

**HOLY LAND, LOST LANDS, *REALPOLITIK*.  
IMPERIAL BYZANTINE THINKING ABOUT  
SYRIA AND PALESTINE IN THE LATER 10<sup>TH</sup>  
AND 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

**TIERRA SANTA, TIERRAS PERDIDAS,  
*REALPOLITIK*. LA VISIÓN DEL IMPERIO  
BIZANTINO SOBRE SIRIA Y PALESTINA A  
FINALES DEL SIGLO X Y EL SIGLO XI**

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This study reviews Byzantine attitudes and state policy towards the region between Antioch and Mount Sinai, stressing the general cautiousness of imperial strategy and, from the late tenth century onwards, the government's preference for peaceful coexistence and commerce with the Fatimid caliphate. Caliph al-Ḥākim's destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009 did not overturn this state of affairs, and the main bone of contention between Cairo and Constantinople was the city of Aleppo, not Jerusalem. Even here, the two powers were inclined to leave the initiative to local parties, rather than insisting on direct rule, and communications between Muslim and Byzantine-ruled territories were mostly fairly straightforward. During the relative détente of the first half of the eleventh century, pilgrimages to the Holy Land increased, and it may well have been primarily in order to impress pilgrims – those travelling from Byzantium itself, but especially those from the Christian west – that emperors lavished resources on reconstructing the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the 1030s and 1040s. Militant intervention on behalf of the Christian populations of south-

Este estudio pasa revista a la política oficial del estado bizantino con respecto a la región situada entre Antioquía y el Monte Sinaí, haciendo énfasis en la prudencia adoptada por lo general en la estrategia imperial así como, a partir de finales del siglo X, en la voluntad del gobierno a favor de una coexistencia pacífica con el califato fatimí y el respeto a las relaciones comerciales. La destrucción de la iglesia del Santo Sepulcro por el califa al-Ḥākim en 1009 no alteró este estado de cosas, en el que la piedra angular de la política de contención entre el Cairo y Constantinopla estaba representada por la ciudad de Alepo, y no por Jerusalén. Incluso en esta, los dos poderes estaban inclinados a dejar la iniciativa a los partidos locales, más que en reivindicar el control directo. Las comunicaciones entre los territorios gobernados por musulmanes o bizantinos fueron así por lo general bastante regulares. Durante el parón relativo que experimentaron en la primera mitad del siglo XI, los peregrinajes a tierra santa aumentaron, y puede haber sido esencialmente para impresionar a los peregrinos (tanto los procedentes de Bizancio como, especialmente, aquellos que viajaban desde el Occidente cristiano) por

ern Syria and Palestine was not on their agenda. These conclusions rest on the collation of miscellaneous evidence, whose components are mostly well-known but have seldom received consideration side by side. The study highlights the value of trade to Fatimids and Byzantines alike, the esteem for 'the holy places' among Byzantines besides westerners, and the emperors' desire to demonstrate concern for the Holy Sepulchre without jeopardising relations with the Fatimids.

*Key words:* Byzantine emperors; Fatimids; Caliph al-Ḥākim; Egypt; Jerusalem; Holy Sepulchre; Aleppo; Relics; Pilgrims; Palestine; Monks; Lazaros; Mount Galesion; Holy Cross; Trade; Communications; Church; Reconstruction; Mosaics; Realpolitik; Melkites; Oriental Christians.

lo que los emperadores invirtieron abundantes recursos en la reconstrucción de la iglesia del Santo Sepulcro entre las décadas de 1030-1040. La intervención militar a favor de las poblaciones cristianas de Siria meridional y Palestina no estaba en su agenda. Estas conclusiones se obtienen a partir del cotejo de evidencias diversas, que eran ya bien conocidas por separado, pero que raramente habían sido contrastadas en conjunto. El estudio resalta el valor del comercio para los fatimíes y los bizantinos a la vez, la veneración por los Santos Lugares entre los bizantinos y occidentales, así como el deseo del emperador de hacer patente su preocupación por el Santo Sepulcro sin poner en riesgo sus relaciones con los fatimíes.

*Palabras clave:* emperadores bizantinos; fatimíes; califa al-Ḥākim; Egipto; Jerusalén; Santo Sepulcro; Alepo; reliquias; peregrinos; Palestina; monjes; Lázaros; Monte Galesio; Santa Cruz; comercio; comunicaciones; iglesia; reconstrucción; mosaicos; *realpolitik*; melquitas; cristianos orientales.

### 1. Three Byzantine Perspectives

The region stretching from Antioch to Jerusalem and on to Mount Sinai offered three perspectives to medieval Byzantine eyes. The Byzantines could, as Christians, regard the land as holy ground, trodden by Christ, the Apostles and the Prophets, where God revealed Truth to mankind; having been the site of events from sacred time, this land abounded in relics and was itself holy, containing places where God still intervened regularly, descending each Easter in the form of the 'Holy Fire' on the church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, the Byzantines could view the region as former imperial territory, overrun by the Arabs in the seventh century yet still rightfully theirs, as the continuers of the Roman empire, especially as it contained sizable numbers of Christian communities, centred on ancient churches and monasteries, for whom a Christian Roman emperor might feel responsibility. A court orator voiced such sentiments

<sup>1</sup> On Byzantines' descriptions of sites and shrines, and variant conceptions of the Holy Land in general, see Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca*, pp. 13-28, 67-68, 73-75, 90-95; Patlagean, "Byzantium's dual Holy Land", pp. 114-115; Pahlitzsch, "Zur ideologischen Bedeutung", pp. 250-253. For Byzantine and Muslim interest in the 'Holy Fire', see Pratsch, "Der Platz der Grabeskirche", pp. 62-66.

around 901.<sup>2</sup> Or, thirdly, they could accept that the region was long lost beneath the rule of an alien regime professing a faith inimical to their own, with even its Melkite Christian inhabitants elaborating their own culture and using Arabic rather than Greek for religious worship as well as for everyday life and for literature;<sup>3</sup> from a geopolitical viewpoint informed by pragmatism, to try and regain and retain the region as part of the empire would be utterly impracticable. These three perspectives were neither wholly mutually exclusive nor themselves clear-cut, and one should beware of supposing that a single, fixed, outlook pervaded each stratum of Byzantine society. Nonetheless, the coexistence of such perspectives is worth bearing in mind, although our principal concern will be with the attitudes and policy of the imperial government.

The lattermost of these three perspectives was, I suggest, generally predominant amongst the Byzantine ruling elite in the later tenth and eleventh centuries, albeit lacking in full articulation. Such an attitude fitted well with the habitual cautiousness of imperial strategy, its attentiveness to terrain and general reluctance to take on extensive new territorial commitments that might prove too costly to defend. Neither of the other two perspectives impinges strongly on the extant writings of the decision-makers and senior officials of the imperial 'Establishment'. On the eve of the *reconquista* that brought Cilicia and parts of Syria back under imperial dominion, Constantine VII's handbook on statecraft for his son, Romanos, recalled the Saracens' conquest of Palestine fairly dispassionately.<sup>4</sup> Admittedly, his *De administrando imperio* shows interest in the churches and monasteries of 'the holy city' and of Palestine in general, taking note of the gifts made to them by Charlemagne and by the Iberians.<sup>5</sup> Manifesting his own qualities of piety and Christian leadership, Constantine in 947

<sup>2</sup> Arethas of Caesarea likened Leo VI's offensive to 'laying claim to one's ancestral inheritance', and voiced hopes for the 'revival of whole cities and churches of God to the praise of His glory', Arethas of Caesarea, *Scripta minora*, vol. II, p. 33, lines 18-19; p. 34, lines 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Neither the settlement-pattern and numbers nor the outlooks of non-Chalcedonian, Syriac-speaking, Christian inhabitants of Syria and Palestine can receive full treatment here, relevant though they are to imperial strategy and policy.

<sup>4</sup> Constantine VII, *De administrando*, ch. 19, pp. 82-83.

<sup>5</sup> Constantine VII, *De administrando*, chs. 22, 26, 45, pp. 96-99, 108-109, 206-207. For his designation of Jerusalem as 'the holy city', see, e.g. ch. 21, p. 84, line 5; p. 88, line 67.

sent a clergyman with a gift for the patriarch of Jerusalem, quite soon after becoming senior emperor.<sup>6</sup> He also showed largesse towards the monastery of St Catherine's on Mount Sinai, judging by the icon portraying King Abgar with features similar to Constantine's own; this may well have accompanied gifts for the house.<sup>7</sup> However, such gestures did not necessarily denote any plans on Constantine's part to re-impose dominion over the anciently Christian churches and monasteries, whether in Palestine or Sinai. They would have been somewhat in the spirit of the 'limited ecumenicity' that T. Lounghis discerns in the Macedonian dynasty's handling of the Christian west.<sup>8</sup>

A century and more after Constantine and his aides composed the *De administrando*, Byzantines in court circles inclined to regard the Taurus mountain-range as marking the limits of wholly 'Roman' territories, viewing the landscape, climate and population-groups beyond with some detachment. Michael Attaleiates wrote of Turkish incursions between the Mesopotamian theme and the themes of Melitene and – in the Taurus range – Lykandos as being God's wrath against their Armenian, Nestorian and other heretical inhabitants. 'These lands', he remarked, 'teem with false doctrine of this sort'.<sup>9</sup> Attaleiates also commented on the excessive heat of 'the Syrian parts' in summer: Romanos IV Diogenes had stationed his men in the Lykandos theme during the summer months of 1068, postponing operations against the Turks in Syria so as to spare his men 'the unaccustomed heat'.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the climate of the Holy Land was fair game among Byzantine intellectuals in the twelfth century, judging by the jibes of Constantine Manasses. 'How', he asked, 'O Christ, did you sojourn so long in dry, suffocating, burning, deadly places? If I think of the choking air of Nazareth, I am amazed at your humility, O Word!'<sup>11</sup> Manasses wrote his poem on travels in the Eastern Mediterranean region for the diversion of members of the Komnenian court.

