at about the same time of civil officials of the *themata* called *eparchoi kai anthypatoi*, successors of the former *ad hoc* prefects and diocesan governors whose positions had at some time in the (later) eighth century been amalgamated as the military command districts, or *strategides*, replaced the older provinces as the key administrative units in the empire. This development also coincides with a fairly rapid re-monetisation of the state economy, just as the rise in significance of the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* and their *apothekai* had coincided with a dramatic de-monetisation. The *kommerkiarioi* associated with particular ports inherited the commercial functions of the *kommerkia*, and we have surmised that the *protonotarioi* took over their other functions. The *basilika kommerkia* thus became effectively redundant as far as the state was concerned, and disappeared. Individual *kommerkiarioi* continued to be appointed to supervise frontier

trade and commerce, although their connection with the production and distribution of silk was severed, probably in the time of Eirene.[160]

All of these developments should be seen as reflecting a considerable degree of central state planning, reflecting in consequence a clear awareness of both financial and structural issues of resource allocation and distribution. The fact that there is limited evidence for a few *protonotarioi* before the 830s and 820s, or that they do not appear in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, reflects what we would see as the second stage of the changes which the *themata* represent, as the government recognised the need for a more localised fiscal supervision for each such district. What is significant, we would stress, is the coincidence of the key phases in quite different levels of the state's administrative structure, which lend to the interpretation offered here a coherence and dynamic which makes reasonable sense of the evidence taken as a whole.

Taxation and the assessment of resources

Agrarian production was the main source of the wealth of Byzantine society, and likewise constituted the main source of taxable revenue for the state. But effective means of assessing and extracting this wealth were essential, and the period with which we are concerned saw the establishment of what were, for their time, the most efficient tax-assessment arrangements in the western medieval world.

By the beginning of the eighth century a number of fundamental changes had been introduced into the late Roman system of land-tax assessment and collection, based upon the so-called *capitatio-iugatio* system. This had involved the regular fixing of a rate for each praetorian prefecture, reflecting the estimated requirements of the state for the period in question. The amount owed by each landowner and each producer was then calculated on the basis of a relationship between productive land and the labour-power/animals exploiting it. Although it had varied from province to province, the basic unit of assessment was the *iugum*, a notional unit of land, and the *caput*, a unit of manpower. Together these units constituted the basic unit of taxation. Land could only be taxed when it was cultivated (in reality or notionally), and so measures also evolved whereby

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[160] We are thus in agreement with Oikonomidès 1986a, as far as the general development of these institutions is concerned, differing primarily on the question of the extent and competence of the *kommerkiarioi*, *apothekai*, and *basilika kommerkia* in respect of other, more pressing, state requirements during the period of fiscal and political crisis from *c.* 640/50–730/40.

individuals and communities were collectively responsible for unoccupied adjacent land within their fiscal district, and the taxes which they owed (a procedure known as *adiectio sterilium*, or *epibole*). And although the operation of this system varied from region to region according to local tradition, measures of assessment and so forth, it was the basic method of raising revenue on land until the middle of the seventh century or slightly later.[161]

During the second half of the seventh century – the lack of evidence prevents any exact dating – some changes were introduced into these arrangements. The most important seems to have been the separation of the individual from the land, so that productive land was assessed on the basis of its output, and individuals by a flat rate head-tax. As in the preceding period, regular cadastral censuses or assessments were still required, of course, and although censuses and revisions to the registers had been carried out at intervals beforehand, evidence for a number of censuses in the second half of the seventh and first half of the eighth centuries suggests that the government was especially concerned to bring its tax registers up to date at this time – under Constans II between 662 and 668, under Constantine IV a partial census in the West in 681, under Leo III in the mid-720s similarly a census in the West. There were probably others about which the sources are silent. According to Theophanes the last census involved a registration of new-born male infants which, if accurately reported from his source, illustrates the way in which the new poll-tax was effected (since such a registration would not be necessary to raise the regular land-tax).[162] By the ninth century the poll- or head-tax was known as the *kapnikon*, or hearth-tax.[163] These changes seem already to have taken effect by the time of

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[161] See Haldon 1997a, 28–30, for a summary with literature.

[162] *LP* I, 344. 2–4 (cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 234); *LP* I, 366. 9–10 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 250); Theoph., 410 (Mango and Scott 1997, 568) (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 300). Cf. Cosentino 2006, 47–9.

[163] Indeed, this tax may well have been introduced under Constans II, as suggested in Haldon 1997a, 142–53; and Oikonomidès 1996a, 26–34. Speck 2002–3, 533, noted the possibility for the reign of Leo III that its first appearance may have been in the form of a poll-tax similar to the *jizya* imposed on non-Muslims in the Islamic territories (see also Oikonomidès 1987, 9). Zuckerman 2005, 81–4, has suggested that the term *diagrafa* (*seu* capita) at *LP*, 1, 344, employed to describe the afflictions imposed while in the West by the emperor Constans II on the provinces of Calabria, Sicily, Africa, and Sardinia, refers to a new poll-tax. The use of the term *capita* would seem to lend support to this, although there must remain some uncertainty about this identification. Whether this was copied from the Islamic administration, however, seems to us more questionable, albeit by no means impossible. The fact that *diagraphon* in post-conquest Egyptian papyri certainly refers to the poll-tax imposed on Christians, for example (see Zuckerman 2005, 83, with literature in n. 13), means only that Greek-speakers applied a known term to a new Islamic tax – indeed, one might ask what other word (in Greek) one might apply to a new tax levied in Islamic lands, apart from a generally available

Leo III – the reigns of both Constans II and Justinian II have been proposed as possible periods by which they had been effected – and reflect the need to adjust to the very difficult situation faced by the empire during the middle and later years of the seventh century; although the first concrete reference to the *kapnikon* does not occur until the reign of Nikephoros I.[164] The older collective responsibility for abandoned/uncultivated holdings continued to operate, however, at least according to the late seventh- or eighth-century *Farmer's Law* (*Nomos georgikos*), although this deals only with communities of peasant landholders and not larger estates.[165]

During the course of the eighth century several further modifications to the system were introduced. Under Constantine V, for example, the practice of demanding the basic land-tax in (gold) coin, rather than in produce, seems to have become more usual. Hitherto, and partly as a result of the difficult situation which followed the first wave of Islamic conquests and the withdrawal of the field armies into Asia Minor, it appears to have become usual for much of the land-tax to be collected in produce and consumed locally by the armies in each province. It continued to be the standard practice to collect a portion of the land-tax in produce, although only when required by the presence of soldiers (passing through on an expedition, for example).[166] With this exception, however, the produce represented

generic term given a new significance, such as *andrismos, diagraphon* or *kephalikon* (just as we find Theophanes reporting Leo III's imposition of *phorous kephalikous*, i.e the poll-tax, on the peasants of the papal patrimonial lands he wished to tax, in *c.* 726/7 or perhaps earlier [although placed by Theophanes in 731/2–3]: Theoph., 410; trans. Mango and Scott 1997, 568). On the new Islamic tax in Egypt, see Gascou 1983; Gonis 2003, 150; but with a divergent view in Papaconstantinou 2010. The term *diagraphon* can refer to a list or register (e.g. Maur., *Strat.*, i, 2.71) and by derivation any tax on occasion. In the context of the fiscal crisis in resources faced by the empire in the later 650s, it is just as likely that the east Roman version of the poll-tax, an element which anyway inhered within the traditional tax-assessment, was separated from the levy on land in order to boost income, in particular in view of the difficult situation in the east and the Balkans, and in respect of the movement of population and abandonment of land entailed in the constant warfare.

[164] See Theoph., 487 (Mango and Scott 1997, 668); Theoph. cont., 54; Oikonomidès 1996a, 30. Again we would take issue with Zuckerman 2005, 84, who argues that the exemption confirmed by Constantine IV for the church of Ravenna, which notes that no priest or cleric of any sort should be subject to a *censum* (in the meaning of tax or levy) (Agnellus, 115), refers to the new poll-tax specifically. *Censum* might just as easily refer to any other state imposed levy, exemption from which the emperor was reaffirming. Clergy had traditionally been exempted from extraordinary fiscal impositions, cf: *CTh.* XVI, 2. 1ff.

[165] See *Nomos georgikos*, cap. 14; and discussion in Chapter 7.

[166] Sources and discussion in Haldon 1994. Note also the interesting case alluded to in a letter of Ignatios the Deacon, where reference is made to the supplies, collected from the tenants of the church estates for which Ignatios is responsible, and stored in the estate warehouse (*oikonomeion*), and then transferred to the state *tameia* or storehouses, which were intended for the army. Ignatios, *Ep.* 1 and 2.

by the land-tax was henceforth converted first into gold through market exchange or directly to the army (and probably at fixed prices), as in the later Roman period. The *Chronography* of Theophanes describes the emperor Constantine V as a "new Midas", and both here and in the *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros, it is noted that the rural population was reduced to poverty because of the need to sell their produce at low prices in order to obtain coin with which to pay their taxes.[167] These difficulties may have been improved somewhat during the reign of Theophilos in particular, when an increase in issues of the base coinage of account may have eased this situation (see Chapter 6).

Under Eirene and then Nikephoros I a number of other changes were made which shed more light on the system as a whole. Eirene issued several orders benefiting particular categories of taxpayer, including abolishing the charge on families owing military service where no adult male was available. The method of determining taxable property by declaration, certified by oaths, appears to have been abolished, replaced shortly thereafter, during the reign of Nikephoros (who had been general *logothetes*, thus chief finance minister, under Eirene), by a system of registers of properties drawn up by imperial officials appointed specifically for that purpose, the costs of this innovation to be covered by a supplementary tax of two *keratia*, a flat-rate charge of 1/12 of a *nomisma* on each taxable unit.[168]

Further changes occurred at unspecified moments over the same period. At some point after the reign of Nikephoros, under whom the principle of *adiectio sterilium*, attested in the *Farmer's Law*, remained operative, tax-assessment and collection arrangements were revised to the system familiar from the later (tenth- or possibly twelfth-century) *Fiscal Treatise*, and the tenth-century land-legislation of the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty. By the older arrangements, the fiscal burdens due from deserted agricultural land were imposed upon the fiscal community to which the property in question belonged, and eventually, after a legally determined period, redistributed among that community. This principle was by the tenth century (and probably already by the time of Basil I) abandoned. Instead, deserted or uncultivated land was temporarily freed of its fiscal dues until the occupier had brought it back into cultivation, when taxes might once more be

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[167] Theoph., 443 (Mango and Scott 1997, 611); Nikeph., 160. Commentary in Brandes 2002, 380ff., with further sources.

[168] See Burgmann 1981, 28f.; Theoph., 486 (Mango and Scott 1997, 667f.). The supplementary tax was called the *chartiatikon*. A letter of Theodore of Stoudion refers to the fiscal alleviations introduced by Eirene: Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*, 7. 61ff. For discussion, and the evidence from the later seventh century also regarding the use of oaths, see Oikonomidès 1988b, 135–6.

demanded. If the property in question remained uncultivated, the fiscal authorities could declare it as 'clasmatic', detach it from its fiscal unit, and attribute it to a new owner. Such a system was, of course, easily managed where detailed fiscal registers were maintained, and may reflect the introduction at this time of the detailed type of register familiar from the archival records of the later tenth and eleventh centuries and afterwards.[169]

Nikephoros I did tighten up the system of assessment, however, revising the registers and bringing in a great deal more revenue. Partly this was achieved by the process of 'equalisation' or *hikanosis*, whereby landowners (monasteries in particular, if the chronicler Theophanes is to be believed) had the taxable value of their properties re-assessed, and land in excess of the taxable value of what they paid was confiscated and attributed to the fisc as state land, to be let out and taxed separately. He demanded arrears of the *kapnikon*, and insisted also on a re-organisation of those registered for military service who held landed property – the majority of the troops in the provincial armies – a move which we can now suggest was one element in the establishment of the first *themata*. All these changes and improvements were written off by the hostile contemporary witness Theophanes as nothing more than evil deeds, but it is clear that they in fact involved a substantial upgrading of the state's fiscal management, greatly to the advantage of the government and its resource-base.[170]

* * *

By the middle of the ninth century, therefore, the key elements of the middle Byzantine fiscal system were in place. The main taxes were the land-tax, assessed on quantity and productivity of the land, the fixed-rate hearth-tax, and a series of supplementary taxes. These included the *chartiatikon*, already mentioned, as well as the *dikeraton*, introduced by Leo III initially to pay for repairs to the walls of Constantinople, but turned by Nikephoros I, as we have seen, into a charge for administrative costs. In addition, the *hexaphollon*, known from later documents, may have been introduced in the eighth century, as a surcharge of 1/48 on taxable values of a certain level. Undoubtedly, taxes on pastureland, livestock, and other elements of rural production were also exacted, although details are forthcoming only from documents of the later ninth and tenth centuries and afterwards.[171]

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[169] For these changes, see Lemerle 1979; and for a hint that the new arrangements were operating by the time of Basil I, see Theoph. cont., 346–8.

[170] For a detailed analysis of the 'evil deeds', see Christophilopoulou 1960.

[171] The best detailed analysis of all these charges and the operations of the middle Byzantine fiscal system remains Dölger 1927. But see also the more recent discussion in Lemerle 1979 and the briefer treatment in Oikonomidès 1996a.

To what extent the changes outlined here can be fitted into the broader scheme of civil and fiscal administration is unclear. The appearance of *protonotarioi* during the first half of the ninth century may be connected with some aspects of the changes; the disappearance of the *basilika kommerkia*, and the massive increase in issue and circulation of the bronze coinage of account under Theophilos in particular may represent further nuances in tax-assessment and collection about which no source provides information. What is clear is that over the course of the eighth and early ninth centuries the east Roman state attained a degree of fiscal stability and efficiency which contributed considerably to the political and military potential that was realised thereafter.

The nature of provincial military administration:
origins and evolution

There are a series of problems connected with the ways in which we under-
stand the administration of what historians have generally come to call the
middle Byzantine *themata*. We shall deal in the following sections only with
issues pertaining to the general administrative capacities of provincial mil-
itary officers, and their military role. The evidence is for the most part not
new, but it urgently needs to be re-considered in the light of recent research.
It is generally admitted that the consolidation of what can legitimately, by
the ninth century, be referred to as a 'thematic' administrative organisation
was a very long drawn out process.[1] We will now suggest that the 'theme
system', if it can be referred to as such, really dates only from the early ninth
century, even if the structures and arrangements out of which it grew had
been evolving gradually since the middle of the seventh century.

There has been a strong tendency to view Byzantine administrative prac-
tices from a point of view too obviously determined by modern, predom-
inantly western, administrative-bureaucratic traditions and assumptions,
including modern ideas about efficiency, administrative order, and so on,
and at the same time there has been a degree of determinism insofar as
the pre-history of the 'themes' has been read as inevitably leading to their
appearance. Recent work has suggested that these ideas should be seriously
challenged,[2] since they have led to a somewhat artificial model of medieval
administrative procedure and a tendency to ignore or underestimate the
flexibility and multi-dimensional aspect of the ways in which Byzantine
state officials attained office or promotion, carried out their duties, and
exercised their authority, a tendency which has had the further result of
obscuring the ways in which power-relations were constructed and oper-
ated in the Byzantine world of the eighth and ninth centuries.

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[1] See Lilie 1984; and Haldon 1993a for a survey of the debate up to 1991.

[2] Until the 1990s the only serious challenge to these assumptions was mounted by Friedhelm
Winkelmann in his work on the Byzantine system of rank and precedence and on the Byzantine
social elite at this period. See Winkelmann 1985 and 1987a.

The first point to make concerns the nature of the Byzantine bureaucratic system. This was not an anonymous, independent, and self-regulating administrative structure, which is the way many have approached it. On the contrary, it was a patrimonial network of concentric circles of clientage and patronage, concentrated around the imperial court and, more importantly, around the person of the emperors and their immediate family or entourage. Efforts to understand Byzantine ranks as represented in official titles, for example, will not grasp the dynamic of this set of relationships until the paramount role of the individual emperors in selecting or rejecting imperial officials, and of individual office-holders and their personal and family ties and networks, has been grasped. Attempts to build up a 'logical' system of precedence, in which each position is neatly related to those above and below it according to modern notions of order and system, are doomed to misrepresent the realities of Byzantine culture and patterns of social power.[3] This can be demonstrated most clearly when we look at the various officials who actually administered the territories within the provincial military commands or who held other responsible positions in the imperial administration during the eighth and ninth centuries. To begin with, we will summarise what is known or assumed about the organisation and administrative structure of these commands in the period in question.

By the beginning of the reign of Leo III it seems clear that the provincial administration of the empire was centred around two sets of institutions: the provinces themselves, with their local administration concentrated around the fiscal machinery of the state, and the military corps or commands garrisoned across the provinces. As far as the sources tell us – and most of the evidence comes from the lead seals of officials – the provinces of the later years of the sixth century survived intact as somewhat shadowy administrative entities (although there may well have been shifts in boundaries about which we know nothing at all) – clearly identified by the later seventh century as regions within military commands, a result of the arrival and posting of the bulk of the imperial field armies in Asia Minor from the middle of the seventh century.

It is generally agreed that the provincial armies of the later seventh century and afterwards are the direct descendants of the late Roman field armies under their commanders, the *magistri militum* (those of Oriens, Armenia, the praesental field forces or *Obsequium*, and Thrace). The origins of the maritime division referred to as the *Karabisianoi*, or ship-troops, remains an

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[3] See Chapter 8.
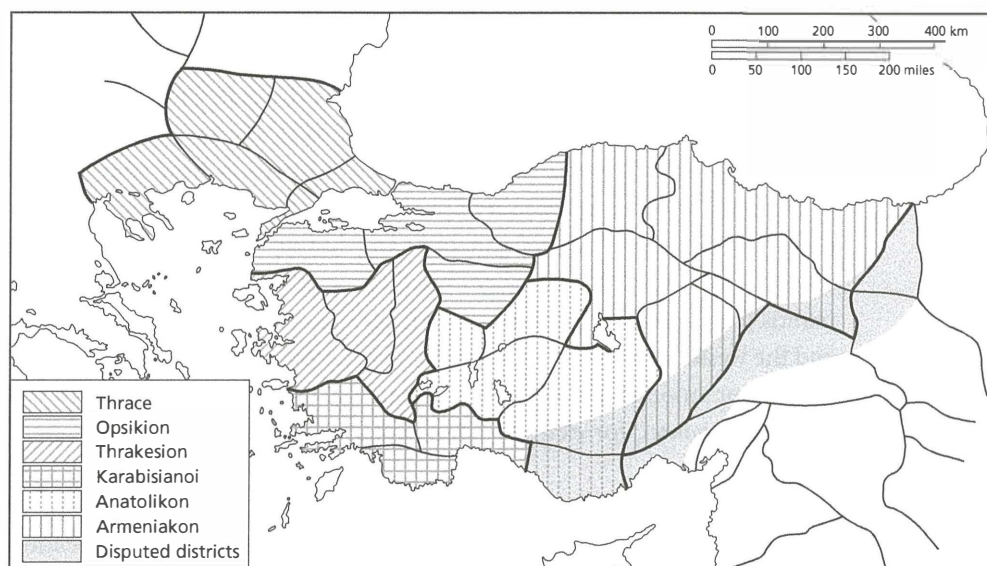
Map 5. Schematic map of late seventh-century and eighth-century military commands, mapped on to the civil provinces

unresolved issue, although we would retain their derivation from the rump of the Justinianic *Quaestura*.[4] The Greek versions of these Latin divisional names are those referred to in our sources as the *Anatolikon, Armeniakon,*

[4] See Diehl 1905. The *Karabisianoi* appear to be first mentioned in the *iussio* or letter sent to the pope by Justinian II in 687 ratifying the Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (held at Constantinople in 680), and are referred to as the *Cabarisiani.* Gelzer (*Georgii Cyprii Descriptio orbis Romani*, xliii) emended this to *Calarisiani*, hence referring to the forces based at Sardinia (Cagliari) and, following the order of the text itself, those based in Africa; but changed his views (following Diehl's arguments) in Gelzer 1899, 11, 20ff. Antoniadis-Bibicou took up this suggestion, however, since a later Arab geographer, using earlier sources, also includes a reference to the *patricius* of Sardinia as one of the chief officers of the empire – see Oikonomidès 1964, and Antoniadis-Bibicou 1966, 65f. While this view has been supported by Toynbee 1973, 227–8 and note 6, as well as by Guillou 1969, 159, note 67 (and cf. also Leontsini 2001, 116–17), it has been challenged by Ahrweiler 1966, 22ff.; see also Charanis 1957; Pertusi 1958, 39 and note 178; as well as by Zuckerman 2005, 117–19. Diehl suggested that the *Karabisianoi* represented a successor to the older *Quaestura exercitus* established by Justinian I, a district which included both the Danube provinces of Scythia and Moesia II, as well as Caria and the Aegean islands (except for Delos and Imbros: see Justinian, *Nov.* 41 [a. 536]; Lydos, *De Mag.*, ii, 28–9. See Szádeczky-Kardoss 1985; Torbatov 1997). This suggestion was dismissed by Ahrweiler 1966, 12, note 2, but accepted by Hendy 1985, 651ff. See also Grigoriou-Ioannidou 1982; Koder, in *TIB* 10, 78f. The issue is still debated – see Brandes 2002, 59–61; and for a different view also Yannopoulos 1990. For the original legislation, see Justinian, *Nov.* 41 (May 536). It is worth noting that at the end of the sixth century the *Quaestor* was also referred to as the *eparchos* of the islands, suggestive of the emphasis on the Aegean territories under his authority, and perhaps also of a reduction in his territories as a result of hostile military action and immigration from beyond the Danube. See John. Eph., *HE* iii, 3.32 (trans. Brooks 121.15).

Opsikion, and *Thrakesion* (Theophanes, writing a century later, applied the term *thema* anachronistically, a point argued long ago by Pertusi). Then, from at least the time of Leo III well into the middle years of the eighth century these divisions or commands are described by the term *strategis*, with no implications other than that the armies in question were commanded by *strategoi* (with the exception of the *Opsikion* division, commanded by a *komes*), imperially appointed generals.[5] In addition to these field armies, of course, and as in the preceding period, there were a number of smaller commands for particular districts or ethnic groups – the various *duces* in Italy and the western provinces in Italy and Africa, similar commands in frontier districts or among federate groups beyond the frontiers in the Balkans (the various *archontes*, for example) and probably in the eastern provinces as well.

When we look at the disposition of the later (ninth- and tenth-century) military provinces or *themata* and the districts they covered, their location appears fairly closely to reflect the logistical demands of the divisions along the frontiers and inland, which is to say, the revenue potential and the extent

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For two seals of similarly titled officers, see *ZV* 2928; *SBS* 5 (1998), 45; and *DOSeals* II, 150f. See Curta 2001 for the distribution of lead seals of the sixth century associated with the *Quaestura*, and see esp. Gkoutzioukostas 2008. It is true that, as Zuckerman (2005, 117ff.) points out, the *Quaestura* was itself not, as originally established, a military division. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the *quaestor* was not in charge of the flotillas based at Ratiaria, Securisca, and Transmarisca, and every reason to believe that he managed the whole *annona*, from transportation to distribution along and behind the Danubian *limes*. In addition, overlapping and conflicting spheres of authority render any rigid distinction at this level of seniority between civil and military problematic in the extreme, especially in view of the *Quaestor*'s juridical authority over the armies based along the Danube. See Mitova-Dzhonova 1986. By the same token, we could note that the sources do not actually say that the *Karabisianoi* are a warfleet – they are, rather, units of soldiers – 'ship soldiers' – who can be transported by sea to places around the coast of the Aegean or indeed any other regions where they might be needed; that they fight at sea is implicit only. While the *Quaestura* had no war fleet, neither is there any evidence that this army had: it was moved by transport vessels. Moving supplies and transporting soldiers was exactly what the *Quaestura* was established to do (very clearly demonstrated by Goutzioukostas 2008), and what the *Karabisianoi* also did.

5 As noted and emphasised by Zuckerman 2005, 125ff., especially 128ff., citing the sigillographic material. See below. For the *Opsikion*, see Haldon 2005; Schmitt 2001. Brandes 2001, 128 and nn. 45, 46, noted that the commander of the *Opsikion* is also referred to as both *stratelates* and as *strategos* in the Acts of the Council of 681 as well as in other sources. Brandes also argued that (a) the term *Opsikion* referred until *c.* 681 merely to an imperial private retinue, and that (b) the field army of the same name came into existence only with the campaign against the Bulgars in 679–80. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise, even if it is also clear that the exact constitution of this division must remain obscure because of lack of more detailed information. A seal of the *Basilicu Opsiciu* from Sicily, dateable to the 660s, would support this position: Manganaro 2005, 76, no. 19, pl. II 19. On the date of the campaign of 680, see also Kresten 2006.

of the districts which they could draw upon for their supplies.[6] This reflects a fairly early establishment of the forces in question in their districts,[7] in turn a response to the nature of the Arab attacks, which penetrated regularly deep inside imperial territory, so that any linear defence became more or less irrelevant, and certainly unworkable. Indeed, it is important to bear in mind the real nature of the military crisis situation which the state had to confront in the period after 640, in which Anatolia itself was regularly and frequently the object of raids and more substantial invasions, and in which the rural and urban landscape was transformed, as we have seen in Chapters 6 and 7. The armies were supported through the fiscal and administrative apparatus already described: through the praetorian prefecture on the one hand and the *kommerkiarioi-apotheke* system on the other. From 648/9 until the early 660s Armenia was subject to first Byzantine and then caliphal control, sometimes loosely enforced and with periods of autonomy under local princes, sometimes more forcefully imposed. From the 660s, however, while it was thereafter within the Byzantine sphere of influence in a general sense, it was not again under imperial political and military control except for brief periods. The army of the *magister militum per Armeniam* was operating both in Armenia proper and along the frontier throughout this period, but was increasingly confined to the districts to the west of Armenia from the late 650s.[8]

The evidence which has been reviewed above for the state's financial management strongly suggests that by the reign of Leo III an identity was evolving between the names of the military commands or *strategides*, and the districts or provinces upon which they drew for their supplies and perhaps manpower. The loss of Armenia from Byzantine control and the threat from the East will have involved a relocation and repositioning of the field army of the *magister militum per Armeniam*, while the final abandonment of Cilicia and northern Syria in the last years of the seventh and early years of the eighth century will have entailed further withdrawals of frontier and field units belonging to the *magister militum per Orientem*. By the 730s it is likely that the field armies which had defended the eastern frontier – those of the *magister militum per Armeniam* in the east, and the *magistri*

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[6] Obviously this does not apply to later newly formed military divisions which in the context of the ninth or tenth century had a largely strategic or political origin, such as the ephemeral *thema Mesopotamias*: see Brandes 2002, 489ff., 649ff.

