

New Europe College Yearbook 2007-2008



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ISSN 1584-0298

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DOES “POLITICAL THEOLOGY” EXPLAIN THE FORMATION OF ORTHODOXY?

Political theology

It was largely believed that the perfect blend of Christianity and empire was once and forever offered in the refined recipe of Eusebius of Caesarea for his imperial patron, Constantine.¹ Modern scholarship instead has described the encounter between pagan Rome – or not yet Christian Constantinople – and the religion of Christ as a complex and quite long process,² stretching well over 300 years since the presumed founder of the Christian empire. A major role has been ascribed to imperial agency, and rightly so.

But whose religion did the emperor actually promote? It would be easy game and probably false to denounce the emperor’s, Constantine’s for example, cynical use of Christianity, but we are equally critical of accepting pious stories. Whatever the starting point, empire and Christianity grew together for a long time and imperceptibly, maybe unwillingly, twisted each other.

Inside the broader frame of Christianity it is this twist that called for the term *political theology*. Basically we may infer that it took several generations of Christians in power to work on a blend of Christianity and empire. Eusebius of Caesarea is only one stance; another, opposed stance is that of Ambrose and Gelasius. If some of Eusebius’ ideas were to become common knowledge and belief it is because they might have belonged to a more general sentiment of Christian leadership, as long as direct proof of a wide readership and influence of the *Vita Constantini* is lacking.³

Describing this process we need first to take account of a great juridical-historical debate of the 20th century, that concerning the notion of “political theology”. Carl Schmitt described through this notion the secularization of theological concepts as modern juridical terminology of sovereignty.⁴ Erik Peterson understood the concept of political theology

as any convergence of political theory and religion. Thus, with historical erudition, he tried to respond to Carl Schmitt, by showing that monarchist forms of Christianity, like Arianism, favored the monarchical development of the empire, meanwhile Trinitarian Christianity slowed down the process. Taking Eusebius of Caesarea as starting point, he threw, as a good catholic theologian, the whole responsibility of political theology on non-orthodox Christianity.⁵ In a further stage of the evolution of the concept, Ernst Kantorowicz uncovered how political theology emerged from medieval to early modern times, in his famous *The King's two Bodies*. He described a long historical process by which a medieval system of mystical representations, Christ's double nature, penetrated the legal thought of the early modern State and nourished a whole range of politico-juridical concepts.⁶ Kantorowicz's starting point was an 11th century treaty about the "twinned" or "mixed" nature of Kingship, known as the Norman Anonymus.⁷ Recently, Alain Boureau unveiled the particular intellectual process by which the modern State emerged as a subject of political reflection in the scholastic period (1200-1350). In his subtle analysis he shows that scholastic writers, starting with a reflection on the human condition, on Paradise, sin and redemption, came to postulate the existence of two types of community: one called salvation community, where the intention is to guide the individual soul towards salvation, the other called survival community, where the aim is to assure the continuance of a given community. Each of these communities responded to a particular logic and permitted an organization according to its own goal. The Nation State as we experienced it in the 20th century is a consequence of the emergence of the survival community in the late middle ages. He called that phenomenon *La religion de l'Etat*.⁸

For Boureau the process is specific to late medieval and early modern Western Europe and is the starting point of the secularization of political concepts. Religious thought is thus at the origin of the modern State, *l'Etat républicain*, but the development of this intellectual process steps out of the proper sphere of religion. If Alain Boureau is right, there is no "political theology" possible before scholasticism.

It is common sense to say that pre-modern political organization required a certain degree of religious involvement, anthropologists and historians of religion had been working on such aspects since a century.⁹ But what we have to describe for late antiquity should be then exactly the opposite phenomenon of "political theology". It is not a secularization of political power, but it is its sacralization. Erik Peterson misunderstood

the thought of Carl Schmitt,¹⁰ but asked a good historian's question: did Christianity boost the monarchical development of Rome? What kind of Christianity was it and why? His answer implies precisely the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy.

To attempt an answer to Erik Peterson's question I would like to inquire how much does our view of orthodoxy, heresy and schism owe to the real or ascribed role of imperial agency in the formation of Christianity.

Two major themes in recent scholarship might help us clear up the picture of the opening ages of imperial Christianity.

First is the already introduced concept of "political theology", but only, in my view, to deny its applicability to late antiquity. In fact, we should suppose that recent authors used the concept not by reference to its intellectual origin, but rather to name a general convergence between Christian religion and Roman power.¹¹ In this sense, political theology stands exactly for its opposite, political religion or civil religion, that philosophic and/or religious system which assures the cohesion of society, legitimizes its power and assures the functioning of a governing class. What made Erik Peterson apply "political theology" to the 4th century is the fact that the official religion of the Roman Empire changed, paganism was dropped and Christianity adopted. But here again we will have to weigh how much of pagan thought was abandoned and how much of Christianity was adopted and also to what pace.

Second is the more recent trend to abandon a narrative of the glorious march of Orthodoxy through the threats of heretical and schismatic enemies and to engage into a more neutral account of "orthodoxies/heresies", that is of strongly defended opinions about the true faith.¹²

In this perspective I will try to identify the role of strongly committed communities, instead of considering largely Christianity as an actor. These communities may develop particular features but in an acknowledged connection to the rest of Christianity, or fall into parochialism and antagonistic definition of their faith. For the first case I would refer to, for example, the distinction between Pauline and Johannine communities in the early stages, or for a later period the accepted liturgical differences of local communities (until the *Trullanum*, when such differences became unacceptable, a phenomenon which we will describe later). The antagonistic development would be represented for the fourth century by the Donatist schism in Africa. Another aspect of such layers of Christianity, specific of the 4th century, is the ability of such groups to rise to central

relevance to Christian communities through the interaction with imperial power; they turn eventually into a social stratum of religious identification, as was Arianism, eventually a choice of the Germanic military aristocracy. Our conceptual tool borrows some essence from Peter Brown's "micro-Christendom",¹³ although he applied it to 7th and 8th century politically separated spaces of the once united imperial Christian *oikoumenè*. Another eloquent example which calls for a concept like "micro-Christendom" is the situation in Constantinople itself during most of the 4th century, where communities were formed around several bishops: the bishop Paul, identified by ecclesiastical historians as continuator of the orthodox nicaean community, the bishop Makedonios, and the officially appointed bishops Eusebius of Nicomedia and later Eudoxius and Demophile, the latter celebrating in Saint Irene or Saint Sophia.