<sup>6</sup> Riant, "Lettre du clerc Nicétas", p. 377 (text); Pratsch, "Der Platz der Grabeskirche", pp. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup> Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine*, pp. 94-98; plates xxxvi-xxxvii.

<sup>8</sup> See Lounghis, "The Adaptability of Byzantine political ideology", pp. 347-358; Lounghis, "Byzantine diplomacy", pp. 48-54.

<sup>9</sup> Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 73, lines 11-16.

<sup>10</sup> Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 79, line 23, p. 80, line 2.

<sup>11</sup> Manasses, *Hodoiporikon*, pp. 325-347 (text), at lines 295-298. See Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 369-370 and n. 180; Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca*, pp. 17-20.

Rather than being a factual account of the embassy to the Frankish King Baldwin III of Jerusalem in which he had served, his verses offered imaginative, sometimes humorous, variations on the well-worn theme of exile from Constantinople: the capital was the only place worth living in!<sup>12</sup> But the very fact that Manasses' remarks passed for rhetorical *coloratura* bespeaks a certain reserve on the imperial elite's part concerning the Holy Land, enabling him to portray even a visit there in terms of 'exile'.<sup>13</sup> Such sentiments interlocked with another foundation-stone of Byzantine political thinking, that Constantinople was pivotal to God's plan for mankind.<sup>14</sup> Seeing that Byzantine orators sometimes depicted their capital as not merely 'God-protected' but the New Jerusalem and that the *pignora imperii* and the Instruments of Christ's Passion were in the Great Palace, imperial statesmen were hardly likely to view recovery of the physical Jerusalem as integral to their ideology.<sup>15</sup> However, to characterise the Byzantine elite's attitude towards the Christian east as being somewhat detached raises the question of why the empire should have extended its dominion beyond the Taurus at all in the later tenth century. Such a characterisation might seem to jar with emperors' very occasional expressions of enthusiasm for regaining the city of Jerusalem. And there is the still more basic question as to whether mannered expressions of indifference on the part of intellectuals do not distort our own picture, overshadowing if not eclipsing other variants of opinion or belief in circulation in Byzantium. The evi-

<sup>12</sup> See Nilsson, "La douceur des dons abondants", pp. 181, 183-187, 192-193.

<sup>13</sup> The title *Hodoiporikon* is of seventeenth-century vintage, and manuscripts of the poem mention 'exile' (*apodemia*) in the title: Manasses, *Hodoiporikon*, pp. 313 (introduction), 325 (text); Nilsson, "La douceur des dons abondants", pp. 185, 190-191 and n. 36.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Alexander, "The Strength of empire", pp. 341-347 (repr. pp. 11-17); Magdalino, "The History of the future", pp. 4, 11-13, 29-30 (repr. pp. 30, 37-39, 55-56).

<sup>15</sup> Although orators did not regularly term Constantinople 'the New Jerusalem', rhetoric and ceremonial could liken its role with that of Jerusalem for the Israelites and compare its rulers with Israel's: Alexander, "The Strength of empire", p. 347 (17); Patlagean, "Byzantium's dual Holy Land", pp. 113, 115-116; Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca*, pp. 133-136; Rapp, "Old Testament models", pp. 194-196; Pahlitzsch, "Zur ideologischen Bedeutung", pp. 242-247. On the cult of the True Cross and on the other relics of Christ's Passion kept in the Great Palace, see Magdalino, "L'Église du Phare", pp. 22-25; Klein, "Constantine, Helena", pp. 43-45, 48-55, 58-59. On the *pignora imperii*, see Alexander, "The Strength of empire", p. 343 (13); Dagron, *Emperor and priest*, pp. 97-98, 215-217.

dence of pilgrimages made by monks and other Byzantines to the Holy Land suggests the enduring vitality of the first of the three perspectives outlined above.<sup>16</sup> One must also reckon with the conspicuous concern for the churches of Jerusalem, more specifically for the church of the Holy Sepulchre, shown by successive emperors during the first half of the eleventh century.

These perspectives and gestures are not, in fact, wholly mutually incompatible. This becomes clearer in light of a couple of other developments in the Levant in the late tenth and earlier eleventh centuries. Although *prima facie* only loosely relevant, they have a bearing on imperial attitudes and policy towards Syria and Palestine, and therefore deserve attention. Before attempting this, however, one must review the principal considerations behind imperial policy towards the Muslim powers to the south from the later tenth century onwards, setting deviations from the norm and localised flare-ups against the well-known background of Byzantino-Fatimid relations in the eleventh century. Bias in favour of the status quo is evident on the geopolitical plane, and this seems characteristic of ecclesiastical affairs, too, for all the government's interest in choosing appointees to the patriarchal see of Antioch and, fleetingly, Jerusalem.<sup>17</sup> A prime concern was the security of Antioch, engendering interest in Aleppo's affairs, too.

## **2. Byzantine strategy and policy towards Syria and Palestine, and Byzantino-Fatimid relations in outline, in the later tenth and first half of the eleventh century**

Extreme cautiousness, and fears of sudden reunification of the Muslims and their resumption of all-out offensives, pervaded thinking not only among members of the Constantinopolitan elite but also in the military leadership, as witness the preface to 'Skirmishing'.<sup>18</sup> The commissioner of this handbook was none other than Nike-

<sup>16</sup> See Talbot, "Byzantine pilgrimages".

<sup>17</sup> On imperial appointments to Antioch and the Constantinopolitan patriarch's consecration of appointees, see now Todt, "Zwischen Kaiser und ökumenischem Patriarchen", pp. 141-142, 153-160. I am grateful to Professor Grünbart for sending me the text of this work.

<sup>18</sup> "Skirmishing", in Dennis (ed. and transl.), *Three Byzantine military treatises*, pp. 146-147 (lines 9-12 of Greek text).

phoros II Phokas, the emperor who associated himself with belligerence against the ‘Saracens’. The series of Byzantine offensives earning Nikephoros renown as ‘bravest conqueror’<sup>19</sup> had, essentially, been triggered by the aggressiveness of the amir of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla. Indeed the original decision to change strategy and launch major expeditions to shatter Sayf’s powerbase and humiliate if not destroy him seems to have been a reluctant one. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus took it only after repeated attempts at making truces or reaching some sort of accommodation with him had failed.<sup>20</sup> And Nikephoros II Phokas, self-styled foe of Islam that he was, stopped short of seeking direct rule over Aleppo. He seems to have contented himself with regaining the ancient and celebrated patriarchate of Antioch, while aiming to cut the Ḥamdānid dynasty of Sayf al-Dawla down to size and reducing the emirate of Aleppo to the status of a client-state. This, at least, is the implication of the truce with Aleppo that was under negotiation at the time of Nikephoros’ death in December 969 and ratified very soon afterwards. Besides seeing to payment of annual tribute and a poll-tax, the city’s amir undertook to bar the way to would-be attackers of Byzantium, and alert the imperial authorities of impending raids. Aleppo was to become, in effect, an observation-post, while the Byzantine customs-officers stationed there would collect dues on goods arriving from imperial territory.<sup>21</sup>

It is highly questionable whether Nikephoros’ murderer and successor, John I Tzimiskes, was any more committed to full-blown expansionism in the direction of Palestine. Admittedly, he led an expedition as far south as Damascus in 975. Moreover, he boasted in his letter to the ‘prince of princes’ of Armenia, Ashot III, that he had approached Mount Tabor with the city of Jerusalem and ‘the holy places of God’ in his sights, before having to veer westwards to deal with ‘the abominable Africans [Fatimid troops]’ who had ‘fled to the coast fortresses’.<sup>22</sup> However, as P. E. Walker pointed out, Tzimiskes seems to have played up the pious character of his campaign and to

<sup>19</sup> Nikephoros was acclaimed as such on the eve of his accession to the throne in 963: Constantine VII, *De cerimoniis*, 1.96, I, p. 438.

<sup>20</sup> See Shepard, “Constantine VII”, pp. 36-40. See also McGeer, “Two military orations”, pp. 121-123.

<sup>21</sup> Canard, *Histoire*, pp. 833-836; Farag, *The Truce of Safar*, pp. 2-3; Shepard, “Byzantine diplomacy”, pp. 42-43.

<sup>22</sup> The letter’s text is incorporated into Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, pp. 30-31.



have exaggerated his territorial ambitions for propagandistic purposes: his letter to Ashot does not amount to a statement of strategic aims.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, it is probably no accident that Tzimiskes avows his intention to ‘deliver the Holy Sepulchre of Christ our God from the bondage of the Muslims’ in a letter addressed to an external potentate, demonstrating the awesomeness of imperial military undertakings. Ashot III’s dominions looked onto the region of the Iberians, whose special veneration for Jerusalem and ‘the Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ’ had caught Constantine VII’s eye twenty years earlier.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps more suggestive of the primary concerns of Tzimiskes and his successors is their construction of the fortress now called Qal’at al-Sahyun, some thirty kilometres from Laodicea (Latakia). The latter was of strategic value, especially after a Fatimid army tried to retake Antioch and its port, Alexandretta, in 971.<sup>25</sup> The construction of a sizable fortress atop an inaccessible ridge served to shield Latakia from the landward side, and this implies the fundamentally defensive cast of Byzantine thinking.<sup>26</sup> The facet of his expedition that Tzimiskes highlighted for domestic consumption was not so much territorial gains as the acquisition and transfer to the capital of important relics.<sup>27</sup> Talk of liberating the Christian inhabitants of Palestine together with the Holy Sepulchre would not, apparently, have roused much enthusiasm among the citizens of Constantinople. Relics, in contrast, might further enhance the City’s sacredness, and their own security and wellbeing.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See Walker, “The ‘crusade’ of John Tzimiskes”, esp. pp. 326-327.

<sup>24</sup> Constantine VII, *De administrando*, ch. 45, p. 206, lines 30-31.

<sup>25</sup> See Walker, “A Byzantine victory”.

<sup>26</sup> Ball, *Syria*, pp. 145-146. Further elucidation of the fortress’ significance will come from Todt and Vest, *Syria*.