[7] See Hendy 1985, esp. 621ff.; and Haldon 1997a, 215ff. Older literature, and survey of the material, in Lilie 1984, 32ff.; and Haldon 1993a.

[8] See Haldon 1997a, 62; Mahé 1993, 469–76, for the background; and Howard-Johnston, in *Sebeos*, II, 255–84.

militum per Orientem and *per Thracias* in the centre and south – were billeted across some of the provinces of Asia Minor (on the basis of the potential of those provinces to supply and provide for the units in question). This hardly affected the basic administration of those regions: the older civil *eparchiai* or provinces continue to exist in some form well into the eighth century, and some significant aspects of the late Roman civil administrative apparatus survived until the early ninth century, as we have now argued in the preceding chapter.

In carrying out these successive reconfigurations of the strategic frontier, the state faced the problems of both supplying and recruiting its forces in the territory which remained under imperial authority and maintaining effective political and fiscal control. This was resolved by a combination of means: the collection of state taxes in the areas where soldiers were based in the form of produce and materials with which to supply and equip them, and the diversion by the state of the activities of the *kommerkiarioi* within the praetorian prefecture or general *logothesion* towards the process of supplying field forces.[9] As noted above, it is hardly a coincidence that at about the same time that the role of these *genikoi kommerkiarioi* seems to have been formalised, there took place also a reduction in the minting and issue of bronze coinage, suggesting that large-scale and generalised cash payments to the soldiers were no longer seen as essential to the supplying and equipping of the armies.[10] The allocation to the field armies of groups of provinces from which to draw their resources reflects the fiscal and logistical priorities of the late seventh- and early eighth-century state, at least in the first instance, and to a degree continues established practice from the preceding period.[11]

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[9] For detailed discussion of all these points see Haldon 1997a, 215–51; and Chapter 10.

[10] With the special exceptions of Sicily and Constantinople, this applies across the empire, although there are minor regional inflections. See Morrisson 1986b, esp. 156ff.; 1998, 328–30; Malamut 1988, I, 138, with references; Hahn, *MIB* III, 157–8; Grierson, *DOC* II, 517–19; Brandes 2002, 323ff.

[11] Direct evidence for the dispersal of the soldiers is rare. Archaeological evidence already referred to for some areas in the Balkans suggests the existence in the eighth century of small garrison units based in forts covering access to major administrative or economic centres, important routes, or frontier areas. See Chapters 6 and 9. The *Life* of Philaretos (see 125. 34ff.), written in the first half of the ninth century about events of the second half of the eighth century, refers to the *stratopedon* of the region where a poor soldier, Mousoulios, served. The word *stratopedon* is ambiguous, since it can mean either military camp or army. Our own preference is the second meaning, so that the text is referring to the despatch of a group of officers from the command headquarters (presumably – the text says nothing of where these men came from) to muster the troops dwelling in the region. The circumstances of the account support this – a 'chiliarch', together with a hekatontarch and a pentekontarch made up the group (although the *Life*

The armies: change and development in the eighth and ninth centuries[12]

At the beginning of the reign of Leo III there were four major military divisions in Asia Minor, the *Anatolikon, Opsikion, Armeniakon, Thrakesion,* representing field armies formerly under *magistri militum,* each now commanded by a *strategos* (or a *komes* for the *Opsikion*). In addition, there existed what have been dubbed maritime divisions, the command of the *Karabisianoi,* operating primarily in the West and perhaps the Aegean, and the command of the *Kibyrrhaiotai.*[13] The accepted view has until recently been that the demise of the command of the *Karabisianoi* occurred shortly after 710 (the last mention of a *patricius et stratigus Caravisianorum*[14]) and before 732, when Theophanes mentions Manes, *strategos Kibyrrhaioton.*[15] As we have seen, however,[16] Theophanes misdates this event; while seals of several commanders or other officers of the *Karabisianoi* dated to the first half of the eighth century, and a further seal of a commander of the *Karabisianoi* dated to the later eighth or early ninth century, prove that the command was of some significance well beyond 710.[17] At the same

should not be taken too literally in respect of such details), and this hardly suggests a very large force to be mustered. Furthermore, the account implies that Mousoulios was on his way to the muster – the presumption must be that it was from his home or village, since if there was a 'camp' the muster would have been there. This hardly fits with the idea of a permanent military garrison *located at a specific point* in the region; but nor does it contradict the possibility that the state still regarded such soldiers as its 'regulars', making up its field armies, even if the reality was somewhat different. See Haldon 1979, 67 and 75; Ahrweiler 1960, 8–9. The *Life* of Philaretos is, of course, constructed around a series of *topoi* and fable-like tales, in which the generosity shown to the soldier is merely one element, also found elsewhere (e.g. in the *vita Eustratii*). See Ludwig 1997, 89ff., and Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 225.

[12] For a recent survey of the history of the Asia Minor commands (under the heading of *themata,* of course), see Blyssidou *et al.* 1998.

[13] See above, n. 4.   [14] *LP* I, 390.

[15] Theoph., 410.6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 568). See Pertusi, *De Thematibus,* 149; Antoniadis-Bibicou 1966, 63–98; Bury 1911, 109; Gelzer 1899, 34; Ahrweiler 1966, 81–3; Grigoriou-Ioannidou 1982; Savvides 1998 (prosopography of officers); *PmbZ* no. 4690. But the date of this entry is uncertain, since Theophanes' account of this period, in particular of Byzantine relations with Italy, is notoriously unreliable and confused. The expedition in question probably happened some years before 732: see Bertolini 1967. Sigillographic material in *DOSeals* II, 150–63. Brandes 2004 argues plausibly that the name Manes is a later iconophile attribution (intended to associate the activities of Leo III with 'Manichaeism') and that the whole expedition is thus suspect. We would argue, in view of the lack of any evidence to the contrary, that the expedition probably did take place, whatever the name of its commanding officer. The passage is neither clear evidence for nor against the existence of an independent command of *Kibyrrhaiotai* at that time.

[16] See Chapter 2, 83 above.

[17] See *PmbZ* nos. 7933, 8176, 10809, 10878, 10883, and 575.

time, the region of the *Kibyrrhaiotai*, based around Kibyra, possibly that in Caria (but with a squadron also at the little port of Korykos in eastern Lycia),[18] is mentioned indirectly in 698 when its *drouggarios* Apsimar rebelled against Leontios.[19] Whether the units which came to be referred to as the *Kibyrrhaiotai* were originally a division of the *Anatolikon* army cannot be resolved in view of the absence of evidence; they certainly had a naval aspect, to judge from the reference to the *drouggarios* Apsimar and his activities for 698; and they may have been established under Constans II, although no direct evidence confirms this.[20] It is important to note that the sources do not refer to specifically naval commands, but rather to ships and soldiers, or 'fleets' and their commanders; while as we have already pointed out,[21] the term *Karabisianoi* may just as probably refer to troops supplied by, or transported by ship, as it may refer to soldiers who fought from ships, the latter the usual interpretation.[22] There is no real evidence at this stage that the *Karabisianoi* were intended purely as naval commands, even if that is what they soon became in the light of the Arab threat at sea.[23]

All these commands had evolved some degree of geographical identity by about the middle of Leo's reign. In addition, the residual imperial territories in Italy and the West formed a separate group: Sicily (with the associated duchy – *doukaton* – of Calabria), established under Justinian II or one of his immediate successors, probably between 692 and about 700; and

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[18] There are in fact at least two possibilities for the Kibyra in question, one a town of some importance in the sixth century and before in southern Caria, the other on the Pamphylian coast, to the east of Side. The latter has traditionally been taken to be the site after which the command or district *ton Kibyrrhaioton* took its name, but the other site must remain a possibility, and has indeed been preferred in a well-argued contribution: see Yannopoulos 1991. There are likewise three different towns called Korykos, although that on the western shore of the Gulf of Antalya (Attaleia) remains the most likely. See Toynbee 1973, 259 and n. 7, and *DOSeals* II, 151ff.; also *TIB* 5, 45–6, 315–16; *TIB* 8, 118f and 407–13 for a prosopography of officials; 629–30 for Kibyra.

[19] Theoph., 370.23f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 517); Nikeph., 98.

[20] According to Constantine VII in the *De Thematibus*, the *thema* 'of the sailors/marines' had its headquarters on Samos, and had not included mainland territory at all: *De Them.*, 41. It is worth emphasising that the army of the *Kibyrrhaiotai* is named after its soldiers (the soldiers of Kibyrrha), not the district itself. This is a sign of the relative antiquity of the division in question (as with the other early commands), and suggests its original existence probably as a division of a larger command. It would also lend credence to the suggestion that it was established under Constans II or perhaps Constantine IV: see Zuckerman 2005, 122f. For the evolution of the naming process of military units, see below, 734, 755ff.

[21] See n. 4 above.

[22] Thus the commander of the *Karabisianoi* appears as *patrikios* or *strategos* 'of the Roman fleets/ships' (for 697/8, exped. to Carthage: Theoph., 370.8–9 (Mango and Scott 1997, 517); Nikeph., 98), or as '*strategos* of the ships' in 678 when his forces relieved the beleaguered city of Thessaloniki (*Mir. S. Demetrii*, II, 254ff.). See Leontsini 2001.

[23] See in particular the arguments put forward by Grigoriou-Ioannidou 1982, at 204ff. And on the naval commands more generally, the essays in Carile and Cosentino 2004.

the island of Sardinia, also under a *doux* and the local district authorities, *archontes*, together with the Balearic isles, which remained under nominal imperial authority, probably managed from Sardinia (but, like Sardinia, under Roman ecclesiastical authority), until the last years of the ninth century.[24] Finally, there were the Thracian and Helladic commands, the former created probably in about 680, in the region to the north and west of Constantinople, but defended at first by units from the *Opsikion* army; the latter between 687 and 695 in eastern central Greece, perhaps including parts of the Peloponnese, intended no doubt to protect the surviving imperial posessions along the coast from the depredations of the inland population (whether immigrant 'Slavs' or not).[25]

[24] Although the seals of the *kommerkion* of Sicily suggest a particular fiscal status before this time, related to the grain supply of Constantinople: see, Chapter 10, and Prigent 2006b, 291–3; Brandes 2002, 365; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 168; Metcalf, *Cyprus*, no. 221. By 696/7 there was an *apotheke* for the island, as a seal of that date belonging to Kyriakos, *apo hypaton* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of Sicily shows: *ZV* 197; *DOSeals* I, 5.4 (Brandes 2002, no. 140); Nichanian and Prigent 2003. For the evidence for Sardinia, see the summary in *DOSeals* I, 36–7; Leontsini 2001, 114–18; and Cosentino 2004, 337–48, 2005b with further literature; also Laurent, *Corpus* V, 1. 721ff. That the Balearics were under the authority of the *dux* of Sardinia is suggested by a small number of lead seals of imperial officials of the later seventh and first half of the eighth century: see Ilisch *et al.* 2005, 28–31 (S1–S5) – and Signes Codoñer 2007; although there is no definite evidence of any imperial presence in the islands after *c.* 750. See Blyssidou *et al.* 2008: 248ff., 265ff.

[25] For the boundaries of the early commands, see Haldon 1997a, 219–20, although we should not assume these until the early eighth century; and for a general historical survey Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 69–111 (*Anatolikon*), 113–61 (*Armeniakon*), 167–200 (*Opsikion*), 201–34 (*Thrakesion*). It has often been maintained that the *Thrakesion* command was at first merely a *tourma* or division of the *Anatolikon* (see, e.g., Ostrogorsky 1968, map 2 [80], 84 n. 2; *CMH* iv, 2, 36; Toynbee 1973, 253–4; Pertusi, *De Thematibus*, 124ff., all following Gelzer's original suggestion [Gelzer 1899, 77f.]); *DOSeals* III, 2 (but for an eighth-century seal of a turmarch of the *Thrakesion* see Cheynet 1999, no. 31, probably the seal of the officer commanding the *tourma* within the command). This is also the interpretation marginally preferred by Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 201–4. Lilie's arguments appear to me to be more convincing than this allows, more particularly since the *apo hypaton patrikios kai komes tou Opsikiou* Theodore, who appears in the Acts of the sixth council in 680, bears the title of *hypostrategos* of Thrace, and this should not be taken to assume that there existed therefore an independent *strategos*, merely that this region was at that point under the overall authority of the commander of the *Opsikion*. Later examples of close military co-operation between *Opsikion* officers and soldiers from Thrace serve to re-inforce the point (examples cited again in Blyssidou *et al.* 1998): Lilie 1977, 22ff.; Haldon 1984, 470 (n. 422). Lilie has similarly argued convincingly that the command of Thrace existed already in the 680s, and that its establishment is connected with the appearance of the Bulgars at this time (Lilie 1977, 28–35, followed also by *DOSeals* I, 155ff.; Brandes 2001), again challenging a traditional view: cf. e.g. Toynbee 1973, 255. Even if a command for Thrace had been established in 680, however, it is quite possible that it was managed at first from the *Opsikion* command, hence its absence from the subscription list of 687 (*ACO* II, ii, 2, 886 – *PmbZ*, no. 7345). See also *TIB* 6, 76, with lit. Zuckerman 2005, 118 n. 124, maintains that Lilie's identification of the *exercitus Tracesianus* in the subscription list of 687 with the *Thrakesion* force in western Asia Minor is incorrect, because the army in question appears second in hierarchical order, just as the Thracian army or *magister militum* had done in the late
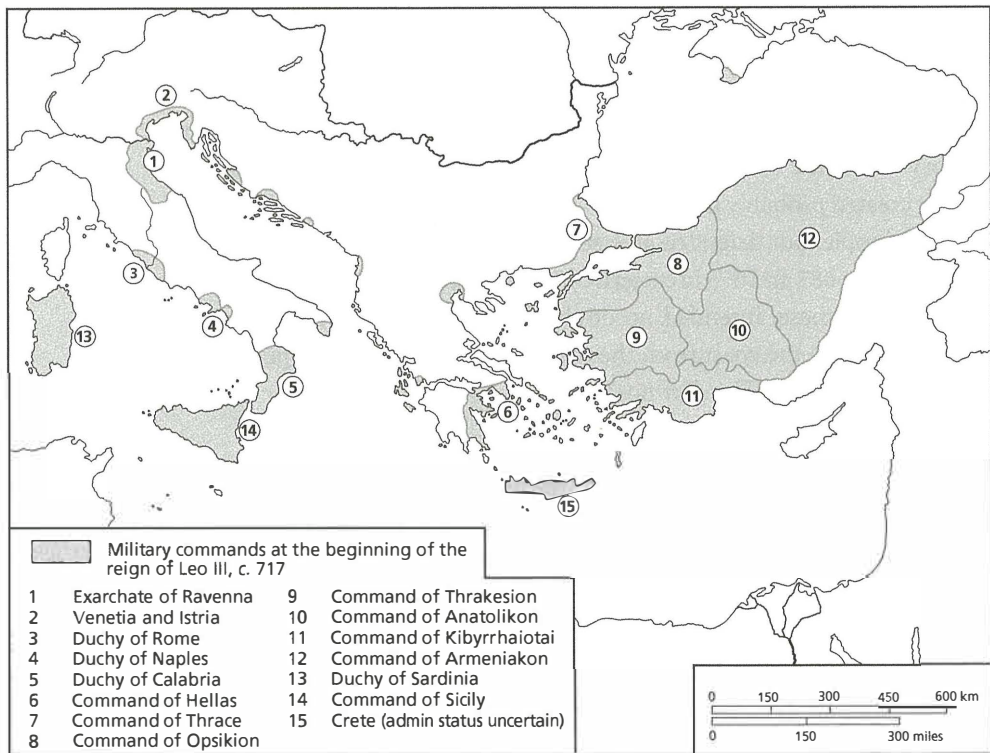
Map 6. Military commands at the beginning of the reign of Leo III, *c.* 717

The creation of the commands of Sicily and of Hellas are illustrative. In the former case, two factors must have played a role. On the one hand, the beleaguered position of the exarch, based at Ravenna, with real authority limited to the region of Ravenna itself (the *provincia Ravennae*) and the difficulties of maintaining communications between this region and the various ducal territories, meant that the remaining Byzantine possessions in the south were very exposed.[26] And as the source of a considerable tax revenue, as well as grain from Sicily for Constantinople, the imperial

Roman period: this must therefore be the army of Thrace. This misses the point: the Thracian forces had been transferred to Asia Minor at an earlier stage and had remained there (how else can one explain a 'Thracian' army in Anatolia?). The *magister militum per Thracias* Marinus was defeated with his forces fighting the Arabs in 638: Nikephoros Patr., §23 (70, 4–6). The *Thrakesion* army – *exercitus Tracesianus* – *was* therefore the original army of Thrace, and maintained its ranking as second – indeed, this is a good proof that Lilie's argument is correct.

For Hellas, see *TIB* I, 50–78; *DOSeals* II, 22f.; and for Sicily, Oikonomidès 1964. Calabria was established as the command of a *doux* by the time of Justinian II, and remained under a *doux* into the tenth century, even though the *strategos* of Sicily moved to Calabria after the fall of Taormina in 902: see von Falkenhausen 1978, 7–30; and for some seals, *DOSeals* I, 19ff.

[26] For the discussion on the date at which the command of Sicily was established, see Oikonomidès 1964, and *DOSeals* I, 22f. (between 687 and 695); Brown 1984, 48 and n. 20

government would be interested in a more effective local defence.[27] On the other hand, the loss of most of the provinces of Africa and the threat posed to Carthage (which actually fell in 697) and to Sicily and southern Italy from Muslim raiders from North Africa must also have played a role.[28] It has been plausibly suggested that the stimulus to the establishment of a command in these regions may have been provided by a series of Byzantine successes in North Africa, achieved in conjunction with indigenous clans. But there is no reason to suggest that the appearance of a *strategos* in this case meant anything more than the establishment of a new military corps across the districts involved.[29]

In the case of Hellas, the impetus may well have come from Justinian II's great campaign against Slavs and Bulgars of 688/9, and the fact that he was able to extricate his forces only with considerable losses.[30] An adequate defence for the surviving Byzantine districts of eastern Greece must have seemed a pressing requirement, and the command was probably established initially in about 695, its first *strategos* probably the Leontios, former *strategos* of the *Anatolikon*, who rebelled against Justinian in the same year and usurped the purple. Again, there is no evidence here for anything other than the establishment of a new military division with its officers across the province(s) in question. References to the *Helladikoi*, to *drouggarioi* and *tourmarchai* or to the geographical name Hellas do *not* prove that the area was already organised as an administrative entity: they show that there were military units there, commanded by officers bearing titles typical of late Roman and early Byzantine military organisation, and that these units had a geographical identity. A seal referring to the regions under the military command of the Helladic forces supports this impression.[31]

(between 687 and 701) with other literature; Winkelmann 1985, 84–6, stresses quite rightly the fact that mentions of a *strategos* of the island should be treated with care, and may not be used to assume, at this early date, a 'thematic' administrative structure. See also Kislinger and Seibt 1998, 10–13; Nichanian and Prigent 2003.

[27] That these lands were regarded as important to the imperial government is made apparent by the tax-reductions granted for them in 681 by Constantine IV (see *LP* I, 366.8; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 250) and in 687 by Justinian II (*LP* I, 368.19–369.2; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 256); Brandes 2002, 372ff. For Sicily as a source of grain for Constantinople, see Chapters 6 and 10, and Prigent 2006b.

[28] Brett 1978, 490–555, see 503–13.

[29] Herrin 1987, 282. The first *strategos* of Sicily is attested in *LP* I, 383, for the year 701. For a seal, probably of the same officer, see Laurent, *Médailler*, no. 114. For other officers see *LP* I, 389, 390 (for the period 708–15); Laurent, *Vatican*, 114 (C7.-8) (and cf. ZV 2529 [C8]); ZV 2356 (C8); cf. also Theoph., 438.8–12 (Mango and Scott 1997, 605) (a. 765).

[30] Theoph., 364 (Mango and Scott 1997, 508). The *sklaviniai* in question were probably only partially to be identified with specific territories, partly with rather loose groups of settlers dispersed across several regions. See Chrysos 2007; also Curta 2006, 96ff.

[31] Theoph., 368.20f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 514); Nikeph., 94f. (Leontios); Theoph., 405.16; 474.1 (Mango and Scott 1997, 560, 651) (Helladikoi); Theoph., 405.17–18 (*tourmarches ton*

The implications of the title *strategos*

It is particularly worth underlining the absence of hard evidence to support the contention that senior military commanders or generals had supreme authority in their territories in the seventh or the eighth century, a point we will take up again later in this chapter. This is an idea based on reading back into this period the situation as it had evolved by the end of the ninth century, canonised in turn by Ostrogorsky's notion that the themes were creations of Herakleios who invented the whole system in a single series of 'reforms'. The two positions can be used to re-inforce each other, yet the argument remains circular. But while provincial military commanders were technically military officers only, they could clearly be highly influential men in their provinces. The example of Constantine V's generals is a case in point, and we need not doubt that provincial generals exercised real power over many branches of the state administration in their territory simply by virtue of their military authority, command of armed force, and monopoly of state-sanctioned violence. Crucially, however, this authority was derived from their relationship with the emperor of the day, rather than from any juridically defined institutional structure. We have made this point already regarding the nature of office-holding at this period in Chapter 8. There was thus a complex plurality of power relations in the provinces, dependent for their configuration upon the relations pertaining between a wide range of officials and commanders, with the central authorities, with the church and its episcopal leaders, administrators and financial officials, and with the individual emperor, at any given moment.

We have seen that during the first thirty years of the eighth century military divisions had begun to be identified with specific geographical areas – groups of provinces. This process was furthered as new military corps were given an independent or autonomous status and named for the province or region they defended. While there is thus good reason to think that this involved the concentration of a supervisory authority in the hands of the commanders or *strategoi* of these divisions, we have seen that the main features of the provincial fiscal and civil administrative structures, as

Helladikon) (Mango and Scott 1997, 560); ZV 3084 (*drouggarios Hellados*); and a seal dated 738/9 for the *strategis* of Hellas: *ZV* 254. On the origins of the command, see Ostrogorsky 1968, 111, and Toynbee 1973, 265–6, both with further references and literature; Winkelmann 1985, 92–4; Koder and Hild 1976, 54–67; and *DOSeals* II, 22f. Zuckerman 2005, 124 and n. 147, remarks that since Hellas and Sicily do not appear in the *subscriptio* of 687, they are to be understood as represented in effect by the *Karabisianoi*. This may be the case, but it is more likely that neither Hellas nor Sicily had independent commands at the level of *strategos* at this time, being subsumed within other commands (Thrace/*Opsikion* and Italy).

they are known from the late sixth and early seventh century, and no doubt altered and transformed in various respects as a result of the developments of the second half of the seventh century, continued to function in many respects as before, at least well into the eighth century. The earliest army commands then gave their divisional names to the provinces in question; those established later – in a 'second wave' – took their names from the geographical regions in which they were based.[32] The fact that the seals of *kommerkiarioi* begin from the early years of the eighth century to refer to the provinces of the respective military commands, whereas formerly they had borne predominantly the names of provinces only, reinforces this impression. Provinces are seen in the context of the military divisions which they support. Military commands thus take on a clear geographical identity. But there is no evidence here of any unification of civil and military authority under the *strategos*.[33] We should avoid interpreting this material on the basis of our assumptions and knowledge of a later period, and the administrative-bureaucratic structures which came to be associated with the 'thematic' organisation as it developed.[34]

The role of the various *strategoi* mentioned in the sources rarely suggests anything other than a military function. Only much later, as for example in the *Life* of Anthony the Younger[35] written during the first half of the ninth century, and therefore contemporary with the events it purports to describe, is a *strategos* seen fulfilling a judicial function, an officer also described on several occasions as *archon* and even *archon Attaleias*, as well as *strategos* (and in any case, it is worth remembering that military officers

[32] Thus we would reject the suggestion of Pertusi 1958, 24, that these commands had already acquired an administrative identity by the early eighth century. Lilie 1984, 38f., expresses in general a much more acceptable position, but we would argue that even for the middle of the eighth century there is no evidence for any *civil administrative* structure other than the traditional (modified) one, as described above.

[33] See for the seals and further discussion *ZV*, i, 1, 129–363 with the review of W. Seibt, in *BS* 36 (1975) 208–13. The earliest extant seals referring to the provinces of a particular military command are from 717–18 (*ZV* 222a, *DOSeals* IV, 22.27, for the *apotheke* of Koloneia and all the provinces of the Christ-loving *Armeniakon*); 730–41 (*ZV* 258, 259 for Thrace); 732/3 (*ZV* 242) for *Anatolikon*; 741/2 (*ZV* 261) for *Thrakesion*; 745/6 (*ZV* 263) for *Opsikion*. Cf. *ZV* 2290, 2578 for 'the imperial *kommerkia* of the provinces of the God-guarded imperial *Opsikion*'. Seals of officials belonging to the *strategis* of Hellas, of the *Kibyrrhaiotai* and of *Thrakesion* (*ZV* 254; I, 3, 1955, addendum to 339, no. 261; *DOSeals* III, 2, 2.31) reflect this primarily military identity and function. See the useful summary and catalogue in Brandes 2002, App. X, 601–10 (nos. 175, 215, 232, 234a, 237, 239, 240).

[34] First mention of the *Armeniakon*, for 667: Theoph., 348.29 (Mango and Scott 1997, 488); of *Anatolikon*, for 669: Theoph., 352.14–23 (Mango and Scott 1997, 492); of *Opsikion* as a geographical region, for 687: Theoph., 364.14–15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 508); Nikeph., 92 (but this may reflect later assumptions about the districts in question, of course).

