



Lethbridge
Undergraduate
Research Journal

ISSN 1718-8482

[Home](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Editorial Board](#) | [Instructions for Authors](#) | [Contact](#)

Lethbridge Undergraduate Research Journal
ISSN 1718-8482

Imperial Ideology: The Idea of the Universal Christian Empire in Late Antiquity

Christopher Records

University of California, Riverside
Riverside, California, USA

Citation:

Christopher Records: Imperial Ideology: The Idea of the Universal Christian Empire in Late Antiquity. *Lethbridge Undergraduate Research Journal*. 2008. Volume 3 Number 1.

Table of Contents

[Abstract](#)

[Origins](#)

[The problem of Christian communities outside the Empire](#)

[The new Eusebian-Constantinian role for the emperor within the Church](#)

[Initial Christian resistance to universal Christian Empire: Salvian, Augustine, and Ambrose](#)

[The reign of Theodosius as the realization of Christian Empire](#)

[The effects of imperial division after 395 on the ideology](#)

[The maintenance of imperial unity after 476](#)

[The reign of Justinian: high tide for the Oikoumene](#)

[The problem of imperial decline: the 7th and 8th centuries](#)

[Breaking point between theory and reality: the splintering of Latin Christendom](#)

[Endnotes](#)[References](#)

Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of Christian universalist ideologies from the year 300 AD to about 800 AD, with a focus on their development in the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. It traces how the interaction of ideology with political reality- imperial decline, internal ideological and ecclesiastical disunity, and other challenges- resulted in the eventual development of other universalist ideologies at the dawn of the medieval period, among them the idea of Latin Christendom and the Byzantine commonwealth idea.

The ideology of the universal Christian Empire was an important force in the political, military, and religious affairs and thought of late Rome and early Byzantium. From its origins under Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea and Constantine the Great in the early 4th century to the loss of Byzantium's easternmost provinces to the Arabs in the 7th and 8th centuries, the ideology would lie at the core of the Christian Roman identity in late antiquity. Nevertheless, the idea's theoretical implications were very different from the practical political capabilities and realities of the Roman and Byzantine states in the time period. The assertion of universal Roman rule conflicted with the practical limitations of Roman and Byzantine economic, political, and military power. This problem, and the existence of large Christian communities outside the Empire, along with imperial decline and territorial loss necessitated an eventual transformation of the idea of universal Christian *Oikoumene* that would result in the formulation of the "commonwealth" idea as a more practical alternative. In the West, however, the tension between the theoretical supremacy of the emperor within the universal Christian Empire and the actual political and ecclesiastical independence of the see of Rome would result in a rejection of the traditional notion of the universal Christian Empire in the West that would ultimately lead to the formation of the idea of a Latin Christendom under the ultimate authority of the papacy.

This paper will chart the evolution of the ideology throughout late antiquity. It will also describe how and to what degree the ideology influenced the "thought world" ¹ of the Byzantine church, state, and society in general. It will trace how the interaction of ideology with political reality- imperial decline, internal ideological and ecclesiastical disunity, and other challenges- resulted in the eventual development of other universalist ideologies at the dawn of the medieval period, among them the idea of Latin Christendom and the Byzantine commonwealth idea.

Origins

The idea of the universal Christian *Oikoumene* has its genesis in the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea.² Eusebius saw the Roman Empire and Christianity as “two roots of blessing” derived from the same source, by which chaos, disorder, and disbelief might be “subdued and reconciled.”³ He considered the concurrence of the birth and life of Christ with the establishment of the Roman monarchy by Augustus the workings of divine providence, for the purpose of ending “all the polyarchy in the Roman world.”⁴ Consequently, Eusebius saw the accession and reign of Constantine I and the confluence of Roman imperial power and Christian faith in the person of the emperor as providential, and praised the emperor for establishing “a nation, unheard of from the beginning of time, not concealed anywhere in a corner of the earth, but extended throughout all the earth under the sun.”⁵

Eusebius' clearest vision of the emperor's role in the Christian Empire is found in a series of panegyrics given in honor of Constantine's tricennial celebrations in 336. In the *Orations*, Eusebius cements the concept of the emperor as an imitator and mirror of God. Just as God is lord of all, so Constantine “summons the whole human race to acknowledge the Higher Power, calling in a great voice that all can hear.”⁶

For Eusebius, the Roman state was destined to be the universal Christian Empire, and its borders and ruler were to be those of the Christian world. As the emperors expanded the borders of the state and conquered new territories, so would Christianity expand, and as the Christian faith expanded, so would Rome extend its reach. The imperial vocation was to be that of the Apostles: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”⁷

The problem of Christian communities outside the Empire

From the beginning, the Eusebian idea of a universal Christian Empire under the supreme authority of a god-imitating emperor encountered practical difficulties. In particular, the existence of Christian communities outside the Empire clashed with Eusebius' concept of one Christian *Oikoumene*. In late antiquity, there were large Christian communities beyond the Eastern and Southern borders of the Roman Empire, in areas such as Armenia, Ethiopia, Caucasian Iberia, and parts of Arabia and Persia.⁸ The question of whether the existence of these communities outside the borders of the Roman state was viewed merely as a temporary aberration or whether they were accepted as component parts of a looser, “commonwealth” of Christian, Roman-influenced entities is one that still remains unanswered to this day. Certainly, there is compelling evidence for the latter.