<sup>27</sup> Tzimiskes’ letter to Ashot III mentions relics, besides the intention of liberating the Holy Sepulchre; but only relics feature in the propaganda about the sacral feats of the campaigns of Tzimiskes and his predecessor that Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes refract: Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, p. 32; Leo the Deacon, *Historia*, X.4, IV.10, pp. 165-166, 70-71; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 271. See Kalavrezou, “Helping hands”, p. 56; Magdalino, “L’Église du Phare”, pp. 24-25; Pahlitzsch, “Zur ideologischen Bedeutung”, p. 253.

<sup>28</sup> For imperial and other Byzantine approaches to relics, see, e.g., Kazhdan *et al.*, *Oxford Dictionary*, III, pp. 1779-1781 (Taft, Robert and Kazhdan, Alexander); Kalavrezou, “Helping hands”, 53-79; Talbot, “Pilgrimage to healing shrines”, pp. 159-161; Lidov, *Eastern Christian relics*; Magdalino, “L’Église du Phare”, pp. 22-26.



Without attempting a gazetteer of the territories that came under Byzantine dominion in the late tenth century, one may note that the emperor's reach did not extend very far due east of Antioch, while expansion to the south was confined to coastal areas.<sup>29</sup> One gains a fair impression of strategic priorities from the writings and activities of Nikephoros Ouranos, whom Basil II installed as *Doux* of Antioch in 999 and who remained in post until at least 1007. His previous experience had mainly been at the imperial court, where he had served as 'Keeper of the Imperial Inkstand', and from where he had led an embassy to Baghdad. Ouranos' only known spell of military action before his posting to Antioch had been a couple of years earlier, when he crushingly defeated Bulgarian invaders on the river Spercheios, in Greece.<sup>30</sup> He proved himself then to be a master of defensive operations and this, alongside loyalty to the emperor, was probably what earned him the command at Antioch. An erudite and prolific man of letters, Ouranos compiled a military treatise while based there. Mostly, he copied or paraphrased the *Taktika* of Leo VI and Nikephoros II Phokas' *Praecepta militaria*, together with various ancient texts. Nikephoros' work contains detailed instructions on offensives involving heavy cavalry. However, Ouranos added to his compilation three largely original chapters relevant to local conditions, and their contents suggest that siege warfare and incursions into enemy territory were his chief preoccupation, not further conquest to the south or east.<sup>31</sup> Ouranos' underlying assumption that the region's borders would not alter drastically accords with what we know of his activities as *Doux*: 'for the most part his military duties took on the character of local police actions'.<sup>32</sup> Chapter 65 of Ouranos' treatise does envisage besieging and occupying fortresses in enemy territory. Yet his recommendations on this subject disclose incidentally the fairly open nature of the Byzantino-Muslim borders: the fortress'

<sup>29</sup> Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", p. 186.

<sup>30</sup> A point made by McGeer, "Tradition and reality", pp. 130-131. On Ouranos' earlier career, see McGeer "Tradition and reality", p. 130; Holmes, *Basil II*, pp. 383-385, 409-410.

<sup>31</sup> McGeer, "Tradition and reality", pp. 133-134. See Ouranos, *Taktika*, chs. 63-65, pp. 142-163.

<sup>32</sup> McGeer, "Tradition and reality", p. 131. On the broad range of responsibilities entrusted to Ouranos, "*magistros* and ruler of the East" according to his seals, see also Holmes, *Basil II*, pp. 350-351.

defenders would send messages offering high prices for grain and other necessities to ‘our people dwelling along the frontiers’; in response, ‘our people..., greedy for gain’ would supply them ‘in great quantities’.<sup>33</sup> Ouranos insists on ‘great vigilance’ and ‘severe penalties’ to prevent this happening. But his very concern suggests how readily persons, animals and goods could move across the borders.

A complementary picture is implied by the links which the Syrian Jacobite living in Byzantine-ruled territories maintained with coreligionists based in Muslim territory. Cross-border trading contributed to the wealth and cultural vitality of the monasteries and episcopal sees they founded on the Byzantine side of the border from the later tenth century onwards. Nikephoros II and his successors urged the Syrian Jacobite hierarchy to establish itself along the Euphrates valley, and the Catholikos John Sarigta took up residence in Melitene.<sup>34</sup> The Byzantines’ expulsion of the many inhabitants of the reconquered territories who refused to abjure Islam had prompted this imperial initiative. The region of Melitene was, in Michael the Syrian’s words, ‘filled with men whom he [the Catholikos] assembled himself from all sides’, many coming from Muslim territory and ‘being accustomed to living in the midst of the two peoples and the two empires’.<sup>35</sup> Not that the imperial authorities greatly cherished these heterodox Christians. Unsure of their loyalties, Nikephoros II may well have been aiming to shift Syrian Jacobites and their priests away from the strategically vital environs of Antioch. According to Nikephoros Ouranos, a commander should threaten with decapitation any Syrian or Armenian Christian inhabitants of a town under siege who did not come over to him before its fall; they were, presumably, to be settled on imperial territory.<sup>36</sup> Yet the imperial authorities’ instigation of such population-shifts and of immigration from Muslim-ruled territory says something about the limited scope of their territorial aims. They

<sup>33</sup> Ouranos, *Taktika*, ch. 65.6-7, pp. 154-157.

<sup>34</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, XIII.4, III, p. 130; Dagron, “Minorités ethniques”, pp. 185-194.

<sup>35</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, XIII.4, III, p. 130; Dagron, “Minorités ethniques”, p. 186.

<sup>36</sup> On tensions between Catholikos John Sarigta and the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch even before the Byzantines recaptured the city, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, XIII.4, III, p. 130; Dagron, “Minorités ethniques”, p. 187. For Nikephoros Ouranos’ instructions, see his *Taktika*, 65.13, pp. 158-159.

would scarcely have behaved thus if further campaigning and emancipation of all Christians in the Holy Land were on the agenda, current borders being only temporary.<sup>37</sup> Equally, their measures to ensure an adequate demographic base of taxpayers and potential military manpower imply awareness of the strain even quite limited territorial acquisitions had imposed on their resources. Similar constraints probably account for the tendency, at least in the first generations after the reconquest, to leave existing administrative structures in northern Syria and Mesopotamia intact, concentrating garrisons in a select number of strongholds, and relying heavily on diplomacy to maintain a modicum of order.<sup>38</sup>

The broad outlines of Byzantium's borders with the Muslim Levant, their underlying stability from around the year 1000 until well into the eleventh century, are fairly familiar. W. Felix has reconstructed the ups and downs in Byzantino-Muslim relations in the Levant, offering close analysis alongside copious detail.<sup>39</sup> Equally well-known are the largely amicable relations between the Fatimid leadership in Egypt and the imperial government for much of that period. Steven Runciman, for example, wrote of their 'good terms' in the mid-eleventh century; 'neither', he observed, 'was aggressive, and both wished to keep in check the Moslem states further to the east'.<sup>40</sup> This simple fact, epitomised by the *khuṭba*'s prayers in the name of the Fatimid – rather than the 'Abbasid – caliph in Constantinople's mosque from the late tenth century onwards,<sup>41</sup> tends to vanish beneath the incessant flurry of events: incursions into Byzantine territory by tribes like the Banū Kilāb of the northern Jazīra; jockeying between Muslim notables for control of Aleppo; and clashes between Fatimid and Byzantine forces and their proxies. These goings-on receive coverage from Yaḥyā of Antioch's chronicle and other Arabic narratives and they loom correspondingly large in modern accounts. Yet to a great extent, as Felix and other scholars make clear, the turbulence stemmed from what was happening inside the Muslim world or among the semi-nomadic societies in the desert

<sup>37</sup> Dagron, "Minorités ethniques", p. 185.

<sup>38</sup> Holmes, *Basil II*, pp. 368-391.

<sup>39</sup> Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 45-123.

<sup>40</sup> Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, I, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> See Reinert, "The Muslim presence", p. 137; Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", p. 188.

straddling the borderlands. These societies' endemic violence drew the Byzantine authorities into what McGeer aptly terms 'local police actions', stability being their prime objective.<sup>42</sup>

Aleppo was, undeniably, an abiding bone of contention. Competing claims to formal dominion over it could bring Byzantine and the Fatimid forces into collision, and the issue sometimes had wider repercussions on their relations. Significant as these tensions were, however, they were localised and, for the most part, low-intensity. On the one hand, Aleppo was clearly of manifold significance to Byzantine rulers, its recovery being perhaps more apt to enhance imperial status than that of Jerusalem itself, and no emperor could regard with equanimity its long-term subjection directly to another major power. On the other hand, Basil II and most of his successors showed marked reluctance to let tensions over Aleppo escalate into full-scale war. The main sanctions he took against the Fatimids by way of signalling disapproval and pressing them to change policy, a trade embargo, bear closely on another, somewhat broader, dimension to Byzantium's relationship with Egypt and also on a phenomenon probably owing something to it, the increasing number of western Christians who made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the earlier eleventh century; their journeys supplemented those of the Byzantines themselves to 'the holy city' and its churches and monasteries.