[35] *V. Antonii Iun.*, esp. 20.7; 194.31.

always possessed jurisdiction over their soldiers and, depending on context, those non-military personnel who came into conflict with soldiers – see below). But by this time a substantial transformation of military administration had taken place, as we shall see below.[36] Theophanes' account of the role of Michael Lachanodrakon in carrying out Constantine V's anti-iconophile policies in the *Thrakesion* district could also be construed as implying that a provincial *strategos* had civil judicial authority as well.[37] In particular, Lachanodrakon's actions in purportedly despatching his *notarios*, Leo Kouloukes, together with a former abbot, also Leo, to destroy all the monasteries and nunneries in the areas under his command and confiscate their property might also be interpreted to mean that the *strategos* exercised full civil judicial and military authority. His example was perhaps followed by others, although Theophanes does not specify which; yet the account is extremely suspicious in terms of factual accuracy, built around iconophile propaganda as it is.[38] In fact, quite apart from the tendentious and hostile nature of Theophanes' report and the sources upon which it was based, Lachanodrakon's actions were unexceptionable, given direct imperial support or command, in a situation where a military commander had no civil or judicial authority whatsoever. There existed no strict division between civil and military authority in this sense, as the legislation of Justinian I – where conflicts of interest appear as a frequent stimulus to imperial legislative activity, and where efforts to limit the jurisdiction of each proved, on the whole, unsuccessful – demonstrates. Justinian had intervened on several occasions to prevent military officers, particularly the *magistri militum* and the various *duces* in frontier regions, from oppressing or otherwise damaging the interests of civil governors and officials as well as the local populace.[39] At a time when there existed at least in theory a clear demarcation between civil and military authority and privilege, military officers even

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[36] The relevant passages were discussed in full by Lemerle 1965, 292.

[37] Theoph., 445.3–6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 614); *PmbZ*, no. 5027; Rochow 1994, 60f., 65, 226–7.

[38] Theoph., 445.28–446.15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 615).

[39] See, e.g., *CTh* i, vii.2, where Theodosios I chastised Addaeus, *mag. mil. per Orientem* for exceeding his authority in dealing with a civil governor; and compare the problems caused by the conflicting interests of civil and military officers in many provinces under Justinian exemplified in Just., *Nov.* xxvi (a. 535), on the abolition of the two *vicarii* of Thrace and their replacement by a *praetor* (in turn apparently replaced by a *vicarius* by the 580s: see Haldon 1984, 271ff.; Stein 1949, 747 n.2). Similar problems underlie the promulgation of *Nov.* cxlv (a. 553), dealing with infringements by the *dux Lydiae et Lycaoniae* on the authority of the civil powers in Phrygia and Pisidia (the effective repeal of *Nov.* xxiv, on Pisidia, and xxv, on Lycaonia, issued in 535); and they can be inferred to be at least partially behind Just., *Edict.* 8 (a. 548) (revoking most of the provisions of *Nov.* xxviii [a. 535], on Hellenopontus, xxix [a. 535], on Paphlagonia, and xxx [a. 536], on Cappadocia) to avert conflicts of interest which

intervened, on the basis of personal requests from acquaintances, in ecclesiastical matters, as the case of Dionysios, *magister militum per Orientem* in 431, demonstrates.[40] The mere fact that military officers in the eighth and ninth centuries may at times have intervened in matters of civil jurisdiction, or that they may have exercised political power in a non-military sphere, therefore, is quite unexceptional and certainly cannot prove that they were also the 'governors' of their regions. At the most, it shows that there continued to be areas in which military and civil spheres could overlap, especially where, as in the case of Lachanodrakon, imperial support and approbation were obviously forthcoming (and sought after), or where a local officer may have held special powers on a temporary or even long-term basis for special reasons. Justinian's appointment of *praetores* and *comites* with both military and civil authority, followed by his later revocation of such powers for many of those officers, itself illustrates the dangers inherent in assuming that because some regions are administered in one way, all regions were similarly governed.[41] Of course, the exarchates of Ravenna and Carthage offer examples of military officers endowed with a general authority, and it has been argued that they were the models upon which the later military commands were established.[42] While this remains a possibility, it should be recalled, firstly, that the existence across our period of seals of officers called simply *strategos* without any territorial marker shows that the title had a preeminently military and not administrative value; and secondly, that both exarchates represented territories relatively distant from the centre of imperial government, territories which required local command and control in order to respond to the conditions of the last third of the sixth century. In contrast, all the evidence – fiscal and administrative – from the later seventh and early eighth centuries points to an increasing level of central imperial management of the Anatolian hinterland, a development paralleled and reflected also in the social history of the state elite of the period and its relation to the palace, in other words, in a situation in which exarchate-like structures were irrelevant or even dangerous to imperial control.[43] This

had hitherto been damaging to effective local administration. *Edict.* 8 re-establishes the *vicarius* of Pontica, imposing once more a unified military, judicial, and civil authority over the provinces of that diocese. For the implications of these two legislative acts see below.

[40] See Jones 1964, 376f. For the intermixing of functions and the possible conflicts that arose, see also MacMullen 1963, 152ff.

[41] See above, and Haldon 1997a, 260 and nn. 24, 25.

[42] See in particular Diehl 1888, 1905. For discussion of the earlier literature, see Haldon 1993a, 3ff.

[43] See Chapter 10; Haldon 1997a, esp. 206–7; and more generally in terms of social and political developments, Haldon 2004.

does not preclude the possibility that provincial *strategoi* were granted some plenipotentiary authority in respect of recruitment or military supplies, of course. But this must always have been managed – as indeed it was even after the establishment of the *themata* as fiscal administrative entities in the early ninth century (see below) – through the co-ordination of military and fiscal affairs, involving fiscal officials supervised from and by Constantinople.

That the title *strategos* automatically signified a thematic military governor, an assumption necessary to many interpretations of the evolution of the *themata* themselves, is thus quite wrong. Of course, it did come to mean this. The fact that in his early tenth century *Taktika* Leo VI could place the *strategos* at the head of the thematic administration should not be taken as necessarily applying to the later seventh, eighth or possibly even much of the ninth century. But that this was not the only meaning, or at least represented one that could only be understood when the appropriate information (divisional name, rank etc.) was also given, is clear from the fact that large numbers of seals exist for officers bearing this title but with no specific attachment. Particularly striking in this respect is the relatively high rank held by many of these officers, and the fact that they derive from the eighth and ninth centuries, as well as from the following period. Their existence cannot, in consequence, be dismissed or explained away as an 'early' or 'transitional' phenomenon. The majority of the seals bear the ranks of *patrikios* and/or *protospatharios*, and they are clear evidence of the existence of high-ranking military officers entitled *strategos* who had no territorial command as such.[44] That this was the case is supported from the literary sources. Thus in 698 Tiberios Apsimar appointed his brother Herakleios as *monostrategos* of the cavalry forces in Asia Minor;[45] Artabasdos appointed his son Niketas as *monostrategos* and sent him to the *Armeniakon* in 741.[46] This means only that these officers were appointed to the command of those armies, no more.[47] All references to a *strategos* for a particular region, until the middle of the eighth century at the earliest, should be taken merely as references to commanders of armies as such, i.e. as purely military commands, as the late seventh-century seal of a certain Sergios,

[44] For a complete list of those known from collections to 1985, see Winkelmann 1985, 117–18, although several more are now known from collections published since then. A possible explanation for these seals is that these officers were well-enough known by contemporaries as to need no thematic identity. But this seems unlikely for so many. See, for example, Cheynet, *Spink*, no. 29, for Theophanes, *patrikios* and *strategos*, from the eighth century.

[45] Theoph., 371.9ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 517); Nikeph., 102. See Lilie 1976, 113.

[46] Theoph., 417.23f. (Mango and Scott 1997, 578).

[47] A point already made by Speck 1981, 98–9.

apo hypaton, patrikios and *strategos* of Lazika (which seems never to have existed as a permanent territorial command) would suggest. Examples are numerous.[48]

New armies and the evolution of the middle Byzantine system

The command of the *Karabisianoi* seems to have faded in significance during the 720s and afterwards.[49] But it remains unclear whether a command of the *Aigaion Pelagos* was established at the same time, thus entirely replacing the older command. There is no evidence for a territorial command called *Aigaion Pelagos*, but a (more-or-less) independent Aegean command appears to have been in existence by the late 750s, by which time *Karabisianoi* seem no longer to exist. Nothing is known of the inception of the command of the *Aigaion Pelagos*.[50] In the *Taktikon* Uspenskij it is (still) under a *drouggarios*.[51] And for the year 781 Theophanes mentions a *drouggarios* of the Dodecanese, which may or may not refer to the same circumscription.[52] A geographically distinct region referred to as the *Aigaion Pelagos* appears as early as 711–13 on the seals of *kommerkiarioi*, a region which was apparently co-terminous with that of the Cyclades mentioned on earlier seals, and

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[48] See the literature and textual/sigillographic evidence discussed in the next section. For Sergios, see Cheynet 2001, no. 40 and commentary.

[49] Seals of a certain Theodotos, imperial *spatharios* and *ek prosopou eis Karabisianous* (*ZV*, no. 2488 (a and b), dated to the eighth century), and another of N., imperial *spatharios* and *ek prosopou eis Karabisianous* (Koltsida-Makri, no. 82), may belong to this period, and possibly represent the end-phase of the command's independent existence. For early eighth-century seals of commanders of the *Karabisianoi*, see n. 4 above, and *DOSeals* II, 150f. and no. 58.1 (=*ZV* 2614).

[50] For a seal of Leo, *hypatos* and *drouggarios* of Pamphylia, dated to the eighth century, see Cheynet 1999, no. 17. First reference to a command (*arche*) of the *Aigaion Pelagos*: *V. Theoph. Conf.*, §§5 (4.7, for the 760s). But it is not clear what sort of command is intended, and a *drouggarios* has generally been assumed (see Ahrweiler 1966, 77; and the more cautious discussion of Winkelmann 1985, 108–9), on the basis of *T. Usp.*, 53.18; 57.10. See *DOSeals* II, 109ff. For seals of *drouggarioi*, see *ZV* 1887a and b; Konstantopoulos, *Molybdoboulla*, 97; *ZV* 2649; *Sig.*, 193f., 1, 2; *GB* 17541; *ZV* 2360; *ZV* 3167 (all of the second half of the eighth–middle ninth century). A *strategos* is first mentioned for 843 in the *Acta Davidi, Symeonis et Georgii*, 253.31; 258.37, but since this was compiled probably during the eleventh century and based on reports of probably dubious quality, it is difficult to know whether to accept this evidence at face value (see the comments of the editor, Van Den Gheyn, *ibid.*, 210). For a seal: Konstantopoulos, *Molybdoboulla*, 98 (= Schlumberger, *Sceaux byz. inédits.*, 47).

[51] *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 53.18; 57.10; and bearing in mind that we accept the proposed re-dating of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij from the early 840s back to the reign of Michael I (811–13): see Živković 2007.

[52] Theoph., 454.19 (Mango and Scott 1997, 627); cf. *V. Ignatii*, 489C (Mansi xvi, 210).

which has been taken to be the descendant of the late Roman province of the *Insulae*, which was placed in the *Quaestura* by Justinian.[53] The evidence suggests only that an independent naval command covering the Aegean and under a *drouggarios* was in operation from the middle of the eighth century. That it was subordinate to the commander of the *Kibyrrhaiotai* until after the time of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij seems to us unlikely.[54] The history of the evolution of these maritime regions is complex. A *strategos* of Samos appears briefly in the sigillographic record about the middle of the eighth century, and may be the equivalent of the commander of the *Kibyrrhaiotai*, or simply a (short-lived) independent command,[55] while further subdivisions had been created by the middle of the ninth century, although they may well have existed already prior to this as sub-units of larger forces/regions.

Further major changes to the original pattern of military commands were introduced by Constantine V. But the stimulus for change was undoubtedly the effects of the revolt of Artabasdos, Leo III's son-in-law, which took place in 741–2. Artabasdos had been made *komes* of the *Opsikion*, one of the most important imperial field armies, and that from which the emperors drew the units for their own defence and that of Constantinople.[56] He had also been awarded the title of *curopalates*, so that he held a dominant position in respect of the imperial government. As commander of the *Opsikion* he had a key role in defending both emperor and capital, as well as of controlling a division which had a recent history of intervention in Constantinopolitan affairs. With the support of troops of the *Anatolikon* and *Thrakesion* armies, Constantine was able to defeat Artabasdos and his son Niketas, who had the support of the *Opsikion* and *Armeniakon* divisions as well as those in Thrace. But Artabasdos' rebellion and occupation of Constantinople demonstrates the importance of the *Opsikion* army and its commander in imperial politics. The rebellions and *coups d'état* of 713, 715, and 718 all illustrate the key position of this corps and the need for those in power in Constantinople to

[53] *ZV* 163: seal of Kosmas, *stratelates* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the (?) *Kyklades* (687/9); 196: seal of a *genikos kommerkiarios ton Kykladon neson* (796/7); 211: seal of an *apo eparchon*, *genikos kommerkiarios* of the *Aigaion pelagos* (711–13); 213: seal of John, *apo eparchon* and *genikos kommerkiarios* of the *Aigaion pelagos* (713/14); 249: seal of a *kommerkiarios* of the islands of the *Aigaion pelagos* (734/5). The islands appear in the sigillographic record both in connection with *Aigaion Pelagos* and alone (in respect of fiscal administration): see *DOSeals* II, 128f., and seals 43.1–5; Brandes 2002, App. X, 607–8.

[54] See Winkelmann 1985, 108–10; *DOSeals* II, 111–12; with seals 40.5–10 (*drouggarioi* of the *Aigaion pelagos* dating from the eighth–tenth centuries).

[55] *DOSeals* II, 110 and no. 44.10.   [56] See Haldon 1984, 191–200.

gain its support.[57] Leo III had solved the problem temporarily by appointing his friend and son-in-law Artabasdos to command the *Opsikion*, but the structural imbalance re-asserted itself on Leo's death as Artabasdos' powerful position gave him the initial advantage in his attempt to usurp the throne.

In order to re-establish a degree of equilibrium between provincial and central power, Constantine clearly had to reduce the power of the *Opsikion*; and his intentions in the long term are clearly reflected in the creation of a central elite force, which first appears in the sources in 765; and the splitting up of the original *Opsikion* into its three constituent sections, resulting in the appearance in the literary sources for the year 766 of the *Boukellarion*, for 768 of the *Optimatoi*, and for 773 of the *Opsikianoi*.[58] When these changes occurred is not known, but the middle and later 740s or 750s are likely – seals of officers of the new *Boukellarion* division belonging to the middle decades of the eighth century would suggest as much.[59] The measures instituted by Constantine, therefore, were in the first instance to place greater reliance on other provincial contingents, in particular on the *Thrakesion*, thus reducing the immediate influence of the *Opsikion* on imperial politics. This is obvious during the conflict itself, less obvious thereafter until the appearance of Constantine's loyal *strategos* for the *Thrakesion* district, Michael Lachanodrakon, in the 760s.[60] Nevertheless, the *Opsikion* appears much less prominently in the sources after 742.[61]

In the second place, the rank and position held by the commanders, or *komites*, of the *Opsikion* appear to have been reduced at some time in the middle of the eighth century. Until Artabasdos' rebellion, these officers had all been endowed with the title of *patrikios*, indicating that they belonged

[57] See Haldon 1984, 196ff., for the position of the *Opsikion* in the structure of power relations within the empire; and Winkelmann 1978, 217ff. A seal of Leo, *patrikios* and *hypostrategos* of *Thrakesion*, dated to the eighth century, has been tentatively identified as belonging to Leo, the successor of the general Sisinnios, who supported Constantine V in his struggle with Artabasdos, only to be removed for involvement in a plot against the emperor. See Cheynet 1999, no. 30. The title *hypostrategos* may reflect the fact of the emperor's presence as commander-in-chief in the war against Artabasdos and immediately afterwards. See Brandes 2001, 29–30.

[58] See Theoph., 437.1–3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 604) (*scholarioi* and *tagmata*); 440.28 (Mango and Scott 1997, 608) (*Boukellarioi*); and 447.20–21 (Mango and Scott 1997, 617) (*Optimatoi*); 451.15–16 (Mango and Scott 1997, 623) (*Boukellarioi* and *Opsikianoi*); *DOSeals* III, 55, 117; Haldon 2005; a different perspective in Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 163–200 (*Opsikion*); 235–44 (*Optimaton*); 245–57 (*Boukellarion*).

[59] *DOSeals* IV, 1. 5, 28 (cf. Seibt, *Bleisiegel*, no. 179), 33, 35.

[60] Theoph., 440.27 (Mango and Scott 1997, 608).

[61] See Lilie 1977, 22, 25; 1976, 324f.; *DOSeals* III, 55ff. for later seals.

to the highest group of state officials; similarly, after the establishment of the newly independent divisions of the *Optimatoi* and *Boukellarioi*, the *komites* of the *Opsikion* were generally styled *patrikios*, *protospatharios*, and sometimes (after the first years of the ninth century) *anthypatos* as well.[62] Yet in the middle of the century we find that the *komes* of the *Opsikion* is a mere *spatharios* (or possibly a *protospatharios*) in rank – a relatively humble position for such a formerly powerful officer;[63] just as importantly, there appear to have been appointed a series of *topoteretai* for the *Opsikion* region, a post normally associated either with various palatine departments (and, later, the new palatine units) or with a relatively humble level of thematic military administration. What is interesting is that they are *spatharioi*, the same rank as their commanding officers.[64]

In effect, there took place a considerable reduction in the status and power of the commander of the *Opsikion*, while at the same time officers were appointed to oversee the affairs of the region and those of its *komites*. It was less the *post* of commander of the *Opsikion* which was reduced in rank, than the titles and rank accorded to the individuals appointed to this position, which were lower than they had previously normally been: it is important to bear in mind the highly personalised nature of office-holding and rank in the middle Byzantine administrative system (see Chapters 8 and 10). From the presence of one of these *komites* in Constantinople in 765, it seems reasonable to suggest that the latter were kept under the emperor's watchful eye in Constantinople, leaving the day-to-day leadership of the army to the *topoteretes*. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that the *komes* David in 765, although involved in opposition against Constantine, is described as 'of the family of Beser'.[65] Beser was himself a confidant of Leo III and adviser to the young Constantine at the time of Artabasdos' rebellion.

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[62] See Haldon 1984, 484–6, for the textual evidence and the seals of these officers; also Winkelmann 1985, 73–4. Note also (although with different conclusions) Brandes 2002, 85f., 121–5, 127–31; and discussion in Chapter 10.

[63] See Theoph., 438.12 (Mango and Scott 1997, 605) (David, *spatharios* and *komes* of the *Opsikion*); *ZV* 3079, seal of Artabasdos, imperial *spatharios* (although it is possible to read *protospatharios* also) and *komes* of the *Opsikion*. See Haldon 1984, 486, n. 516; Winkelmann 1985, 74.

[64] For their seals, see *ZV* 1762, 2660, 3176a, b, Laurent, *Orghidan*, no. 219; Haldon 1984, 213, for discussion. The subordinate *topoteretai* in the themes and palatine units should not be confused with the senior officers of similar rank who functioned as seconds-in-command in the *tagmata* in the ninth- and tenth-century sources: see Oikonomidès 1972, 110, n. 69.

[65] 'kata ton Beser' (Theoph., 438.12f. [Mango and Scott 1997, 605]): various suggestions as to the interpretation of this formula (which occurs for a number of persons of the eighth–ninth centuries) have been made. See Winkelmann 1987a, 151–2, for previous literature and the (probably) correct solution.

It may be that Constantine deliberately chose a man from a family with a tradition of loyalty to himself to command the *Opsikion* at the time at which he was putting his major reforms into effect.[66]

The results of Constantine's measures in the 760s were thus to create a loyal contingent of soldiers, the *scholai* and *exkoubitores*, at Constantinople; and to fragment the formerly over-influential *Opsikion* command into three separate and independent divisions. In the process of evolving this strategy, he had clearly already addressed the issue insofar as the *komites* of the *Opsikion* had been reduced in status and power. The tactical, and temporary, nature of this move is evident in the fact that from the 760s the commanders of the *Opsikion* rank once more among the highest imperial officers, bearing the title of *patrikios*.[67] But in addition, it appears that he transformed the most dangerous element of the former *Opsikion* army, that of the *Optimatoi*, into a transport and support regiment for his new elite units.[68] The *Opsikion* division itself, along with the newly independent command of the *Boukellarioi*, henceforth acts as a standard provincial military division. These reforms amounted to a recognition of the fact that the field army corps had by the middle of the eighth century become too provincial properly to serve the needs and politics of the rulers at Constantinople. However close they may have been to the capital, their interests and perspectives had become those of provincial soldiers, and the dangers this brought with it were apparent. In reforming the old ceremonial palatine regiments of the *scholai* and *exkoubitores*, the emperor had re-introduced a central standing army (for this is what this force appears to have been), small though it was. He had created a tool for the successful prosecution of imperial policies which was free of provincial bias (although, as we shall also see, it was to prove a two-edged weapon). He had reduced the power of a major source of potential opposition to imperial authority. And in so doing, he also created the conditions for the evolution of the theme system proper.

[66] See Speck 1981, 76, for the probably iconoclast tradition which grew up around Beser – as a loyal defender of Constantine – which was later the basis for much anti-iconoclast material; *PmbZ*, no. 1010.

[67] See Haldon 1984, 485, n. 515.

[68] The *Optimatoi* after whom the subdivision of the command *tou Opsikiou* was named were descended partly from Gothic and other Germanic federates and mercenaries, who had come to be based in north-west Asia Minor during the seventh century. Their memory is preserved in the term *Gotthograikoi* (and related versions of it) which occurs in sources from the seventh to eleventh centuries, and which in the early eighth century formed a specific fiscal circumscription: see above, 696 note 101. They appear to have supplied the units which normally garrisoned Constantinople in the period before 741. See Haldon 1984, 96–100, 210–12, 223–6.

Nikephoros I and the creation of the *themata*

It is generally agreed that the earliest reference to the *themata* in the *Chrono-graphia* of the monk Theophanes, in the reign of Herakleios, is an anachro-nistic usage.[69] Yet it has also been pointed out that Theophanes is the only chronicler who employs the term *thema* for armies or provinces when reporting events of the period before the reign of the emperor Nikephoros I. The word *thema* to describe provincial armies or the areas where they were based occurs in no other source before the second decade of the ninth century.[70] Neither in the sigillographic record nor in any contemporary texts, nor in the *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros, compiled prob-ably in the early 780s (which continues to use the term *strategia* or *strategis arche* for the military commands of the empire), is the word applied to provinces or armies. Indeed, the very first references to the term *thema* occur at about the same time as the appearance of *protonotarioi* noted already, that is to say, in the first decade of the ninth century. We will suggest that it is in this period that we should seek the origins of the thematic 'system' represented in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij. That this development is a feature of the last few years of the eighth century or, more probably as we shall see below, of the early ninth century, is confirmed by two sets of evidence: first, the evidence for the development of the fiscal administrative struc-tures examined in the preceding chapter; and second, that for the so-called 'military lands' and the ways in which soldiers were recruited and financed. It can hardly be a coincidence that at the very point at which *protonotarioi* appear in our sources (textual and sigillographic) and the various shifts in fiscal administration become apparent in the sigillographic record, the term *thema* begins to appear also.

What, therefore, was the basis of recruitment during the later seventh and eighth centuries? First, it is apparent that the provincial armies continued to receive a salary, in either bronze or gold coin depending on circumstances (although always referred to in terms of gold in the texts), in recompense for their service. Legal texts of the early–middle eighth century refer to soldiers being remunerated by both *annonai* (rations) and by a *rhoga*, a cash salary. Second, we know that by the 740s soldiers might also be partially dependent upon their families and households for their equipment and maintenance,

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[69] Theoph., 303.10. Lilie 1976, 287ff., Haldon 1979, 30ff.

[70] A point which Zuckerman 2005, 128, pointed out was known but which had been largely ignored by scholarship.

and that this had implications for soldiers' testamentary rights.[71] This is supported again by the text of Theophanes regarding the so-called first vexation of the emperor Nikephoros I (discussed in detail below), which shows that in 809 soldiers possessed landholdings which had long been in their families, their own private property which they could sell or otherwise dispose of freely.[72] While hagiographical compositions such as the *Life* of Philaretos (compiled *c.* 821–2) were written some time after the events they claim to describe, they also reflect the assumptions of their audience or readership that provincial soldiers at the time of composition who mustered for duty were expected to provide their mount and basic equipment and supplies.[73] Third, while recruitment of soldiers from the later seventh century must have been 'provincialised' or localised to a considerable degree, we have up to the early ninth century no evidence to suggest that units were drawn from particular communities or fiscal districts, in contrast to the situation in the later ninth and tenth centuries. Finally, military service had acquired by the later eighth century a clearly fiscal character, insofar as families registered for military service who could not provide a soldier, for whatever reason, had to pay an appropriate compensatory sum to the state. Theodore the Stoudite praises the empress Eirene for relieving soldiers' widows of payments demanded by the state in place of their husbands' military service, which the widows themselves could not, of course, provide. The exaction itself is ascribed by Theodore to *orthodox rulers before* Eirene, therefore before Leo III, and of long standing.[74] It is clear from the somewhat later *Vita* of Euthymios that this humane measure was soon rescinded. Euthymios was born in the 820s, and his biography written in about 900. His father was registered for a *strateia* (military service), the obligations attached to which fell on the family – a standard procedure described in several hagiographical sources of the period. Euthymios' mother could only support these burdens after the death of her husband by registering her son in his stead.[75]

This shows, first, that some households were registered for military service, and second, that such households were expected to compensate the

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[71] See *Ekloge* xvi, 4; also xvi, 1 and 2; and Simon 1977, 94 (A)2, 7; (B)4 (an eighth-century legal decision, attributed to Leo III and Constantine V, appended to manuscripts of the *Ekloge*. Discussion in Haldon 1979, 67ff.; Lilie 1984, 196f., and Oikonomidès, 1988b, 130ff.). Soldiers' property derived, by whatever means, through their military service was defined as *idiokteton*: see, xvi, 1; full references (from Codex Justinianus, Basilica, and the so-called 'military codes') at Haldon 1979, 54 n. 94, 71 n. 126.