In Christian areas outside of the Empire, it is clear that the inhabitants gravitated towards Christian Rome and Byzantium due to their shared faith, among other factors, but it is also clear that they greatly valued their political independence and did not always recognize the supremacy of Roman authority.⁹ Throughout late antiquity, there seems to have been practical imperial recognition of the fact that outright conquest of many of these groups and states was simply untenable, and also recognition of the commonwealth idea as a way to exercise indirect influence in Christian, Roman-influenced states.¹⁰ The prime example of this is perhaps the invasion of the Jewish Southern Arabian Kingdom of Himyar by Christian Aksumite Ethiopia with the direct encouragement of the Emperor Justin I in 525.¹¹ The emperor's encouragement of the invasion illustrates that there at least was recognition of the usefulness of imperial influence over independent Christian states outside the Empire, and also acceptance of a cooperative relationship between the Empire and those states for the sake of pragmatic political benefit. Eusebius' universalist ideology was thus altered to suit political reality.

The new Eusebian-Constantinian role for the emperor within the Church

On both the political and ecclesiastical fronts, Eusebius also advanced the idea of the emperor as an *episkopos* for those outside the Church, a role that Constantine did much to legitimize and develop during his reign, by both taking on new responsibilities within the Church and perpetuating preexisting practices and roles. His continued use of the title *Pontifex Maximus* and his maintenance of the imperial cult are examples of the latter, while his establishment of imperial authority to convene church councils and effectively act as the executive authority for the enforcement of Church unity and dogma attests to the truth of the former. Nevertheless, Constantine's efforts in introducing a new, distinctly Christian role for the emperors should not be deemphasized. Constantine introduced the idea of the emperor as the successor and equal of the apostles¹² seemingly on his own, both in writings attributed to him (the “Oration to the Assembly of Saints,” for example) and in the manner of his burial (as the “thirteenth apostle” in the *Hagoi Apostoloi* in Constantinople).

Initial Christian resistance to universal Christian Empire: Salvian, Augustine, and Ambrose

The Eusebian notions of the relationship between Christianity and the *Imperium*, of a universal Christian Empire stretching throughout the entire inhabited world, and of a new imperial role in Church affairs were met with opposition by many prominent figures within the Orthodox Christian community. The long tradition of Christian resistance to secular authority was not easily broken by the new acceptance and prominence of the Christian faith within the Empire.

The Christian writer Salvian, writing in the early 5th century, presents a decidedly anti-Eusebian attitude in his *On the Government of God*, which counters the Eusebian notion of a special destiny for the Roman state, and returns to old Christian attitudes toward secular authority and rule. Salvian considered the condition of Rome a product of its inherent immorality and labeled the Empire “already extinct or at least drawing its last breath.”¹³ Furthermore, Salvian attributed the successes of the Vandals, Goths, and other barbarians to their superior morality and chastity.¹⁴ This was a direct attack on the Eusebian notion of a special destiny for Rome.

So too did Augustine reject the ideology of universal Christian Empire in the 5th century. For Augustine, confidence in secular authority and in worldly empires was misguided, due to their celebration of the glories of men rather than the glory of God.¹⁵ Furthermore, Augustine contrasted the inherent transience of earthly kingdoms with the eternal nature of heaven,

contrasting earthly victory with “death in its train”¹⁶ and the perpetual joy of the City of God. He also differed from Salvian in denying that the strength, weakness, success, or failure of earthly empires (including Rome) was dependent on the piety or morality of their rulers. Arguing that just as the pious Christian emperor Jovian had ruled for a shorter period of time than the pagan Julian, so the worldly fates of individuals are not determined by their degree of faith and piety or lack thereof:

When we describe certain Christian emperors as ‘happy, it is not because they have enjoyed long reigns, or because they died a peaceful death...All these, and other similar rewards or consolations in this life of trouble were granted to some of the worshippers of demons¹⁷ ...God removed Jovian more quickly than Julian; he allowed Gratian to be slain by the usurper’s sword.¹⁸

Augustine thus directly countered the Eusebian notion of the universal Christian Empire.

Ambrose of Milan was another important figure who challenged Eusebian-Constantinian ideology. Ambrose never directly countered the idea of the universal Christian Empire, but he did move against the Eusebian idea of imperial authority and the imperial role vis-à-vis that of the Church. Throughout his career as bishop of Milan, Ambrose tried to assert ecclesiastical supremacy over the emperors. The two most notable examples of this are found in two famous letters he wrote to the Emperors Valentinian and Theodosius. In a letter to Valentinian in 384, Ambrose threatens the emperor with excommunication should he decide to restore the pagan Altar of Victory to the Senate house in Rome, warning him that, should he decide to restore the Altar and then attend church, he will either “find there no priest” or “find one that will gainsay you.”¹⁹ Ambrose repeated the tactic six years later, in a famous letter to Theodosius. In it, Ambrose responds to the so-called massacre of Thessalonica²⁰ by calling for the emperor to give penance and by threatening him with the same penalty that he had threatened Valentinian with in 384:

I, I say, have no charge of arrogance against you, but I do have one of fear. I dare not offer the Holy Sacrifice if you intend to be present. Can that which is not allowable, after the blood of one man is shed, be allowable when many persons’ blood was shed? I think not.²¹

The intrusion of imperial authority in Church affairs and the new identification of the inhabited Christian world with that of the Roman state were therefore not met with complete acceptance on the part of prominent Christians such as Augustine, Salvianus, and Ambrose. Eusebius, Constantine, and successive theologians and emperors may have envisaged and advanced a new imperial-Apostolic role and a new fusion of Roman-Christian identity in the 4th century, but that did not automatically entail the adoption of those viewpoints by the Christian establishment.