### 3. The issue of Aleppo

Before turning to this broader dimension and to the phenomenon of pilgrimages, it is worth glancing at three aspects of imperial and Fatimid concern with Aleppo. Firstly, Basil II intervened personally in Aleppo's affairs only twice, in 995 and 999, acting in response to Fatimid intrusions.<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, having negotiated a ten-year truce with the Fatimids in 1001, Basil showed forbearance, attempting to strike a balance between the various local contenders for rule over Aleppo. He might confer titles and other favours on more than one at a time, but without exploiting their rivalries to appropriate the city

<sup>42</sup> McGeer, "Tradition and reality", p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 47-48; Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", pp. 177, 191.

for himself. Basil's principal demarches against the Fatimids were triggered by the prospect of direct Fatimid control there, as when Aleppo's military commandant, Fath, recognised Fatimid overlordship and a Fatimid force proceeded to take up residence there.<sup>44</sup> For the most part, Basil sought to maintain and then prolong the truce with the Fatimids.<sup>45</sup> This remained the primary stance of most of Basil's successors throughout the first half of the eleventh century, even though they upheld the rhetoric of triumph and imperial expansionism and launched expeditions to annex strongholds and territories on the empire's Caucasian and western approaches.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, it is striking that when an emperor sought military stature and further legitimisation for his regime by leading a campaign to capture a renowned target, his eyes fell on Aleppo. If John Tzimiskes had claimed to have had Jerusalem in his sights, at least when addressing external potentates, Romanos III led a huge expedition to Aleppo two years after becoming emperor in 1028. According to Michael Psellos, his motivation was vainglory.<sup>47</sup> One must ever be wary of Psellos' explanations for actions. But the political leadership of Aleppo was weak at the time, and the unmilitary emperor Romanos' choice of Aleppo as a 'soft target' probably registers how familiar the city then was to the Constantinopolitan elite and other significant Byzantine circles. Such celebrity could have arisen from contemporary commercial ties, rather than merely from the region's classical remains and associations with the Caesars and Alexander the Great, which inspired Romanos to stage an *adventus* at Antioch.<sup>48</sup>

A second aspect of Byzantine and Fatimid concern with Aleppo is the rather more surprising lack of evidence of any driving ambition on the Fatimids' part to rule the city. They did sometimes send forces to Aleppo while proclaiming their rightful overlordship, but these episodes mostly reflect the inherent political instability of north-

<sup>44</sup> Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 67-68; Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", p. 192.

<sup>45</sup> Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 49-76; Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", pp. 185-186, 192.

<sup>46</sup> Shepard, "Emperors and expansionism", pp. 75-79 (repr. pp. 85-89).

<sup>47</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, I, pp. 35-36. On the size and the fate of Romanos' expedition: Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 82-88.

<sup>48</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, I, p. 37; Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 84; Shepard, "Emperors and expansionism", p. 77 (87).

ern Syria: coping with overtures from rival regionally-based figures was all the harder when the Fatimid leadership in Cairo was itself divided. Thus, for example, their expeditions to Aleppo in 983 and 991 essentially resulted from the bids for self-aggrandisement of the ambitious Turkish military slave Bakghūr, whose enterprises enjoyed support from the caliph but not from the vizier, Ya‘qūb b. Killīs. The vizier, like many others in Fatimid ruling circles, was predisposed in favour of nominal overlordship and tranquil relations with the Byzantines, so long as the latter behaved peacefully.<sup>49</sup> A third reason for Byzantine preoccupation with Aleppo is the likelihood that fiscal and broader commercial considerations weighed heavily, alongside strategic concerns about Antioch’s vulnerability to any Fatimid armies based in the former city.<sup>50</sup> Firm data regarding the amounts and regularity of the collection of dues by Byzantine customs-officers stationed in Aleppo seems to be lacking, and whether they managed to collect revenues effectively for protracted periods is questionable. Yet one should not overlook the simple fact that much of the business done in Aleppo’s suqs led to and from the Byzantine lands, presupposing a common interest in peaceful trafficking across the Byzantino-Syrian borders. The prosperity arising from this receives vivid illustration from Ibn Buṭlān’s account of the journey he undertook in 1048-49. He travelled along the road from Aleppo to Antioch, observing the large number of villages along the way and commenting on the fact that Aleppo’s citizens depended on the wine, fruit and vegetables brought from Byzantine territory.<sup>51</sup>

Ibn Buṭlān’s description bespeaks relaxed conditions in the border region. Aleppo would scarcely have relied on necessities from Byzantium had relations been otherwise, and this local trade will have supplemented the items from Byzantium which the truce of 969 had provided for: silks, brocade and pearls, alongside livestock and ordinary cloths.<sup>52</sup> There are further hints of the functioning of commerce from occasions when the emperor manipulated it for diplomatic ends. Thus in 1020-21 Basil II’s reward to Aleppo’s governor for renouncing his allegiance to the Fatimid caliph and recognition of his own

<sup>49</sup> Beihammer, “Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt”, pp. 178-181, 185.

<sup>50</sup> Beihammer, “Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt”, pp. 175-176, 183.

<sup>51</sup> Schacht and Meyerhof, *The medico-philosophical controversy*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>52</sup> Canard, *Histoire*, p. 835; Farag, *The Truce of Safar*, p. 4.

overlordship was effective monopoly of overland trade with other Muslim regions.<sup>53</sup> And, as noted above, it was the commandant Fath's switch of allegiance to the caliph and the installation of a Fatimid force in Aleppo that elicited systematic countermeasures, in 1016. Even then, Basil's countermeasures took the form not of military action but of a ban on trade and travel with all lands under Fatimid hegemony. Basil made an exception only of the area controlled by Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās, chieftain of the Banū Kilāb, who requested the exemption and was then enjoying a degree of imperial favour.<sup>54</sup> This presupposed that the value and convenience to the Fatimids of direct communications with Byzantium would deter them from further interventions in Aleppo's affairs. Admittedly, the embargo did not achieve this result, and it is questionable whether enforcement was ever very robust.<sup>55</sup> One might therefore incline to dismiss it as a half-measure, necessitated by Basil's commitments elsewhere: war with the Bulgarians was still raging in 1016. Yet the imposition of a trade embargo was fairly unusual as a means of imposing sanctions in Byzantine diplomacy, while the exempting of Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās, who was based in the region of Aleppo, carried a double-message for Cairo: Byzantium possessed a viable alternative to trading with the Muslim world via Egypt; and it could use its economic weight to gain collaborators in the very region where the Fatimids had installed troops. Thus by exempting Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās from the embargo Basil II highlighted Aleppo's role as the major irritant, exacerbating Byzantino-Fatimid tensions. By implication, the Fatimids should keep out of what the emperor considered to be his rightful and necessary sphere of influence, while he himself let southern Syria alone, acknowledging that this came within the Fatimids' sphere. Jerusalem and other holy places lay there, too. But, viewed through the lenses of imperial *Realpolitik*, issues such as the condition of Christian populations beneath Fatimid rule or even the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre by Caliph al-Ḥākim in 1009 were necessarily

<sup>53</sup> Yahyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, III, pp. 404-405; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>54</sup> Yahyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, III, pp. 400-401; Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 68; Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", p. 192.

<sup>55</sup> Jacoby, "Byzantine trade", p. 38 (repr. p. 120) (Hereafter, references will only be to the reprint's pagination). That the lifting of the embargo was the Fatimid government's prime request in 1023 indicates the value to it of Byzantine trade, but does not prove that enforcement of the embargo had been total.



secondary concerns.<sup>56</sup> Friday prayers in the name of the Fatimid caliph would seem to have carried on in Constantinople's mosque, symbolising a partnership of mounting value to caliph and *basileus* alike.

#### 4. The commercial dimension of Byzantino-Egyptian relations

There are hints of imperial Byzantine interest in trade with Egypt from the era when 'Abbasid control over the province's governors was waning, and Romanos I Lekapenos sought to foster commerce with its Ikhshid rulers.<sup>57</sup> But evidence of exchanges becomes much fuller a generation or so later, and not merely thanks to the accidental survival of commercial documentation from the Cairo Geniza from the second half of the tenth century onwards. Much of the trade between East Asia and the Mediterranean world seems to have shifted from overland routes across the 'Abbasid caliphate's central regions to sea routes traversing the Indian Ocean and leading up the Red Sea. The shift was underway in the mid-tenth century. Al-Mas'ūdī could write of Fustāṭ that 'all the kingdoms situated on the two seas [Indian and Mediterranean] ... bring to this commercial centre all the most remarkable, the rarest and best perfumes, spices, drugs, jewels and slaves, as well as staples of food and drink, and cloth of every sort.'<sup>58</sup> The Fatimids' promotion of commerce from 969 onwards along with the Qarmatians' depredations from their base in Bahrayn eroded 'Abbasid dominance over maritime trade with East Asia. Navigation in the Persian Gulf became hazardous, to the profit of Cairo and Alexandria.<sup>59</sup> If Egypt's consequent prosperity is familiar to scholarship, the extent of its Byzantine dimension has come to light more recently, through the investigations of David Jacoby. Byzantine merchants were swift to take advantage of the array of wares now available, making for 'the market of the Greeks' in Fustāṭ

<sup>56</sup> On al-Hākim's destruction of the church, see Yahyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, II, pp. 491-492. For continuing diplomatic exchanges between Cairo and Constantinople in the years following this, see Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 58-59; Beihammer, "Byzanz und die islamische Staatenwelt", pp. 191-192.

<sup>57</sup> Reinert, "The Muslim presence", p. 135 and n. 34; Jacoby, "Byzantine trade", pp. 115-116.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh*, p. 20; transl. in Staffa, *Conquest and fusion*, p. 46.

<sup>59</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trade*, p. 58. See also Pearson, "Islamic trade", pp. 321-322; Lev, "The Fatimid caliphate", pp. 222-224.

and frequenting Alexandria.<sup>60</sup> The Byzantines imported goods originating in Egypt itself, linen and other types of textile woven in Tinnis, but they also bought goods from the India and beyond, silks and other top-quality textiles, dyes, pearls, scents, pepper and (from the ‘Spice Islands’) an extensive assortment of flavourings. High-value, long-haul trade between Alexandria and Constantinople intersected with regional and local circuits in the Eastern Mediterranean, encompassing southern Asia Minor, Cyprus and ports such as Tripoli.<sup>61</sup> In other words, small-time traders as well as wealthy entrepreneurs involved themselves in dealings with counterparts from the Muslim Levant.