[72] Theoph. 486.10ff. (Mango and Scott 1997, 667).   [73] *V. Philareti*, 125.34ff.

[74] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* 7.61–3; discussion in Oikonomidès 1988b, 135–6.

[75] See *V. Eustratii*, 377.3ff.; Haldon 1979, 56ff.

state for as long as they were unable to fulfil their obligations – since they of course continued to enjoy the advantages, fiscal and legal, of military status. There is no implication, however, that the military service, the *strateia*, was formally and officially attached to, and seen as an obligation on, the family's property or land.[76] All it suggests is that there existed by 800, if not much earlier (740/1, the time of composition of the two *Ekloge* texts referred to above), a category of soldier recruited on a hereditary basis, responsible for providing some of his equipment, whose household enjoyed military status, but in return for which the household owed certain obligations to the state. In addition to this, there must have continued to be voluntary recruitment. Just as in the late Roman period, all soldiers achieved, by virtue of their military status, certain juridical and fiscal privileges for themselves in respect of testamentary law, on the one hand, and in respect of tax obligations on their households, on the other.[77] The recruitment campaigns run by senior officers for particular campaigns occasionally mentioned in the sources would not change this picture.[78] There is no evidence for a direct association between military service and land during the seventh and eighth centuries.

At the beginning of the ninth century, however, all this changed. In the year 809/10, according to the chronographer Theophanes, the emperor Nikephoros I – who, we must remember, was formerly the chief finance officer of the empire before his seizure of power in 802 – carried out or ordered a series of important fiscal measures, referred to by his detractor, Theophanes, as *kakoseis*, 'evil deeds'. The first of these, carried out between September 809 and the following Easter, entailed the compulsory transfer and settlement of many soldiers from Asia Minor to 'the *sklaviniai*', that is to say, territories recovered in Greece, Macedonia and perhaps western Thrace.

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[76] That provincial military obligations were hereditary is generally accepted, although the point at which it became so – in the reign of Herakleios, in the mid-seventh century, or during the eighth century – remains at issue. For a review of the evidence see Kaplan 1992, 231–55. This reasoning rests largely on the tenth-century material, through which the earlier evidence has been interpreted.

[77] For the privileges attached to military service in the late Roman period, see Jones 1964, 617, 675; Mommsen 1889, 248f.; Patlagean 1977b; for the relevant texts, see esp. *CJ* xii, 30; 35.16 (with the reference to unspecified military privileges); 36; Dain 1961 and esp. *Dig.* L, 5.10 (= *Bas.* LIV, 5.10) on exemption for soldiers from certain *munera* or *aggareiai*, including that of billetting; and *Dig.* L, 4.3. Whether soldiers remained free from *capitatio* in the later Roman period (they were clearly not freed from paying the later *kapnikon*) remains unclear – see Jones 1964, 617 and 675. For the Roman period proper, in which these privileges are rooted, see Campbell 1984, 210–29 (on testamentary privileges), 229–36 (on *peculium castrense*); Garnsey 1970, 245ff.

[78] See Haldon 1979, 79 and n. 145, for some examples.

Both poor and well-off were involved. The forced transfer and selling up of their own private property was a key part of this measure. The text is explicit that they were themselves responsible for disposing of – selling – their lands. There is no mention or implication of state-protected 'military holdings' here.[79] A second 'vexation' was the order to enrol or recruit the poor into the army, with the stipulation that those soldiers who could not afford their military equipment and service were to be helped by contributions (to the value of 18 ½ *nomismata* each) towards the costs of their equipment, and that their taxes were to be paid in common on their behalf by the communities from which they came.[80] The text reads: "In addition, he [Nikephoros] ordered a second vexation, namely that the poor should be enrolled in the army and should be fitted out by the inhabitants of their commune, also paying to the treasury 18 ½ *nomismata* per man plus his taxes in joint liability". These 'poor' are clearly assumed in Theophanes' text to have property from which taxes would normally be due, and shows that they are not entirely indigent and impoverished, merely that the demand that they should remit 18 ½ *nomismata* for their fitting out was far more cash than they would normally be able to raise.[81]

All these measures appear to have been novel – not only the communal contributions of cash to equip the soldiers in question, familiar from tenth-century texts and known as *syndosis*, but also the communal payment of their normal fiscal dues (the land- and hearth-taxes) – familiar in respect of ordinary tax-payers who were unable to cover their tax-payments (and described in the *Farmer's Law*). For the first time this was now

[79] Theophanes, 486.10–22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 667). As Speck 1978, 383 and notes stresses, of course, the source of Theophanes' text is particularly hostile to Nikephoros, and presents his measures in the worst possible light. See also Christophilopoulou 1960; Brandes 2002, 493 n. 63 for a reference in Michael the Syrian to the existence of a pamphlet hostile to Nikephoros, upon which Theophanes' report may have drawn. It is possible to read into the text a forced sale of property to the state at fixed prices, which affected the better-off in particular. See also Ahrweiler 1960, 19f.; Lemerle 1979, 62–4; followed by Oikonomidès 1996a, 39; and 2002b; see discussion and further literature in Brandes 2002, 760. For the population transfer and its implications, see Ditten 1993, pp. 335–52.

[80] Theophanes, 486.10ff., esp. 486.23–6 (Mango and Scott 1997, 667); and the discussion of Lemerle 1979, 62–4; Alexander 1958a, 117ff.; Haldon 1993a, 25–7; 1979, 50–1; Kaplan 1992, 237–8. The report in the *Chronicle of Monembasia* for the year 805 is in some respects similar to that of Theophanes in respect of the re-settlement of parts of the Peloponnese by the Byzantine authorities and by returning emigres from S. Italy: see detailed discussion in Ditten 1993, 334ff., and the two developments may be connected.

[81] There is a problem with the text as it stands, which strictly should mean that the poor themselves would pay the 18½ *nomismata*. The editor emended the text (changing the participle παρέχοντας to παρεχόντων) so that it would refer to the members of the fiscal community instead. This has met with general agreement: see Theophanes (Mango and Scott 1997), n. 4, 669.

applied to members of the community who were also soldiers. The verb in question – *strateuesthai* – may be understood to mean either 'call up' (soldiers already registered), or 'enrol/register' (for the first time). Whichever is preferred, these measures clearly involved the transfer of families from provinces across Asia Minor, and their establishment on new lands in Thrace, on the one hand; on the other, it entailed the establishment of a system of communal financing of such soldiers grounded in the basic fiscal unit (the village) in which the soldiers were themselves registered.[82]

In order to make greater sense of the emperor's measures, the general political military context is relevant. As we have seen in Chapter 4, Byzantine efforts in the Balkans from the mid-780s resulted in the stabilisation of a frontier between the empire and the Bulgars accompanied by a line of fortified posts (Philippoupolis, Beroea, Markellai, and Anchialos). The process of Christianisation of the southern Balkans and those parts of Greece most affected by earlier Slav settlement was also initiated.[83] In 805 Byzantine forces recovered, or at least established their pre-eminence across, most of the Peloponnese, a conquest which was consolidated through the re-populating and garrisoning of towns such as Patras.[84] Nikephoros campaigned without achieving very much in 806–7 and again in 807–8, although at the beginning of this campaign he had to deal with a plot and then return to Constantinople. But in that year the Bulgars defeated a Byzantine force at Strymon, and were able also to capture and destroy the fortress of Serdica.[85]

The warfare in these areas, the efforts of the emperors from the 780s onwards to re-establish a firm control over the area, and the attempt to establish a well-defended and fortified frontier and a stable hinterland, all offer a context for the measures taken by Nikephoros I. There is a clear implication that the state allocated the transferred soldiers to new lands – soldiers were being settled, as soldiers, with all the legal implications entailed in such a move. Soldiers also become for the first time a direct cost to the communities from which they were recruited or into which they were inserted, both in respect of paying for their basic equipment and in terms of covering their taxes. In doing this, Nikephoros was creating a new kind of army, less burdensome to the fisc, with a direct investment in the defence

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[82] See Haldon 1979, 50, n. 87. It might be objected that Theophanes refers to the transfer of people 'from all the *themata*', and hence that the latter already existed. But he uses *themata* throughout his chronicle to refer to the regions in Anatolia where the armies were based, so that his usage in this instance may be equally anachronistic. Recent discussion on the date of *Farmer's Law* (placing it in the later ninth century): Schmick 1999.

[83] Lilie 1996, 183–9; Ivison 2000.

[84] Theoph., 482.25–483.15 (Mango and Scott 1997, 662–3). See Belke 1996; Kislinger 2001.

[85] See Chapter 4, 358; and the discussion in Ditten 1993, 331–5.

of its properties and communities. The measures which Nikephoros implemented affected certain regions in particular, in Asia Minor and in the south Balkans. Macedonia and other regions were, if we follow the logic of the emperor's moves, to receive an army that would be granted lands, in communities that would support it. This army was therefore allocated to a particular region within an existing military command, and 'placed' there, with the specific duty to protect imperial territory by protecting its own lands.

It is in this context that we may better grasp the original significance of the word *thema* itself. The origins of the term are disputed, but it clearly derives from the verb τίθημι, to place, to deposit, to set down or to assign, and this has been taken to refer to the ways in which the late Roman field armies in the east were withdrawn. *Thema* has thus generally been taken to refer to the process and results of the ways in which the government assigned its armies across the provinces in the middle and later seventh century.[86] While we would certainly agree that such a process occurred,[87] we would suggest that, in the light of the actions taken by the emperor Nikephoros, it was only during his reign that the word *thema* was applied to the establishment of soldiers in the provinces, more particularly, to the establishment of a new type of military force in a designated area – even today the term *thema* can refer to an enclosure or a specifically designated area in certain dialects of modern Greek. This usage became current or was first applied only in the early ninth century, because it was directly associated at the same time, and for the first time formally, with the attribution of fiscal responsibilities to the communities from which the soldiers were drawn and to which they belonged: the verb *tithemi* also carries this meaning, and the word *thema* can likewise – for example – refer to a deposit of funds for a particular purpose.[88]

In establishing soldiers and their families in new fiscal communities, specifically ordaining that the poorer soldiers should have their military

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[86] For summary of the discussion, see Haldon 1993a. See Dölger 1955, who derived the word from *tithemi*, in connection with the military registers, and hence with the military lands. Howard-Johnston 1984 argued that the term may be derived from an Altaic word, referring to divisions of 10,000 men; and that it was introduced to the Roman army during the reign of Herakleios, probably by Khazar allies. While ingenious, the argument has not met with general acceptance, the more so since the Greek word, while there is no direct evidence of its evolution or its earlier application in the sense suggested by Dölger, nevertheless provides a plausible explanation.

[87] Argued in detail in Haldon 1979, 1997a and 1999a.

[88] Koder 1990, expanding one aspect of Dölger's argument, in turn based on the work of Kyriakidis 1953: 1962, who also looks at modern meanings of the word. See also *LSJ*, s.v. θέμα; and Koder 1997.

obligations supported from the resources of such fiscal units, Nikephoros I introduced a novel and effective way to recruit and maintain provincial armies and assigned a direct fiscal burden for the equipping and maintenance of soldiers to the affected provinces. It may also be that his measures encouraged a closer identity between soldiers and their homes and communities, to which they were now bound by fiscal ties of solidarity, and that the intention may have been to stiffen resistance to invasion. It further gave the communities which were to support such soldiers a vested interest in their maintenance and efficiency. How rapidly this method of supporting the provincial forces was then applied to other armies is not clear. But the appearance of *protonotarioi* and other fiscal officials associated with these arrangements suggests that it was in fact Nikephoros I who created the first *themata* and who was, therefore, the founder of the so-called 'theme system'.[89]

The status of the properties owned by these soldiers, some of whose taxes were paid by other members of the same fiscal unit, be it a village or some other type of settlement and whose equipment was paid for communally, will in all other respects have been no different from regular private property belonging to a soldier, enjoying the privileged fiscal status (primarily manifested in exemption from extraordinary taxation) traditionally associated with soldiers' property. The soldiers' families continued as before to bear a fiscal burden vis-à-vis the state if they could not provide a soldier. This is in part indirectly confirmed by the titles of the officials associated with provincial military administration, who begin to appear in the sigillographic record only from this time. *Strateutai* and *epoptai* are clearly associated with the recruitment of soldiers, on the one hand, and with the overseeing of the military registers, on the other.[90] Constantine VII's preamble to his novel

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[89] This argument was first suggested in Haldon 1984, 221. The argument presented here should not preclude the possibility that the word *thema* was in day-to-day use for the armies before this time, but it does seem that it receives official recognition only in the early ninth century.

[90] Nearly all known seals of *epoptai* are ninth-century or later. See, e.g., *ZV* nos. 1920, 2068; *DOS* 1, 1. 22; 71. 9; 2, 22. 4; 6–7; 8 (= *ZV* no. 3155); 43. 1; 3, 2. 9; 5, 6. 5. One only is dated to the eighth century: *DOS* 4, 22.15 =*ZV*, no. 2241, but is very similar to a ninth-century seal of the same type (*ZV*, no. 1920). We know of only one (late ninth-century) seal for a *strateutes*: see Laurent, *Orghidan*, no. 218. Officials called *epoptai* were concerned with fiscal assessments in the late Roman period, of course and, with the *exisotai*, were responsible for assessing tax burdens (see, e.g., *CJ* x, 16.13.pr. (a. 496) and the discussion in Dölger 1927, 79ff.): they were responsible to the general bank of the prefecture in the fifth and sixth centuries, and they are still found in the *sekreton* of the *genikon* in the later ninth and tenth centuries – *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 113.30; and comm., 313. But they disappear from the record in the period after the sixth century, and reappear only as officers attached to a particular *thema* in the ninth. A slightly different interpretation: Brandes 2002, 198ff.

'on soldiers', issued between 949 and 959, states explicitly that the practice
of military service based on the possession of land, which was by custom
hedged about with various conditions regarding sale and transmission, was
formalised only in the tenth century.[91] The implication is that, apart from
the establishment of the newly settled soldiers on land given to them (or
sold to them – it is not at all clear from Theophanes' text that they were not
compelled to buy land with the funds released by the sale of their ances-
tral holdings), and apart from the communal fiscal responsibility for their
military expenses (as far as we know now not associated with property but
with persons), the association between state-granted or privately inherited
or obtained land and military service remained informal, but recognised.
Otherwise Constantine VII's statement, to the effect that soldiers have by
long tradition only – not by any legislation, something considered only in
his own reign – been forbidden from alienating the land which supported
their military service, would make no sense.

How widespread was this arrangement at first? As the system became
generalised across the military commands, so they became referred to as
themata, rather than simply as 'commands' (*strategides*). We possess one
important hint in a letter of Theodore of Stoudion, who refers to the 'five
themata' of Asia Minor in a letter written in 819, a text that is problem-
atic if we believe that there were more than five armies called *themata* at
this time.[92] If we understand the word in the sense argued here, then it
seems that the system introduced by Nikephoros was applied within a short
period to the major military divisions of the empire – apart from those in the
Balkans (presumably including at least Thrace), the commands of *Opsikion*,
Anatolikon, *Armeniakon*, *Thrakesion*, and *Boukellarion* were soon maintain-
ing their soldiers on this principle. The division of *Optimates*, established
as a logistical support corps under Constantine V as we have seen,[93] and
the maritime commands recruited from coastal regions, had not yet been
brought into the new arrangements. It is likely, although not always certain,
that new provincial armies were established from the outset on this model.
But good evidence for other Anatolian commands (such as Paphlagonia, for
example) is lacking until somewhat later (see below). In this context also one
may better understand the anachronistic reference in Theophanes, for the
reign of Herakleios, to those parts of Asia Minor referred to as the 'regions

[91] Svoronos, *Novelles* (*JGR* i, 222; trans. McGeer, 71; Dölger, *Reg.*, no. 673).
[92] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* 407. 53 (and Fatouros, comm., 392). This number seems to reflect a real
      situation: according to a later tradition, Bardanios Tourkos was appointed to command five
      Asia Minor *themata* by Nikephoros I. See Theoph. cont., 6, 15f. (and cf. *PmbZ*, no. 766).
[93] Haldon 1984, 223–6.

of the *themata*.[94] The implication of such a phrase is that there were regions which were not 'of the *themata*', that is to say, there were districts within the empire not yet incorporated into this new arrangement when Theophanes was compiling and editing his *Chronographia* in the years following the death of Nikephoros I.

It has now been shown that the generally accepted dating of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij to the early 840s or later is not supported by the evidence, and that in fact the document was drawn up in the reign of Michael I.[95] If we accept this argument, it changes considerably the date at which many military districts were first established or became *themata*, as we will see in what follows. But what is important in this context is that the *Taktikon* already lists many of the major military districts of the empire as *themata*, suggesting that the administrative changes introduced under Nikephoros were applied across the empire, and probably at the same time. The revised dating would in addition provide both a context for the creation of the *Taktikon*, which can be seen in this new light as a necessary step towards recording and managing the new arrangements, as well as support for the contention that the reform was recent and substantial.[96]

What was a *thema*, therefore, at this period, and how was it different from a *strategis*, a command (and its territory)? If we pull together this sparse evidence and combine it with the evidence for changes in fiscal administration, it may be defined by the following criteria:

1. It was a specific territory within which an army was based and recruited, but for the first time now on the basis of communal obligations to support poorer soldiers and pay for their equipment, and communal obligations towards the payment of their public taxes according to the degree to which their own property could or could not support this service.
2. It was fiscally distinct and managed by a *protonotarios*, who was the coordinating link between military requirements and fiscal administration.
3. It had its own officials connected with maintaining the military registers and the tax-assessments of the soldiers' families entered in the registers.

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[94] Theoph., 303.10. Whether Theophanes found the term *thema* in the material he took from George Synkellos is unknown. But since he rarely uses any other term for the imperial forces from Herakleios onwards, yet certainly drew on more than just the material he had from George, it is more probable that he imposed it himself.

[95] Živković 2007.

[96] Živković 2007, esp. 84–5. The fact that the *Taktikon* makes reference only to the *protonotarios* of the *dromos* (*Taktikon* Uspenskij, 57. 24; 59.19), but not to those responsible for the *themata* is, as we have shown in Chapter 10, not a problem: thematic *protonotarioi* were established, or given their new, provincial, roles, within the department of the *genikon*, only after the fiscal measures of Nikephoros had been implemented. See Chapter 10, 679–81.

4. It had its own justice, headed by a *praitor* (later *krites*) (the former provincial governors, as discussed in Chapter 10).
5. It had its own governor, the *strategos*, who was supported by a clerical department under a *kagkellarios*.

The significance of these reforms was that the failings of the traditional military administration were finally recognised and addressed. Provincial recruitment of the field armies had long been the norm, but it was neither reliable nor were the soldiers always adequately equipped. This new set of arrangements seems to have tied soldiers directly into a specific fiscal community, which must of necessity have been taken account of in the tax-registers, in a way which had not been the case before, and it is probably from this time that we must set the establishment of localised district *banda*, or *topoteresiai* as they are called in the tenth century, geographically distinct regions from which particular units were drawn. Theophanes reports that the third 'vexation' imposed by the emperor, closely associated with the communal payment of taxes of poor soldiers, was a general census, which entailed an increase in the rates of taxation. How reliable the report of a tax-increase is remains unclear, but it is apparent that the census, the arrangements for transplanting soldiers (and providing them with properties equivalent to those they had been compelled to sell off), and the process of establishing a communal fiscal responsibility for many of them are part of a closely connected set of measures.

More importantly, although soldiers had become increasingly reliant on their families for the wherewithal to support their military service, this had never been formally recognised – the government still regarded them as full-time, salaried regular armies. The measures taken by Nikephoros were clearly meant to ensure both properly equipped soldiers, because the costs were covered by the soldier's communities, regardless of the soldiers' own financial situation, and a regular, provincially rooted and predictable base for recruitment, directly associated with the fiscal assessment of each basic tax unit, the *chorion*, because a further obvious implication of the measures, if they were to work at all, was that the military registers must now have listed all those families *by fiscal unit* liable to provide a soldier. The increasing use of minuscule script in record-keeping from the later eighth century, which permitted a greater sophistication in the maintenance and structure of tax-registers and similar types of document, may also be considered as part of the general context, and possibly even given some causal weight, in these changes.

The extent to which the new arrangements worked is not clear. In the ill-fated expedition of 811, Theophanes reports that the emperor set out with his forces and 'many poor men armed at their own expense with slings and sticks (who were cursing him as did the soldiers)'.[97] In the passage describing the later defeat and massacre of the same army, these 'poor men' are not mentioned specifically, the implication being that they are to be counted among the soldiers.[98] This may perhaps refer to these new recruits, and – if Theophanes' text is to be taken at face value – they were poorly equipped. If it is not simply a *topos* taken from the *Vita Philareti*, a passage in the *Vita Eustratii* involves the saint giving his horse to an impoverished soldier whose horse has died and who cannot afford a new one. By the later ninth century the emperor Leo VI was encouraging the provincial *strategos* to require the wealthier in his district to provide mounts and equipment or resources for a soldier, thus arming poor but registered *stratiotai* through wealthy, unregistered persons: to what extent this reflects the fact that the existing arrangements of communal fiscal support for soldiers was being ignored by those in a position to do so remains unclear, but seems likely; and a letter attributed to the patriarch Nikolaos I pleads the case of a widow who does not have the means to equip her son for the military service he owes.[99]

While soldiers raised on either the traditional pattern or the reformed model of Nikephoros appear during the eighth and first part of the ninth century to have constituted the majority of the provincial armies of the empire (although the evidence is very sparse), many were also recruited as mercenaries and as full-time professionals, so that a number of different categories of soldier existed side by side. In addition, it should be remembered that there were often very considerable differences among the provincial registered soldiers – some relatively well-off, others quite impoverished. The late ninth- or early tenth-century military treatise, the so-called *Taktika* of the emperor Leo VI, notes that the thematic authorities (represented by the commander-in-chief, the *strategos*) should select troops for call-up with care, making sure that only those most able to serve and maintain and equip themselves appropriately should be drafted for the campaigning season.[100]

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[97] Theoph. 490 (Mango and Scott 1997, 672).

[98] The *Script. incertus*, a near-contemporary account at origin (see Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 179–80), and other texts describing the battle refer only to the soldiers and officers. On the text and its history see also Stephenson 2006.

[99] See Leo, *Takt.*, xviii. 129; xx. 205; *V. Eustratii*, 377. 3–6; Darrouzès 1960, II, 50 (130f.).

[100] Leo, *Takt.*, iv, 1; and cf. epilog. 57.

The military authorities were responsible for carrying out such assessments, and for adjusting the draft to ensure that those who were too poor properly to support their military service were maintained by their better-off (or unregistered) neighbours. At the same time, there is some slight evidence from both the later eighth and the ninth century that occasionally the government expanded this recruitment base by drafting in new soldiers, to be registered on the military rolls. The emperor Leo IV, for example, is reported to have recruited substantial numbers of soldiers into both provincial and Constantinopolitan units.

Whether Nikephoros I recruited 'the poor' in general, or simply called up poor but already registered soldiers, the refilling of the military registers is mentioned on several occasions during the ninth century. Basil I undertook a major recruitment programme, and the chroniclers note that the reason was that the previous emperor, Michael III, had allowed the military rolls to decline, suggesting in turn that regular replenishing of the military register by recruitment drives of one sort or another (attracting volunteers or by conscription) was an established practice.[101] Whether such accusations against Michael III are plausible or not, it is likely that however broad the original registers may have been, natural wastage would inevitably have reduced the effective recruitment base over more than a generation or two. As military service and land – the means of its support – became ever more closely associated, it is likely also that the fiscal officials would have made sure that these new draftees possessed an appropriate income. By the middle of the tenth century, it had become clear that the best way to achieve this was formally to associate military service with the holdings which could support it.[102]

The multiplication of military divisions

So far, then, there is no evidence that, until the early ninth century, military divisions were anything other than military command regions made up of a number of provinces, to which they gave their name (after the first 'field' armies), or from which they took their name (the later 'geographical' armies). Provincial *strategoi* had military powers only, although

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[101] Leo IV: Theoph., 449 (Mango and Scott 1997, 620); Basil I: Theoph. cont., 265, 266. Note also the discussion in Kaplan 1992, 237f.
[102] See Haldon 1993a, 20–41.

of course, and as noted already, they could readily impose themselves on the civil authorities. Thus there are high-ranking *archontes* for Hellas (a seal dated variously from the late seventh to mid-eighth century), *Kibyrrhaiotai*, and Crete,[103] for example, who have been thought by many to confuse the issue[104] – but who in fact may be understood simply as civil-military governors or indigenous warlords for the regions in question, possibly complementing or replacing a normal *strategos*. The *strategos* of Crete and the *archon* co-existed in the ninth century.[105] Local leaders were often appointed as *archontes* to special jurisdictions, either within an existing administrative entity, in command of particular ethnic groups, for example, technically (but not necessarily actually) subordinate to imperial authority, or merely as a token recognition of their acceptance of imperial authority, as with the *archontes* in Hellas, or those of Dalmatia and other coastal districts in the Balkans, or the various *archontes* of the Sklaviniai in Macedonia and Thessaly in the later seventh and eighth centuries, some of whom were in effect federate allies of the empire, their 'tribal' names mentioned on the lead seals of their *archontes*.[106] While such evidence certainly shows that the armies also had acquired a distinct geographical identity – the officers in question are not referred to as belonging to a civil province, for example – it must not imply any new 'thematic' administration. As we have suggested, the hierarchy of military and administrative officials was highly personalised and dependent upon the court and upon patronage and influence,[107] so that a region could well have been referred to as an army in both the military

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[103] *ZV* 2300 (*archon* of Hellas); *ZV* 2408 (*archon* of *Kibyrrhaiotai*); *ZV* 1782, 2645, 2001a and b (*archontes* of Crete, eighth–ninth c.). See *DOSeals* II, 94ff.

[104] E.g. Hunger, in *BZ* 68 (1975) 137.