Inside the late antique puzzle of Christendoms we may find an "imperial Church", which should not be taken as the institutional reality of the Church within the empire. The imperial Church, situated at the encounter between empire and Christianity, is usually embodied in a group/class of influential bishops, devout aristocrats and their followers, of whom particularly the court clergy, able to interconnect politically and intellectually the world of Christian worship with that of imperial agency. Through their individual authority, their social and political action, those men rose to prominent partners of imperial government and thus controlled for a span of time the imperial stand on Church matters. Such is the case of some Arian bishops (Eusebius of Nicomedia,¹⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea), but also partially of Athanasius, later of the Cappadocian bishops (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianze, Gregory of Nyssa), of Ambrose, of Cyril of Alexandria or of Nestorius of Constantinople. But already Constantine the Great formalized such an imperial Church by his practice to gather bishops at his court, and to entrust them on the one hand with instructing him on divine matters, as stated in the *Vita Constantini*,¹⁵ on the other hand with responding to the appeals of provincial ecclesiastics to his court. These bishops formed eventually a permanent synod (*endemousa*). The ecclesiological canons established in the years of Constantine, responded cautiously to this reality.¹⁶ Athanasius's trial in 335 illustrates the phenomenon: first Athanasius challenged his deposition by the council of Tyre, and applied immediately to imperial justice. In his turn, Constantine gathered the court bishops, who confirmed the deposition of Athanasius by the Tyre council and denounced him for revolt against imperial authority (the alleged threat expressed by Athanasius that he

could stop the export of grain from Alexandria to Constantinople). On such political ground, the emperor extended the canonical judgment to a political trial and sentenced Athanasius to exile.¹⁷

The two themes, civil religion and religious orthodoxy, relate strongly to each other as they allow us finally asking the question whether there is any conscious ideological choice in favor of one or the other variants of Christianity. It amounts to put to test the theory of Erik Peterson, that Arian theology did favor the exaltation of the imperial power?

And if such an alliance between Arianism and cult of the emperor existed, could we follow the ideological struggle down to the first manifestations of Christian art? Is there an anti-Arian and anti-imperial stand in this 4th century art, as Thomas Mathews in his *Clash of Gods* would like to have it?¹⁸ Our questioning could go a step further: may we speak about ideology in the 19th century's sense in the 4th century?

From the “God-Man” to the “Man-God”

The 4th and 5th centuries witness within Christianity the thorough debate first over the divinity of Christ and later over the relation between divinity and humanity in the person of Christ. The “God-Man” formula stands for the first debate, the “Man-God” formula stands for the second debate. In the shift from the “God-Man” to the “Man-God” formulas although the debate concerns the first element of the equation, emphasize falls each time on the second term. The interest of this construction is to integrate theological debate with public perception of Christianity as it is shown by representations of that divinity. In earlier periods of Christianity the incarnation was understood as a God who took human shape to act, moved by compassion, among his worshipers. In later periods the thinking over divino-humanity meant to highlight that humanity was elevated to the dignity of receiving the uncreated God in the created flesh. Divino-humanity, as it is understood by the 4th century Church Fathers, is the common destiny of mankind. Christ was a forerunner of His flock. His human nature clothed divine nature in order to open divinity to the whole of mankind, best expressed by St. Athanasius of Alexandria in the lapidary formula: “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God” (*De inc.*, 54, 3: PG, 192B).

In order to establish the divino-human problematic it was natural chronologically to open first the debate over the divinity of Christ. This

is the period dominated by the “*God-Man*” equation. Was Christ a God like so many pagan gods who visited the mortals taking the shape of a mortal occasionally? A positive answer to this question means that the humanity of Christ was only an illusion, which is the docetist stand on the problem. The principle of the radically transcendent character of God was saved by this view. But this opinion remained marginal. If the God of the Christians was supposed to be completely transcendent and Christ, His Son, needed to be truly human, then, the Son must have been only an early spiritual creation of the transcendent Father. Such was the conclusion of Arius: Christ as subordinated, lower rank divinity. Arius’s theology of the *Sophia*, Wisdom of God, answers positively this alternative and thus keeps the line with the Old Testament unknowable God. How did the immediate, experienced reality of Jesus of Nazareth, narrated in the Gospels, relate to God?

A few generations later, when the full and co-eternal divinity of the Son became article of faith for a good part of the Christians (basically after the confirmation of Nicaea at Constantinople in 381), the incarnation rose to a more confusing debate. The full presence of humanity in God was the object of struggle with non-chalcedonian (mono- or miaphysitism, monoenergism, monotheletism) theology until the late 7th century. This follows the “*Man-God*” equation.

The images of Christ follow closely this theological evolution and make it obvious. In His early images, in the catacombs and on the sarcophagi, two themes are predominant: Christ as philosopher sitting amidst his disciples or as “magician” performing his miracles. These images, without being necessarily produced or sponsored by non-orthodox communities, correspond to the intellectual development of the *God-Man* phase. As Thomas Mathews put it, the late 3rd and 4th century images of Christ represent him as a “grass-roots god”, ready to teach and to console his followers. Closer he shows himself to mankind, less he seems integrated into divinity.¹⁹

At the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century appear the first representations of Christ on the vault of the apses. The chronological coincidence with the Theodosian restoration of Orthodoxy and the opening of the new *Man-God* phase of the debate, allow us to postulate an association between the two. The Apse images are clearly dedicated to the other dimension of the Christ, the divinity. The 5th century apse-mosaic at Hosios David in Thessaloniki makes a clear reference to the vision of the glory of God as Christ in the Book of Ezekiel. The other scriptural

sources of inspiration for the emphasis of divinity in Christ are the Heavenly Jerusalem images, like in Santa Pudenziana, and the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, like in the Sinai monastery. The new concern of Christians was to point to the fact that the incarnated historical figure is precisely the transcendent divinity of the Old Testament made visible in painting as it was made comprehensible through visions to the prophets of the past and to the apostles in the Transfiguration or in the encounters after the resurrection, particularly the scene of the Ascension of Christ.

The sixth century solution was a visual Chalcedon. What we see in the icon is indeed the historical human figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Only in its fleshly apparition divinity dwells completely. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9) applies to the early icons as follows: who sees this human form of Christ sees its divine being as part of His unique hypostasis. For a moment of hesitation before the final merger of the Christ Human and Christ God we see the double images of Christ in the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna: Christ Emmanuel in the apse and Christ teacher on the vault in front of the apse.²⁰

Christ is mediator not as a subordinate God, but as a man, was the nicaean answer to Arius, as it was formulated by the Antiochene school. The Arian controversy created the necessity of a proper expression of the relation between humanity and divinity in Jesus Christ. Once again several coincidences make it clear that theological debate may enter the domain of artistic expression. In the chapter Thomas Mathews dedicates to the "female" traits of Christ in several of his 4th to 6th century images he concludes on one hand to a continuation of pagan traditions of hermaphrodite gods on the other hand to theological motivation for this sexual indistinctiveness of Christ. Although he does not point in that direction, but prefers to quote Gnostic texts, we may raise the question of the incarnate Wisdom of God, a theological synonym for the Logos. The term belonged to Arius' vocabulary but was skillfully transformed by Athanasius into an instrument against Arius.

"And yet these, whereas God is called and is a Fountain of wisdom, dare to insult Him as barren and void of His proper Wisdom. But their doctrine is false; truth witnessing that God is the eternal Fountain of His proper Wisdom; and, if the Fountain be eternal, the Wisdom also needs be eternal."²¹

And this Wisdom is the Word, and by Him, as John says, "all things were made", and "without Him not one thing was made" (John 1, 3). And this Word is Christ."²²

The identification of the Wisdom with the Word, in Athanasius' Discourses against the Arians, written about 356 to 360, could be the starting point not only of a particular cult of Christ, but also the inspiration for an image of the divinity of Christ.²³ The question is of interest as the Hagia Sophia is obviously the preferred theme of imperial church buildings in Constantinople and Thessaloniki in the 4th and 5th centuries. The fact that the church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, eventually the cathedral of Constantinople, inaugurated in 360, may have received its name in the years after Athanasius' Discourses or maybe later in the fourth century, but certainly not earlier, in vicinity to a church dedicated to the Peace of God, Hagia Eirini, adds some weight to our hypothesis.