Material attestation of both sets of merchants seems to come from the wares recovered from a merchantman wrecked off the southeast coast of Asia Minor at Serçe Limani in the mid or later 1020s. Besides Fatimid gold coins, weights-and-measures and many de luxe manufactures from East Asia, three tons of glass cullet were being shipped from Fatimid-ruled Syria for reworking in, most probably, Constantinople.<sup>62</sup> Yet most of the cargos (including sumac) were modest, suggesting ‘a rather marginal level of maritime commerce’, as if the vessel were a tramp-steamer, constantly putting in to port to take aboard short-haul passengers and traders.<sup>63</sup> Plying between Byzantine and Muslim territories, these persons were vulnerable to theft and extortionate costs of board and lodging, and thus in need of *entrepôts*, offering regulation of prices, secure storage and affordable accommodation. Institutions for this purpose, *funduqs*, had long been a feature of Muslim towns but a word very probably deriving from this term, *phoundax*, makes its appearance in our extant Byzantine sources only in the eleventh century.<sup>64</sup> The absorption of the Arabic term into Greek – presumably for want of a pre-existing *terminus technicus* – may well reflect intensified trafficking between Byzantines and Muslims, some being of modest means and, most probably, frequent-

<sup>60</sup> Jacoby, “Byzantine trade”, pp. 112-119.

<sup>61</sup> Jacoby, “Byzantine trade”, pp. 117-129.

<sup>62</sup> On the glass, see Bass *et al.*, *Serçe Limani*, esp. Bass, “Glass cargo”.

<sup>63</sup> Van Doorninck, “The Byzantine ship”, p. 140. For the sumac fruits, which probably came from Syrian coastal areas, see Ward, “Plant remains”, pp. 506-507, 509.

<sup>64</sup> Attaleiates, *Historia*, pp. 148-150; Constable, *Housing*, pp. 64-67, 150-152. The Byzantine, state-run, version of the *funduq* does not seem to have offered accommodation: Constable, *Housing*, pp. 65, 151. See also Magdalino, “The Grain supply”, pp. 40-44.

ers of the maritime circuits of the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean.<sup>65</sup> This had a counterpart in the everyday cross-border trading that Ibn Butlān presupposes and which archaeological data also attests. The pattern of finds of later tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantine copper coins in the Antioch region resembles the pattern of such finds made near Aleppo at Balis-Meskene and also further south, at Ḥamā.<sup>66</sup> Equally noteworthy is the find at Tiberias of sizable quantities of bronze coins in a hoard datable to the later eleventh century. Besides numerous anonymous *folleis* of the 1030s and 1040s, there are ‘signed’ *folleis* of Constantine X and a single ‘signed’ *folleis* of Michael VII. These could have reached Palestine individually by means of trade, but the excavators also entertained the possibility that a pilgrim had brought them from Byzantine-ruled territories.<sup>67</sup> This leads us to a phenomenon that most probably registers commercial developments as well as of the spiritual aspirations of Christians.

## 5. Pilgrimages

That there was an upsurge in westerners’ pilgrimages to the Holy Land from around the millennium since Christ’s Incarnation seems plain enough. Ralph Glaber remarked upon the ‘countless multitude’ heading for the Holy Sepulchre ‘in numbers unheard-of in earlier ages’. Some sages, he noted, took it to portend the coming of Anti-Christ.<sup>68</sup> Mentions in saints’ *Lives* and other narratives of Latins’ journeys to the Jerusalem become quite common from the second half of the tenth century onwards, while archival evidence in the form of wills from Catalonia signals increasing numbers of pilgrims attempting the journey from the early 1000s until the 1030s.<sup>69</sup> While recognising that widespread millennial fears alongside personal concerns about salvation impelled ever more individuals to perform penance or assure themselves remission of sins through journeying to the Holy Places,

<sup>65</sup> Constable, *Housing*, p. 66. The term *funduq* was very common in Egypt during the Fatimid era, and earlier: Constable, *Housing*, p. 61.

<sup>66</sup> Vorderstrasse, “Coin circulation”, pp. 502, 504-505, 507-508; chart 4 on p. 503.

<sup>67</sup> Bijovsky and Berman, “The Coins”, p. 82; see also pp. 65, 74-76, 80-81.

<sup>68</sup> Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, IV.18; IV.21, pp. 198-199, 204-205.

<sup>69</sup> Micheau, “Les Itinéraires maritimes”, pp. 81-86; Ciggaar, *Western travellers*, pp. 81-82, 168-169; Jaspert, “Das Heilige Grab”, p. 75.

one must bear in mind the practical utility of commercial networks to pilgrims, especially those voyaging by sea. If not utterly indispensable to them, the toing and froing of merchant vessels offered by far the most convenient form of transport. One might therefore expect a quickening in maritime commercial exchanges between the Byzantine world and Egypt to have facilitated pilgrimages, too, and there are indications that this happened. Around the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries western pilgrims mostly travelled to the Levant by sea, and they tended to sail forth from Amalfi or ports directly under Byzantine rule in southern Italy, rather than from Venice.<sup>70</sup> This accords with Jacoby's thesis that traders from the Byzantine lands were foremost among the Christian entrepreneurs seeking access to the markets of Alexandria, Fuṣṭāṭ and the newly-founded Cairo; the Venetians – unlike the Amalfitans and other southern Italians – participated there in significant numbers only from the later eleventh century onwards.<sup>71</sup>

By the 1020s the mode of transport preferred by western pilgrims seems to have shifted in favour of journeys overland across the Balkans and Asia Minor, even as their numbers rose.<sup>72</sup> But this shift probably reflected securer conditions in Bulgaria after Basil II's victory in 1018 and an easing of tensions on the Bulgaro-Hungarian border, rather than any discontinuation in sailings between Byzantine ports and the Levant, or a slackening in commercial exchanges. Western pilgrims could now make almost the whole journey by land, and there are plentiful hints of cross-border trading between imperial and Muslim-ruled territories. Crossing the border into Muslim territory south of Latakia was probably no harder than it was between the regions of Aleppo and Antioch. And in the case of travel overland as with seafaring, the rhythms of fairly constant commercial traffic probably generated an infrastructure that had the incidental effect of curbing the travel costs of pilgrims. In fact, the availability of hostelries along the major routes southwards from Byzantine Syria could well have facilitated – if it did not foster – the development of mass-pilgrimages in the 1020s.<sup>73</sup> In other words, the detente

<sup>70</sup> Micheau, "Les Itinéraires maritimes", pp. 89-91.

<sup>71</sup> Jacoby, "Byzantine trade", pp. 118-124, 128-139, 143-144, 157.

<sup>72</sup> Micheau, "Les Itinéraires maritimes", pp. 90-91.

<sup>73</sup> For a map of *funduqs* along the coast of the Levant and the land-route south from Aleppo between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries, see Constable, *Housing*, map 2, p. 69.

between Cairo and Constantinople and the burgeoning activities by land and sea of traders on local and long-distance circuits created conditions in the Levant propitious for western Christians anxious enough about their spiritual health and ultimate salvation to risk the journey.

Not that the Byzantines were wholly indifferent to the sacred properties of places in the Levant or to ‘the holy city’ and, as already noted, another perspective existed alongside that of imperial *Realpolitik*. The general notion of journeying for spiritual self-betterment enjoyed high esteem: one might travel to a particular shrine or sacred place, or so as to consult a holy man, or the act of journeying itself might count for more than the arrival. Visits to Jerusalem amount to a topos in the *Lives* of early Byzantine saints, and a visit to Jerusalem (as well as Antioch, Constantinople and Rome) features in the fictitious *Life* of St Gregory of Agrigento, set in the sixth century, but composed during the medieval era.<sup>74</sup> Journeys to Jerusalem for a variety of pious motives continued in the Middle Byzantine period, as witness Constantine VII’s despatch of a clergyman to the patriarch there. In late tenth-century western Asia Minor, the boy Lazaros was ‘seeking to become a wanderer from his own homeland and to go to the holy places of Christ’s passions’.<sup>75</sup> Upon eventually reaching Jerusalem, he ‘went round and worshiped at all the holy sites, and indeed all the monasteries’,<sup>76</sup> before deciding to enter the Lavra of St Saba. His prime concern was to relive the ascetic rigour of early fathers such as Sabas himself, spending periods in the desert.<sup>77</sup> Lazaros lived on in the region, holding office in the monastery, and he might well have stayed there indefinitely but for the waves of persecution unleashed by Caliph al-Ḥākīm in the early 1000s. This induced him to withdraw via Mount Tabor – where he ‘worshiped’ – to Da-

<sup>74</sup> Malamut, *Sur la route*, pp. 102, 147-149, 243-258, 312-317; Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos*, pp. 158-159; Pratsch, “Der Platz der Grabeskirche”, pp. 59-60.

<sup>75</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, chs. 4, 6, p. 510; transl. Greenfield, pp. 80, 82. On this work, see Thomas and Mallett (ed.), *Christian-Muslim relations*, III, pp. 160-164 (Schadler, Peter).

<sup>76</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 16, p. 514; transl. Greenfield, p. 94.

<sup>77</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, chs. 17, 18, pp. 514, 515; transl. Greenfield, pp. 97, 100. On the monastery of St Saba in the middle ages, see contributions to Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaitic heritage* and, on visiting Byzantine pilgrims, Talbot, “Byzantine pilgrimages”, pp. 102-103, 107-108. See also Schick, *The Christian communities*, pp. 99-100, 402-403; Thomas, “The Imprint”, pp. 73-83.

mascus and then back to Latakia and, ultimately, Mount Galesion.<sup>78</sup> One might therefore categorise Lazaros as more a holy ‘wanderer’ than a pilgrim. Indeed, his *Life* has more to say about monks journeying to and from the region of Jerusalem than it does explicitly about pilgrimages, testimony both to relatively straightforward communications across the Byzantino-Muslim border and to the attraction that Palestinian houses exerted on Byzantine monks.<sup>79</sup> But one should note the *Life*’s mentions of Lazaros’ yearning for ‘the holy places of Christ’s passions’, terminology redolent of visiting sites of events from sacred time, one of the Byzantine perspectives noted above. The moral stature of monks like Lazaros was such that tokens he handed out served as amulets, worn under the tunic of his devotees.<sup>80</sup> One might reasonably expect some laypersons to have followed the monks’ example, making their own journeys to ‘the holy places’. Indeed, material evidence points to pilgrimages to Jerusalem undertaken from outlying towns such as Cherson. Excavations there have unearthed cross-encolpia, tenth- or eleventh-century mementoes from Syria or Palestine, alongside lead ampoulae made in the Holy Land for containing oil or holy water.<sup>81</sup> In the later tenth century pilgrimages were already common enough in Bulgaria for Cosmas the Priest to complain of men who had taken the tonsure flouting monastic discipline and travelling, some ‘to Jerusalem, and others to Rome and other cities’.<sup>82</sup> The earlier eleventh century saw Rus and Scandinavians going – or trying to go – on pilgrimages to Palestine. Thus the youth-

<sup>78</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 24, p. 517; transl. Greenfield, p. 108.