The reign of Theodosius as the realization of Christian Empire

Nevertheless, despite the objections of men like Salvian, Augustine, and Ambrose, the bonds between Orthodox Christianity and the Roman state grew stronger in the 4th century, despite the long period in the middle of the century which saw the rise of Julian and the Arian emperors Constantius and Valens. The disunity of the Christian community that prevailed throughout the period certainly threatened to undermine the cohesion of the Christian Empire, and later on would do just that in the Monophysite East,²² but the favored (and official) status of Nicene Christianity in the reigns of Gratian and Theodosius did allow for greater unity between so-called Catholic Christianity and the emperorship. Every subsequent emperor in late Roman and Byzantine history would acknowledge and adhere to Nicene Christianity.²³

The reign of the Emperor Theodosius may be seen, in certain ways, as the final culmination of Constantine and Eusebius’ efforts to transform Rome into a truly Christian Empire (if not entirely universal) and its emperors into revered and authoritative figures within the Christian community. Just as Constantine had been the “new Moses,” so Theodosius became the “new David,”²⁴ often praised more for his piety and humility than for his military prowess.²⁵ His efforts to stamp out paganism; his convening of the Council of Constantinople in 381, which marked the reassertion of church unity after the reign of Julian and the long dispute over Arianism; and his defeat of Eugenius at the Battle of Frigidus and subsequent unification of the empire in 394 cemented his designation as a divinely-protected emperor realizing the Christian destiny of the Empire.²⁶

The idea of the Oikoumene at the time of Theodosius also may have gained adherents beyond the Christian community. In a panegyric given in honor of Theodosius, the likely pagan²⁷ Latinus Pacatus Drepanius describes the universal reach of the emperor’s power in language that echoes Eusebius:

The Ocean does not make the Indian secure, nor the cold the man from Bosphorus, nor the equatorial sun the Arab. Your power penetrates places which the Roman name had scarcely penetrated before.²⁸

Whether this can be attributed to the continued prevalence of longstanding pagan Roman beliefs concerning the destiny of the Empire, to mere panegyric flattery, or to the growing popularity of the Eusebian idea is unclear.

The effects of imperial division after 395 on the ideology

The effects of the division of the Empire at Theodosius’ death in 395 and the subsequent decline of Roman imperial authority in the West on the idea of the universality of the Oikoumene remain vague, and somewhat controversial. It is true that the Empire remained theoretically unified and merely under the administration of two emperors after 395,²⁹ certainly, but it is also clear that, throughout the 5th century, the East and the West functioned as two separate political entities largely pursuing two different political goals and agendas and enjoying two very different states of power and authority.³⁰ The relative success and stability of the Eastern Empire, which largely maintained its territorial integrity throughout the 5th century, stood in stark contrast to the great failure of the Western Empire, which was unable even to defend its Italian heartland.

This imbalance must have had a great effect on perceptions of the unity and universality of the Empire, and certainly prompted some distinction between the East and the West in the minds of their citizens. Indeed, traces of the “emergence

of an eastern consciousness of the distinct characters of the two halves of the Roman Empire" have been seen in the works of 5th century Eastern historians Zosimus and Sozomen.³¹ Sozomen contrasts the manner in which the "Eastern Empire was preserved from the evils of war, and governed with high order" and the way in which the "Western Empire fell prey to disorders" in his *Ecclesiastical History*.³² Similarly, Zosimus attributes the preservation of the Eastern Empire to the will of fortune and providence.³³ For both, the continued existence and relative prosperity of the Eastern Empire and the long decline of the Western Empire revealed a distinct and providential destiny for the East.³⁴ No doubt, the fact that the relationship between the Eastern and Western Empires from the death of Theodosius until the deposition of the last Western emperor in 476 devolved into open hostility at various times fed into that idea of "distinction."³⁵ Whether or not that led some Romans to think of the East and the West as two entirely separate and distinct *states* is debatable. If so, then that would constitute a new and direct challenge to the "imperial ideology."

The maintenance of imperial unity after 476

The decline of the Western Empire and the deposition of the last Western emperor in 476 left the emperors at Constantinople the widely acknowledged heirs of Roman imperial authority, and even the barbarian chieftains who carved out kingdoms in the West recognized their legitimacy, and styled themselves as their viceroys. The trappings³⁶ of the unity of the Roman Empire therefore remained after the disintegration of Roman imperial authority in the West, but whether the idea of its universality remained unscathed is questionable. The lack of any concerted military effort to reassert Roman imperial authority in the West from the deposition of Romulus Augustus in 476 to the Vandalic War in 533 and the conservatism of Eastern military efforts to aid the West throughout the 5th century suggests that there was a practical recognition of the limits of Eastern Roman power and capabilities during the period, though there does not seem to have been any recognition of limits to imperial authority or legitimacy.³⁷ Robert Browning suggests that it was during this time that the concept of an Eastern-focused, "Byzantine" foreign policy emerged³⁸, recognizing the limits of Constantinople's capabilities and realizing that any effort to reassert control over the Western territories would simply be untenable.