The representation of the Theotokos in the sanctuary apses starting with the sixth century also answers this concern for the Incarnation of the Logos. The apse does not reveal anymore an invisible God, made understandable through concepts and in visions, but the origin of His visibility, the birth through a Virgin.

For Dionysius and Maximus, the Incarnation is a model for the union of the soul with God and the liturgy is the ascension of the soul to this unity.²⁴

Christianity as civil religion

Within the religious turmoil of the 4th century, political thinkers like Eusebius of Caesarea, Themistius, Libanius or Synesius built a system, inspired by a variety of sources, neo-platonic predominantly, that best fitted the political challenges of an overextended and complex empire. Out of the four authors, one is Christian, suspected of Arianism, one is a half-hearted Christian and more a highly cultivated roman aristocrat, Synesius, and the other two are pagans. Their writings converge towards an exaltation of imperial power, but they are far from representing something like an official political doctrine. Particularly for Eusebius, whose political theory drew on the Old Testament, and thus best rooted in Christian thought, there is no evidence that his *Vita Constantini* played the role of an official theory. On the contrary, a legendary Constantine, baptized in

Rome at the beginning of his engagement in favor of Christianity, produced in the fifth century, seemed more useful to a Christian empire than the political content of Eusebius's work.

Despite the Hellenistic framework of state-building, the imperial religion within the growing Christian context took a path of strong personalization. We may find emperors whose footprints marked the route, but no coherent construction. It is rather the story of a repeatedly renewed but difficult ceasefire between the worldly empire, so hated by the first Christians, and the Kingdom of God, so constantly distrusted and mocked since Pilate of Pontus.

If there was any strategy in the choice of Christianity by Constantine, the big issue with which he was confronted was the absence of a unified doctrine. The Arian controversy came to prove this. Despite the image created by Eusebius of Caesarea, of Constantine as equal to the Apostles and bishop, the 4th century emperors did not achieve to control the doctrinal evolution of the Church in the 4th century.

Timothy Barnes observed that for the 4th century there are three situations of conciliar gatherings from the point of view of their relation to political power:

- councils convened of the bishops' initiative, where no imperial agenda had influenced the debate on ecclesiastical matters,
- councils convened by the emperor, but without any imperial agenda (Nicaea),
- and councils convened by the emperor in order to respond to an imperial demand (the most obvious example would be the councils of Ariminum (Rimini) and Seleucia convoked simultaneously in 359 to approve of the creed signed by Constantius in Sirmium).²⁵

At Nicaea, Constantine just presided over the opening of the council, assisted at some of the meetings, but did not participate in the debates. Despite several direct interventions of the successors of Constantine, his attitude became an official image for a century: a holding back of the emperor when it came to participate in or to moderate the debate of the bishops. This Constantinian initial attitude was confirmed by the Letter sent to the council of Ephesus in 431 by the absent rulers Theodosius II and Valentinian III, concerning the supervision of comes Candidianus:

“Because it is necessary to provide properly for your most sacred synod's suitable discipline and quiet by supervision, we have not disregarded this, so that by this means calm may be guarded from every quarter. And we

have been persuaded that your Godlinesses need no external aid to provide peace for this and other matters. But not to overlook this also pertains to our harmonious provision concerning piety."²⁶

The emperors explained to the bishops that they had instructed the comes Candidianus to join the

“sacred synod but take no part whatsoever in the inquiries and proposals which would be made there on the subject of the dogmas, (for it is not lawful for a person not belonging to the list of holy bishops to mingle in the discussion of ecclesiastical matters), but by every means to remove from the said city the laics and the monks, both those who have foregathered on this account and those who are about to assemble... and to provide that no discord from antipathy should be extended further.”²⁷

After the council of Chalcedon we meet on the contrary with a long range of imperial legislation on dogmatic matter: the *Enkyklion* of Basiliskos, 476, the *Henotikon* of Zeno, 482, Justinian’s ‘Three Chapters’ and his legislation against the theopaschites and the Origenists; the *Ekthesis* of Heraklios in 638, launching the formula of the “single will” and the *Typos* of Constans II, in 648. The variation of imperial attitude towards the councils has immediate contextual explanation, but the basic concern of the emperor, as it appears to be already the concern of Constantine, depicted by Eusebius, is to pacify and unify the Church on a minimal basis, on a compromise. Such is the primary concern of the imperial Church. Notably, already in Constantine’s edict against heretics, reported by Eusebius, only ancient, resilient and strongly divergent heretical communities are mentioned and outlawed, but recent splinters like Donatists, Meletians and Arians are not. For the Non-Chalcedonians it took more than a century to come to a parallel ecclesiastical organization. And they did it only when they realized that their choice in matter of faith had little chance to become the ruling truth in Constantinople. These contesting but not yet excluded or auto-excluded communities are strata of “micro-Christendoms” which from the emperor’s point of view belong to the Church of the empire.

Theodosius asked Ambrose to teach him the true religion, tells us Theodoret in his *Ecclesiastical History*, and by unveiling the opposition between the Constantinopolitan, i.e. oriental, practice of the emperor

staying in the sanctuary during liturgy on the one hand and the “western” righteousness of Ambrose, who expels the emperor from the sanctuary and explains the difference between priesthood and emperorship, on the other, he announced a recurrent debate on the sacerdotal status of the emperor. How close is the emperor allowed to come to the sanctuary and to the performance of priestly gestures? Was it the Arians who dominated the Churches in Constantinople, who allowed the emperor to sit in the sanctuary? The consecration of Hagia Sophia in 360 by the Arian bishop Eudoxius at the will of Constantius allows us to think so. But with the emperor Theodosius Western orthodoxy prevailed. Why was an emperor ready to give up imperial privileges only to comply with orthodoxy? The lesson learned by Theodosius the Elder was applied by Theodosius the Younger in his novel that forbids the emperor to enter the church accompanied by his retinue.²⁸ As Theodoret’s story goes, Theodosius learned the difference between priesthood and emperorship the hard way, through public confrontation with the orthodox bishop Ambrose.²⁹ In this case the imperial Church had to comply with Ambrose’s “micro Christendom”.

The epoch after the council of Chalcedon inaugurates another imperial attitude towards Christianity, in which the emperor dictates “truth” within the borders of a smaller empire. Justinian illustrates the climax of this new stand on the issue. He believed that it was the emperor’s role to teach God’s laws, to formulate the truth of the Church, as in the Three Chapters. Justinian’s approach to the sphere of ecclesiastic matters follows the path of a central and active role of the emperor within the Christian religion (e.g. Justinian’s Novella nr. 6). It is the moment when the Latin *Acta Silvestri*, translated into Greek merge with the Constantinian legend. Agapetus’ *Advisory Chapters* to the emperor Justinian attest that some simple ideas of Hellenistic monarchy found a Christianized vocabulary. Justinian can easily be credited with initiative in the definition of his religious role. But such overtones Justinian introduces need no theory, but only fine-tuned gestures. Despite the theodosian edict against the presence of the armed retinue of the emperor in the church, Justinian can be seen, in San Vitale in Ravenna, entering the church with his retinue, fully armed soldiers, the *doryphoroi*, as they are mentioned in the Cherubic hymn.³⁰ Nevertheless it was not just a neglect of an old edict; it meant rather for the emperor to assume a new symbolic role within the liturgy, that of living icon of Christ, in which case the soldiers played the role of angelic hosts. But once again, the prominent role Justinian assumed as emperor did not

become a standard. At the end of the seventh century the emperor was supposed to depose his *regalia* and quit his retinue when entering the church (Constantine IV in San Appolinare in Classe). According to the council *in Trullo* the emperor's access to the sanctuary was an exception admitted for the imperial majesty, in that particular case when he was bringing his gifts to the altar (canon 69).