<sup>79</sup> For example, the boy Lazaros encountered a monk from Paphlagonia likewise en route to the Holy Land, accompanying him to Attaleia: Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, chs. 8, 9, p. 511; transl. Greenfield, pp. 85, 86. Gregory the Cellarer treats the arrival of monks from Jerusalem in western Asia Minor almost as routine: Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 84, p. 535; transl. Greenfield, pp. 173-174. On the links, aspirational and actual, between Middle Byzantine monasteries and Palestinian houses’ traditions, see Malamut, *Sur la route*, pp. 105-106, 150-151; Morris, *Monks and laymen*, pp. 34-35; Patlagean, “Byzantium’s dual Holy Land”, p. 114; Talbot, “Byzantine pilgrimages”, pp. 101-103, 106-107.

<sup>80</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 75, pp. 532-533; transl. Greenfield, p. 162-164. On laypersons’ recourse to monks for guidance: Morris, *Monks and laymen*, esp. chapter 4.

<sup>81</sup> Since the ampoulae came indubitably from Palestine, a connection with pilgrimage is certain: Jašaeva, “Pilgerandenken”, pp. 483-484; Abb. 7.1-2; Abb. 8.1-2. For pilgrims’ use of ampoulae: Talbot, “Pilgrimage to healing shrines”, pp. 161-162.

<sup>82</sup> Cosmas the Priest, *Treatise*, p. 351.

ful Feodosii yearned to travel from his hometown of Kursk to ‘the holy places where our Lord walked in the flesh and to venerate them’. He attempted to join a band of ‘wanderers’ who told him that they had come from ‘the holy places’ and would be going back there.<sup>83</sup> Around this time, in the mid-1030s, the Norwegian Harald Hardrada took the opportunity arising from service with the imperial forces to visit Jerusalem and, probably, bathed in the Jordan, a trip amounting to a pilgrimage.<sup>84</sup> Other northerners were journeying to Jerusalem by the second half of the century, as Swedish runestones attest.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the urge to visit ‘the holy places’ and return with holy oil or water or other tokens of one’s feat was keenest amongst members of newly-converted northern peoples or provincials living on Byzantium’s periphery. But the clear impression Nāser-e Khosraw gained during his journey to Jerusalem was of many pilgrims travelling from Byzantium ‘every year’ to the Holy Sepulchre. He even claims that the emperors travelled with them in disguise, and he seems to imply that this had prompted Caliph al-Ḥākīm’s destruction of the church.<sup>86</sup> This tale is fictitious, yet Nāser-e Khosraw was not a wholly naïve or careless observer, and his mention of pilgrimages every year from the Byzantine lands deserves attention. It is consistent with maritime traffic flourishing between the Fatimid territories and Byzantium,<sup>87</sup> a further indication of the two powers’ general predisposition towards detente. They did not usually let rivalries over Aleppo or the endemic turbulence and low-intensity local conflicts in northern Syria overturn a mutually advantageous state of affairs.

<sup>83</sup> Nestor, *Zhitie*, pp. 356-359; transl. Heppell, *The Paterik*, p. 28.

<sup>84</sup> The allusion to Harald’s journey in skaldic verses incorporated into the *Heimskringla* is specific enough to warrant credence. The skald describes him as setting forth ‘to subjugate’ Palestine, but depicts the visit as non-violent, praising his intimidation of robbers and imposition of ‘justice’, actions reminiscent of Byzantine ‘police actions’ in the borderlands. Harald could have participated in these, but have visited Palestine, too: Sturluson, *Haralds Saga*, ch. 12, pp. 83-84; transl. Magnússon and Pálsson, pp. 59-60. Föller, accepting the Palestinian visit’s historicity, suggests that Harald and his men escorted Byzantine craftsmen to the Holy Sepulchre: “Wikingen”, pp. 294-297.

<sup>85</sup> Mel’nikova, *Skandinavskie runicheskie nadpisi*, nos. B-III.4.7; B-III.7.20.

<sup>86</sup> Nāser-e Khosraw, *Book of Travels*, pp. 37-38; Jacoby, “Byzantine trade”, p. 119. On the problem of al-Ḥākīm’s motivation for destroying the church, see Krönung, “Al-Ḥākīm”, pp. 152-158.

<sup>87</sup> Jacoby, “Byzantine trade”, p. 119.



## 6. The Holy Sepulchre after Caliph al-Ḥākim's destruction: the eventual imperial response

The nature and contemporary impact, let alone the causes, of Caliph al-Ḥākim's outrages against the church of the Holy Sepulchre are problematic. The destruction was less complete than some contemporaries made out, leaving parts of Constantine the Great's fourth-century church intact, even if not sparing an adjacent church built in the early Islamic period.<sup>88</sup> No less uncertain are the nature and extent of the various attempts at reconstruction that ensued, and their dating. Archaeological data of Muslim-style design and techniques could suggest that provisional repairs and some rebuilding occurred soon after 1009.<sup>89</sup> This would tally with Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd's report that the Muslim lord of Jerusalem, al-Mufarrij b. al-Jarrāḥ, took quite swift remedial action, supplementing the efforts of local Christians and carrying out repairs of 'several parts' of the church.<sup>90</sup> Yaḥyā's testimony also bears closely on the question of what impact al-Ḥākim's conduct had on Christian contemporaries. Yaḥyā does justice to the Muslim authorities' attempts to make good the damage, and he records al-Ḥākim's subsequent edict permitting general reconstruction of churches and reinstatement of their funding bodies.<sup>91</sup> He nonetheless depicts the ruin and despoliation of the church of the Holy Sepulchre as thoroughgoing.<sup>92</sup> Himself a Christian, Yaḥyā feared oppression and, like many other Christians and their families, he migrated to Byzantine territory, probably soon after al-Ḥākim gave permission for this in 1013.<sup>93</sup> He was not the only well-informed contemporary

<sup>88</sup> Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 73; Avni and Seligman, "New excavations", pp. 158-160; Avni, "From polis to Madina", p. 322.

<sup>89</sup> The problems of dating and attributing the extant materials are the more vexed in light of the probability that the Byzantines themselves commissioned or directly employed local craftsmen later in the century. For evidence of un-Byzantine techniques: Ousterhout, "Rebuilding the temple", pp. 74-75. See also Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, pp. 77, 81.

<sup>90</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, II, p. 505. Yaḥya's western contemporary, Ralph Glaber, writes of the "well-dressed square stones" with which the church was rebuilt at the behest of al-Ḥākim's Christian mother: *Historiarum libri quinque*, III.25, pp. 136-137. See Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, pp. 72, 76-77; Pringle, *The churches*, p. 11.

<sup>91</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, III, pp. 436-441.

<sup>92</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, II, p. 492.

<sup>93</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, II, p. 519; Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 62; Thomas and Mallett (ed.), *Christian-Muslim relations*, II, p. 658 (Swanson, Mark N.).

to decry the episode. According to the *Life of Lazaros*, the caliph's agents 'did not stop their demolition until they had completely levelled (the church) to the ground'.<sup>94</sup> Lazaros, who would later stress his role as an eyewitness to these depredations, proceeded to leave Palestine 'because of the persecution', which cost the lives of 'many people, monks and laymen'.<sup>95</sup> Whatever the precise extent of the ruination of the church in 1009, some pious and articulate Christians took this event very seriously, and they put the victims of al-Ḥākim on a par with the early martyrs. Indeed, the lasting notoriety of al-Ḥākim's action is attested by the story Nāser-e Khosraw relayed, more than a generation afterwards.

These observations from a variety of writers offer something of a contrast to the perspectives of imperial *Realpolitik* and Byzantino-Egyptian commerce. Aleppo ranked high among Byzantine strategic concerns, whereas Jerusalem did not: it was the prospect of a Fatimid garrison's permanent establishment in the former city that eventually provoked countermeasures, not Caliph al-Ḥākim's destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Even then, the retaliation took the form of economic sanctions, not war. From a geopolitical and material viewpoint, the imperial government was acting with due restraint, recognising al-Ḥākim's behaviour as incurably idiosyncratic, and accepting that the haemorrhaging of Palestinians' religious faith from Christianity towards Islam was beyond its power to halt. In the face of al-Ḥākim's measures, even monks of St Saba were abandoning the faith, to the consternation of Lazaros.<sup>96</sup> This was insufficient to overturn a governmental policy of what amounted to benign neglect of the Melkites, and the past sufferings of the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem were probably known in the eleventh century, as they had been to Constantine VII.<sup>97</sup> But there was an additional, novel, factor which Byzantium's rulers had to take into account, the phenomenon of pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The number of pilgrims seems to have been markedly on the rise, as western Christians and members of newly-converted peoples seized the chance to make physical contact with the holy places and pray at the grave

<sup>94</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 19, p. 515; transl. Greenfield, p. 102.

<sup>95</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 19, p. 515; transl. Greenfield, p. 103.

<sup>96</sup> Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros*, ch. 20, pp. 515-520; transl. Greenfield, p. 104; Thomas and Mallett (ed.), *Christian-Muslim relations*, III, p. 162 (Schadler).