This is supported by the attitudes of Byzantine emperors throughout the 5th and early 6th centuries, most especially toward the kings of Ostrogothic Italy. In an effort to preserve their legitimacy in the West while refraining from unrealistic efforts at outright military conquest, they endowed the kings of Gothic Italy with consular dignities and the emperor Anastasius even went so far as to award the Frankish King Clovis with the same honor.³⁹ The tactic seems to have been successful. The 6th century Chronicle of John Malalas records that the Ostrogothic King Theodoric "did everything in accordance"⁴⁰ with the Emperor Zeno's wishes, and indeed a letter from Theodoric's grandson and successor Athalaric acknowledges "the far-reaching power of your favor to ennoble me."⁴¹

Nevertheless, there is evidence that there was a distinction between the idea of Roman identity and the direct political control of the Emperors in late 5th and early 6th century Ostrogothic Italy. One of the most compelling pieces of evidence for this is found in a letter addressed to the Emperor Justinian from the Roman Senate dated to 533. Written just after the conclusion of the Vandalic Wars, it features a personified Rome contrasting her situation with that of newly-conquered Africa:

If Africa deserved to receive her freedom through you, it is cruel for me to lose a freedom which I have always been seen to possess.⁴²

Similarly, a letter from the Gothic Queen Gudeliva to the Empress Theodora from 535 asserts that there "should be no discord between Roman realms."⁴³ Present in both is a sense of differentiation between the idea of Roman identity and direct imperial control. Whether this attitude was present only among the Gothic elites of Italy (and also the Roman administrators they employed, such as Cassiodorus), or whether it also found adherents among the majority of the population is unclear. If it indeed did, then that would have certainly represented a departure from the Eusebian idea.

What is certain is that there was never any recognition of the loss of any Western territory during the 5th or 6th century at Constantinople,⁴⁴ and certainly the actions of Justinian in the 6th century attest to the continuing existence of the dream of a restored Christian Empire as first conceived by Eusebius at the Eastern imperial court.

The reign of Justinian: high tide for the Oikoumene

The reign of Justinian I was certainly greatly influenced by the idea of the universal Christian Empire and the conception of the relationship between the emperorship and the Church that Eusebius had first developed. Theologically, Justinian was of the Eusebian-Constantinian tradition in recognizing no separation between secular and religious matters.⁴⁵ Militarily, the reconquest of the West undertaken during the reign of Justinian certainly was also a product of his adherence to the idea of the universal Christian Empire. They had their roots in his belief in it, and in his confidence in his own universal role as emperor. The campaigns in Italy, Africa, Southern Spain, and Dalmatia were considered matters "not of conquest, but of restitution,"⁴⁶ and also took on the guise of religious crusade, in light of the Arian character of the Goths and Vandals.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the lack of any concerted effort to retake the westernmost portions of the Roman world, i.e. Gaul, Britain, and the heartland of Spain, during Justinian's reign presents the same question that the loss of the West in the 5th century does: Was there recognition of limits to Roman (i.e. Byzantine) authority and control at the time and does this constitute a challenge to the idea of the universal Oikoumene?

There had been recognition for some time of a difference between vital territories in the West and those peripheral ones that the Empire could afford to lose for a time. Italy, Africa, and Illyricum (all of which Justinian conquered) fell into the former category, while Gaul, Spain, and Britain fell into the latter. There also would have been greater difficulties in retaking Gaul, Britain, and inland Spain, simply owing to the distance of these territories from the East and the Byzantine dependence on the Mediterranean for transporting men and supplies. The strain that the reconquests had already exacted and the internal problems that the Empire suffered during Justinian's reign⁴⁸ no doubt discouraged further conquests. Indeed, it was no doubt these practical concerns, and the ever present threat of invasion on the eastern and northern borders of the Empire from the Persians, Avars, and other peoples, that prompted Justinian's successors to pursue a far more conservative Western policy, one that managed to hold most of the territories won by Justinian until the Lombard and Arab invasions in the 6th and 7th centuries. Therefore, there does not seem to have been any explicit recognition of limits to

Roman/Byzantine authority, but rather recognition of limits to the Empire's practical capabilities, just as there had been in the 5th century.

The problem of imperial decline: the 7th and 8th centuries

The two centuries after Justinian present a far greater problem for understanding the *Oikoumene* idea. One of the reasons for this is the scarcity of source materials. Yet another is the fact that it has been the subject of some debate among modern scholars.⁴⁹ Some, like Cyril Mango, have held that, in the 7th century, Heraclius' reign was viewed as the near realization of the "dream of entirely Christian *oikoumene*,"⁵⁰ and that the losses to the Arabs in the latter half of his reign and immediately after, though they presented a clear challenge to the "imperial ideology," did not destroy it. Others, including Robert Browning, have concluded that Heraclius' reign represented the final triumph of an Eastern-bound, non-universalist truly "Byzantine" foreign policy. The Lombard invasion of Italy and the refocusing of imperial efforts on the Eastern core of the Empire in order to withstand challenges from first the Persian and then the Islamic threats in the Heraclian period Browning sees as the final end to any serious objectives to regain the West at the court in Constantinople.⁵¹

Certainly, the 7th and early 8th centuries marked the greatest period of crisis in the history of the Byzantine state until the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 1204. The religious impact of losing the great Christian communities of the East, in particular Jerusalem, was truly cataclysmic, on par with the psychological impact of the sack of Rome in 410.⁵² For the idea of the universal Christian Empire, the 7th and 8th centuries posed perhaps the greatest challenge until 1204 and the later Ottoman invasions. The question of why the Persians and the Arabs had been successful in driving the Byzantines out of the East and to the very walls of their capital was one that hit directly upon it.

One way in which these defeats were explained was through a resurgence of apocalyptic thought.⁵³ There was a longstanding identification of Byzantium (Rome) with the Fourth (and last) Kingdom of the book of Daniel and myths surrounding the emperor's role in the conflict with the Antichrist enjoyed widespread adherence throughout Byzantine history.⁵⁴ The idea of universal *Oikoumene* was easily reconciled with the idea that its end would coincide with the Apocalypse.⁵⁵ Also, just as in the West in the 5th century, so too in Byzantium in the 7th and 8th centuries there was a reemergence of belief that the Empire's misfortunes were a result of divine vengeance. The *Short History* of Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople places blame for the sack of Pergamon by the Arabs during the 8th century on God's disfavor due to an especially horrific act committed by the city's inhabitants:

By some devilish intention the inhabitants of the city took a pregnant girl who was about to give birth to her first child, cut her open and having removed the infant from inside her, boiled it in a pot of water, in which the men... dipped the sleeves of their right arms. For this reason they were overtaken by divine wrath.⁵⁶

Throughout late Roman and Byzantine history, this line of reasoning is a common manner of dealing with imperial defeat.