[105] *Takt.* Usp., 49.18; 53.5. See also Cheynet 2001, no. 38, for a seventh-century seal of Michael, *archon* of Isauria; or *DOSeals* III, 24.1, a seal of Maurianos, *archon* of Lydia (seventh–eighth century) and Voegtli 1993, no. 2 (an early eighth-century seal from Pergamon for Thalassios, *stratelates* and *archon* of Lydia). We do not believe that these *archontes* represented a sort of transitional administrative form between province and *thema*, a view still found in some of the literature: see, e.g., Pillon 2005, 75–6. Sardinia had both a *doux* and *archontes*, for example, in the later seventh and eighth centuries: see n. 24 above.

[106] See esp. Seibt 1999, 2003; Ferluga 1992; and the discussion of *DOSeals* II, 23f., with respect to the eighth-century *archontes* of Hellas who were probably semi-independent lords of the Slav populations of specific regions both within and neighbouring the *strategis* (and see *ibid.*, no. 8.2; and Oikonomidès 1994a). For other *archontes*, in the Peloponnese and Thrace, for example, see Curta 2004, esp. 177–9; and for those of the north-western Balkan region (Serbian and Croatian), see Živković 2002, esp. 83–4.

[107] It has generally been assumed, for example, although without any grounds, that an *archontia* always precedes the establishment of a *thema*, as a sort of preliminary or transitional organisational stage: see *ZV* i, 1311; Bury 1911, 13; Winkelmann 1985, 97–8, à propos the *Karabisianoi/Kibyrrhaiotai* problem.

and territorial sense, while still having officers from the older civil administrative bureaux. In southern Italy and Sicily traditional Latin nomenclature seems to have survived alongside newer Greek titles.[108]

New military divisions appear at the end of the eighth century and during the ninth. The army of Kephallenia, traditionally thought to have been established in the first years of the ninth century, certainly by 810,[109] seems in fact to be an earlier creation, perhaps of the time of Constantine V or Leo IV.[110] The army of the Peloponnesos appears in the sources shortly thereafter. A *strategos* of the Peloponnese is named for the years 805 and 811 in connection with the campaigns of Nikephoros I; there is no real evidence that this refers to anything more than a military commander with troops from or based in that area participating in a particular expedition, although following that emperor's fiscal and military reforms the Peloponnese may have been established from this period as a fiscal entity also.[111] Seals of officers connected with the Peloponnese army (*tourmarchai, strategoi*) datable to the first half of the ninth century, and the appearance of the *patrikios kai strategos Peloponnesou* in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, make it probable that it was indeed established by Nikephoros I or shortly before his reign. Indeed, a date for the first stages of this in the mid-780s is possible, following the campaign of Staurakios in 784 against the Slavs of the Peloponnese, accompanying the establishment of an army in Kephallenia at about the same time, and as part of a strategic initiative to deal more effectively with the inland populations who threatened both the re-assertion of imperial authority over the Peloponnese as well as the coastal bases from which this could be launched.[112] Likewise the earliest references to an army of Macedonia lie in this period, for 813, with the command itself having been established probably between 789 and 802;[113] as well as to those of

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[108] See Guzzetta 1999, nos. 3–5 (eighth–ninth-c. seals of *doukes* as well as of a *basilikos spatharios, dioiketes,* and *rector* of Calabria). See the *dioiketai* listed in Brandes 2002, s.v.

[109] *Annales Regni Franc.*, 130.27f. and *SBS* 6, 78, no. 3: seal of Leo, imperial *strator* and *tourmarches* of Kephallenia, dated to the later eighth century. See *DOSeals* II, 1.15.

[110] See *TIB* 3, 52, 175; Winkelmann 1985, 103; *DOSeals* II, 1ff.; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel,* no. 238 (late eighth-century seal of a *chartoularios* of Kephallenia), with comm., 233.

[111] See Winkelmann 1983, 125f.; 1985, 104–5 with older literature and sources; Belke 1996.

[112] *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.11; Winkelmann 1985, 104f.; the regions which made up the original administrative unit of the Peloponnese were probably under the authority of the command of Hellas until they became a separate administration. See *DOSeals* II, 22f., and for seals and discussion, 62ff.; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel,* no. 345; with Oikonomidès 1999. For the view that this *thema* was established in the years 784–8, see Živković 1999. We would, of course, see it initially as a command (*strategis*), not a *thema*.

[113] The late eighth-century seal of David, imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of Macedonia, is the earliest clear evidence for a date under Eirene and/or Constantine: Seibt and Wassiliou,

Thessaloniki (by 836, probably already by 824),[114] and of Dyrrhachion (by the 820s).[115] It is interesting that increasing evidence becomes available at or shortly after this time for the re-opening of a number of important land-routes across the southern Balkan region, both westwards and northwards out of the Byzantine sphere.[116] The creation of an army of Paphlagonia has been dated to the period from 815/20 to 826, on the basis of a mention in the mid-ninth-century *Life* of Theodore of Stoudios.[117] Even if this evidence is not entirely reliable (a *katepano* of Paphlagonia also occurs during the ninth century, as an officer whose existence has been connected with a naval command, but whose existence may simply be evidence of the lack of uniformity of thematic military and civil administration),[118] by the time of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, the *strategos* of Paphlagonia is firmly attested.[119]

As the ninth century progressed, so larger territorial armies were reduced in size as sections of them became independent commands – not necessarily under *strategoi*, for smaller regional commands known as *kleisourarchiai* were also established, autonomous border districts established to guard especially sensitive passes and outposts. Thus the naval command of Samos, possibly the same as the command of 'the Gulf' under a *drouggarios* who appears in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, was created in the middle to late eighth century, presumably as a strategic complement to the *Aigaion Pelagos* command: its autonomy, like that of the *Aigaion Pelagos*, is reflected in its own entry in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij.[120] The corps later to become the *thema*

Bleisiegel, no. 322, with comm. In Theoph., 501.1 (Mango and Scott 1997, 684) and the *Script. incertus*, 337. The reference in Theoph., 475.22 (Mango and Scott 1997, 654), for the year 802, to a *monostrategos* of Thrace and Macedonia may refer to a commander of the forces from the newly established command of Macedonia together with Thrace; it may equally refer to an officer in charge of these regions before 'Macedonia' existed as a theme. See Winkelmann 1985, 91. For seals of officers probably from the Macedonian thematic establishment, see *ibid.*, 101–2. Again, there is no doubt of its thematic administrative existence by the time of the compilation of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.9. See also *DOSeals* I, 110f.

[114] Oikonomidès 1972, 352, and n. 365; *DOSeals* I, 50–1.

[115] See Ferluga 1964 (who prefers a very early date – under Nikephoros I, with which we would agree: See *PmbZ* no. 8462); see Oikonomidès 1972, 352; Winkelmann 1985, 107–8; *DOSeals* I, 40. For Nikopolis, raised later to thematic status, see Basiliou-Seibt 2007; Trombley 2007.

[116] See McCormick 2001, 531ff.

[117] Treadgold 1980, see 286–7; and *V. Theod. Stud.* 309C. The latter is the earlier of two extant *Lives*, but was not written before 855 (see Beck 1959, 504 with literature), and it may be that the reference is anachronistic. See the remarks of Winkelmann 1985, 110, where the sigillographic evidence is also presented; and Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 275–85.

[118] Theoph. cont., 123.4. For the naval command, see *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 231.25 and Oikonomidès 1972, 346. For a summary of the sigillographic material, see *DOSeals* IV, 11.

[119] *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.7; 57.1.

[120] See above on *Kibyrrhaiotai*; and *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 53.18 and 19 for the two *drouggarioi* of *Aigaion Pelagos* and the Gulf respectively. The first *strategos* of Samos appears in 899: see

of Strymon, operating between the Byzantine districts of Macedonia and Thessaloniki, may have been a *kleisoura* of Macedonia in the eighth century, and had possibly been established as such as early as the time of Justinian II. It makes no appearance in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, but is listed in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos in 899. A seal of an officer who bears the title 'imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of the Strymon' dated to the first half of the ninth century, and a reference in Theophanes to the army of the Strymon and its *strategos* for the year 808/9, would suggest an early foundation, however.[121] Better known examples are found in the ninth century. Such were Kappadokia, Seleukeia, and Charsianon. The first, called *mikre* or lesser Kappadokia, was originally a *kleisoura*, possibly formed from the areas later to become the *tourmai* of Koron and Nigde (between 806 and 813) in the *Anatolikon thema*, but by the 830s may have had a *strategos*, with the addition of other districts (possibly including Loulon in the *Anatolikon* and Kasse in the *Armeniakon*).[122] Seleukeia was a *kleisoura* from the late

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Kletorologion of Philotheos, 101.28; Oikonomidès 1972, 352. No text specifies that 'the Gulf' and the Samos commands are equivalent, but this is generally accepted by all commentators, although Treadgold 1980, 278, suggests the Gulf of Attaleia/Pamphylia, which may well be more probable. This command would then be entirely separate from those already discussed, and seems not to have attained a longer-term independent existence. This identification would also remove any evidence for the establishment of the independent command of Samos before 899. For 'the Gulf' as equivalent to the later command of Samos, however, see *DO Seals* II, 110–11.

[121] The date in the time of Justinian II is Toynbee's hypothesis, based on *De Them.*, ii, 50; Theoph., 364.15–17 (Mango and Scott 1997, 508) (Toynbee 1973, 268, and cf. 90). As with several other districts, an *archon* of Strymon is also known, from the ninth century: see *DOSeals* I, no. 37.1 and discussion on p. 104. For the ninth-century seal, *DOC* 1, no. 37.3; and cf. Theoph. 484.29–485.3 (Mango and Scott 1997, 664–5). Such an early date remains problematic for the date of composition of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij, of course: see Živković 2007, 62–5.

[122] See *DAI*, cap. 50.92ff. and comm., 189; Oikonomidès 1972, 348, and n. 343; Ahrweiler 1974, 217f.; and Ferluga 1953, 82ff.; Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 259–74; Yannopoulos 2001. In the *Taktikon* Uspenskij there is no *strategos* for Kappadokia in the ms., although a *tourmarches* is given (55.21). Oikonomidès 1972, 48, n. 24 (to *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.6), arguing that the *thema* probably existed as early as the year 830 (see Theoph. cont., 120; Kedrenos ii, 127: but this is a highly tendentious and legendary account about the return to Byzantium of the general Manuel, recalled from his exile with the Arabs by the emperor Theophilos, which Bury 1912, 222, n. 5 dismissed as unreliable), wishes to emend the text and add a *strategos*; similarly, he corrects 55.21 from the *tourmarches* to the *tourmarchai*, in order to make the text conform to the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (a.899). But as Winkelmann 1985, 112, points out, this is to force a regular pattern upon the administrative structures of the Byzantine state which it probably never possessed; while the Arab geographers upon whom this argument also rests are not entirely reliable in this respect (and are certainly ambiguous as to its status – the earlier refer to the region as a *kleisoura*, the later – mid-tenth century – as a *thema*). It is equally possible that the *tourmarches* was singled out in the *Taktikon* Uspenskij because it was particularly important at that moment, but had not yet been raised to independent status. The simplest solution is to accept Živković's proposal, that the *Taktikon* Uspenskij is in fact to

eighth century, but became a *thema* only during the reign of Romanos I.[123] Charsianon was in origin a *tourma* of the *Armeniakon* army, but may have become a *kleisoura* as early as 793/4. By 873 it was a *thema*.[124]

In a similar way the soldiers of the district of Chaldia, originally part of the *Armeniakon*, appear by the late eighth century to have attained a degree of independence: seals of *doukes* of the corps, as well as seals of officers normally associated with the military establishment (*tourmarches, komes tes kortes*), all from the later eighth and first half of the ninth century, suggest that we are dealing here with a purely military structure. There are no references to officials who might be connected yet with a permanent civil administrative establishment. *Archontes* had also held (and may have continued to hold) office until the time of the compilation of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij (thus either in the period *c.* 809–28 or early 840s),[125] when a *strategos* is first attested. He re-appears in the year 867, and it is generally assumed that the regular thematic arrangements were then in place.[126] The units associated with the region Koloneia, also part of the *Armeniakon* division, similarly had a *doux* and an *archon* during the ninth century, before appearing as a *thema* in the 860s.[127]

be placed in the reign of Michael I: this would render its reference to the region as a *tourma* perfectly intelligible and avoid emending the text: see Živković 2007, 59–61. Similarly, there is no reason to assume that all *themata* always had more than one *tourma*. See also Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 259–74. For an early foundation for the *thema*, and based upon Oikonomidès' argument (and accepting the tendentious reports concerning the general Manuel's return), see Yannopoulos 2001. See also *DOSeals* IV, 43.

123 Cf. Honigmann 1935, 42f.; Pertusi, *De Thematibus*, 147–8; Oikonomidès 1972, 350; Ferluga 1953, 80. The late eighth-century date is suggested by a seal of that period of Sisinnios, *hypatos, basilikos spatharokandidatos kai kleisourarches Seleukeias*, which also evidences the high rank such an officer might on occasion hold. See *ZV* 3178; and for further seals and literature, Winkelmann 1985, 111.

124 Honigmann 1935, 49–51; *DAI* cap. 50.90 and comm. 188–9; Ferluga 1953, 79f.; Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 299–305; *DOSeals* IV, 40. There are problems with all the earlier references, however, and an early independent status as a *kleisourarchia* must remain uncertain. See Winkelmann 1985, 114–15, for further sigillographica materials and discussion.

125 See *ZV* 3088A (late C.8); 3226A (C.9); Konstantopoulos, *Molybdoboulla*, 158a (late C.8) (*doukes*) and Schlumberger, *Sig.*, 289, 1 (C.8–9) (turmarch [or *kommerkiarios*: see Winkelmann 1985, 107]) and 289, 2; 331 (late C.8–9) (*komes tres kortes*, or 'count of the tent', an adjutant to the thematic *strategos*). See *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.10 (*patrikios kai strategos*); 53.4 (*doux Chaldias*) and 55.2 (ex-*archontes*) (and note Oikonomidès 1972, 55, nn. 33 and 37; 59, n. 43). See Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 287–97. On the possible earlier date of *Takt. Usp.*, see Živković 2007.

126 See Georg. mon. cont., 839.17f.; Ps.-Symeon, 687, 21f.; Leo Gramm., 253.14f.). Seal of a *strategos*: *ZV* 2137A (C.9). Oikonomidès 1972, 349, and nn. 349, 350 prefers an early date – 824 – for the probable thematic foundation; Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 287–97. Note also Živković 2007, 59f.

127 See Winkelmann 1985, 114, for the seals and other textual evidence; Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 321–9; Oikonomidès 1972, 349, and n. 345, notes that Mas'udi, writing in the later tenth

Outlying regions of the empire were also affected by the establishment of 'thematic' military forces on their territory. Cherson remained under *archontes*, who seem to have been little more than nominal imperial representatives, until the establishment of a more permanent imperial presence in the form of a *strategos* and troops under Theophilos in about 833.[128] But whether this is equivalent to the establishment of a *thema* in the administrative sense seems rather unlikely: the local population remained relatively autonomous under its own leaders, the *archontes*, as the tenth-century account of Constantine VII suggests. The *strategos ton klimaton* (of the districts) for the area around the city of Cherson seems to reflect a separate command area, distinct from the city and district of Cherson itself, reaching from the Cimmerian Bosphorus up to the Crimea.[129]

In Dalmatia there appears also to have been an *archon* representing Byzantine interests, but there is direct evidence of a *strategos* only in 878, although it has been argued that in fact the *archontia* of Dalmatia had become a *thema* and had an army under a *strategos* by *c.* 817–21. In the interim there is a possibility that a Byzantine officer with the title of *doux* played a military role.[130] Crete had a Byzantine presence, represented by an *archon* until into the ninth century, although military commanders were also present on the island until its final conquest by the Andalusian Muslims in the late 820s.[131] If the *Taktikon* Uspenskij is indeed to be dated to the

century, refers to Koloneia as a 'district', which may refer to its status as a *kleisourarchia*. See Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, 321–9.

[128] Oikonomidès 1972, 353, argues for *c.* 833, following Theoph. cont., 123.19–124.5 and *DAI*, cap. 42 (184), both accounts based on the same source (see *DAI*, comm., 154f.). See also Pertusi, *De Thematibus*, 182–3; comm., 153–6, 205ff.; Ferluga 1953, 89ff.; Toynbee 1973, 270. Treadgold 1980, 278, and n. 32, prefers 839/40 for the establishment of the *thema* of the *klimata*. On the basis of the textual evidence cited, this seems an acceptable date for the appointment of a military commander and force of troops to watch over Byzantine interests in and around Cherson. Whether it is good evidence that this area was a *thema* in the administrative sense (it is not referred to as such) remains more doubtful. See *DOSeals* I, 182–3; and Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou 1998. For further seals of *archontes* of Cherson from the later eighth century, see *SBS* 6, 71–2; and Alekseenko 2003.

[129] See *DAI*, cap. 53 (286); comm., 209, and the discussion in Živković 2007, 52–8. For the *strategos ton klimaton*, see *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.19. For seals of *archontes* and *strategoi*, see esp. Winkelmann 1985, 113. No seal bears the title *strategos ton klimaton*, only that of *strategos Chersonos;* although two seals do bear the appellation. . . . of the *klimata*. See *DOSeals* I, no. 81.1, and discussion with literature at 182, and Sokolova 1983, no. 14; see also Sokolova 1991, 205ff.

[130] For the *archon* see *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 57.12. See Winkelmann 1985, 116–17 and *DOSeals* I, 14.1–5 and 46 for seals of officers. For the history of the region, see esp. Ferluga 1992b, together with the review by W. Seibt, in *JÖB* 30 (1981) 338–9; and the important discussion in Živković 2007, 73–82.

[131] See, e.g., *ZV* 2645, 2646, 2001, 1782 and the seals cited by Winkelmann 1985, 101, for *archontes* of the eighth- first quarter of the ninth century. Oikonomidès 1972, 353, citing the

reign of Michael I, then a *strategos* is firmly attested, and the presence of a *tourmarches* of Crete (a seal of an officer dated to the first half of the ninth century) is evidence for the presence of an independent army in the province.[132] Cyprus similarly had a Byzantine presence, but it was for the most part of a non-military nature, for the island was partitioned in respect of revenue according to an agreement made in 688/9.[133] Seals of *archontes* and eparchs for the period from the seventh through to the later ninth century are illustrative.[134] According to the tenth-century report in the *De Thematibus*, Basil I had re-taken the island in the period 874–80 and a *strategos* had been appointed. Thereafter Byzantine authority lapsed, and it is unclear whether the traditional arrangements were re-established or not. The island was definitively taken by Byzantine forces in 965.[135]

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This evidence illustrates two points. In the first place, it shows that officers entitled *strategos* were placed in charge of provincial armies, although whereas some bore also the name of the army and were thus appointed as permanent commanders, there were many *strategoi* attached on a temporary basis to particular commands, localised both in time and to a specific campaign or task. Second, it shows that while the districts across which armies were based by the later seventh century came to be referred to collectively by the name of that army – *Anatolikon, Opsikion*, and so forth – the fiscal and provincial administrative structures which predated these arrangements continued to operate, albeit in a form which had evolved to meet the demands of the times, and directed from the various central

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mention of a certain *archisatrapes* on Crete, asumes that he is the first *strategos* to be referred to in the sources; but this could be any military officer (see the comment of Treadgold 1980, 279). Other seals and discussion: *DOSeals* II, nos. 36.1ff., and 94f., for summary of literature and sources.

[132] See *ZV* 2059 for the turmarch. The seal may equally be that of a subordinate of the *strategos* appointed for 843, if we accept the arguments made by Bury 1911, 14, and the traditional dating of this text to the early 840s at the earliest: see *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 49.18; Herrin 1986; and the literature in Winkelmann 1985, 101, n. 1. If we accept the re-dating of the *Taktikon* Uspenskij to the reign of Michael I, following Živković 2007, however, the problem is resolved, since the text would reflect the situation prior to the Arab conquest.

[133] See Haldon 1997a, 70–2 and nn. 77, 79.

[134] Winkelmann 1985, 115–16; Metcalf, *Cyprus*, nos. 141–5, for local fiscal officers (*dioiketai*) and nos. 150–5 for seals of *drouggarioi* found on the island (although without a provincial designation), dating to the seventh–ninth centuries. A seal of Theodore, (*kandidatos*?) and *kleisourarches* (again with no province/thematic designation) from Cyprus, dated approx. *c*. 800–50, may well indicate a short-term military arrangement: see Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 212. For the *archon* of Cyprus see *Taktikon* Uspenskij, 57.15.

[135] *De Them.*, 81.20–3. See Oikonomidès 1972, 353, for literature; and *DOSeals* II, 101, and discussion.

1	Opsikion	9	Thrakesion	17	Aigaion Pelagos
2	Boukellarion	10	Kibyrrhaiotai		(Aegean Sea)
3	Optimaton	11	Thrake	18	Sicily
4	Paphlagonia	12	Makedonia	19	Kephallenia
5	Armeniakon	13	Thessaloniki	20	Calabria
6	Chaldia	14	Hellas	21	Dyrrhachion
7	Kappadokia	15	Peloponnesos	22	Dalmatia
8	Anatolikon	16	Samos	23	Cherson/Klimata
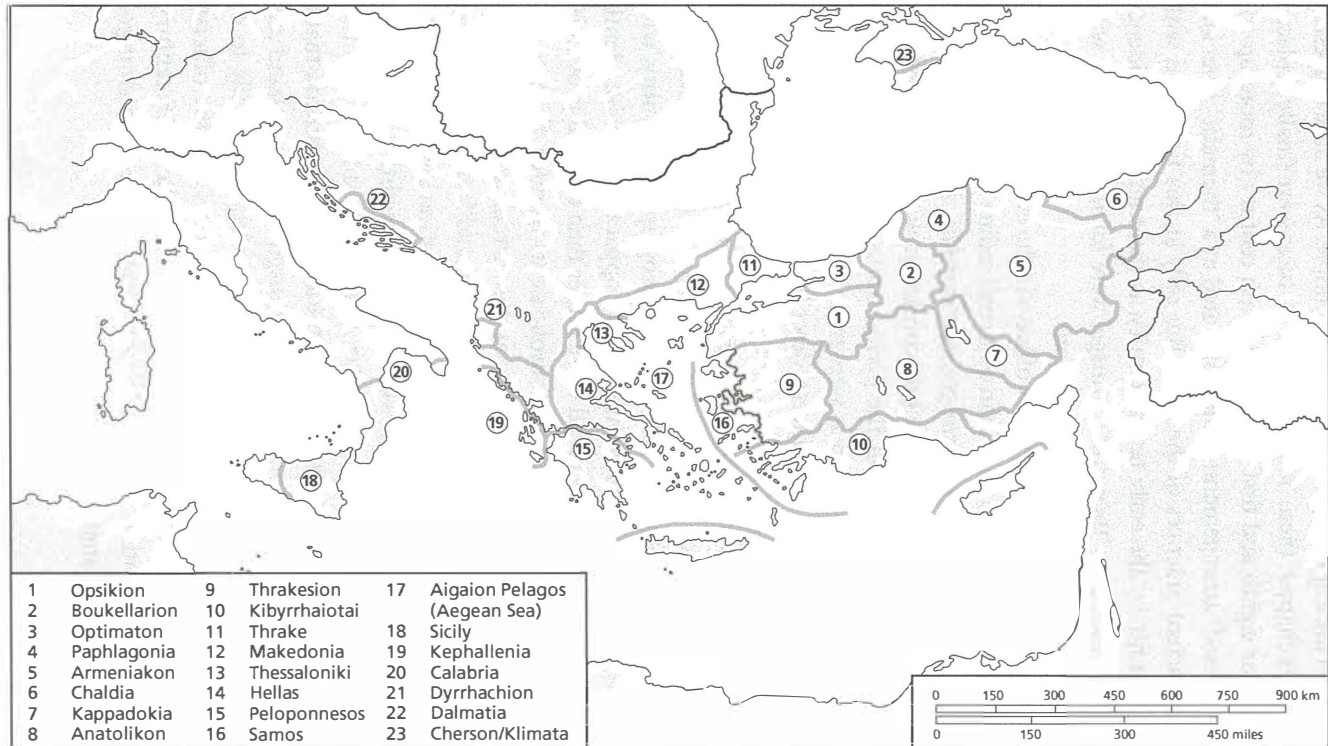
Map 7. *Themata* and other territories *c.* 840

departments in the imperial palace at Constantinople. As we have suggested in the previous chapter, these 'late Roman' structures were finally replaced during the later eighth and first half of the ninth century by more up-to-date, 'rationalised' arrangements which operated at a 'thematic' level and reflected the actual practices of the time. But only at this time, and with any certainty only by the early tenth century, is there any clear evidence to suggest that the (now 'thematic') *strategoi* were formally invested with anything other than purely military functions.

For none of the references to military officers in the evidence mentioned so far need refer to anything other than a normal military connotation for the *strategides* and the officers – *strategoi*, *tourmarchai*, *drouggarioi* and so on – associated with them. It is entirely consistent with this material to argue that the armies throughout the period up to the later eighth century and possibly later in some areas were merely regional military corps, with their appropriate staffs and officers, described by regional names, but with no implication that any judicial and administrative functions were attached to the functions of *strategos*, for example. In parallel, the regions these forces were allocated or had come to occupy had in the meantime and by the early eighth century evolved a clear geographical identity, with a slowly evolving civil and fiscal administrative apparatus likewise identi-fied by the name of the division based there rather than original provincial descriptions. As the empire began to consolidate its frontier districts and re-incorporate formerly marginal territories, new circumscriptions deter-mined by the presence of the army and the areas it could firmly control were created, and in turn the appropriate fiscal administration was introduced.

It was, therefore, only during the last years of the eighth century with the gains made in the Balkans in particular under Eirene and Constantine VI, and as entirely new territory was taken under imperial control, that a real coincidence between the command of a *strategis* on the one hand and a civil administrative circumscription on the other began formally to be recognised. The appearance of *protonotarioi* of *themata* and the officials associated with them, starting in the second decade of the ninth century, followed by the attribution of the title *anthypatos* to thematic *strategoi*, marks this period of change.