<sup>97</sup> Constantine VII, *De administrando*, ch. 22, pp. 96-99.

of Christ. As noted above, from the 1020s on, western Christians seem to have preferred the overland route, being able thereby to travel in large bands, for example the 700 or so accompanying Abbot Richard of Saint-Vanne and other notables eastwards in 1026. This company and, probably, most other western pilgrim bands crossed into Asia Minor via the Bosphorus at its most convenient point, Constantinople.<sup>98</sup> The preponderance of anonymous *folleis* datable to the 1030s and 1040s in the Tiberias hoard could perhaps register in part a surge in traffic of pilgrims overland to Palestine around this time.<sup>99</sup>

One might, *a priori*, expect Byzantine emperors to have been aware of this new phenomenon. They received eminent western pilgrims at court and, in donating particles of the True Cross to some, they reaffirmed their own connection with the city whence Constantine the Great's mother had brought the Cross. Constantine IX bestowed a particle on Bishop Ivo of Séz in 1050, while Richard of Saint-Vanne received gifts of silk from the emperor and two particles of the True Cross from the patriarch.<sup>100</sup> There was a longstanding tradition of avowals of imperial concern for Jerusalem and its churches. As noted above, Constantine VII sent a gift to the city's patriarch while John I Tzimiskes averred his intention to liberate the Holy Sepulchre. Yet eleventh-century strategists were no more inclined to extend the borders to Palestine than Tzimiskes the Great had been. If significant portions of the basilica built by Constantine survived alongside reconstruction work done by the Muslim authorities soon afterwards, the assemblage would have been a standing reminder of Caliph al-Ḥākim's act of destruction. This might even explain why the episode remained imprinted on western Christian and Muslim consciousness in subsequent decades. This is the background to the

<sup>98</sup> Pertz (ed.), *Vita Richardi abbatis*, ch. 17, p. 288; Micheau, "Les Itinéraires maritimes", p. 89.

<sup>99</sup> The many examples of heavily worn Class B and Class C anonymous coins in the hoard could have reached the Holy Land in the purses of individuals rather than en bloc, and it is noteworthy that these types were also common at sites further north in Syria: Vorderstrasse, "Coin circulation", pp. 502, 507, Chart 4 on p. 503. For details of these types in the Tiberias hoard: Bijovsky and Berman, "The Coins", pp. 74-75, Table 3.1, p. 65; Table 3.1 (sic), p. 73; Table 3.3, p. 77.

<sup>100</sup> William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, VII.15, II, pp. 118-119; Pertz (ed.), *Vita Richardi abbatis*, ch. 17, p. 288. See Jacoby, "Bishop Gunther", p. 277 and n. 56.

imperial response to the ruination of the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

I shall pick out three aspects of the imperial response, without attempting full exegesis of the negotiations, let alone relationships between the imperial government and the patriarchate of Jerusalem.<sup>101</sup> Firstly, the earliest firm evidence of Byzantine governmental concern about the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre comes from Yaḥyā of Antioch. He records a mission which the patriarch of Jerusalem, Nikephoros, conducted on behalf of the Fatimid regent Sitt al-Mulk in 1023. According to Yaḥyā, Nikephoros informed the emperor of the steps already taken to repair and reopen ‘all the churches’ in Egypt and Syria, returning to them their *waqfs*, and generally improving the Christians’ lot. He also told the emperor of the restoration of ‘the church of the Holy Resurrection in Jerusalem’.<sup>102</sup> Thus it was the Fatimid – not the imperial – government that raised the issue of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, as a token of benevolence towards the Christian subject-populations. No less significantly, the mission’s prime overt objective was – according to Yaḥyā – the ending of the trade embargo. Clearly, the regent presupposed some imperial concern for the churches under Fatimid dominion, and the embargo was still irksome enough for her to rank its removal as a priority. But Sitt al-Mulk had instigated this diplomatic approach upon learning of Basil’s successful campaigning in Georgia and imminent return to Byzantium.<sup>103</sup> She was probably trying to forestall his intervention in the affairs of Aleppo, where the Fatimid garrison had to reckon with the ambitions of Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās and other local chieftains; these duly sought alliances with Basil soon after Sitt al-Mulk’s death, which occurred during Nikephoros’ visit to Byzantium.<sup>104</sup> In other words, without abandoning Aleppo outright, Sitt al-Mulk seems to have hoped formally to resume amicable relations by making much of the repairs to ruined churches, the Holy Sepul-

<sup>101</sup> For the scant data on patriarchs and their Byzantine links, see Gil, *A History of Palestine*, pp. 455, 463-464; Schick, *The Christian communities*, pp. 102-105; Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>102</sup> Yaḥyā’s ‘Church of the Resurrection’ follows Byzantine usage, as against the western ‘Holy Sepulchre’: *Histoire*, III, pp. 468-469; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 73-74; Dölger, *Regesten*, I.2 *Halbband*, no. 816c.

<sup>103</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, III, pp. 468-469.

<sup>104</sup> Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 74-76.

chre's foremost among them. She perhaps calculated that personal reassurances from the Jerusalem patriarch about his church – and the condition of local Christians – would relieve Basil of any inhibitions about commercial collaboration with the Fatimid authorities, while downplaying the issue of Aleppo.

At any rate, if the church now became a symbol of imperial concern for Jerusalem and Christian subject-populations, Byzantine diplomatic thinking owed something to the Fatimids' initiative. It featured as a symbolic bargaining-counter four years later, when Constantine VIII proposed a compact with the caliph: the mosque in Constantinople would be reopened and refurbished, only the caliph's name being mentioned in the Friday prayers; in return, the caliph must let Christian rulers send money and builders for reconstruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>105</sup> This, apparently, was also the time when Byzantium lifted its trading embargo.<sup>106</sup> The implication of what Constantine proposed was solemnisation of the status quo, with the Fatimid caliph regularly receiving public recognition in the Byzantine capital, while the emperor accepted Fatimid jurisdiction over Palestine and southern Syria. It is as if his proposals for building-work on the church were in default of more active measures to assist the Christian populations of those regions. And, one should recall, when an emperor's thoughts turned to expansion in the east, as did Romanos III's in 1030, the city of Aleppo appeared the most enticing goal, not Jerusalem. Only after Romanos' expedition to annex Aleppo came to grief and he abandoned plans for a further expedition in 1031 did the issue of rebuilding work on the Holy Sepulchre's and other churches under Fatimid dominion resurface. These constituted one of Romanos' conditions for making a formal truce. Caliph al-Zahīr accepted not only this but also the emperor's demand that he should appoint future patriarchs of Jerusalem. The sticking-point was Aleppo. From an apparently strong negotiating-position, Romanos demanded full recognition of his dominion over the city. This the caliph would not concede, and he also rejected the idea of exchanging the city of Apamea for the Byzantine-held fortress of

<sup>105</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, 1., 2. Teil, no. 823b; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 80-81; Reinert, "The Muslim presence", p. 139.

<sup>106</sup> Reinert, "The Muslim presence", pp. 138, 139; Jacoby, "Byzantine trade", p. 120. Such a dating would be consistent with that ascribed to the Serçe Limani wreck.

Shaizar.<sup>107</sup> What is striking is Romanos' readiness to postpone reconstruction at the Holy Sepulchre through insisting on recognition of his sovereignty over Aleppo: in effect, all else was secondary, and this was probably not merely a bid to restore personal prestige dented by the fiasco of 1030. But the desire of both parties to maintain dialogue is equally noteworthy. According to Yaḥyā, 'correspondence between the two parties continued on this subject during his [Romanos'] reign and then his successor Emperor Michael's for three years and a half'.<sup>108</sup> Finally, in 1036, a ten-year truce was ratified, with Byzantium dropping demands for recognition of dominion over Aleppo and also, apparently, for the right to nominate the patriarch of Jerusalem. Conditions in northern Syria looked unpropitious for long-term direct control, and customary considerations of *Realpolitik* prevailed.<sup>109</sup>

A second aspect of the imperial response to the ruination of the Holy Sepulchre is that rebuilding seems to have been almost as protracted as the negotiations. Quite soon after ratifying the Byzantino-Fatimid truce, Michael IV 'sent certain nobles of the Romans with a vast quantity of silver and gold'. The source of Bar Hebraeus, our Syriac informant for this, considered the church restored to its former glory.<sup>110</sup> In similar vein, John Skylitzes avers that 'his [Romanos'] successor Michael became the completer of the task'.<sup>111</sup> These categorical statements suggest that the works instigated by Michael were on an impressive scale. They could well denote the bulk of the extant work in 'recessed brick technique' of the Rotunda and other structures.<sup>112</sup> Yet William of Tyre states that the rebuilding of the church occurred in the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-55), funded 'by the imperial treasury'.<sup>113</sup> The discrepancy

<sup>107</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, III, pp. 532-535; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 101-103. On al-Ḥākim's appointment of Nikephoros to the patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1020, see Gil, *A History of Palestine*, pp. 463-464, 510, n. 19.

<sup>108</sup> Yaḥyā of Antioch, *Histoire*, III, pp. 534-535.

<sup>109</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, 1., 2. *Teil*, no. 843; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>110</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, vol. I, p. 196; Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 77.

<sup>111</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 388.

<sup>112</sup> For details of the masonry and design attributable to eleventh-century Byzantine supervision and, at least partially, to Byzantine execution, see Ousterhout, "Rebuilding the temple", pp. 70-74. Biddle (*The Tomb of Christ*, pp. 77-81) makes a case for dating all this work to Michael IV's reign. See also Pringle, *The churches*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>113</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, I.6, I, p. 113.



between these statements is not irreconcilable. The original Constantinian church had been vast, while the reconstructed Rotunda possessed, besides a large porticoed court, several additional chapels; besides, the upper levels of the Rotunda were of considerable technical complexity. This ensemble would have left scope for repairs, annexes, and further embellishment, almost a ‘rolling programme’. Bar Hebraeus and John Skylitzes could even be echoing contemporary communiqués that extolled Michael IV’s accomplishments at Jerusalem.<sup>114</sup> Their statements need not wholly preclude further undertakings – or perhaps continuous works – on the part of Michael’s successors. William of Tyre regards Constantine IX as being direct successor to Romanos III, a sign of the limits of his knowledge. He was not, however, totally ignorant. He mentions Nikephoros as patriarch of Jerusalem at the time of the rebuilding, a statement valid for Michael IV’s reign albeit not for Constantine IX’s. And his attribution of a key role to John Carianitis, a Byzantine retiree to Jerusalem who had become a monk and interceded with the emperor on behalf of the city’s Christians to fund the reconstruction, seems too specific to be pure fiction. William could well have telescoped a series of rebuilding works, giving full credit to the sponsor of the last phase, Constantine IX.<sup>115</sup>

That a series of works may have emanated from Byzantium gains corroboration from Nāser-e Khosraw’s account of what he saw at the church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1047. Its elaborate programme of mosaics involved ‘much gold’, and he mentions the images of various Prophets. Old Testament figures feature in the mosaics at Nea Moni in Chios, too, and these were undoubtedly commissioned by Constantine IX. Among them, a bearded Solomon bears the emperor’s own features.<sup>116</sup> The mosaics at Nea Moni also have a striking depiction of Christ’s Resurrection.<sup>117</sup> The apse mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre’s

<sup>114</sup> No such communiqués about imperial building works appear to survive from the Middle Byzantine era, but victory bulletins persisted: McCormick, *Eternal victory*, p. 192. On the outcome of the rebuilding works, see Pringle, *The churches*, p. 13 and fig. 1b on p. 8.