After the 7th and 8th centuries, there was a period of significant change in the nature of the idea of the universal *Oikoumene*, by now more than three centuries old. It does not appear, as some have suggested, to have become a feature of the past in the minds of most Byzantines.⁵⁷ A strong sense of the Empire's universal destiny remained well into the very last centuries of Byzantium, when its borders had receded to the walls of Constantinople itself.⁵⁸ The sense of apocalyptic destiny that had sprung up in the early Byzantine period would never fully recede from the scene.⁵⁹

Breaking point between theory and reality: the splintering of Latin Christendom

Nevertheless, from the 7th and 8th centuries on, there were several profound changes in the ideology of universal Christian Empire that came as a result of disparities between political reality and the theory of universal Christian Empire. The area from which the greatest challenge and the greatest change arose was Italy. Byzantine legitimacy in Italy had remained virtually unchallenged since the fall of the Western Empire in the late 5th century. Through the period of Ostrogothic rule, the reconquest of the peninsula under Justinian, and the 7th century, the Byzantine emperors remained the widely acknowledged legitimate rulers of Italy. Papal support of the emperors at Constantinople remained similarly constant throughout the time period, due both to the continued legitimacy of the Eastern Emperors and to the fact that Byzantine armies provided the chief military support for the papacy in Italy.⁶⁰ The numerous challenges of the late 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries dramatically changed the situation. Preoccupied with affairs on its Eastern borders, Byzantium's power in Italy declined markedly. At the same time, the Lombards invaded from the north, and conquered a large part of the peninsula, extending their rule from Milan and Pavia in the North to Benevento and Spoleto in the Central part of the country.⁶¹

The decline of Byzantium's material authority in Italy was coupled with a decline in its spiritual authority as well. The emergence of the Iconoclasm controversy in Byzantium during the time period resulted in a highly visible break between the Western and the Eastern churches. Iconoclasm emerged from Byzantine Anatolia, where contacts with the Muslim world were most pronounced and constant, under the Isaurian Emperor Leo III, and the movement was distinctly Eastern.⁶² It was characterized not only by Eastern religious ideas but by a new imperial assertiveness of authority over the Church. The Iconoclast emperors were vigorous in the decision and definition of dogma, and were just as active in asserting the subordination of the Church to their authority.⁶³ In the West, where reverence for icons was longstanding, Byzantine authority was already on the wane, and the independence of the see of Rome was on the rise, the Iconoclast controversy marked a turning point. Far enough from Constantinople to remain independent of its dogmatic dictums, Rome broke with Constantinople on Iconoclasm. Internal religious differences once again disrupted the unity of the universal Christian Empire, exacerbating already existing political divisions.

The pope who actualized this break, and also began the process of actualizing the formal political independence of the Roman church from imperial Byzantine control was Gregory I, notable both for championing of the church's ecclesiastical independence in his overt defiance of the iconoclast policy of Leo III and also his championing of its political independence

in undertaking diplomatic and political actions seemingly without the approval of Constantinople. Faced with imperial orders to enforce the emperor's iconoclast policies, Gregory responded by, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, "arming himself against the emperor as against an enemy," by asserting his own authority on matters of dogma, and by calling the first council to anathematize the iconoclasts.⁶⁴ He also undertook independent action to counteract the growing power and influence of the Lombards, by sending ambassadors to the Frankish King Charles to elicit Frankish military support.⁶⁵ He did this recognizing that he would have to act to ensure the security of the papacy and papal interests on his own, in light of the fact that he "saw no help would come his way from the imperial power."⁶⁶ Thus, the practical limitations of Byzantine power to confront the Lombards and defend the papacy in Italy hastened the actualization of papal political independence from Byzantine imperial authority in the 8th century.

From Gregory onward, this continued to be the case. Unable to rely on Byzantine power to bolster their own, the popes were left to effectively defend themselves and act on behalf of all of the Romanized parts of Italy. They did this by strengthening their alliance with the Frankish kings, an arrangement that did much to buttress and strengthen their political power in Italy, and that also encouraged their independence from Byzantium. Perhaps the most notable example of this is the relationship between Pope Stephen II and the Frankish King Pepin in the mid-8th century. Pepin undertook war against the Lombards at Stephen's urging, and confiscated much of central and northern Italy from them, including the exarchate of Ravenna, newly taken from the Byzantines.⁶⁷ Rather than giving these territories back to Constantinople, however, he gave them over to Stephen and to "the holy Roman church and all the apostolic see's pontiffs forever."⁶⁸ In return for his support, Stephen awarded to Pepin the dignity of Roman patrician, a title that had previously been awarded only by emperors.⁶⁹ Both the donation of large, formerly Byzantine-owned territories in Italy to the pope and the conferring of an imperial dignity by the same pope attest to the growing political independence of the papacy from imperial control, a situation unforeseen in the history of the universal Christian Empire and fundamentally divergent from its vision of ecclesiastical and imperial unity.