Heraclius's reign is no less prominent in this reformulation of the imperial religion by his assumption of the title *basileus* and the innovations in the coronation ritual.³¹ The most important theological implication in the definition of imperial power that occurred in the reign of Heraclius was the full assimilation of the Christian Roman emperors to the kings of Israel. At times "Christian History" perfectly overlapped with Roman Empire in the most genuine way, as we can read in George of Pisidia or in the Homily on the 626 siege of Constantinople by Theodore Synkellos. But at other times, no less significant, Christians were at odds with imperial Christianity or liked to make us believe that they were so. Such were the answers of Maximus Confessor to his imperial interrogators.³²

The present study also joins in another historiographic debate, concerning the rhythm of change from a pagan to a Christian society. Since the 1970's the study of late antiquity has tended to play down the shock of Christianization and barbarization of the empire and to describe a progressive social, political and cultural transformation from the antique to the medieval forms of society. After the opening of the debate in French historiography by Henri-Irénée Marrou,³³ Peter Brown was considered the champion of this methodological approach to a period that he stretches from Marc Aurelius to Charlemagne.³⁴ His determining contribution was to close the eighteenth century rhetoric of decline and fall (Montesquieu, Gibbon), in which Christianity played the role of interior enemy.³⁵ My contribution to this debate would be to emphasize that Christianity is not directly and genuinely responsible for the political change in the Roman Empire; that the changes we observe from the late third to the sixth century owe as much to the Hellenization of the empire and to the social and political context as to its Christianization. There is in fact no coherent Christian doctrine on Roman imperial monarchy, and the attitudes are bouncing back and forth from one author to the other, from one emperor to the other. There is no linear "progress" within this movement. Christianity in the fourth century is not a starting point for the

monarchical transformation of the empire; the phenomenon becomes visible only by the modern historian's capacity to know the outcome.

It was once considered common knowledge that the monarchic structure of the Later Roman Empire resulted from the blend of Hellenistic political philosophy, Roman legal thought and Christian faith.³⁶ Nevertheless the blending itself was a weary process, with successive layers of the different ingredients. By uncovering the chronology and dynamics of the process which brought into existence the ideal image described by Herbert Hunger as "Reich der neuen Mitte"³⁷ we may discover how much this construction depended on immediate context.

Genuinely Christian acceptance of Roman imperial government lies in those references in Matthew 22, 21 "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's", Romans 13, 1-6 "Every person must submit to the supreme authorities. [...] The authorities are in God's service and to these duties they devote their energies", I Peter 2, 13-17: "Submit yourselves to every human institution for the sake of the Lord, whether to the sovereign as supreme, or to the governor as his deputy for the punishment of criminals and the commendation of those who do right. [...] reverence to God, honour to the sovereign". These texts described a world of submission to temporal powers and in as much as possible harmonious relation to the pagan environment in hope of the timely relief through the Parousia; meanwhile the Apocalypse of John, expressing another type of political experience by Christians, depicts a full-blown conflict with "forces of evil", a straight denunciation of worldly power. These references announce the two extreme positions of the Christians as to power; both came to be strongly expressed in the 4th to 6th centuries.

Erik Peterson answered his question, whether Christianity strengthened the monarchical character of the late Roman world by its doctrinal content, by distinguishing between a heretical Christianity, guilty of political theology, and an orthodox one, which opposed it. But all the dogmatic struggles were won momentarily by imperial support. Usually historians call the outcomes of such struggles with the alternative orthodoxy/heresy, but we may equally see them as a succession of orthodoxies from the point of view of the imperial church. Monarchy in its late antique forms may also find another explanation, which brings back on the stage Themistios and Libanios, emphasizing that Christian thought just followed a trend better rooted in its Hellenistic ground³⁸ and responded to challenges coming from its Eastern borders.³⁹

To Peterson's heresy/orthodoxy distinction we have to add the more classical distinction East/West and raise the following questions: is there a Western appetite for independence of the Church versus an Eastern tendency to submission? Or was it only the mere proximity and solid structure of Roman power in Constantinople that determined the Eastern specificity?

From Constantine to Heraclius, a series of clashes between ecclesiastical authorities and political power, dramatic reconfigurations of the political landscape in late antiquity, such as the fall and loss of the Western half of the empire or later the military and political shock of the war with Persia and the rise of Islam, created a corpus of narratives which eventually turned into doctrinal content. Precedents and traditions built up a fragile but functional "constitutional" thought in Byzantium.⁴⁰ Each historical challenge was the opportunity to rethink the Christian character of imperial power. It is hard to draw the line between an imperial and Constantinopolitan production of Christian political doctrine, Heraclius' assumption of the title *basileia*, for example, and an ongoing Christian attitude of distrust towards power, expressed in fact in peripheral circles, whether geographic (Rome and its sense of independence), or spiritual (the monastic desert) and to say when did one or the other prevail.

Taking another path and a later period than in Peterson's argumentation, we might however reach the conclusion that in Constantinople *any attempt to sacralize power* encounters a renewed concern for orthodoxy. Each Church council of the 5th and 6th centuries, that assumes the task of religious reconciliation, opens and concludes with acclamations of the emperor. Where the theologian legitimately sees at work the hand of the Holy Spirit, the historian sees events and circumstances, for which he has no alternative, as much as counterfactual history is bad history.

It is only at the very end of the seventh century that a text in an official document describes the emperor in his religious role.

Orthodoxy, Orthopraxy and Civil Religion: the *Trullanum* (691-692)

Only ten years after the sixth ecumenical council the emperor Justinian II summoned the bishops of the empire for a new one. This council came to be known as *in Trullo*, the one which took place in the domed hall of the imperial palace in Constantinople, in fact the same hall in which

the sixth ecumenical council also gathered. The name of this council indicates a long dispute over its authority with the Church of Rome and its effectiveness only inside the political borders of the Byzantine Empire. The participant fathers and the emperor claimed that it was the fulfilment of the earlier fifth and sixth ecumenical councils, hence its other name 'Quinisextum'. A significant preamble opens the 102 canons, explaining the necessity and the task of this council, i.e. to produce new regulations for the good order of a community conceived as Church and empire at the same time. The argument put forward by the bishops is namely the lack of such regulations in ecumenical assemblies for the last two centuries. The historian feels intrigued, on the contrary, by their concern for such regulations, the more so as most of them were since long in practice and the matters regarded issues of liturgical practice, social behavior or ecclesiastical organization. The attention given to the purity of the dogmatic definition of faith, orthodoxy, by the previous ecumenical assemblies was replaced by interest in a standardized and unified form of worship, orthopraxy. The initiative was clearly on the emperor's side, who took it as a personal challenge to bring the Church of Rome to agreement. The preamble brings the emperor even more into the scene. It functions almost as a mirror of princes and acknowledges his central role in the community of believers at a time when some Christian communities on the periphery of the new Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the former Eastern provinces of the Empire might have regarded the deliverance from the tyrannical Roman emperors as an act of God's favor.