The substructures of provincial military administration

The armies and their districts as we know them during the eighth and ninth century, whether in the form of geographical-administrative units or as

armies in the simplest sense, were divided into sub-units or divisions which had initially a tactical significance alone, but which eventually assumed also a geographical-administrative significance. But following the conclusions regarding the reforms of Nikephoros I, which entailed the establishment of a formal association between soldiers, their equipment and support, and their fiscal community, we would argue that the territorial sub-divisions of *themata* evolved alongside the process of 'thematisation' of the empire's main armies, in particular as units came to be identified with the fiscal communities or groups of fiscal communities which supported them. Unless they already possessed specific divisional names – such as the *tourmai* of the *Theodosiakoi*, or the *Victores*, which appear in a tenth-century text referring to the *Thrakesion* army; or the *Foederati*, in *Anatolikon*, or the *Boukellarioi*, or *Optimates*, in the *Opsikion* region, names inherited and maintained from the sixth century, or were appointed to specific commands within a command, such as a particular fortress[136] – they would simply be the *tourmai* of such-and-such an army. Only as the military commands adopted a fiscal-geographical appearance did the *tourmai* and *banda* receive a geographical identity (as reflected in a passage of the mid-tenth-century *On Imperial Administration*, for example).

There is little Byzantine evidence for these arrangements until the tenth century, unfortunately, and so we are constrained to use somewhat later evidence retrospectively, always a risky undertaking. But combined with the evidence of the lead seals of officers of the provincial establishment, and with that of the ninth- and tenth-century Arab geographers, who provide valuable information about the command structure of the Byzantine forces, at least in its ideal form, we can draw some limited conclusions. Ibn Khurradadhbi, for example, writing in the last twenty years or so of the ninth century, describes things as follows:

the *patrikios* commands 10,000 men; he has two turmarchs under his command, commanding 5,000 men each; each turmarch has under his orders 5 drungars in charge of 1,000 men each; under the command of each drungar are 5 *komites* in charge of 200 men each; each *komes* commands 5 kentarchs with 40 men each, and each kentarch has under his command 4 dekarchs with 10 men each.

The same description is given by Kudama, writing in the first half of the tenth century.[137] His figures vary from those given in the *Taktika* of Leo

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[136] On which see the evidence presented below; and Haldon 1984.

[137] Ibn Khurradadhbi, 84; Kudama, 196. Ibn Khurradadhbi also includes older and in part contradictory information, from a different source, including, for example, a reference to a group of twelve *patrikioi* who are the main governors of the empire, and another list of six

VI, compiled *c.* 900, in which the chain of command for a *thema* of 4,000 cavalry is described: 2 *tourmai* of 2,000 men, each consisting of 2 *drouggoi* or chiliarchies of 1,000, subdivided into 5 units of 200 men under *komites* (*banda*), each *bandon* consisting of 2 groups of 100 under *kentarchoi*, further grouped into units of 50, 10 and 5.[138] Nevertheless, apart from the size of the *tourmai*, and of the units under the *kentarchoi*, the two descriptions are close. And the tactical structure is itself not to be doubted – *thema*, *tourmai*, *drouggoi*, *banda*, and their commanders are all attested in the sigillographic record as well as in literary accounts, the last two from the sixth century and before as popular expressions for different types of unit.[139]

While the sources are unclear as to the exact process, it is clear that by the middle of the ninth century the terms *bandon* and *tourma* referred also to territorial entities – geographically identifiable districts with an administrative competence of some sort. We know from tenth-century sources that the recruitment and maintenance of ordinary soldiers was organised through *tourmai*, or 'divisions', in turn subdivided into *banda*, referred to from the administrative point of view as *topoteresiai*, which were distinct geographic entities consisting of a group of localities made up in their turn of a group of fiscal districts. The *drouggos* (loosely rendered as 'brigade') does not appear to have possessed any geographical identity, and referred to a tactical-organisational body only, whose officers were probably attached to the permanent staff of the theme *strategos*.[140] This is perhaps borne out by the fact that in the *Vita* of Philaretos, written in the early ninth century, the *chiliarchos* – the equivalent of *drouggarios* – visits the local units to inspect their weapons and check their readiness before the muster is completed.[141] The officers commanding such *banda*,

senior commanders in the provinces (80–1). The archaic list includes the *patrikios* of Amorion, the *patrikios* of Ankara, the *patrikios* of *Armeniakon*, the *patrikios* of Thrace, the *patrikios* of Sicily, the *patrikios* of Sardinia. For discussion, see Oikonomidès 1964.

138 *Takt.*, xix, 149.

139 Thus the late sixth-century *Strategikon*, which presents a schema in which the army is divided into brigades, or *moirai* and divisions or *mere*, regularly uses *drouggos* for both when drawn up in non-linear formation (i, 3.6; ii, 1.6; ii, 2.1; xii, 8.20/7–8). The first reference to a *tourmarches* is for 626/7 (Theoph. 325.3 [Mango-Scott 1997, 453]): George, *tourmarches ton Armeniakon*; the first reference to a *drouggarios* is to Theodotos, the *megaloprepestatos drouggarios*, who accompanied the *magister militum* Elias on an embassy to the Persian king Siroes in 626 (*Chron. Pasch.*, 731.5). It is apparent that *drouggos* had already achieved a semi-official status as the term for a group of *banda* by this time; while *turma*, which had until at least the fifth century meant officially a cavalry troop of some thirty or so soldiers (cf. Webster 1969, 146ff.), had evolved and been applied to much larger mounted divisions.

140 *DAI*, 50.91–110; commentary, 189; Ahrweiler 1960, 80f.; *Const. Porph.*, *Three treatises*, 257–8.

141 See *PmbZ*, no. 11112 (Anon.). There are no seals of *chiliarchiai* for this period, but there exist many for *drouggarioi*, (i) without any localisation, (ii) as well as of a particular *thema* or a

the smallest independent unit in the army, were generally referred to as
komites, occasionally and archaisingly as *tribounoi*, and there is plenty of
evidence for their existence throughout the seventh, eighth, and ninth cen-
turies and afterwards in the sigillographical as well as the documentary
record.[142] Their exact role in peacetime remains unknown, whereas at least
in the later ninth and tenth centuries their senior officers, the *tourmarchai*,
had a clear administrative and judicial as well as a military function.[143]

specific place or region. For a sample of seals of the group (i), see, e.g., Oikonomidès 1993a,
190 (no. 1151: seventh-c. seal of Baanes, *drouggarios*; *ZV* 808 (seventh-c. seal of Gabriel,
drouggarios [cf. Sode, *Bleisiegel*, no. 265]); 1551 (seventh-c. seal of Mauritanos, *drouggarios*);
1610 (700–50, seal of Stephanos, *drouggarios*) (and cf. Schlumberger, *Sig.*, 337
[seventh/eighth-c. seals of Stephanos, *drouggarios* and of Gregorios, *drouggarios*]); 1918A,
2011, 2106 (eighth-c. seals of George, John, and Leo, all *drouggarios*); 2165 (750–850, seal of
Matthias, imperial *mandator/kandidatos* [?] and *drouggarios*); 2184, 2238, 2530
(eighth–ninth-c. seals of Michael, Niketas, and Theophylaktos Dabaltes, all *drouggarios*);
Laurent, *Orghidan*, no. 290 (eighth-c. seal of Eulampios, *drouggarios*); 291 (eighth-c.
seal of N., *drouggarios*); see also Cheynet, *Collection Seyrig*, 208; Cheynet 1999, no. 16;
Koltsida-Makre, *Byzantina Molybdoboulla*, no. 73; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, nos. 258–64;
SBS 8, 204, no. 7 (seal of ?John, *spatharios* and *drouggarios*, found at Ephesos); and for an
inscription dated 898, see also *CIG*, IV, xl, no. 8690 (Gregory, *strator kai drouggarios*). Many
otherwise unspecific seals of *drouggarioi* include a relatively high rank (*apo eparchon, hypatos,*
etc.), suggesting that these were perhaps naval commanders rather than simple corps
commanders – we have not included these here. Seals of ordinary *drouggarioi* for group (ii)
include: Oikonomidès 1993a, 195 (no. 503, 800–25 seal of Konstantinos, imperial *kandidatos*
and *drouggarios* of S[eleukeia]?); *DOSeals* I, 39.4 (ninth-c. seal of Leo, imperial *spatharios* and
drouggarios of Christopolis); 48.1/*ZV* 2587 (ninth-c. seal of Theophylaktos, *drouggarios* of
Chalkis); *ZV* 2553 (ninth-c. seal of Thomas, *drouggarios* of Athens [?]); Konstantopoulos,
Molybdoboulla, no. 192 (eighth–ninth-c. seal of [Stylianos?], *drouggarios* of the Opsikion);
Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, no. 265 (late eighth-c. seal of Aratios, *drouggarios* of the
Opsikion); *DOSeals* IV, 10. 3 (eighth-c. seal of Theodore, *drouggarios* of Teios [Bithynia]);
Cumont, 'Inscriptions', 46, no. 429 (ninth c. [?] dedication for John, *strator* and *drouggarios*, at
Koloneia, Armenia I) and cf. *idem*, 44, no. 394 (dedication of a church by N., *strator* and
drouggarios = *CIG* 8690). Cf. *ZV* 3129 (750–800, seal of Kosmas, *drouggarios* and *ek
prosopou*); Cheynet 1999, no. 17 (late eighth-c. seal of ?Leo, *hypatos* and *drouggarios* of
Pamphylia, possibly a naval post). For a full list, see s.t. *drouggarios* in *PBE* and *PmbZ*. The
vast majority of all seals of *drouggarioi* belong to the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries.

142   See, for example, *ZV* 666, 3021, 3026, 3107, 1453A, 1533, 1678A, 1679, 1802, 1845, 2004,
      2094, 2181, 2234, 2289A, 2419, 2468, 2469, 2480, 2480A, 2483; Konstantopoulos,
      Molybdoboulla, nos. 197, 199; and Koltsida-Makri, *Byzantina Molybdoboulla*, nos. 68, 69
      (eighth c.). The majority of these bear no rank and some display markedly provincial
      characteristics. It is probable that those with higher ranks – *apo eparchon* or *stratelates*, for
      example, as in *ZV* 916, 1679, 2094 – are not *komites* of *banda*, but more important officials
      such as the *komites* of Abydos, in charge of important customs establishments, and we have
      not included them here. Theodore of Stoudion refers in one of his letters (Theod. Stoud., *Ep.*
      160) to a deserving man who had been promoted to the position of *komes*, even though that
      of a *tourmarches* would not have been too good for him; while there are many references to
      provincial *komites* in the hagiographical record: see Haldon 2000b, 322ff. For detailed lists, see
      s.t. *komes* in *PBE* and *PmbZ*.
143   Some seals of *tourmarchai* have a geographical or divisional attribution, others have no other
      referent at all. For the latter, see, for example: *ZV* 1055, 1411, 1509, 1513, 1783, 1784, 1789,

Active soldiers were thus assumed to be under the jurisdiction of their own courts, as several texts from the tenth to twelfth centuries make clear. One tenth-century writer notes that: 'The law itself stipulates that each officer (*archon*) has authority over his own men (*laos*) and can judge them.... For this reason, from the most ancient Romans and from the law, the general possesses authority over his own theme. He judges cases in matters that affect the soldiers.... The *tourmarches*, as is clear from the law and imperial decrees, has also had authority to judge in his own *tourma*, according to the regulations in force and their precedents'.[144] The Justinianic and earlier regulations on this are quite clear, and there is no reason to doubt that they remained in force throughout the period from the late sixth century onwards.[145] This applied not just to the soldiers themselves, but to their immediate families and dependants also.

When exactly the territorial *topoteresia* and *tourma* became formally recognised administrative units is unclear, but in the light of the reforms introduced under Nikephoros I, we may reasonably assume that it took place in association with or as a direct result of those reforms. What is certainly apparent is that the period between the reigns of Constantine V

2163, 2204, 2269, 2326, 2465, 2549, 2555a & b, 2661, 2980, 3089; Pančenko, *Katalog*, 199ff.; 9, 1904, 342ff.; 13, 1908, 78ff., nos. 378, 422; Laurent, *Vatican*, 150, 151; Cheynet, *Collection Seyrig*, 222, 223; Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, nos. 340, 341, and for an inscription, see *CIG* IV, xl, no. 8917: these are all *tourmarchai*, mostly of the rank of *spatharios* or imperial *spatharios*, some of *kandidatos* or occasionally *strator*, some unspecified, and with a few higher-ranking officers. Twenty-one date to the eighth and/or ninth century, the rest to the seventh century. For the former group, associated with a specific region or place, the following are typical: Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, nos. 344 (Klaudioupolis; cf. *DOSeals* IV, 7. 1); *ZV* nos. 410 (Dazimon), 1722 (Adramyttion), 1762A (Dazimon), 1905 (Klaudioupolis), 2558 (Thessaloniki), 2576 (Nikopolis), 3146 (Thessaloniki); Nesbitt-Oikonomidès, *DOSeals* I, 74.1 (Bizye); 79.1 (*ZV* 2643) (Sozopolis); *DOSeals* II, 7.1 (Spartari); 61.1 (Mezon/Caria); *DOSeals* IV, 52. 1 (Larissa, in Sebasteia): these are all seals of *tourmarchai* of varying ranks – the commonest is imperial *spatharios* – dating to the eighth and ninth centuries. A considerable number of seals for the same period also bear the name of a *thema* or thematic district, without any more precise location: *ZV* 2662 (*Anatolikon*); 2272, 2664 (Sicily); 2059 (Crete); 1876a & b (Hellas); 1934, 2663 (*Boukellarion*); 2550 (*Opsikion*); 1710, 2523 (*Kibyrrhaiotai*); 2147 (*Makedonia*); 2198 (Pamphylia); 2576 (Nikopolis); 2623 (Thrace); 2644, 2644A, 3140 (*Thrakesion*); *DOSeals* I, 5.36 (Sicily); 71.39 (Thrace); *DOSeals* II, 22.42 (*Peloponnesos*); *DOSeals* IV, 1. 39–40 (of the *Boukellarioi*); Laurent, 'Bulletin I', 639 (*Boukellarion*); Seibt and Wassiliou, *Bleisiegel*, nos. 342 (*Anatolikon*), 345 (*Peloponnesos*), 346, 347 (Sicily); Cheynet 1999, no. 31 (*Thrakesion*). Note also *ZV* 3148a & b, 800–50, seal of Nasir, imperial *spatharios* and *tourmarches* of the *Phoideratoi*. See the list of *tourmarchai* s.v. in *PBE* and *PmbZ*, the vast majority of which belong in the eighth–tenth centuries.

[144]   *De vel. Bell.*, xix, §8. See also the commentary by Dagron, *ibid.*, 269–72. There is a question about the context and polemical purpose of this text, however, since it may well be asserting a right or authority which derives from practice and precedent rather than any formal recognition of military jurisdiction.

[145]   See Haldon 1984, 305–6.

and of Theophilos seems to mark the period of transformation and change from the last vestiges of late Roman military institutional arrangements to those which can properly be called Byzantine which evolved in their place.

The results of these considerations can now be summarised. First, the view of the *themata* as military districts headed by a generalissimo with supreme authority, both civil and military, is accurate strictly only for the period after the early ninth century. Until the abolition or phasing out of the older civil structures, beginning probably in the reign of Nikephoros I and continuing into the 830s and 840s, the *strategos* was, originally, the military commander of an army-corps, and his command was a *strategis*. The military officers of the sub-divisions of the army-corps should be understood as purely military in function, too. By the end of the seventh century, army-corps were being named after the areas in which they were based, rather than *vice versa*, as was the case with the first divisions established in Asia Minor. Administrative officials were appointed from Constantinople to conduct the fiscal affairs of those regions, and judicial matters were the responsibility of the *anthypatos*. Even though the older provinces continued to have an administrative identity – well into the eighth century – the central government seems increasingly to have seen these *strategiai* as administrative units in themselves. The power of the *strategos* outside the purely military sphere (which was anyway very hard to define precisely) obviously depended upon his control of the military and upon imperial support. There were considerable variations over time and place in the ability of *strategoi* to intervene in non-military affairs, but they seem to have been concerned chiefly with leading their forces in war and catering for the most effective way of supporting them.

From the reign of Nikephoros I, as we have argued above, these commands became known as *themata*, as a result of newly introduced fiscal policies which associated military service and fiscal support directly and explicitly for the first time. And it is only during the period from *c.* 810 onwards, when seals of *protonotarioi* of individual *themata* are available, and when the title of *anthypatos* may have ceased being a function and was awarded as a rank – first to *strategoi*, later to a range of higher-ranking state officers – that thematic generals appear to have been endowed with both civil and military authority. However, the exalted position of provincial generals in the sources which reflect the situation of the seventh and eighth centuries mirrors both the increased social and political importance of armies in the period after the beginning of the Muslim conquests as well as the bias and interests of the sources themselves, which could hardly avoid the

political-military matter of everyday life. It is likely that part of the stimulus for many of these developments, both in respect of the fiscal administration dealt with in Chapter 10, as well as in terms of the closely associated military structures, was the recovery of a more monetised economy from the later eighth century.

The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, compiled in 899, lists the 'bureau' of the thematic *strategos* as consisting of entirely military or para-military officials; the civilian and judicial officials of the theme are listed separately, under their respective central bureaux.[146] While it is clear from the *Taktika* of the emperor Leo VI, and a range of other sources of the ninth and tenth centuries, that the *strategos* was the chief imperial official in his theme,[147] his civil authority remained mostly supervisory and delegated, and the entirely military nature of his command establishment in the later ninth century implies an originally entirely military function, even if in practice his authority was more extended than this at times. The evidence we have examined, when scrutinised carefully, actually says very little about the real power and authority of such officers, at least until the later ninth and tenth century. Beyond that, if we take the statements in the *Taktika* of Leo VI seriously, *strategoi* exercised a general supervisory authority in civil affairs, and had the judicial authority inherited from the older *anthypatoi* over both civil and military matters in their *themata*.[148]

* * *

The evidence presented above shows that there is no solid evidence for the unification of military and civil authority in the hands of *strategoi* until the late 830s and afterwards. It shows that a series of fiscal administrative changes took place in the early ninth century, changes which affected both the financing and the recruitment of the armies; it also shows that it is only at this time that thematic *protonotarioi* first begin to appear, as do references to and seals for officials such as *chartoularioi, strateutai, epoptai* attached to a specific *thema*, a term which also appears for the first time in the early ninth century, and which reflects a series of important fiscal

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[146] See *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, 109.16–111.5; cf. 113.28ff. (general *logothesion*, including chartularies of provincial treasuries and thematic *epoptai*, tax-assessors, and *dioiketai*, fiscal administrators); 115.14 (chartularies of the bureau of the military *logothesion* based in the *themata*); 121.6 (*protonotarioi* of the bureau of the *sakellion*, based in the *themata*).

[147] See Leo, *Takt., c.* 680, 684, for example, and Ahrweiler 1960, 36–8, with the sources cited.

[148] For a good survey of the role and position of the thematic *strategoi* in the ninth to eleventh centuries, see Ahrweiler 1960, 36ff.; for the seventh and eighth centuries, see Winkelmann 1985, 138–40, who stresses the almost entirely military character of the functions of these officers, even at the end of the ninth century. For detailed accounts of the administration of a *thema* in the later ninth and tenth centuries, see Ahrweiler 1960, 36–46, 67ff.

and military administrative changes.[149] In the light of the coincidence of both sets of change at this time, the evidence permits us to conclude that it was primarily under Nikephoros I, and probably his immediate successors, that a thematic administration in the form described in the later ninth- and tenth-century texts came into being.

[149] The sigillographic and some of the textual material is collated by Winkelmann 1985, 129–35 (*protonotarioi, chartoularioi, dioiketai, epoptai*). The first, third, and fourth groups have been dealt with already. *Chartoularioi* were always attached to all bureaux at Constantinople (see, e.g. Jones 1964, 450).

12 | Iconoclasm, representation, and rewriting the past

In the 1990s, when this project began, Byzantine iconoclasm was a package wrapped in an almost impenetrable membrane of attitudes and assumptions, many of them conflicting. Edward Gibbon's enlightenment perspective (and his own anti-clerical and misogynist tendencies) was the rarely acknowledged ghost at the feast; positivists debated the relative influence of earthquakes, his family's Syrian origins, and Islamic prohibitions against figural imagery on Leo III's policies, which no one doubted were iconoclast;[1] Peter Brown's and Averil Cameron's cultural history examined the quest for ownership of the authority of the truth underneath the debates about images;[2] gender entered the argument;[3] the theology behind iconoclasm was exhaustively analysed;[4] and the 'linguistic turn', with its emphasis on the power of genre over factual content, found a strange bedfellow in Paul Speck's philological unpicking of the textual sources of iconoclasm.[5] The icons (images) of iconoclasm were largely seen as secondary elements, and scholars focused on the textual sources. These, as has long been known, are one-sided, and often no longer in their original form. It has been increasingly recognised – and demonstrated – that the Byzantines were as adept at 'spin' as modern politicians are conventionally accused of being; and subsequent generations continued to rewrite and reframe the history of iconoclasm, innocently or not. Byzantine writings on iconoclasm might therefore be seen as a particularly problematic body of primary sources. But it is important to remember that words are not, and never have been, archaeological or 'scientific' markers of some absolute reality. Intentionality and timing – What did this Byzantine author intend to mean? When did this idea become conventional wisdom? – are critical in all periods. The debate about the extent to which we can rely on the written sources has been problematised throughout this book. Arguments about interpolation can easily become circular, and we have tried to manoeuvre our way delicately (and

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[1] See, e.g., Bryer and Herrin 1977.   [2] See esp. Brown 1973; Cameron 1992.

[3] See Herrin 1982; Herrin 1983; Cormack 1997; Herrin 2001b.

[4] See, e.g., Sahas 1986; Giakalis 1994; Parry 1996; Barber 2002.

[5] Compare, e.g., Clark 2004 with Speck 1991; Speck 1994b (additional publications appear in our bibliography); and see Haldon 2001.

we hope rationally) between, on the one hand, uncritically accepting the textual evidence at face value and, on the other, arguing that every phrase that sets out the iconophile position lucidly is a later interpolation. We have also tried to leaven the problems inherent in (all) textual evidence by balancing them against the other major source of primary material, material culture. But, apart from an allusion to the issue in Chapter 1, we have not yet addressed one critical issue: what was iconoclasm about, and why did it occur when it did?

One problem with attempts to answer this question has to do with the nature of the written sources. The rhetoric of neither the protagonists nor the opponents of iconoclasm could escape the boundaries of its genre; the ways the issue was written about became ossified in a series of well-worn tropes that were adapted from earlier ecclesiastical arguments, most notably anti-heretic dialogues and christological debates (which is why, in the past, many scholars saw iconoclasm as the last Christological controversy, an intuition which is not entirely incorrect, but which was not shared by the Byzantines).[6] The rhetorical constraints mean, as we have said repeatedly throughout this book, that words about 'art' are almost always generated by something else, and – while they are very illuminating indeed about the conventions governing the meta-narratives that the Byzantines constructed for themselves – they are almost useless for reconstructing the material culture of the eighth and ninth centuries. That is why, throughout this book, we have positioned the visual within its historical context, and fronted material remains before we looked at the documentary sources that were purportedly written about them.

Still, while we have looked in some detail at the century and a half historically associated with Byzantine iconoclasm – *c.* 700 to *c.* 850 – along with its seventh-century background where necessary, we have devoted little time to the central issues and problems surrounding iconoclasm itself. Instead, our main themes have been the socio-political and material underpinnings associated with the shift between late antiquity (or the early Byzantine period, depending on one's point of view) and the medieval world. In the east Roman empire, that transition became irrevocable in the seventh century,[7] but the need and, as important, the desire to codify and delimit the parameters of what was by now possible and thinkable only became evident across the eighth and into the ninth century. Iconoclasm/iconomachy

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[6] A good analysis of this, from a somewhat different perspective, appears in Barber 2002, who also signals the small but sometimes significant rhetorical changes that did take place.
[7] See Chapter 1 and Haldon 1997a.

is the label – the code word – that encapsulates these attempts at self-definition, and so it is perhaps not terribly surprising that the topics that iconoclasm nominally addressed are not always obvious in the process we have traced across this book. Talking about visual images, as we have argued elsewhere,[8] is an easy way for crafters of words to deal with other things, but the fact that images were the lynchpin, the defining noun, of icono-clasm and iconomachy follows a historical development. Religious images and portraits had existed long before Christianity, and continued into the Christian era. But, as we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, the fusion of sacred portraits with the real presence of saintly personages – a linkage accepted for relics from the later fourth century – occurred only shortly before the first stirring of the iconoclast movement, and iconoclasm responded to this, pulling together a wide set of apparently different issues into the same ideological package. Whether or not images had initially been at the heart of these concerns (and we think that they were), this new conceptual construct was able to absorb them. Why? And, to repeat the question at the end of the last paragraph, why did iconoclasm occur at this particular time?

The answer to the first question is both simple and elusive: iconoclasm, like almost everything else, is about representation. The answer to the second has to do – as scholars have argued for decades but, in our opinions, for the wrong reasons – with the Byzantine response to Islam. Let us begin with that.

Why iconoclasm?

On one level, iconoclasm was about positioning images within the cult of saints: of allowing images of the holy to perform like relics of the holy. To say that a saint's bone, or a bit of cloth or oil that once touched a saint or the saint's bones, conveyed saintly presence was a major step in itself; to extend that power to an object physically unconnected to the saint in any way – the portrait painted by human hands – did indeed smack to many of idolatry, and was condemned as such by early churchmen.[9] Images of pre-Christian gods and goddesses had to be long forgotten as real actors before the sacred portrait could first be admitted into the company of the holy through the medium of miraculous images not made by human hands, a shift which only occurred in the mid-sixth century.

[8] Brubaker 2006b; we follow, of course, Geertz 1983.   [9] See Chapter 1.

These relic-images were agents of conversion, providers of revenue for their owners, and protectors of cities and the state.[10] Sacred portraits made by human hands, however, are only rarely – and usually problematically – ascribed any such miraculous powers before the last quarter of the seventh century, after which, as we have seen, the church responded with the first canonical legislation concerning religious imagery in 692; a generation later, in the 720s, various churchmen condemned the holy portraits, and, ultimately, iconoclasm was officially declared in 754. The critical issue, then, is why sacred portraits became widely accepted as means of accessing the divine comparable to relics around the year 680. We must also question the canonical legislation: was it a response to a change in the way images were perceived, or was its timing simply coincidental? And, finally, we must return to the reaction against sacred portraits from the churchmen, followed across the next generation by the wider ecclesiastical community, and ask why *icon*oclasm? Was iconoclasm, as has recently been argued, primarily a theological debate,[11] or did it have wider significance?