Throughout the 8th century, the roots of papal independence grew along with an emerging concept of a Latin Christendom in which the pope was the supreme authority. The authority of the pope over *omnes Italiae seu occidentalium regionum provincias, loca et civitates* probably was first conceived during this time with the emergence of the false idea of the donation of Constantine.⁷⁰ Its logical realization was the coronation of Charlemagne as Augustus in 800 by Pope Leo III, an event that saw the ultimate assertion of papal authority over the long dead Western Empire and also the beginning point of Latin Christendom. The decline of Byzantine authority in Italy necessitated this massive sea change in the relationship between the papacy and the emperors at Constantinople, and certainly the coronation of Charlemagne would never have occurred nor the idea of a Latin Christendom likely have emerged had Byzantium retained a strong presence in the Italy and the West.⁷¹ The reality of imperial decline once again clashed with the theory of universal Christian Empire, and once again reality won out.

At the same time, in the Balkans and the Slavic World, Byzantium's practical situation in relation to emerging political and military forces such as the Bulgars and Slavs spawned yet another practical alteration to the idea of the universal Christian Empire. Unable to undertake the military conquest of peoples such as the Bulgars and the Slavs, Byzantium resorted to a more viable commonwealth idea based upon missionary efforts to spread Orthodox Christianity and the spreading of Byzantine material culture.⁷² The result of these efforts was what has been called the Second Byzantine Commonwealth, based upon the idea of a hierarchy of functionally independent, Orthodox Christian, and Byzantine-influenced states of which the Byzantine Empire was but the most senior and supreme.⁷³ The interaction between Byzantium and the component parts of the Commonwealth, in particular Bulgaria, would cause a further recognition of the impracticality of the idea of the universal Christian Empire.⁷⁴ Throughout the medieval period, the commonwealth idea would vie with the traditional Eusebian idea of the universal Christian Empire for supremacy in Byzantine foreign policy.⁷⁵

The disparity between the reality of imperial power and control and its theoretical extent according to the ideology of universal Christian Empire proved a catalyst for changing the idea. Throughout late antiquity, this variance, between the thought world and the real world, would prove a formidable problem. The reality of imperial decline and the limitations of imperial authority, along with internal religious debate, and other factors eventually intruded upon the theoretical unity and universality of the Eusebian ideology of universal Christian *Oikoumene*, and contributed to the absence of any universal or immutable interpretation of it in late antiquity and in the medieval period.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Dr. Michele Salzman for her constructive criticism and guidance.

About the Author

Christopher Records is a History major at the University of California, Riverside. He intends to specialize in Byzantine History, and to eventually teach and research Byzantine History at the university level.

Endnotes

1. Taken from the article "The Thought-World of East Rome" by Norman H. Baynes. See Norman Baynes, "The Thought World of East Rome," (1948), in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: The Athlone Press, 1955).
2. Certainly, the idea also reflects the influence of pre-Christian conceptions of the destiny of Rome. See Norman Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," (1933) in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: The Athlone Press, 1955), 168-72.
3. Eusebius, *De laudibus Constantini in Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*, ed. Deno Geanakoplos, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 127.
4. Eusebius, *La préparation évangélique in Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*, ed. Deno Geanakoplos, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 131-2.
5. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Roy J. Defarrari *Fathers of the Church*, no. 16 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1955), 250

6. Eusebius, *Tricennial Orations in Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, trans. H.A. Drake (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 86.
7. Matthew 28:19. See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 90.
8. *Ibid.*, 101-4.
9. A prime example of this can be seen in the Ethiopian *Kebrā Nagast*, which some argue dates back to the 6th or 7th century. It describes the Roman emperor as "the son of Solomon" and the Emperor of Ethiopia as "the firstborn and eldest son of Solomon." Explicit in the statement is a belief in the superiority of Ethiopia. See *Kebrā Nagast* 20 [book on-line], trans. E.A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), accessed 13 May 2007. Available from <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/kn/kn020.htm>; Internet. and Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 114.
10. Certainly, the interaction between the Empire and the Christian states of the Caucasus, notably Armenia and Lazica, is an exception. Throughout late Antiquity, these areas were occupied by imperial armies and were made imperial provinces, though Roman/Byzantine control of them remained tenuous. See Ghazar P'arpec'i, *History of the Armenians Part One (druag A)* [book on-line], trans. Robert Bedrosian. Accessed 30 May 2007. Available from <http://rbedrosian.com/gp1.htm>; Internet. and Procopius, *History of the Wars Book I, Part XII* [book on-line], trans. H.B. Dewing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), accessed 30 May 2007. Available from http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=199764&pageno=24; Internet.
11. Garth Fowden holds that Justin, while mindful of ideology, was "no less a realist, and well aware of the Byzantine Commonwealth's potential usefulness on a strictly political level." This may best typify the pragmatic attitude of Rome and Byzantium toward Eastern Christian states in late Antiquity. See Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 115.
12. Charles Matson Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 269-71.
13. Salvia, *On the Government of God*, trans. Eva M. Sanford (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 109.
14. *Ibid.*, 138.
15. Aug., *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), 593.
16. *Ibid.*, 599.
17. *Ibid.*, 219.
18. *Ibid.*, 221.
19. Ambrose, *Letters "Letter 17"*, trans. Sr. Mary Melchior Beyenka (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1954), 35.
20. Sozomen, *The Ecclesiastical History Book VII, Chapter 25* [book on-line] accessed 13 May 2007. Available from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26027.htm>; Internet.
21. Ambrose, *Letters "Letter 51"*, 24.
22. One of Garth Fowden's arguments is that, by the Persian and Arab conquests of the 7th century, the "First Byzantine Commonwealth" had essentially broken off from Byzantium, and become a distinct, Monophysite entity consisting of Eastern Monophysite communities. See Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 137.
23. Indeed, all emperors from the late 5th century on adhered to virtually the same brand of Orthodox Nicene-Chalcedonian Christianity, with the exception of the 6th century Monophysite Emperor Anastasius. See *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Part III*, trans. Witold Witakowski (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 7-15.
24. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, 279.
25. Ambrose's "Oration on the Death of Theodosius" barely mentions Theodosius' military accomplishments, focusing instead on the Emperor's Christian virtues, such as piety, humility, mercy, and magnanimity. Ambrose also calls Theodosius "of revered memory [Augustae memoriae]," an address traditionally reserved for deceased patriarchs, martyrs, and highly regarded bishops. See Ambrose, "On the Death of Theodosius," in *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, trans. J.H.W.G. Liebeschütz (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 183-4, 190.
26. Walter Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 197-9.
27. There is some controversy over whether Pacatus was actually a pagan. He certainly heavily uses classical (and pagan) imagery in the panegyric, and calls the Christian God "your [Theodosius] consort," but makes no overt declaration of his religious faith. See C.E.V. Nixon, *Introduction to Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*, by Latinus Drepanius Pacatus, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1987), 3-6.
28. Latinus Drepanius Pacatus, *Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*, trans. C.E.V. Nixon (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1987), 34.
29. The tradition of co-emperors goes back to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in the 2nd century. See Cassius Dio, *Roman History Book 71* [book on-line] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), accessed 29 May 2007; available from http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/71*.html; Internet.
30. The seniority of Eastern Emperors during the period is perhaps best in evidence in the selection of several Western Emperors by their Eastern colleagues in the late 5th century. Examples are Anthemius and Julius Nepos, both selected by Leo I and dispatched from Constantinople. See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History Book II: Ch. XVI* [book on-line] accessed 26 May 2007. Available from http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/fathers/evagrius_0_intro2.html; Internet. and J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire Vol. 1* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1958), 335, 404.
31. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, 227.
32. Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book IX, Chapter VI.
33. Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, trans. James J. Buchanan and Harold T. Davis (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1967),