I intend to interpret the construction of the Trullan canonical collection in the sociological terms of center and periphery.⁴¹ Thus the canons display a system in which society is seen as concentric circles revolving around a religious and political center. The key to this system is given by the 95th canon regulating the integration of heretics into the Church. The canon establishes three types of rituals for the reception into the church of former heretics:

First ritual: profession of orthodox faith, anathematization of the erroneous beliefs and of their authors and finally communion;

Second ritual: profession of faith, anathematization and anointment with the holy chrism;

Third ritual: a new full baptism ritual with exorcisms.

According to these rituals there are three categories of heretics:

Post-Ephesian and Post-Chalcedonian Christological heresies are dealt with the first more simple form of ritual; they are the closest to the orthodox

core of society. Earlier Christological and Trinitarian heresies belong to the second ritual procedure. More radical forms of Anti-Trinitarian beliefs, Gnostic and dualistic heresies are in the last category and to be considered on the same level with pagans. It is noteworthy that Muslims are not mentioned here, and generally are not a subject of concern for this synod, probably they were considered like pagans and Jews completely exterior to Christianity.

The image depicted by the Trullan canons is that of a world of Christianity. Pagans and Jews are not real social groups, but deviating practices in relation to the orthodox core of society. Heretics are put under pressure to integrate the core, but their existence is acknowledged by the simple presence of rules of segregation against them (e.g. prohibition of marriage with heretics, canon 72).⁴²

The distribution of the canons in the corpus displays a tripartite social organization composed in this case of clergy (canons 1-39), monastic order (40-49) and laity (50-102). This religious division of society should receive according to the authors of the canons also a reflection in daily public life through costumes identifying each order. Priests⁴³ and monks are to be recognizable by their garments (27); hermits should quit the cities,⁴⁴ by either joining a monastery, in which they strictly have to obey the regulations of the superior, or by taking refuge in the geographical desert. Similarly, fake madness, thus also the practices of holy fools, so much in fashion in that century, is prohibited. Wandering monks and holy fools are part of that phenomenon called by Peter Brown "the holy man", which supplied local centers of authority to replace the vanishing urban political system of the later Roman empire. Through the Trullanum, in a small empire, with a unified religion, the political center tries to recuperate all authority, the one deriving from religion particularly. Holiness and the sacred are supposed to derive from one center and to reach the society in a regulated manner through hierarchies permanently produced by the higher clergy and the emperor. This trend continued under the iconoclast emperors, who tried altogether to reduce the influence of monasticism and to concentrate religion around public representatives of power.

Dogmatic and disciplinary religious authority enters also in a system of gradual restrictions, which we may read as a concentric structure: women shouldn't speak at all, and they are supposed to receive illumination through their husbands, by asking their questions in the private sphere of the home (70); layman shouldn't express opinions on theological subjects (63);⁴⁵ priests and bishops should stick to the teachings of the fathers

and refrain from inventing new interpretations of the Scriptures (19).⁴⁶ Orthodoxy emerges through these canons as a given content created in the past in a virtually immutable form and echo the concept of the preamble that orthodoxy needs only to be restored. The duty to survey this continuous process of preservation belongs to the emperor and the assembly of the bishops in the empire.

In liturgical matters the norm is given by Constantinople. The local practices of the periphery, Rome, Armenian Church (56, 99)⁴⁷ or Jerusalem, are rejected. The criticism of Roman practices aims also at the denial of supreme or independent authority to the Roman see.

The leitmotiv of the corpus is given by a sentence contained in the 56th canon: *“it seems good therefore that the whole Church of God which is in all the world should follow one rule”*, and corresponds to the principle of segregation and concentric organization of society enunciated in canon 72: *“it is not fitting to mingle together what should not be mingled, nor is it right that the sheep be joined with the wolf, nor the lot of sinners with the portion of Christ”*.

The composition of the Trullan collection of canons goes far beyond the usual scope of canonical works of earlier periods. Through the tone and the range of matters discussed these canons don't sound anymore as regulations for Christians, but as laws for the empire. As an example we can mention the canons which regulate the behavior and dressing code of law students or that about the prohibition of horse racing during the holy week or the more famous canon against soothsayers and bear-tamers. The process of Christianization, as mirrored in the Trullanum, deals with wider social ranges, reaching far beyond the court circles and urban elites as it still was in the time of Justinian. The scope of the process now is to produce a unified society. The silent argument for this development is a world divided between religious centers of power, Islam on the southern frontier of the empire, paganism on its northern frontier, and a potentially dissident Christianity in the West, Rome, and in the east, Armenia. We find this argument fully developed in a contemporary eschatological text, such as the Vision of Pseudo-Methodius of Patara.

The transformation of the coronation ritual in the 7th century⁴⁸ accompanies the process of full identification of the Roman power with Christianity. It is in this context and in preparation of the Trullanum, that imperial propaganda uses the idea of the emperor as guardian of Orthodoxy. A letter of Justinian II to pope Konon (dated February 17th 687) regarding the acts of the sixth ecumenical council (3rd Constantinople),

describes Justinian himself as representative of God and guardian of orthodoxy. The emperor tells the pope that he assembled patriarchs, papal legates, archbishops, bishops, functionaries, bodyguards, the demes, the excubitors, and representatives of the army, ordered the acts to be read out and asked the assembly to sign them. Afterwards he ordered the acts to be kept in the imperial archive and not in the patriarchal archive as sign of his role of "guardian of orthodoxy".⁴⁹

Last but not least the canons of the Trullanum care to give a definition of imperial power. Kingship is described as follows in the preamble of the Trullan canons:

"As we conduct our lives in great sloth and slumber in the idleness of our thoughts, so that the enemy can come upon us unawares, Christ our Lord, who stirs this greatest of ships, the entire world, has now set you over us, the wise governor, the pious emperor...you who dispense yours words in discernment... *Wisdom bore you in her womb* and nurtured you with her virtues; she brought you up and educated you and filled you with the Spirit of God; she has made you the *eye of universe*, you who brightly illumine your subjects with the pureness and splendor of your mind. To you she has entrusted her Church and has taught you to meditate on her law day and night, for the correction and edification of the people subject to you" (as Phinehas [Num 25, 7-11] the emperor transfixes sin by piety and understanding, the same comparison refers to Cyril of Alexandria in the council of Ephesus),⁵⁰ "and you have chosen to lead your flock away from iniquity and corruption."⁵¹

The emperor steers the ship through the swells of turbulence and transgression. Because the last two ecumenical councils have not established canons

"it follows that the holy nation, the royal priesthood (I Pet. 2, 9), on whose behalf Christ died, is thorn asunder and led astray through the many passions resulting from indiscipline, and is detached little by little and cut off from the divine fold, ... through ignorance and neglect (quotation Heb. 10, 29).