Before 680 there are scattered references to images that suggest that occasionally, and in certain circumstances, particular sacred portraits were venerated and accorded the power to protect their owners or to transmit prayers. In the text as we have it now, Theodoret's *Religious History*, first drafted around 440, concludes the discussion of the fame of Symeon Stylites the Elder by noting that: 'It is said that the man became so celebrated in the great city of Rome that at the entrance of all the workshops men have set up small representations of him, to provide thereby some protection and safety for themselves'.[12] If this passage was part of the original work, it would seem that Symeon's portrait had taken on a protective role by the mid-fifth-century, at least in Rome. Speck has argued that this passage represents an interpolation, and, as Price has recently noted, this chapter of Theodoret's text supports several other sections that have been widely accepted as insertions.[13] But even if Theodoret's account could be reliably dated to the fifth century it would stand in isolation; the bulk of our evidence for the use of a holy portrait as an apotropaic image or as a palladium comes from the second half of the sixth century or later.

The most concrete textual indication that, in the years before *c.* 680, an image might stand in for the being represented concerns a picture of

[10] We refer here to the Kamoulianai and Edessa images, discussed in Chapter 1.
[11] Barber 2002.
[12] *Religious History* xxvi.11: Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen 1979, 182–3, and see also their commentary (1977), 21–2; trans. Price 1985, 165.
[13] Speck 1991, 193 n. 68; Price 1985, 173 n. 3, 175 n. 26, 176 n. 36.

an angel rather than of a holy person. An epigram preserved in the *Greek Anthology*, where it is attributed to Agathias (*c.* 531–*c.* 580), reads:

Greatly daring was the wax that formed the image of the invisible Prince of the Angels, incorporeal in the essence of his form. But yet it is not without grace; for a man looking at the image directs his mind to a higher contemplation. No longer has he a confused veneration, but imprinting the image in himself he fears him as if he were present. The eyes stir up the depths of the spirit, and art (*techne*) can convey by colours the prayers of the soul.[14]

All other epigrams about images attributed to Agathias in the *Anthology* are either purely descriptive or concern *ex voto* imagery, but the passage on Michael clearly recognises the portrait's potential for conveying prayer to heaven and seems to hint that it simulated Michael's real presence.[15] Yet angels were believed by the Byzantines to be 'formless, bodiless and immaterial', and thus presented particular problems of representation, well elucidated by Peers in a recent study:[16] a picture could never represent Michael 'as if he were present' because angels were incorporeal. What Agathias seems to mean here is not that the image simulates real presence in the way that later images of saints could, but that the encaustic painting of the archangel Michael allowed the viewer to move from 'confused veneration' of an immaterial being to an emotional response made possible by the bestowal of human form on the angel ('imprinting the image in himself'). Through art and colours – that is, through the presentation of Michael in the guise of a man – the archangel is made sufficiently familiar to the viewer that prayers to 'him' become possible. Angels present an exceptional situation, and while Agathias's response to the portrait of Michael is extremely interesting (if personal and idiosyncratic) we cannot generalise about the absorption of real presence into an image on the basis of this text.

A fragmentary wall painting in Alexandria provides our only material evidence for the potential veneration of images before the end of the seventh century. Within the interior courtyard of a private dwelling, inhabited during the sixth and seventh centuries, Rodziewicz found remnants of a fresco of the enthroned Virgin and child attended by an archangel and a small figure.[17] He dated the painting to the sixth century, and, if

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[14] *Greek Anthology* I, 34: *Anthologia Palatina*, Eng. trans. from Paten, 20–3, whence the trans.

[15] *Greek Anthology* I, 35–89: *Anthologia Palatina*, Eng. trans. from Paten, 23–39. See Peers 2001, esp. 62, 95–100 (though we cannot agree with his apparent belief that all of Agathias's epigrams demonstrate a belief that honour to the image is conveyed to the prototype).

[16] Peers 2001, the quotation at 19.   [17] Rodziewicz 1984, 194–208.

the small figure represents the donor, parallels are indeed found in the mid-sixth-century *ex voto* mosaics at Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki.[18] Features that were not recorded in Thessaloniki, however, are two metal hooks that apparently allowed oil lamps to be suspended in front of the painting.[19] This suggests the honouring of sacred portraits with lights, a practice that we do not find attested in the written source material until the late seventh century.[20] As this house was apparently inhabited through the seventh century, it is of course possible that the lamp hooks were a later addition, but it is equally conceivable that they are simply an unusually early example of the veneration of the Virgin through her image.

These three examples indicate – with varying degrees of compulsion – that some sacred portraits, in some locales, might have been accorded numinous attributes before the end of the seventh century. But, as we have repeatedly noted, there is no evidence that the practice was widespread until then, after which we have a steadily mounting flurry of references. Why was 680 the tipping point?

The seventh century was not a happy period for the east Roman empire. Its first quarter was occupied with Persian and Avar invasions, culminating in the siege of Constantinople of 626, when the relic-icon of Christ was famously credited with saving the city. Though the Constantinopolitan repulsion of the siege basically ended the Avar threat, the Persians continued to occupy the empire's military attention for another year, until Herakleios defeated them, and recovered the True Cross, in 627–8. Seven years later, however, Syria and Palestine were in the hands of a new rival, the Arabs, and, with the battle of the Yarmuk in 636, the Arab conquests began seriously to affect the empire; within the next decade, Byzantium lost its richest province, Egypt. By 650, Byzantium was halved in size, had lost its major agricultural base, and, with few financial or military resources in reserve and its infrastructure severely shaken, was presumably low in morale. All of this had, as one might expect, a profound impact on the empire, and it has been rightly argued by many that the seventh century witnessed a decisive shift in Byzantine social, political, and cultural interests.[21] The impact of these socio-political events was accentuated – and rhetorically overshadowed – by the heresy (in Byzantine eyes) of the instigators of these problems, Islam.

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[18] *Ibid.*, 203. On the mosaics in Thessaloniki, see Cormack 1969 and Brubaker 2004c, both with earlier bibliography.

[19] Rodziewicz 1984, 204.   [20] See 38 above.

[21] For details to flesh out this cursory summary, see Haldon 1997a.

It is impossible for us to recapture the practical and ideological threat of Islam for Byzantines of the seventh century. But we can measure its impact to a certain extent in texts. The texts are theological, and this governs their tone: inevitably, the Arab invasions were seen as God's punishment for the sins of the Chosen People. In a sermon delivered in 634, Sophronios, patriarch of Jerusalem, told his audience that: 'We have only to repent, and we shall blunten the Ishmaelite sword . . . and break the Hagarene bow, and see Bethlehem again'.[22] The first Arab civil war (*fitna*) of 656–61 raised Byzantine hopes of God's forgiveness, but the reconsolidation of the caliphate made it clear that Islam was not a temporary adversary, a realisation cemented by the same cycle of dashed hope (this time accompanied by an outbreak of the plague) occasioned by the second civil war of 680–91. By the end of the century, and particularly after the consolidation of Arab power under 'Abd al-Malik in 691, it was no longer possible to expect that Islam and the Arab threat was going to be overcome by force, diplomacy, or an act of God.[23] Though the eastern front remained relatively secure across the last fifteen years of the century – 'Abd al-Malik paid tribute to both Constantine IV and Justinian II – the social and cultural instability of the last quarter of the century is clear, and is particularly well expressed in the *Apocalypse* of pseudo-Methodios (probably 690–1),[24] and the records of the Quinisext Council of 692.[25]

Some time around 686, following an outbreak of the plague in eastern Syria, John of Phenek wrote that 'the end of the world has arrived'.[26] This theme is played out in considerable detail in the *Apocalypse* of pseudo-Methodios, which was written, in Syriac, sometime in the early 690s, in the expectation and hope that the end of the world was about to begin with the fall of the Arabs.[27] Brock has compellingly argued that the *Apocalypse* was inspired, at least in part, by 'Abd al-Malik's census (or rumours about it) preparatory to imposing a new taxation system in Mesopotamia; as Muslims, including newly converted former Christians, were exempt from the poll tax, the underlying fear seems to be that the church would lose considerable

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[22] See Brock 1982 (trans. at 9), esp. 10–11, 16–17.
[23] The most important contemporary sources are a *History* attributed to a certain Sebeos (*Sebeos*), the church councils of 680 and 691, and a series of apocalyptic texts, the most important of which for our purposes is that of pseudo-Methodios: Kaegi 1969; Brock 1982; Kaegi 1992; and the articles collected in Cameron and Conrad 1992.
[24] Brock 1976, 34; Brock 1982, 19; Reinink 1992. For an overview of the political situation, see Haldon 1997a, 69–78.
[25] Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995.   [26] See Brock 1982, 15–17; Brock 1989; Hoyland 1997.
[27] See n. 21 above.

numbers to the mosque.[28] Reinink has expanded this thesis in a number of articles, most recently concluding that: 'Undoubtedly this fear was rooted in the awareness that the recovery of Islamic power, going hand in hand with the frustration of apocalyptic hopes and greatly increased taxation of Christians, created circumstances highly favourable to conversion to Islam'.[29] In short, in areas under Arab control, the critical destabilising factors expressed by local Christians at the end of the century were eschatological, driven by fear of apostasy, and financial insecurity.

The anxieties expressed by the churchmen who recorded the deliberations of the Quinisext Council of 692 were somewhat different. In addition to providing the first Byzantine canonical legislation about religious images – which, as we have seen, appears to have been a response to the surge in the powers of sacred portraiture a decade earlier[30] – many of the canons expressed concern for the first time about long-standing practices (for example, the 'Hellenic' festival of Brumalia, condemned in canon 62) that had never before exercised the religious establishment.[31] What the canons seek above all is a means to purify the church, and like most purification rituals they are more symbolic than practical: the Brumalia, to return to the example just cited, continued to be observed in Constantinople until the twelfth century.[32]

The attempt to regulate and cleanse is equally apparent in one of the canons about imagery that we have not yet considered in any detail. Canon 100 instructs 'that those things which incite pleasures are not to be portrayed on panels'. After a paraphrased citation of Proverbs 4:23–25, it continues: '... for the sensations of the body all too easily influence the soul. Therefore, we command that henceforth absolutely no pictures should be drawn which enchant the eyes, be they on panels or set forth in any other wise, corrupting the mind and inciting the flames of shameful pleasures'.[33] Canon 100 is overtly concerned with issues of corruption and purity; and it is particularly focused on the distinction between good and bad images. This is the same theme that was the concern of canon 82, discussed in Chapter 2, where the historical portrait of Christ was preferred to the symbolic lamb.

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[28] Brock 1982, 19; see further Reinink 1992, esp. 178, 181, with additional literature.

[29] Reinink 1992, 181. It now appears unlikely that this conversion was substantial till the ninth century, but the fears were nonetheless real.

[30] See 61ff. above.

[31] See n. 22 above and, for analysis, Herrin 1992; Haldon 1997a, 333–7.

[32] *ODB* 1, 327–8; Auzépy 1997b, 262, n. 393.

[33] Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 180–1; an extended version of this argument appeared in Brubaker 2006a.

Here, however, the distinction is not between the historical and the symbolic, but between images that incite pleasure and other, unspecified images. It is only in the eighth century that we will learn that the aim of good pictures, orthodox pictures, is to elicit the tears of purifying sanctity, and to induce the emulation of saintly virtues.[34] In 692, this has not yet become a standard trope, and it was enough to stress that imagery had a distinct purpose, and that purpose was not aesthetic pleasure. It is clearer here than in any other section of the Quinisext canons that the churchmen are using words about one thing (in this case, images) to talk about something else entirely (in this case, purity).[35] But it is also clear that they are interested in controlling what can be represented, a point to which we shall return shortly.

The attempts of the Quinisext churchmen to standardise and cleanse orthodox practice stemmed from a sense of uncertainty and anxiety that is continued in Anastasios of Sinai's *Questions and Answers*, probably composed at the very end of the seventh century,[36] where Anastasios writes quite plainly that the 'present generation' is enduring a period of spiritual crisis.[37] His work on struggles against demons (the *Diegemata steriktika*, probably composed in its original formulation around 690) continues the purification theme.[38] Indeed, from the late seventh century, the need for internal purity becomes a constant theme of both theological and 'state' rhetoric.[39] In this, authors of the late seventh century anticipated the iconoclasts, who, as Auzépy has shown, were sufficiently concerned to avoid the pollution of the sacred by the profane that they removed relics from altars, a practice which led their opponents to castigate them for 'despising' relics, but which was in fact done so as not to defile the sanctity of the Trinity with the presence of mundane saints.[40] Auzépy concluded from this that iconoclasm was an attempt to purify Christianity in response to Islam,[41] but the evidence we have just presented makes it clear that the process actually began much earlier. The disruptions of the seventh century resulted in attempts to

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[34] See, e.g., Brubaker 1999b, 19–58.

[35] For discussion of this phenomenon, see Brubaker 2006b.

[36] Haldon 1992a; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 254.

[37] See Haldon 1992a; this passage is discussed at 132.

[38] See Flusin 1991, but on the problems with the text see also Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 254, n. 41. On the role of icons in the treatise, see Brubaker 1998, 1250, n. 114.

[39] Similarly, the focus of much popular theological literature was about the nature of divine authority, the relationship between right belief and human experience, and the extent to which divine intervention in human affairs could be demonstrated. See further Haldon 1992a, esp. 144–5; and 1997b.

[40] Auzépy 2001. On the importance of Trinitarian theology in the seventh and eighth centuries, see also Barber 2002, esp. 61–81.

[41] *Ibid.*, 23–4.

control and regulate the church, and overall 'produced a greater uniformity of belief'.[42] This is manifest not only in the canons of the Quinisext Council, but also by the increase in anti-Jewish legislation from Herakleios onward, including forced baptisms, and the sharp increase in anti-Jewish polemic; by the Quinisext Council, 'Jew' had become a generalised pejorative that encapsulated all heresies.[43]

Fears of mass conversion to Islam were less pressing to orthodox Byzantium than to the Christian communities living under Arab control; and the standardisation and purification of orthodox (or Nestorian, or monophysite) practice was a luxury not available to Christians in Syria and Palestine. But the force driving the anxieties of the Quinisext churchmen was the same as that motivating pseudo-Methodios's *Apocalypse*: by the 670s, Islam and the Arabs had become a permanent fixture, and by the end of the century the surviving texts document the impact this had on the circumstances of Christian life.

It is in this context that we must understand the emergence of holy portraits as a means to access divine presence around the year 680. As we have seen, one of the earliest references to a holy portrait addressed as if it were the saint himself was related by Arculf (who went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 683/4) to Adamnan (who recorded the account sometime before 688), as a story he had heard from story-tellers in Constantinople.[44] In brief, a man about to set off on a great military expedition stood before a portrait of the confessor George, and 'began to speak to the portrait as if it were George present in person'; he asked 'to be delivered from all dangers by war'. Adamnan continues: 'It was a war full of danger, and there were many thousands of men who perished miserably. But he . . . was preserved from all misadventure by his commendation to the Christ-loving George, and by the grace of God came safely back . . . and spoke to St George as though he were present in person' again.[45] This is a story, of course, and Arculf and Adamnan make no bones about it having been related by story-tellers. The point is not whether or not the man or the icon actually existed, but rather that this was evidently a story circulating in Constantinople in the 680s.[46] The unidentified war of the story can only have been against the Arabs or Bulgars, and so we find the first clear indication of the absorption

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[42] Haldon 1997a, 340; see also Cameron 1992.

[43] See Cameron 1996a; Haldon 1997a, 345–8, esp. 347 nn. 71–2, with extensive literature.

[44] See 58f. above.   [45] *Itineraria*, 231–2; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 114–15.

[46] This is unlikely to be an addition from Adamnan's imagination: as noted in Chapter 2, the only other icon mentioned in the text is of the Virgin, and Adamnan says that Arculf had seen the image but does not note his response to it: *Itineraria*, 233; trans. Wilkinson 1977, 115.

of 'normal' icons into the cult of relics (or, to put it another way, the first known conflation of the attributes of icons-made-by-human-hand with the attributes of icons-not-made-by-human-hand) firmly located in the context of the Islamic conquests and the wars of the later seventh century.

As we also saw, Stephen of Bostra's *Against the Jews* (of, probably, *c.* 700), is one of the earliest anti-Jewish texts to mention images, and his remark that 'Veneration is the outward sign by which honour is given' is perhaps the oldest secure reference to what appears to mean *proskynesis* before images.[47] Again, it is telling that this reference appears in a text-type associated with the anxieties of the later seventh century.

What we are arguing is that the shift in the way sacred portraits were received in Byzantium was a product of late-seventh-century insecurities. God was punishing the Byzantines, and the Arabs were not going to disappear any time soon. The state, the church, and the individual orthodox believer – all in a state of spiritual crisis – needed help, in the form of new channels of access to divinity. Relics worked, but they were not infinitely reproducible, and images-not-made-by-human-hand were even rarer. But the shift from miraculous images to portraits painted by living people – eventually justified by new ways of thinking about the relationship between the painter and the painted[48] – solved this problem in the same way, by almost limitless multiplication, that contact relics had solved the problem of limited human remains of saints (at least for those who had access to holy tombs) centuries earlier. The critical issue is the transference from physical presence to representation, and that is the subject of the next section.

Representation

Put crudely, the advent of Christianity, and its gradual assimilation into mainstream society across the Roman world, had far less impact on Roman social structures than did the crisis of the seventh century. While the old Roman senatorial aristocracy (never so strong in the East) by now existed alongside, or was transformed into, elites grounded in the church, the military, and the urban bureaucracy of Constantinople, the basic social patterns of the Roman empire continued in the East into the sixth century.[49] These changed radically and quickly across the seventh century,[50] and, as we

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[47] See 6 above.   [48] Barber 2002 is an excellent guide to this shift.

[49] There is extensive literature on this topic. For good overviews, see, e.g., Clark 1993; Clark 2004; Wickham 2005, esp. 164–7, 232–55; Kelly 2004.

[50] See Haldon 2004, and Chapter 8.

have seen throughout this book, the ramifications continued to reverberate well into the eighth. But the paradigms that govern behaviour – how people think they ought to act – rarely change in complete harmony with shifting social and cultural contexts. The tension between old patterns of behaviour and new circumstances is a major creator of social and cultural change, and it is that fault line that we need to explore here.

The main concept that the era of iconoclasm – by which we mean the years from around 680, when attitudes toward religious imagery changed, and the end of the ninth century, by which time the issues surrounding images had been fully resolved – sought to redefine was representation. Representation is always central to questions of historiography: it includes how we define, and locate ourselves within (or outside of), the meta-narratives that our society has constructed about the past. But it is also crucial for history, because people in the past were, like us, caught in the perpetual give and take of reproduction and reinforcement of their immediate environment. This was particularly biting in our period. Artisans and writers had, and have, to deal with representation anyway, but those connected with iconoclasm grasped representation in its most literally graphic sense because it was at the crux of the current historical debate. So, while representation is always important, it was important in two distinct but overlapping ways from *c.* 680 until *c.* 900 – the social and the cultural.

In the social sense, what representation means is multiplex, but at the most basic level it is about how we display or present or project ourselves, to ourselves and to others (this is the representation that anthropologists and social historians talk about). In the cultural sense, representation is about how authors and artisans present themselves or, usually, others, to an audience. This type of representation is governed by what is usually called genre: the conventions ruling the particular type of text or image in question (this is what literary and art historians, and some archaeologists, talk about). Both of them are critical for our understanding of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, because iconoclasm is one of the few historical periods in which social and cultural representation were overtly linked, and seriously considered in relation to each other.

But we must be careful. Many of the erudite churchmen who have left a written record of their thoughts were quite clear on the distinction between different types of representation, especially as they applied to the theological arguments of the iconoclast debate. These arguments are important for understanding the intellectual history of the Byzantine empire, but they are largely beside the point for its social or even cultural history. Theology is not why iconoclasm happened: just as the Quinisext Council followed and

responded to a new role for the sacred portrait, so too the theology of both the veneration and the rejection of icons followed along and either codified changes in social practice or attempted to limit them. By systematising the role of sacred portraits in orthodoxy, eighth- and ninth-century theologians created the *cult* of icons, but they did not create the desire to access the holy in a new way: they justified and codified existing realities.[51]

This takes us back to canon 100 of the Quinisext Council, where the churchmen instructed that 'things which incite pleasures are not to be portrayed on panels'. As we have seen, this is about purification, but it is also an attempt to control sacred imagery, and to ensure that the newly powerful images were painted in an orthodox manner. What is important here is that the churchmen did not yet know quite how to explain what 'good' painting was: once again, we see theology responding to (rather than leading) changes in practice. The Quinisext churchmen knew that the significance of representation was changing, and they wanted to ensure the representation remained orthodox and that they maintained a level of control over it.

This hope was only partially fulfilled. The theology of icons that developed across the eighth and ninth centuries has been explored in considerable depth, and has been the subject of several articles and two important recent monographs.[52] The major players were Germanos (patriarch 715–30), perhaps John of Damascus (d. *c.* 754), Nikephoros (patriarch 806–15), Theodore of the Stoudion monastery (d. 826) and Photios (patriarch 858–67, 877–86), all of whom have left lengthy and extremely interesting accounts of the significance of representation in the orthodox world that allow us to understand in some detail how the Byzantines saw.[53] But the problems with relying too heavily on the theology of icons for our understanding of issues of representation in Byzantium are well brought out by Barber's recent analysis of Nikephoros's attack on the Council of 815 that is traditionally called the *Refutatio et eversio*. Focusing on a passage discussing the relationship between a portrait and the one portrayed, Barber quotes Nikephoros at length, summarises his arguments, and concludes: 'Thus, when an icon is destroyed, it is an offence against the formal, that is to say, visible,

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[51] This is why we fundamentally disagree with the conclusions reached by Barber 2002; although the intellectual framework he establishes is excellent, we do not think that this tells the whole story. See further below.

[52] Parry 1996; Barber 2002. See also Giakalis 1994 and Sahas 1986, though these are restricted to summarising the iconophile positions of 787, and, on John of Damascus, Louth 2002.

[53] See Brubaker 1989b; Nelson 2000.

properties of the one shown. One does not destroy Christ when one destroys his icon, rather one destroys the possibility of his becoming available to vision'.[54]

This is theologically correct, and part of a sophisticated chain of Aristotelian reasoning, developed in the later eighth and ninth centuries, that argued that the image was distinct from its subject and could not be confused with it: hence, icons were 'truthful' precisely because they were manufactured.[55] But the passage also demonstrates the stark contrast between the theology of learned churchmen and the response to images considered appropriate in accounts of people in everyday situations.

Anastasios of Sinai's treatise against demons of *c.* 690 (*Diegemata steriktika*), for example, mentions a portrait of St Theodore in a church just outside of Damascus occupied by Saracens; one of the Saracens attacked the icon with his lance, and it bled, after which all twenty-nine Saracens died.[56] The bleeding icon will become a familiar *topos* in iconophile, and later, writings; and this passage has been seen, probably correctly, as a ninth-century interpolation.[57] The precise date is not, however, important for our argument here: what is significant – and especially if, as seems likely, the passage dates from the ninth century, when the theology of icons was firmly established – is that the moment one moves outside of the realm of learned theological treatises, the properties of the sacred portrait so carefully distinguished by Nikephoros and his colleagues collapse. This is true not only of hagiography and miracle accounts such as that in Anastasios's treatise, but also in letters of the same elevated churchmen who were careful to maintain the Aristotelian balance when writing icon theory. Theodore of Stoudion, for example, was perfectly conversant with the idea of the relative relationship between a portrait and the person portrayed that we have just noted in connection with Nikephoros; nonetheless, when writing a letter to the *spatharios* John, he praised him for replacing a human godfather with an icon of St Demetrios for 'here the bodily image took the place of its model' and 'the great martyr was spiritually present in his own image and so received the infant'.[58]

What we are seeing here is, on one level, an exemplification of the importance of context: theological treatises require the careful formulation of image theory; letters to friends are less formal. But the difference between the theological understanding of the sacred portrait and the day-to-day

[54] Barber 2002, 122.
[55] Alexander 1958a, 189–213; Barber 2002, 107–23, both with additional bibliography.
[56] Miracle B.2: see Flusin 1991.   [57] Speck 1994b, 297–8.
[58] Theod. Stoud., *Ep.* I,17; trans. Mango 1972, 174–5.

reception of the same image is not only about different registers of response: it is also about different understandings of representation.

To Theodore of Stoudion, an icon of St Demetrios can be both an artefact, differentiated from the saint, and sharing with Demetrios only likeness, not essence;[59] *and* a manifestation of the saint, standing in for the real Demetrios, who is 'spiritually present in his own image'. It is the former representation that prevents icons from being idols and, importantly, gave the Byzantines arguments with which to counter the Islamic critique of orthodox imagery; it is the latter representation that the faithful kiss when they enter a church, and which became part of Byzantine self-identity. The artefactual, theological icon is not, in Barber's lovely phrase, 'a self-effacing doorway that opens upon another place, but rather a signpost whose insistent presence directs us elsewhere';[60] and the Byzantines did not interact with an icon understood in this way, they contemplated it. The icon as manifestation – the icon as an embodiment of real presence – *is* 'a self-effacing doorway', leading to the saint depicted; and the Byzantines collaborated with icons understood in this way, through veneration. Such collaboration with the image – through kissing or venerating in other ways, through installing it as a Godfather – allowed the Byzantines to use icons to represent themselves, and even today the artisanal product most commonly associated with the Byzantines is the icon.

The acceptance of sacred portraits as mediators with the divine did not need this dual understanding of representation; it only required the second, a belief in the icon as real presence. The desire for additional and enhanced access to the holy was, as we have seen, a product of the serial crises of the seventh century. But, as at least some churchmen were quick to realise, accepting real presence in icons had the potential to unleash uncontrolled, and uncontrollable, rights to the sacred, for icons were infinitely reproducible. The Quinisext Council began the process of regulating orthodox imagery, but it was really only after the iconoclast backlash instigated by Thomas of Klaudioupolis and Constantine of Nakoleia in the 720s, and especially in the early ninth century, that rules and regulations – the theology of icons – were fully developed, and the artefactual icon was born.