206, 219.

34. Zosimus, a pagan, did not acknowledge a Christian providential destiny for the East, but he seems to nonetheless have considered it blessed with divine favor.

35. The most dramatic example of this is the probably murder of the eastern regent Rufinus by the western regent Stilicho immediately after the death of Theodosius. See Gerard Friell and Stephen Williams, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (Cumberland, RI: Yale University Press, 1995), 143-7.

36.

37. Cooperation between East and West in the 5th century occurred both militarily and otherwise, such as the joint Eastern-Western fleets sent against the Vandal kingdom in North Africa in 411 and 468. Nevertheless, the two halves of the empire cannot be said to have been unified on matters of military policy, and the Eastern Emperors dispatched aid to the West in the 5th century sparingly, and only when their own security was assured. See Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, 56-7.

38. Robert Browning, "The Continuity of Hellenism in the Byzantine World: Appearance or Reality?" in *History, language and literacy in the Byzantine world* (Northampton: Variorum, 1989), 115.

39. Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks in Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*, ed. Deno Geanakoplos, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 332.

40. John Malalas, *The Chronicle*, trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, and Roger Scott (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 213.

41. Cassiodorus, *The Variae*, trans. S.J.B. Barnish (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1992), 101.

42. *Ibid.*, 152.

43. *Ibid.*, 139.

44. Charles Diehl, *Byzantium: Greatness and Decline*, trans. Naomi Walford (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 177.

45. George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 77.

46. Diehl, *Byzantium: Greatness and Decline*, 177.

47. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, 212.

48. The *Chronicle of St. Theophanes the Confessor* (c. 810-15) records 9 large earthquakes, 3 plagues, 4 large fires in Constantinople, and several rebellions, plots, and riots in the city and across the Empire in the reign of Justinian, among other apocalyptic-sounding events. While certainly exaggerated somewhat, the truth of some of these occurrences (such as an earthquake in 528 that destroyed much of Antioch) is recorded in other sources, and must have dramatically diminished Byzantine capabilities and tax revenues at the time. See *Theophanes Confessor, The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 265-354.

49. This may be partially attributed to the scarcity of sources.

50. Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 186.

51. Browning, "The Continuity of Hellenism in the Byzantine World," 115.

52. Its psychological weight is in evidence in an account of the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614: "Then, my brethren, there took hold of all the Christians of the whole world great sorrow and ineffable grief, at the fact that the city, the elect, famous, and imperial city had been given over to rapine; that the holy places and refuges of all the faithful had been given up to fire, and Christian folk vowed to captivity and death." The psychological impact of the losses of the 7th century is also apparent in a passage from *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (650-75): "The Roman empire was given to Devastation and to the sword, and its inhabitants to captivity and to slaughter." See *Antiochus Strategos, "The Capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614"* [text on-line], accessed 01 June 2007. Available from http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/antiochus_strategos_capture.htm; Internet. and *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, in *The Seventh Century in West-Syrian Chronicles*, trans. Andrew Palmer and Sebastian Brock (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 232.

53. Averil Cameron, "Byzantium and the past in the seventh century: The search for redefinition," in *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1996), 258.

54. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*, 205-7.

55. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* makes this connection [between the end of Byzantium and the end of the world] quite clearly: "The moment the Son of Perdition [the Antichrist] appears, the king of the Greeks [the Emperor] shall go up and stand on Golgotha... The king of the Greeks shall place his crown on top... and hand over the kingdom to God the Father." See *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, 240.

56. Nikephoros, *Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, trans. Cyril Mango (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), 121.

57. Robert Browning is a notable proponent of this interpretation. See Browning, "The Continuity of Hellenism in the Byzantine World," 115.