"It was your (the emperor's) great desire therefore, after the example of Christ, the good shepherd (John 10, 1-14), searching for the sheep lost in the mountains, to bring together this holy nation, as a special people, and to return it to the fold and convince it to keep the divine commandments and statutes." [The council's mission is to purify the Church of the remnants of Judaisant and pagan practices].⁵²

The preamble alludes to the fact that assaults of devilish legions at the gates of the Church coincide in a meaningful way with the assaults of huge Arab armies from the East and equally threatening pagan invasions from the North. The defeat of the former opens the possibility of victory over the latter. In order to formulate this political interpretation the text appeals to an eschatological framework, which develops new forms of expression at the end of the seventh century and describes, as we shall see, the Empire as near to the Heavenly Kingdom as the available vocabulary could express it.

In the description of the emperor a series of *topoi* are borrowed from earlier rhetorical texts: the imperial *Christomimesis* already belongs to Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*; the steering of the cosmic ship by Christ and of the earthly Empire by the emperor – to both Eusebius and Agapetus' *Mirror of Princes*. Some parallels with the *Life of Constantine* are more striking, for example the description of the image that represented Constantine and his sons trampling or piercing by a weapon a serpent or dragon, cast into the depths of the sea, while the cross was depicted above their head. It is possible that the *labarum* itself was that weapon.⁵³ Eusebius explains the image by citing Is. 27,1 and Ps. 90,13 (the references are generally attributed to Christ, e.g. the chapel of the archbishop's palace in Ravenna). If in this context the dragon is the devil for Eusebius, in another context it is Licinius, who is called "that dragon".⁵⁴ The eternal enemy of mankind finds particular expressions in historical threats to the Christian empire; this is what the preamble conveys through the juxtaposition of "dragon" and "Assyrian". For the opening of the council of Nicaea, Eusebius presents the emperor walking in the hall "like some heavenly angel of God" and at the Vicennalia celebrations "the palace" "might have been supposed ... an imaginary representation of the Kingdom of Christ".⁵⁵ In the Trullan preamble it is not a palace or a church, or the presence of the emperor that allude to the Kingdom of God, but the Christian community, as holy people and political body of the empire, which has already exchanged servitude for the Kingdom of Heaven. The vocabulary is both Pauline, stressing the moral and individual aspect of the struggle with evil, and political, referring to words like: servitude, kingdom, rebellion, tyranny.

The passages of the *Life of Constantine*, particularly his letter to the provincials of the East,⁵⁶ and of the *Praise of Constantine*, where Eusebius draws the analogy between the cosmos ruled by God and the Empire ruled by Constantine,⁵⁷ display various themes similar with our text: the new

sacrifice, as opposed to the pagan sacrifice; Christ's war on the demons, and the emperor's war against its terrestrial enemies; the friendship between Christ and the emperor, who is thus acting as an interpreter of the Word of God. Nevertheless there is no textual borrowing from Eusebius in the preamble.

Unlike Eusebius's more restricted term by term comparison of God's monarchy over the universe with the empire, built on the idea of imitation or reflection, in the preamble the empire is already an actor of the dramatic development of the last things. The objective of the council itself is to establish canons, as rules of righteousness. If in the first and second parts the preamble emphasizes the religious and political unity, the empire as actor, in its third part the emperor Justinian II assumes the major role. Divine Wisdom "has entrusted her Church (to the emperor) and has taught (the emperor) to meditate on her law day and night, for the correction and edification of the peoples (once again in plural)".⁵⁸ More than a divine attribute, the Wisdom of God in this text seems to be a kind of political manifestation of God. "Wisdom bore you in her womb", as it is said about the emperor, could be visualized as the description of a quite obvious ceremonial image: the emperor crossing Saint Sophia with the holy gifts, penetrating in the sanctuary, rising at the ambo to address the people and to receive the crown under the cosmic dome/womb of Wisdom.

The name *ho Assyrios* given to the devil, as historical enemy of the holy city, inspired by Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on Micah*, but possibly also related to the corresponding rhetorical themes of the *Homily* of Theodore Synkellos, presents the Church of the living God typologically as Zion, and mystically as icon of the heavenly Jerusalem. By these references, Constantinople itself becomes a besieged Jerusalem, in which Church and empire merge into an undifferentiated unity. If in Cyril's commentary, following Clement of Alexandria,⁵⁹ the Church is the icon of the heavenly Jerusalem, the preamble extends this function to the empire. The same confusion/identification is operated by Pseudo-Methodius when he applies the reference in Matt. 16, 18 ("the gates of Hades shall never prevail over the Church") to the kingdom of the Christians (i.e. that of the Greeks, i.e. that of the Romans), whose power is justified by the Holy Cross.⁶⁰

The canons 36, 38 and 69 respond to the political scope of the preamble. First, the apparently unnecessary repetition of the canons 3 and 28 of the second and forth ecumenical councils, which equates ecclesiastically Constantinople with Rome, reiterates, very appropriately

in the context of the Trullanum, the role of Constantinople as both political and religious capital.⁶¹ Canon 38 reinforces this intention through invocation of the principle of geographic accommodation of ecclesiastical authority on civil authority, going even further in this logic by replacing the dignity of ecclesiastical centers based on the ancientness of the see with the hierarchical order of cities created by imperial authority.⁶² Canon 36 is thus in fact the very logic consequence of canon 38. Ultimately, canon 69 addresses, albeit in an ambiguous form, the question of the sacred status of the emperor.⁶³ Although this canon is part of the segment of the canonic collection which deals with laity, it creates an exception for the imperial power.

To close the case with Justinian II, we have to add the numismatic evidence: the gold coins of this emperor (*nomismata*) show on the recto the image of Christ *rex regnantium* and on the verso the image of the emperor with the inscription *servus Christi*, thus pointing to the condominium of the emperor with Christ.⁶⁴ The homology Heavenly Kingdom/Earthly Kingdom was put on vertical structure in the Barberini Ivory (first half of the 6th century, probably Justinian)⁶⁵ and on the apse of the domed hall of the Chrysotriklinos in the palace:⁶⁶ Christ above, the emperor below, meanwhile Justinian II choose to emphasize the relation through a double sided image, the coin. The intimacy of the two grew stronger.

Why does Byzantium look so Christian to us? If we interpret Christianity as a means to achieve social cohesion in the empire, and if we accept to define Christianity as a strictly recognizable and controlled form of worship (as the Trullan canons might suggest), in the context of multiple political and religious challenges, then we have to return to the theme of civil religion, and not to political theology. Neither did the empire force Christianity to approve of a political doctrine dedicated to the empire, nor did Christianity shape the political doctrine of the empire, because, as we tried to show in our essay, empire and Christianity were not coherent, willful historical actors. Nevertheless, the motor producing orthodoxy, read at the moment of the late seventh century as orthopraxy, lies within the imperial palace. In this place it looked like if God granted the empire to go on, this was in exchange for its members' commitment to the one true faith in God. Such a belief found a stronger expression with emperors like Justinian, Heraclius or Justinian II, but was shared by all others.

The claims of imperial guardianship of orthodoxy⁶⁷ and the harsh treatment of peripheral groups were not new in fact, but the novelty consisted in their official written form. The canons of the Trullanum compelled the monks to remain in their monastic establishments (canons 34, 41, 42) but already an imperial constitution of Theodosius II ordered the recalcitrant and noisy monks to be held out of the councils' gatherings. This attitude shows early awareness of the subversive power of monasticism. If the palace of the emperor is a dwelling of orthodoxy, as long as the non-Chalcedonians sought refuge in Theodora's palace in Constantinople, they were not yet labeled as heretics. A heresy was not a heresy until it was expelled from the center.