<sup>115</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, I.6, I, p. 113. As Ousterhout remarks (“New Temples”, p. 250, and n. 107), reconstruction work could have begun well before Constantine IX’s time, and continued into it.

<sup>116</sup> Nāser-e Khosraw, *Book of Travels*, p. 38; Ousterhout, “Rebuilding the temple”, p. 78; Ousterhout, “New Temples”, pp. 249-250 and fig. 8.

<sup>117</sup> Ousterhout, “Rebuilding the temple”, pp. 70-71, 78.



Rotunda likewise showed the Resurrection, while a mosaic in the drum depicted the builder of the original church, Constantine the Great. Whether or not the Rotunda's mosaics portrayed Constantine IX himself, their themes were comparable to Nea Moni's. Constantine's sponsorship of major works centring on a mosaic programme could well lie behind William of Tyre's belief that he was wholly responsible for the reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre.

If the mosaics seen and admired by Nāser-e Khosraw in 1047 were the product of Constantine IX's commissioning, they can have been no more than five years old. This brings us to a third important aspect of the Byzantine response to the Holy Sepulchre's destruction: the widespread publicity that emperors seem to have sought, and certainly gained, for all the restoration works undertaken there in the earlier eleventh century. *Enkainia* – readings used at feasts celebrating the dedication of a church – appear with specific reference to the feast for the dedication of the Holy Sepulchre's church in manuscripts from the eleventh century onwards. Such manuscripts became far commoner than those whose headings mentioned the dedication of St Sophia, even though they reflected the liturgical practice of Constantinople. This shift in focus could well register a decision taken in the mid-eleventh century to put on the liturgical map and regularly broadcast the rebuilding of 'the Temple' in Jerusalem at the command of a Solomon-like emperor.<sup>118</sup> If this Constantinopolitan text commemorates the episode in liturgical mode, Constantine IX himself was proclaiming solicitousness for the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the later years of his reign. In 1052 a Byzantine embassy, returning from the Fatimid court via Jerusalem, presented the church with huge golden crosses, chandeliers and gold-worked hangings, supplementing the 'Byzantine brocades' Nāser-e Khosraw had seen a few years earlier.<sup>119</sup>

Our non-Greek texts supplement the rather meagre information available from Byzantine sources. The Byzantines' responsibility for the task of reconstruction seems to have been much bruited in Jerusalem itself, to the virtual exclusion of other parties' contributions. Whether Bar Hebraeus' data derived from a Jerusalem-based source

<sup>118</sup> Ousterhout, "New Temples", pp. 250-251, referring to Sysse Gudrun Engberg's *Profetie-Anagnosmata-Prophetologion* (in preparation).

<sup>119</sup> Felix, *Byzanz*, p. 119 and n. 221; Nāser-e Khosraw, *Book of Travels*, p. 38.

is uncertain, but it was during his stay in the city that Nāser-e Khosraw would have heard of the imperial demarche ‘to rebuild the church’. ‘Large enough to hold 8,000 people inside and...extremely ornate’, the church was, he assumes, wholly of Byzantine workmanship. William of Tyre’s remarks about the Byzantines’ rebuilding work likewise drew upon local traditions that were still in circulation in the Holy Land over a century later.<sup>120</sup> If Byzantine responsibility for the rebuilding-works made such an impression upon a Muslim like Nāser-e Khosraw, it would have been more or less self-evident to Christian visitors, whether of the eastern or the western rite. The sumptuous gold mosaics at the Holy Sepulchre, cleaned daily by the servants, according to Nāser-e Khosraw, served to advertise imperial patronage from the era of Constantine the Great onwards. Pious visitors – pilgrims – would have constituted the most alert, probably also the most numerous, ‘readership’. And this raises the question whether there may not be some connection between the display of imperial patronage for reconstruction work and the influx of pilgrims into the Holy Land.

## 7. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, one may press the fore-mentioned connection a little further. As noted above, an upsurge in pilgrimages to the Holy Land occurred from around the time of the millennium, and increasing numbers of pilgrims, especially westerners, travelled overland from the 1020s on. Awareness of this in Constantinople was keen, and some leading westerners received not merely gifts of relics but imperial escorts to Antioch and even to Jerusalem itself. Reportedly, Count Fulk Nerra of Anjou received such an escort in 1035, and Duke Robert of Normandy probably accompanied him.<sup>121</sup> At the

<sup>120</sup> Nāser-e Khosraw, *Book of Travels*, p. 38. William of Tyre refers to his reliance on “traditions” for data about earlier periods: *Chronicon*, Prologue, I, p. 100, lines 90-91; Ousterhout, “New Temples”, p. 250, n. 107.

<sup>121</sup> *Gesta consulum Andegavorum*, p. 50; Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, IV.20, pp. 202-204; William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, VI.12(13), II, pp. 82-85. Doubts as to the historicity of their meeting up expressed by Louis Halphen (*Comté d’Anjou*, pp. 215-216) seem unwarranted, as Bernard Bachrach demonstrated: “Pilgrimages of Fulk Nerra”, pp. 208-210.

same time, a certain discrepancy between imperial professions of concern for Jerusalem and the standing reminder there of al-Ḥākim's despoliation may well have occurred to visiting pilgrims and statesmen in Constantinople alike. It was more a matter of contrasts than of wholly incompatible phenomena. Indeed, the connection between the growth in pilgrimages and the commercial dimension to Byzantine relations with Egypt has already been noted, together with general détente in the borderlands between the empire and Muslim-ruled regions. At any rate, manifestations of the emperor's concern for 'the holy city' in the form of rebuilding works at the Holy Sepulchre were a convenient demarche that did not put relations with the Fatimids at risk. Indeed, the report on works already done that Patriarch Nikephoros brought in 1023 may have bestirred the imperial government to attempt to take 'ownership' by sponsoring more elaborate reconstruction projects. These works will have enhanced the emperor's reputation amongst Byzantines venerating the Holy Sepulchre, a particularly strong vein of piety in monastic quarters. Lazaros of Mount Galesion, who deemed himself a victim of al-Ḥākim's persecution, was an influential spiritual counsellor, and his network reached to the imperial court in Constantine IX's era.<sup>122</sup> But probably of still greater moment was the impression the masonry and mosaics will have made on pilgrims from the Latin west. It may be no coincidence that Byzantine politico-military ambitions involved *reconquista* in Sicily in the second quarter of the eleventh century.<sup>123</sup>

At any rate, the long-drawn-out building works deftly conjoined all three of the Byzantine perspectives. They showed veneration for the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre; they concretised a form of imperial proprietorship over the 'holy city', as if it were not wholly lost but somehow beneath his aegis, as in Constantine the Great's time; and they served *Realpolitik*, a pious cladding upon the stable, profitable, relationship with Fatimid Egypt. In the mid-eleventh century the imperial government had good reason to perpetuate the status quo. Constantine IX showed no particular inclination to jeopardise it by replacing the name of the Fatimid caliph with his 'Abbasid rival's in the Friday sermon at Constantinople's

<sup>122</sup> Morris, *Monks and laymen*, pp. 104-106, 139.

<sup>123</sup> Whittow, *The Making of orthodox Byzantium*, p. 390; Shepard, "Emperors and expansionism", pp. 85-86 (75-76).

mosque. In 1054, shortly before his death, he acceded to a Fatimid request for 400,000 *ardabb* of wheat to relieve famine in Egypt.<sup>124</sup>

Both the ascetics of Palestinian lavrai and the holy places remained a magnet for spiritually ambitious monks and laypersons in Byzantium.<sup>125</sup> In the mid-eleventh century, emperors showed marks of respect for the patriarch of Jerusalem more extravagantly than they had in the mid-tenth. Indeed, if one follows William of Tyre, the Christians now had their own walled quarter around the Holy Sepulchre, with the patriarch exercising jurisdiction over them, thanks to funding and encouragement from Constantine IX.<sup>126</sup> Nonetheless, geopolitical prudence was aligned with positive belief in the God-given order anchored on the Bosphorus. This left militant intervention on behalf of the Christian populations of southern Syria and Palestine off the imperial agenda in the first half of the eleventh century.

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<sup>124</sup> On the planned shipment of wheat, which Constantine's death held up, see Dölger, *Regesten*, 1., 2. Teil, no. 912; Felix, *Byzanz*, pp. 118-120; Jacoby, "Byzantine trade", p. 128.

<sup>125</sup> The practical guide to Holy Land sites written by Manasses' younger contemporary, John Phokas, signals Byzantine pilgrimages' vitality in the later twelfth century, alongside imperial solicitousness: Patlagean, "Byzantium's dual Holy Land", p. 121; Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca*, pp. 20-21; Talbot, "Byzantine pilgrimages", pp. 106-107.

<sup>126</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 9.17-18, I, pp. 443-444; Runciman, "The Byzantine 'Protectorate'", pp. 208, 213; Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani*, pp. 42-43. For archaeological evidence of building-work south of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the eleventh century: Avni, "From polis to Madina", p. 322 and n. 102.

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