58. A prime example of this is found in a letter addressed from Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople, to Vasily I, Tsar of Muscovy, dated to 1395, in which the patriarch asserts that it is "impossible for Christians to have a church and no empire." See Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople, "Letter of Patriarch Anthony" in *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*, ed. Deno Geanakoplos, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 143.

59. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*, 201-13.

60. Papal support for imperial authority remained strong through to the pontificate of Gregory II in the early 8th century, and even after. See Walter Ullman, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle: A study in the ideological relation of*

clerical to lay power (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1955), 45.

61. Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987), 156.

62. J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the seventh century: The transformation of a culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 87.

63. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 220.

64. *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*, trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), 11, 20.

65. *Ibid.*, 27.

66. *Ibid.*, 58.

67. *Ibid.*, 59, 71.

68. *Ibid.*, 72.

69. *Ibid.*, 95.

70. Mgr. Louis Duchesne, *The Beginnings of the Temporal Sovereignty of the Popes: A.D. 754-1073*, trans. Arnold Harris Mathew (New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benzinger Brothers, 1908), 120.

71. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, 477.

72. Dimitri Oblensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 72, 80-1.

73. *Ibid.*, 203. A very notable example of the commonwealth idea in practice can be seen in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De Ceremoniis* (c. 10th century), in which the proper form of address for the ruler (either basileus or archon) of Bulgaria is "our [the Emperor's] desired spiritual son." The address both highlights the Byzantine emperor's seniority, and the close association between Orthodox Christian rulers within the commonwealth. The *De Ceremoniis*' hierarchical organization of rulers also attests to the growth of the commonwealth idea in medieval Byzantium. See Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae* [book on-line], trans. Paul Stephenson, accessed 01 June 2007. Available from <http://homepage.mac.com/paulstephenson/trans/decer2.html>; Internet.

74. Robert Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria: A comparative study across the early medieval frontier* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 198.

75. Examples of universalist efforts in medieval Byzantium can be seen in the revival of Byzantine power and authority in Southern Italy, the Balkans, and Asia Minor under the Macedonian dynasty, especially the campaigns of Basil II, and the efforts of Manuel Comnenus in the 11th century. Examples of commonwealth efforts in medieval Byzantium include the conversion of the peoples and states of the Slavic East. See Robert Browning, *The Byzantine Empire* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 96-116, 173-6.

References

Kebra Nagast [book on-line]. Translated by E.A. Wallis Budge. London: Oxford University Press, 1932, accessed 15 May 2007. Available from [[www.sacred-texts.com/chr/kr/kn02 ...](http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/kr/kn02...)] ; Internet.

The Lives of the Eight-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis). Translated by Raymond Davis. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992.

Ambrose. *Letters*. Translated by Mary Melchior Beyenka. Chicago: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954.

Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople. "Letter of Patriarch Anthony" (1395) in F. Miklosich and I. Müller, eds., *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi*, Vol. 2, 190-91. Vienna, 1861. In Deno Geanakoplos, ed. *Byzantium: Church Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Baynes, Norman H. *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*. London: The Athlone Press, 1955.

Browning, Robert. *Byzantium and Bulgaria: A comparative study across the early medieval frontier*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.

Browning, Robert. *History, Language, and Literacy in the Byzantine World*. Variorum Collected Studies Series. Northampton, UK: Variorum Reprints, 1989.

Cameron, Averil. "Byzantium and the Past in the Seventh Century." In *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium*. Variorum Collected Studies Series. Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1996.

Cassiodorus. *The Variae*. Translated by S.J.B. Barnish. Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1992.

Diehl, Charles. *Byzantium: Greatness and Decline*. Translated by Naomi Walford. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957.

Duchesne, Mgr. Louis. *The Beginnings of the Temporal Sovereignty of the Popes A.D. 754-1073*. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benzinger Brothers, 1908.

Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*. Translated by Roy J. Defararri. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1955.

Eusebius. *Preparation for the Gospel*. In Deno Geanakoplos, ed. *Byzantium: Church Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Eusebius. *Tricennial Orations*. In *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*. Translated by H.A. Drake. Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

- Fowden, Garth. *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in late Antiquity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Friell, Gerard and Williams, Stephen. *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay*. Cumberland, RI: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Geanakoplos, Deno, ed. *Byzantium: Church Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Gregory of Tours. *History of the Franks*. In Deno Geanakoplos, ed. *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Haldon, J.F. *Byzantium in the seventh century: The transformation of a culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Herrin, Judith. *The Formation of Christendom*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987.
- Kaegi, Walter. *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Malalas, John. *The Chronicle*. Translated by Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, and Roger Scott. Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986.
- Mango, Cyril. *Byzantium and Its Image*. Variorum Collected Studies Series. Aldershot, UK: Variorum Reprints, 1984.
- Mango, Cyril. *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.
- Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. *Short History*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990.
- Oblensky, Dimitri. *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.
- Odahl, Charles Matson. *Constantine and the Christian Empire*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Ostrogorsky, George. *History of the Byzantine State*. Translated by Joan Hussey. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969.
- Pacatus, Latinus Drepanius. *Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1987.
- Salvianus. *On the Government of God*. Translated by Eva M. Sanford. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966.
- Sozomen, *The Ecclesiastical History* [book on-line]. accessed 15 May 2007. Available from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26027.htm>; Internet.
- Theophanes. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Translated by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Ullman, Walter. *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A study in the ideological relation of clerical to lay power*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1955.
- Zosimus. *Historia Nova*. Translated by James J. Buchanan and Harold T. Davis. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1967.
- The Lives of the Eight-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*. Translated by Raymond Davis. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992.