If the abovementioned peripheries were to claim their righteousness or to proclaim their challenge they had to do it in the center.

For the second half of the seventh and the eighth century, the system started functioning the other way round. A severe trial in Constantinople could assure to a religious dissenter his posthumous success. In the seventh century the trial of Maximus Confessor took place in Constantinople and in the eighth century the trial of Saint Stephen the Younger by the iconoclast emperor Constantine V even in the Hippodrome. The initial defeat of the dissenter was eventually turned into triumph when a change of policy occurred in Constantinople. The narrator transforms the castigatory examination in Constantinople in an opportunity to proclaim the truth to the whole world. The official history of Orthodoxy records the later triumphant point of view and expels the discordant view from the sources. If political will seems primordial in establishing orthodoxy, later narrative strategies about orthodox heroes insert coherence into what looks, from a political point of view, as a change of actors and contexts. Creators of Orthodoxy are thus both those who act directly on the battlefield of political action and those who tell the story of the religious conflict.

The conflict around orthodoxy, or the succession of orthodoxies throughout these centuries, accentuates the fact that the emperor held his own version of Christianity. Historians are privileged by the amount of sources produced in the proximity of power in their attempt to retrace the rise and function of the imperial church. What the historian should avoid is to merely take the latter for Christianity.⁶⁸ We have to group carefully the evidence into small temporal units. What makes sense in the fourth century does not in the sixth. What one believes in Palestine is still unknown in Constantinople at the same time.

NOTES

- 1 J. Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought 300-1450*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 4; A. Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien (325-395)*, 2nd. ed., Paris, 1972; T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, 1981.
- 2 G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 a 451*, Paris, 1974; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine*, New York, 1987.
- 3 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Introduction, translation and commentary by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999) 48-50.
- 4 Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, Berlin, 1922.
- 5 E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum*, Leipzig 1935; idem, "Christus als Imperator", *Catholica* 5 (1936), 64-72.
- 6 E. Kantorowicz, *The King's two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton UP, 1957; for the complex intellectual and personal relationship between Schmitt, Peterson and Kantorowicz see the remarkable article by György Geréby, "Carl Schmitt and Erik Peterson on the Problem of Political Theology: A Footnote to Kantorowicz", in Aziz Al-Azmeh, Janos Bak, *Monotheistic Kingship. The Medieval Variants*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2004, 31-61.
- 7 Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, chapter III, Christ-centered Kingship, p. 42.
- 8 A. Boureau, *La religion de l'Etat. La construction de la république étatique dans le discours théologique de l'Occident médiéval (1250-1350)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2006.
- 9 G. Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre. Étude sur le 'césaropapisme' byzantin*, Paris, 1996, p. 17.
- 10 Th. Paléologue, *Sous l'œil du Grand Inquisiteur. Carl Schmitt et l'héritage de la théologie politique*, Cerf, Paris, 2004, p. 87-92.
- 11 Pierre Maraval, Introduction, traduction et notes à Eusèbe de Césarée, *La théologie politique de l'Empire chrétien*, Louanges de Constantin, Paris, Cerf, 2001.
- 12 Averil Cameron, *The Byzantines*, (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2006), chapter 6: "An Orthodox society?" p. 96-116.
- 13 Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, chapter 16, p. 355-379, here p. 359: "their own "micro-Christendom" – a local Christendom, that is, which mirrored the majestic certainty of a "true" Christendom, preserved somewhere in distant lands."; p. 364 "Christianity was a patchwork of adjacent, but separate, "micro-Christendoms". No longer bathed,

unconsciously, in an “ecumenical” atmosphere based upon regular inter-regional contacts, each Christian region fell back onto itself. Each needed to feel that it possessed, if in diminished form, the essence of an entire Christian culture. Often singularly ill-informed about their neighbours, or deeply distrustful of them, the leaders of each “micro-Christendom” fastened with fierce loyalty on those features that seemed to reflect in microcosm, in their own land, the imagined, all embracing macrocosm of a world-wide Christianity.”

- 14 Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, I, 21.
- 15 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, chapter 32,
- 16 Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d’une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, (PUF, Paris, 1974).
- 17 Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos*, 9 and 87, PG 25, col. 264-265 and 405.
- 18 Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, revised and expanded edition, Princeton Univ. Press, 1999, chapter I: The Mistake of the Emperor Mystique, and particularly p. 53.
- 19 Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, revised and expanded edition, Princeton Univ. Press, 1999, p. 92, but for the argument chapters 2 and 3.
- 20 J.-M. Spieser, “The representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches”, *Gesta* 37/1, 1998, p. 69. A recent visitor of San Vitale reported an interesting scene; a orthodox monastic delegation was puzzled by the beardless Christ, they called a specialist to ask whether the mosaics are original and left quickly and very disappointed.
- 21 Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, Discourse I, VI, 19 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, IV).
- 22 Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, Discourse I, VI, 19 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, IV).
- 23 John Meyendorff, “Wisdom-Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 41, Studies on Art and Archeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday. (1987), pp. 391-401.
- 24 René Bornert, OSB, *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine liturgie du VII^e au XV^e siècle*, Archives de l’Orient Chrétien 9, Paris, 1966, p. 118, 121.
- 25 Timothy Barnes, “Constantine, Athanasius and the Christian Church”, *Constantine. History, historiography and legend*, eds. Samuel N.C. Lieu and Dominic Montserrat (Routledge, London & New York, 1998) p. 7-20, here p. 10.
- 26 *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, I, I, 1, p. 120, translation in P. R. Coleman Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church* (London SPCK, 1966) vol. 2, p. 662-63.
- 27 *Ibid.*

- 28 “For we, whom always rightly the weapons of military authority surround, and for whom it is not proper to be without bodyguards, when entering God’s temple, abandon our weapons outside, taking off our diadem, and by the appearance of the lessening of our majesty, there is reaped by us all the more awe for the majesty of empire.” Council of Ephesus: *Collectio Vaticana* 137.3, ed Schwartz, ACO 1.4, p 64.8, trans. P. R. Coleman Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church* (London SPCK, 1966) vol. 2, p. 657.
- 29 Theodoret of Cyrhus, *Hist. eccl.*, V, 18, 20-25.
- 30 See the commentary on the hymn of the Cherubim in Rudolf H. W. Stichel, « Die Hagia Sophia Justinians in Konstantinople als Bühne des Kaisers », *Kolloquim 2000-2001. Fachbereich Architektur*, (TU Darmstadt) 10-19.
- 31 P. Guran, “Genesis and Function of the Last Emperor myth in Byzantine Eschatology”, *Bizantinistica* 8 (2006) 292-296.
- 32 Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre* (Paris, 1996) 177-184.
- 33 H.-I. Marrou, *Décadence romaine ou antiquité tardive? IIIe- IVe siècle*, Paris, 1977.
- 34 P. Brown, *The world of late antiquity, AD 150-750*, New York, 1971.
- 35 A. Momigliano, “Christianity and the Decline of the Roman Empire”, in A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963).
- 36 G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, (New Brunswick, 1957).
- 37 Herbert Hunger, *Reich der neuen Mitte. Der christliche Geist der byzantinische Kultur*, (Graz, Koln, Wien, 1965).
- 38 G. Dagron, “L’Empire romain d’Orient au IV^e siècle et les traditions politiques de l’hellénisme, le témoignage de Thémistios”, *Travaux et Mémoires* 3, 1968, 1-242.
- 39 Irfan Shahid, «The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius,» *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972), 295-307.
- 40 H.-G. Beck, “Res publica romana. Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner”, *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte*, 1970, Heft 2, p. 7-41, reprinted in H. Hunger ed., *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild*, Darmstadt 1975, p. 379-414.
- 41 Edward Shills, *Center and periphery: essays in macrosociology* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1975).
- 42 Canon 72: “An orthodox man is not permitted to marry a heretical woman, nor an orthodox woman to be joined to a heretical man. But if anything of this kind appear to have been done by any [we require them] to consider the marriage null, and that the marriage be dissolved. For it is not fitting to mingle together what should not be mingled, nor is it right that the sheep be joined with the wolf, nor the lot of sinners with the portion of Christ. But if any one shall transgress the things which we have decreed let him be cut off. But if any who up to this time are unbelievers and are not yet numbered in the flock of the orthodox have contracted lawful marriage between