This conclusion has concentrated on the evolution of icon theory rather than the anti-icon theory that, in part, spurred on its development. But it

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[59] See, e.g., Barber 2002, 122–3.

[60] Barber 2002, 137. Barber is alluding here (as he says in n. 43) to a passage in the *Life* of Stephen the Younger which he translates as: 'The icon is called a door which opens our God-created mind to the likeness therein of the prototype'. We have no trouble with this translation but interpret the sentence slightly differently.

is important to recognise that an opposition to icons – apart from being a simple survival of an older view of how the sacred worked, though less old in *c.* 750 than previous authors have argued – derived essentially from the same need for purification in the face of catastrophe that the veneration of sacred portraits developed from. That iconoclasm failed was partly political – its opponents won the factional battles, initially but also most decisively in 787; but it also derived from the difficulty of sustaining a purity which excluded people from easy access to the sacred, rather than one which legitimised it. The military and organisational successes of Constantine V themselves made his version of that purification less essential, once the factional manoeuvres of the 780s moved against it. It is our view, essentially, that the main problem to solve about iconoclasm is what it opposed. The backlash followed from that, but it only hit the heights of government for a generation, *c.* 750–87, with a much more restricted follow-up between 815 and 843. The major change was earlier, around 680, and it marked the beginning of the medieval, orthodox Byzantine state.

Rewriting the past

But that state was not static, and another stream that has flowed through this book is how the iconophiles rewrote the history of iconoclasm. How and why they were able to do so is our final topic.

Both in the consciousness of learned Byzantines and for the modern historian or informed observer, the eighth and ninth centuries mark a watershed in the evolution of the medieval Roman polity. We can see how, after the catastrophes of the seventh century, there occurred during the 100 or so years which followed a gradual stabilisation of the foreign and domestic situation. The government at Constantinople was able to begin the process of stabilising and then expanding its own economic base – its access to the resources it needed to function – through improvements in the system of fiscal assessment, as well as through the recovery of lost territories (especially in the Peloponnese and central Greece). This was not just a result of political and military stability: cultural innovations, such as the introduction of minuscule script in archival record-keeping, also contributed in important ways. We can also see how these new resources began to affect the empire's ability to face up to and challenge the caliphate in the East, even though change was relatively slow and may well have been almost imperceptible to those who lived through it. The effects of the later phases of the first period of iconoclasm, in particular the conclusions

reached by the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, gave added impulse, if they did not create the need, to re-assess the immediate as well as the more distant past, and to provide a clearer perspective on what had happened in the seventh and eighth centuries, a questioning which does not seem to have existed, at least in a way which has left any obvious trace in the sources, before this time.

At the same time, the past needed to be explained in terms of the tangible results of the present, so that chroniclers and historians, churchmen and courtiers sought causes for former ills and, especially, searched for explanations of iconoclasm which might clarify both why the empire protected by God and inhabited by the Romans, the Chosen People, had suffered so many catastrophes, and why God had visited tyrants such as the iconoclastic emperors upon them. From the perspective of a 'search for identity', the whole history of ninth-century Byzantine cultural evolution can be set against this backcloth.

The changes in state structures and society that had occurred between the early eighth century and the middle of the ninth century can be grouped under several headings. In terms of the fiscal administration of the state and the effectiveness of the extractive potential of the taxation system, there can be little doubt that the empire was on a better-organised and firmer footing at the end of this period than at the beginning, when Leo III inherited the 'crisis-management' system of his seventh-century predecessors, and we have suggested the processes through which this took place. In its turn this solid footing was rooted in, but also supported, an effective system of provincial military administration and defence, which contributed in no small measure to the stabilisation of the state's territorial borders by the middle of the eighth century and gave the empire the potential to strike offensively and pre-emptively at potential threats. As we have also seen, the expansion of this provincial administrative apparatus, supported by the resources now available to the government at Constantinople, facilitated from the 780s in particular the territorial extension of imperial authority into areas which had been effectively out of imperial control since the middle and later seventh century, with a corresponding increase in resources for the empire. That the authorities at Constantinople were sophisticated in their appreciation of how to achieve this re-integration is amply demonstrated by the ways in which the state's fiscal apparatus was re-introduced, with tribute or taxes being assessed and collected initially in kind or at least made readily convertible through the presence of institutions such as the *basilika kommerkia.* Territorial stabilisation, internal political order, and an effective provincial defence in turn promoted economic recovery. The result in the

reigns of Michael II and Theophilos in particular, at least as reflected in issues of base-metal coinage, appears to have been the re-assertion of a primarily monetary economy throughout the empire, reflecting and encouraging an increase in internal commerce and industry across the provinces. For while the economy of neither provinces nor towns had ever been demonetised, the option to use base-metal coinage had certainly been severely restricted by circumstances: for example, the availability of coin, the priorities of the court and government, distance from Constantinople, and the needs of the military.

These changes are only part of a complex picture, however, and reflect important changes in the social composition of the state's representatives in both central and provincial government and in the army. The territorial losses, political upheaval, and threats to the empire's existence faced by the emperors of the middle and later seventh century combined radically to reduce the power of the older senatorial establishment. We have seen how the re-incorporation of both middle-level provincial families and the introduction and incorporation of substantial numbers of non-Greek elite families into the imperial establishment and central administration transformed the nature of the social elite of the empire. Older senatorial clans survived, especially in the metropolitan regions, but during the eighth and early ninth centuries combined with these other elements to form a new aristocracy of office, the foundations from which a new aristocracy of birth would evolve from the middle of the ninth century onwards. And it was this new elite's loyalty to and dependence upon the emperors of the Isaurian dynasty (especially the provincial military and fiscal administrators and the episcopate, many of whom were drawn from the same background) that permitted Leo III and Constantine V to implement the military, administrative, and religious policies they adopted.

We have also seen how the limited and occasional opposition to imperial policy from within the elite at Constantinople, primarily from among those who perceived a threat to their own values and interests, was ineffective, although it served to re-inforce imperial authority. At the same time, the monastic opposition to iconoclasm, which emerged so suddenly in the years after the Council of 787, was clearly divided into several camps, and appears to reflect not simply an objection to imperial heresy, but also tensions within and between different factions of the metropolitan establishment. As we have noted, Eirene can by no means be said to have been a convinced iconophile from the start – on the contrary, there is every reason to think that her family had been loyal supporters in their provincial homeland of the Isaurian emperors and their policies, just as many other important provincial families

had been. Instead, her change of heart reflected immediate political vested interests: the need to stay in power and secure the succession of her son Constantine VI, and a judgement of where the shifting balance of power within the metropolitan and provincial elites actually lay. The Council of 787 was carefully engineered in every aspect by her place-man on the patriarchal throne, the administrator Tarasios, himself from an elite Constantinopolitan clan with a long history of loyal imperial service. The result, in fact, was a fragmentation of real and potential opposition to the emperor(s) and a re-inforcement of imperial authority, later re-drawn as a victory for orthodoxy and a defeat of diabolically inspired heresy.

Yet in spite of the iconophile vilification of the Isaurian emperors and their patriarchs, it is quite clear that it was to a great extent their work that put the empire on a sound footing and that enabled their successors to re-assert the empire's position on the international scene. Their success depended upon the support of the state elite and the church, and there can be no doubt that they received all the support they needed – and this high level of bureaucratic and ecclesiastical support for iconoclasm was precisely the problem faced by the iconophile apologists who flourished under Eirene and Constantine VI, and after 842. It was overcome by a persistent and ultimately successful propaganda campaign, in particular through the medium of historiography and hagiography. In a remarkably effective appropriation of traditional martyrological themes, a number of monks and churchmen were recast as martyrs and defenders of orthodoxy, while the emperors and their advisers who oppressed them appeared in the same role as the pagan oppressors of the early church, so well-known through the established martyrologies.[61] In the process a canon of anti-iconoclast ideology and literary motifs was constructed which has affected views of the period down to the present day.

Perhaps one of the most significant results of this investigation, although we cannot claim to be the first to have recognised it, is confirmation of the fact that there was no mass popular opposition to imperial icono-clasm. Indeed, the only apparent source of organised opposition – among the monastic communities of Stoudion and Sakkoudion – appears after the change of direction of imperial policy had become known in the 780s. There is virtually no evidence for anything other than the most limited, metropoli-tan opposition to the policies of Constantine V, and such opposition as there was can, moreover, plausibly be linked to political and factional as much as to religious motivation. Even during the second iconoclast period, to

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[61] For visual parallels, see Brubaker 1999b, 245–62.

speak of a large-scale opposition would be quite inappropriate. During the second iconoclasm, we are somewhat better informed, but in this case opposition appears to have been marginalised, isolated, and restricted to a few brave individuals whose hostility was founded as much on broader theological/dogmatic matters as it was on the issue of sacred images. Imperial iconoclasm appears by the time of Theophilos to have been as much about marking out and asserting imperial authority in and around Constantinople, as it was about serious icon theory and practice (although there is no reason to doubt the genuine conviction of Theophilos himself). Its official abandonment took place with no fanfare, and there was no involvement of any representatives of an 'opposition' because, as we have noted, opposition had been on the whole restricted to individuals and small isolated groups. In the letters of Theodore of Stoudion, nevertheless, we can see the beginnings of the process of re-writing the past, to create not only a series of evil and misguided emperors and patriarchs but a brave, noble, and self-sacrificing (monastic) opposition. That this tendency was directly associated with the factional secular and ecclesiastical politics of the court and Constantinopolitan church there is no doubt. Yet until quite recently it has received, with a few caveats and some expressions of mistrust of the more extreme expressions of iconophile propaganda, general acceptance as a valid account of the eighth and early ninth centuries.

This is not to say, however, that there was no opposition at all. On the contrary, it is clear that a carefully formulated theological argument against iconoclast ideas did evolve, and came to play a crucial role in church and imperial politics. It is likewise clear that monastic opposition which, we have argued, may in some cases also have embodied elite opposition to the policies of Constantine V and Leo IV as well as Eirene, exerted pressure not only on the palace, but could also be turned against those who failed to support the new imperial line. The failure of iconoclasm, and the success of the iconophile position, was a result of a combination of circumstances. First, the political context of the period after 775 was one in which imperial iconoclasm itself was beginning to fade in importance as an instrument of political control; second, iconophile arguments were appropriated by Eirene and Tarasios as a convenient weapon in the struggle for legitimacy and ideological authority. Eirene's position in particular was extremely insecure, as was that of her son, especially in view of the threat posed by Leo IV's brothers, on the one hand, and on the other by the vested interests of both Constantinopolitan and provincial elites who were clearly suspicious of her – the failure of several senior provincial and metropolitan officers to honour the oaths sworn to Leo IV, for example, is a clear demonstration

of this. Rejection of imperial iconoclasm was, in consequence, a risky but highly effective tactic, for it immediately secured the support of outside influences such as the papacy, as well as serving as a test of loyalty among the clergy and the secular establishment. The great care and patience with which the preparations for the council which was eventually held in 787 were carried out suggests the anxiety which the change in policy generated in Eirene's circle.

In much the same way, our discussion of the various rebellions and coups and those who were involved in them shows that they cannot be explained on the basis of some notional opposition between centre and periphery, between Constantinople and the provinces, nor as a conflict between an older metropolitan elite and a newer evolving provincial elite. Since we would argue that opposition to imperial authority during this period had little if anything to do with opposition to imperial iconoclasm (except in the iconophile sources of the ninth century), and further that imperial iconoclasm was not just a pretext for supposed 'social and administrative reforms', the conflicts of this period cannot be ascribed to popular or establishment hostility towards 'reforming' emperors such as Leo III and Constantine V or their successors.[62]

Yet this is not to suggest that no underlying structural tensions were present, and that these were not fundamental to the evolution of Byzantine society across this period. To begin with, we have seen that the evolution of a provincial elite from the later seventh century into the early ninth century changed the nature of the social establishment of the empire, even if it is clear that the majority of the middling and lower members of provincial elite society must in many cases have been the descendants of late Roman provincial landowners and officials. Whereas social power had been plurilocal before the middle of the seventh century, distributed between the capital on the one hand and the provincial cities and their elites on the other, it rapidly became concentrated on Constantinople and the court, a situation which we believe is reflected in the highly regionalised pattern of ceramic production and distribution as well as in the localisation of monetary exchange. We have seen that the system of titles and the palatine hierarchy lost its civic, 'senatorial' aspect and became increasingly imperial, centred on the idea of personal service at court. The second half of the seventh century and early years of the eighth century was a time of political and military crisis, in which established cultural identities had to be re-affirmed and ideological certainties were challenged, a time which produced frequent manifestations

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[62] A position still argued in Blyssidou *et al.* 1998, see e.g. 43–5.

of hostility towards or distrust of particular rulers. Yet paradoxically this very situation enabled the emperors to assert the centrality of the imperial system and their own authority.

As the situation gradually stabilised during the reign of Leo III, those who had achieved positions of authority in the provinces (through membership of and participation in this palatine system), had access also to armed force and military authority in the districts placed under their command. Many of them also found themselves part of local provincial and regional networks of patronage, with kinship and clan or family loyalties playing an important role. Whether or not the very senior level of the provincial military establishment – the *strategos* and other key officials appointed by Constantinople – were permanently established there, these middling strata were the social and economic base from which the imperial government recruited its provincial officers and administrators. The few cases for which we have some detail show that they strove also to maintain or to achieve a toehold in Constantinopolitan society and the imperial administration: apart from the church, membership of the imperial title- and office-holding establishment was the only secure route to achieve and maintain both status and wealth. This stratum reflected in consequence both its own provincial identities and perceptions, notions of honour and status, and these may well, and clearly on occasion did, play a role, as well as a Constantinopolitan outlook, since their vested interests lay also in securing a connection with the centre and with the imperial court, equally vital priorities. In the course of this process across the eighth century, a process in which competition between individuals and families for influence and power played an essential role, family and kinship identities began to take on a new significance, and the frequency of descriptive or attributive epithets in the written sources from the middle of the eighth century onwards, but more significantly from the first half of the ninth century, many of which were to become firmly established family names, testifies to this trend. That the emperor Constantine V had a direct influence in this process, as has been suggested, remains questionable,[63] although it may be that the adoption of a family name was becoming a symbol of social status among certain provincial circles, so that the award of such a surname by the emperor was a recognition of merit as well as of admission to higher social status.

The rebellions and coups which took place should be understood in consequence as reflections of competition for influence, position, and access to the imperial court, as well as for influence, office, and power in the provinces,

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[63] Kountoura-Galaki 2004.

among leading elements of the provincial and metropolitan establishments. But we would argue further that this was in itself also associated with what appears to be a clear difference in the availability of economic resources between the eastern and upland regions of Anatolia and the western or coastal and lowland regions. This differentiation was exacerbated by distance, and it affected also the structure, ambitions, and attitudes of the social elites in both zones, which we would also suggest must be reflected – although it is difficult to draw any direct causal association – in political action, both at elite level as well as the level of, for example, provincial armies. As we have seen in Chapters 6 and 7, this is borne out by the limited but nevertheless indicative archaeological and settlement-geographical evidence. Political influence at court and in the provinces meant expanded access to, and control over, resources (depending on the level and nature of the posts held), both in manpower and in taxation. Political conflict also expressed the competing interests of those who dominated the imperial establishment at any given moment, in contrast with those of other interest-groups which felt threatened or excluded by imperial policy (as in the plot of 766 or the deposition of Eirene in 802). Whether this was within the court and palatine establishment, or between representatives of particular provincial elites and their supporters (as in the rebellions of Artabasdos or Thomas the Slav), depended on the prevailing political configuration, and on the different sets of vested or perceived interests which might coalesce in the short term in order to achieve a particular goal. Such tensions were also inflected in their expression by local identities, traditional loyalties, religious beliefs or purely personal motives – just as the policies of the emperors themselves reflected individual responses and reactions to the situation each ruler inherited, as shaped by their own personal backgrounds and the social, economic, and military possibilities open to them.

The fundamental structural constraint faced by all rulers was that imposed by geography and distance, a constraint which impacted directly on how they could rule. The empire could only be managed and defended, and the interests of the dominant establishment and of the imperial household could only be protected, through the delegation of central authority and resources to those who could act effectively on behalf of the emperor and the state. Emperors thus faced the paradoxical and constant challenge of finding, appointing to appropriate positions, and seconding competent, able, and effective individuals to positions of great authority in which they would be effectively autonomous, while at the same time maintaining central authority and control over the resources required to assure the empire's political existence. Direct selection by the emperors and their closest advisers

was the most efficacious way to achieve these ends, but the existence of social strata which had access to resources and education necessarily compromised any attempt at absolute control. We have stressed the point that the court remained dominant throughout the period, not only in policy-making, but in the formation of the social elite of the empire. Closeness to the emperor and court were essential in determining rank, status, and role; personal relationships, direct and indirect, were crucial to the workings of the whole state apparatus. Control was maintained by rotating senior officers across a variety of different postings, by patronage and rewards and, crucially, by insisting on ideological conformity.

For the modern historian, imperial iconoclasm is in this respect a uniquely useful indication of how this process worked for, as we have seen, the great majority of people serving the empire accepted iconoclasm because it was the emperor's stated position, and by so doing they ensured their own survival and success.[64] Yet opposition was always potentially present, as the rebellions or plots which did occur demonstrate, while evidence of regional loyalties and of systems of local patronage independent of the imperial court is clear. Those who rejected imperial policy did so either because they had a specific ideological motive (although again, and as we have seen, such motives were rarely free of other influences) – such as Theodore of Stoudion – or because doing so offered a convenient vehicle through which to voice other issues (Artabasdos, the plotters of 766, and possibly Thomas the Slav). Leo III and Constantine V were able to exploit their religious policy very effectively to this end – however devoutly they held to their beliefs – ensuring a loyal body of imperial officers and administrators throughout the empire.

In the years between the 660s and the 830s, the imperial elite was transformed by the incorporation of new elements from the provinces and by the evolution of a system of hierarchy and precedence entirely determined by the imperial court. In the process, and in spite of the tensions between different sets of interests and identities, provincial interests were increasingly integrated into the interests of the palace and imperial household, so that the members of provincial and metropolitan elites remained at the same time both dependent on the imperial court and in competition with one another for their social status, their access to power and authority in their own provinces, and their physical security and survival. The possibilities for the imperial elite to evolve interests which conflicted with those of the central government were thereby minimised. Only as the social elite became

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[64] In this respect comparisons with imperially sponsored monotheletism are also appropriate.

both more differentiated, and its members more aware of common identi-
fying attributes, during the later ninth and tenth centuries, did the tension
between central government and administrative control, on the one hand,
and local power and wealth, on the other, evolve to generate the structural
political crisis of the later tenth and eleventh centuries. The eighth and early
ninth centuries provide us with the first evidence of this evolving process.

One very obvious result of our analysis is that the institutions of the
state, and indeed Byzantine society in general, show a remarkable degree of
resilience in the face of very considerable difficulties and on occasion what
must have seemed to contemporaries as near overwhelming odds. To the
straightforward questions, how and why did the Byzantine empire survive
the crises of the second half of the century from *c.* 640–740?, we would
offer three interlocking responses. First, the fiscal administrative bureau-
cracy continued effectively to extract the resources to maintain the army
and central administration. The government and court, in spite of often
dramatic transfers of political power from ruler to ruler and their sup-
porting factions and vested interests, remained stable and continued to
function even through the disruption of civil war or major foreign attack. A
standing army was maintained through an administrative apparatus whose
resources were independent of the imperial household – regardless of the
fact that household and 'state' or 'public' finances overlapped. The army and
the fiscal system functioned effectively, even if, when one examines their
administration and their tactical performance, the armies of the empire
sometimes performed poorly just when the government most needed suc-
cess. And even in the worst of crises, as in 811, with the emperor slain
on the battlefield along with many key officers, with the government at
Constantinople in a state of near panic, with *coups d'état* in the air, and
discontent in the ranks, the state was hardly shaken. The local armies, half
militia and half professional soldiers, continued to function at the regional
level regardless of the disaster which had befallen the field army which had
accompanied the emperor, illustrating the effectiveness of the localisation
of command and defence of strong-points which had evolved. The state's
fiscal and administrative machinery was kept running with barely a murmur
of unease, and we have seen that the various factions in the army and the
Constantinopolitan establishment quickly re-established a common front.
Institutional stability of this sort was deeply rooted, and the state and its
apparatus were embedded in the social-political order to the extent that a
political crisis following a single defeat, given the resources still available to
the new rulers or their advisers, was of no real long-term significance. This
is a long-term and deep-rooted stability – its endurance can be seen in the

results of the seventh century when, in spite of massive losses of territory and resources, a series of political crises, a serious decline in morale, and a long string of military defeats, the state and its institutions survived, and continued to evolve during the eighth century in new directions. Institutional flexibility and stability reflect also the broader social and economic structures within which they were rooted, and in particular the complete identity or consonance of interests that was perceived by both provincial and metropolitan elite society with the interests of the state and imperial government. One of the most important points to bear in mind is the close identity between the institutional and systemic evolution of the state and its systems or apparatuses, and the individuals and groups from whom they were recruited or who comprised them, and whose local and vested interests determined to a large extent how such arrangements actually functioned in practical terms.

Second, and crucially, an imperial ideology and an effective machinery for establishing and maintaining a high degree of political-religious conformity existed, embodied in the tradition of imperial lawmaking and in the institutions of the church. It was this, and the symbolic universe which it evoked for subjects of the emperor and the emperors themselves, which gave 'Byzantines', in differing ways throughout society, an idea of who they were, why they called themselves Romans, and also some notion of what duties were attached to the role with which God had endowed them. Yet it is in precisely these latter areas that Byzantines felt themselves most threatened in the era of iconoclasm, and its immediate aftermath.

Third, institutional stability does not exist without supporting or balancing elements of equal functional effectiveness, and this balance was achieved through morale and ideological motivation, equally important for any effective long-term capacity to survive the effects of external political, military, and economic pressure as well as the results of substantial internal social and political change. It was that ideological strength which carried the empire – both the court and the social elite in their conscious cultivation of a 'Roman' and imperial identity, and the mass of the population in their awareness of their own form(s) of Christianity – through the seventh and eighth centuries, and in its forms and expression was still evolving in new directions. The 'iconoclasm' of, perhaps, Leo III and assuredly Constantine V was one manifestation of this. Yet it is apparent from the proliferation of anti-iconoclastic material in the later eighth and first half of the ninth century that a problem about the past was perceived, a problem which demanded explicit answers to questions which were intimately bound up with the Byzantines' own view of themselves.

The problems which were thought to have been generated by iconoclasm and by the rule of the emperors of the Isaurian dynasty were not, it is clear, problems of state institutions. They were perceived as problems of a moral and theological nature, and the resolution to these problems was outlined in the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787. Having at least provisionally resolved the question of holy images and their status, the question arose as to why they had become the focus of an imperial heresy in the first place? What influences had played a role, and how? And what did all this mean in terms of the imperial idea, the Roman past, and the claims of ninth-century Byzantines and their emperors to be both Roman and Orthodox, protected by God and destined to restore the rule of orthodoxy and expand their *oikoumene*, their (civilised) inhabited world?

We have seen how a careful scrutiny and interrogation of the texts which provide us with most of our information about the iconoclast controversy and the iconoclast emperors highlight the extent to which anti-iconoclast theologians and others in the later eighth and ninth centuries rationalised the past in constructing their narratives of what happened. It is less the fact that iconophiles tampered with 'the facts', or that they deliberately manipulated 'the truth', than that they made sense of what they knew, or believed must have happened, through the prism of their own common-sense assumptions about the past and about the values and morality of their culture. One of the results which follows from this insight is to realise that Byzantine views of the past were, so to speak, ahistorical. The funda-mental modes of Christian behaviour and practice, it was understood, had been established in the time of the Fathers of the Church (just as it was assumed that the fundamental institutions of the state had been established by Constantine and reaffirmed by Justinian), and on this basis change away from these practices was a deviation from the true faith, hence heretical. The iconoclast argument was precisely (and correctly) that the practice of honouring sacred images was an innovation and as such a deviation. Iconophile thinkers from Germanos on (although he was in fact less insis-tent on this than his successors) accepted, or at least argued, that holy images had always been venerated, though stronger arguments were, as we have seen, presented as well, and became increasingly sophisticated. Given that the form this veneration took was defined by the Seventh Ecumeni-cal Council (and the sessions of the council went to great lengths to show that there was indeed a long-term tradition), and elaborated in essential ways into the ninth century, then the policies of the Isaurian emperors could clearly be represented as heretical, as themselves a deviation from the norm.

Any explanation which could throw light on why this deviation had occurred was therefore plausible, so that Jewish and Islamic influence, diabolic intervention, and similar causes were ascribed as motivating the emperors and their evil henchmen. These rulers could thus be made responsible not only for the schism in the church; they could also be blamed for the 'disappearance' of classical education and a whole range of other evils. This process of interpretation did not happen all at once. It was a gradual, even opportunistic, many-layered development, through which different elements within Byzantine society in the ninth century, including the rulers and their advisers, could both justify their own actions and explain any weaknesses or failings in their own policies or the actions of their forbears. It was remarkably successful.

We hope that, if we have achieved nothing else, we can say convincingly that the iconophile version of the history of eighth- and ninth-century Byzantium has at last been laid to rest.

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Index

Given the centrality of these concepts to the present work, the terms 'iconoclasm, iconoclast' etc., and 'iconophile' are not indexed. Monuments are normally listed under location.

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BYZANTIUM
in the Iconoclast Era
c. 680–850

Iconoclasm, the debate about the legitimacy of religious art that began in Byzantium around 720 and continued for nearly 120 years, has long held a firm grip on the historical imagination. This is the first book in English for over fifty years to survey this most elusive and fascinating period in medieval history. It is also the first book in any language to combine the expertise of two authors who are specialists in the written, archaeological, and visual evidence from this period, a combination of particular importance to the iconoclasm debate. The authors have worked together to provide a comprehensive overview of the visual, written, and other materials that together help clarify the complex issues of iconoclasm in Byzantium. In doing so, they challenge many traditional assumptions about iconoclasm and set the period firmly in its broader political, cultural, and social-economic context.