themselves, and if then, one choosing the right and coming to the light of truth and the other remaining still detained by the bond of error and not willing to behold with steady eye the divine rays, the unbelieving woman is pleased to cohabit with the believing man, or the unbelieving man with the believing woman, let them not be separated, according to the divine Apostle, «for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by her husband.»”

43 Canon 27: None of those who are in the catalogue of the clergy shall wear clothes unsuited to them, either while still living in town or when on a journey: but they shall wear such clothes as are assigned to those who belong to the clergy. And if any one shall violate this canon, he shall be cut off for one week.

44 Canon 42: Those who are called Eremites and are clothed in black robes, and with long hair go about cities and associate with the worldly both men and women and bring odium upon their profession--we decree that if they will receive the habit of other monks and wear their hair cut short, they may be shut up in a monastery and numbered among the brothers; but if they do not choose to do this, they are to be expelled from the cities and forced to live in the desert (eremous) from whence also they derive their name.

45 Canon 63: “it does not befit a layman to dispute or teach publicly, thus claiming for himself authority to teach, but he should yield to the order appointed by the Lord, and to open his ears to those who have received the grace to teach, and be taught by them divine things; for in one Church God has made «different members,» according to the word of the Apostle: and Gregory the Theologian, wisely interpreting this passage, commends the order in vogue with them saying:(1) «This order brethren we revere, this we guard. Let this one be the ear; that one the tongue, the hand or any other member. Let this one teach, but let that one learn.» And a little further on: «Learning in docility and abounding in cheerfulness, and ministering with alacrity, we shall not all be the tongue which is the more active member, not all of us Apostles, not all prophets, nor shall we all interpret.» And again: «Why dost thou make thyself a shepherd when thou art a sheep? Why become the head when thou art a foot? Why dost thou try to be a commander when thou art enrolled in the number of the soldiers?» And elsewhere: «Wisdom orders, Be not swift in words; nor compare thyself with the rich, being poor; nor seek to be wiser than the wise.» But if any one be found weakening the present canon, he is to be cut off for forty days.”

46 Canon 19: Those who preside over the churches in their teaching should “not go beyond the limits now fixed, nor varying from the tradition of the God-bearing fathers. And if any controversy in regard to Scripture shall have been raised, let them not interpret it otherwise than as the lights and doctors of the church in their writings have expounded it, and in those let them

- glory rather than in composing things out of their own heads, lest through their lack of skill they may have departed from what was fitting.”
- 47 Canon 99: “We have further learned that, in the regions of the Armenians, certain persons boil joints of meat within the sanctuary and offer portions to the priests, distributing it after the Jewish fashion. Wherefore, that we may keep the church undefiled, we decree that it is not lawful for any priest to seize the separate portions of flesh meat from those who offer them, but they are to be content with what he that offers pleases to give them; and further we decree that such offering be made outside the church. And if any one does not thus, let him be cut off.”
- 48 P. Guran, “Genesis and Function of the Last Emperor myth in Byzantine Eschatology”, *Bizantinistica* 8 (2006) 292-96.
- 49 F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches, 1. Teil, Regesten von 565-1025*, Munich and Berlin, 1924, p. 31, Nr. 254.
- 50 St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Letters*, vol. II,
- 51 *The Council in Trullo revisited*, edited by George Nedungatt, Michael Featherstone, (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995) 49-50.
- 52 *The Council in Trullo revisited*, 52-53.
- 53 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, introduction, translation and commentary by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, Clarendon Press [Oxford, 1999], III, 3, p. 122 translation, p. 255-256 commentary.
- 54 The same kind of identification of the Avar kagan with the dragon in Theodoros Synkellos’ homily, *op. cit.*, translation p. 16-17, Greek text, 302-303, (apud L. Sternbach, *Analecta avarica*).
- 55 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III, 10 and 15, p. 125-127, 264-267.
- 56 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II 48-60, p. 111-114.
- 57 Eusebius, *Tricennialia*, chap. II, Eusebius, *Werke*, Band I, ed. Ivar Heikel, Leipzig, 1902, p. 199-200.
- 58 *The Council in Trullo revisited*, p. 50.
- 59 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromatum liber IV*, 8, 18, PG 8, col. 1277B.
- 60 Pseudo-Methodius, translation P.J. Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 42 (f 126v).
- 61 Canon 36: “Renewing the enactments by the 150 Fathers assembled at the God-protected and imperial city, and those of the 630 who met at Chalcedon; we decree that the see of Constantinople shall have equal privileges with the see of Old Rome, and shall be highly regarded in ecclesiastical matters as that is, and shall be second after it. After Constantinople shall be ranked the See of Alexandria, then that of Antioch, and afterwards the See of Jerusalem”.
- 62 Canon 38: “the canon which was made by the Fathers we also observe, which thus decreed: If any city be renewed by imperial authority, or shall have been renewed, let the order of things ecclesiastical follow the civil and public models.”

- ⁶³ Canon 69: "it is not permitted to a layman to enter the sanctuary (Holy Altar, Gk.), though, in accordance with a certain ancient tradition, the imperial power and authority is by no means prohibited from this when he wishes to offer his gifts to the Creator."
- ⁶⁴ A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique*, Paris, 1957, 37-45 ; C. Morisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, 1970, I, 396-398, pl. LXI, LXIII, LXIV.
- ⁶⁵ Danièle Gaborit-Chopin, in *Byzance, l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (catalogue de l'exposition au musée du Louvre, 3 novembre 1992-1^{er} février 1993), Paris, 1993, nr. 20, p. 63-65.
- ⁶⁶ Av. Cameron, "The Artistic Patronage of Justin II", *Byzantion* 50, 1980, p. 62-84.
- ⁶⁷ F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches, 1. Teil, Regesten von 565-1025*, Munich and Berlin, 1924, p. 31, Nr. 254 in a letter of Justinian II to pope Konon 17 February 687.
- ⁶⁸ Eric Rebillard, *In hora mortis. Evolution de la pastorale chrétienne de la mort au IV^e et V^e siècles* (Rome, 1994), p. 232 draws the attention to the significant changes which allow him to speak of several « christianismes dans l'histoire ». To his view we may add our distinction between simultaneous zones of Christianities, of which one is that which appears in proximity of political power.