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HERACLIUS, BYZANTINE IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY, AND THE DAVID PLATES

By SUZANNE SPAIN ALEXANDER

THE David plates, a set of nine silver disks divided between the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and the Archeological Museum, Nicosia, Cyprus, are among the finest surviving examples of Byzantine secular art.¹ Products of court manufacture, they were discovered in 1902 by a worker quarrying at the site of the acropolis of ancient Lapethos (Byzantine Lambousa) on Cyprus. Part of the second of two hoards found there, they were apparently buried in advance of the Arab conquest of Lapethos in 653/654.² The plates depict events in the early life of David, drawn from 1 Samuel 16–18, with emphases placed on the youth's valor and the legitimacy of his claim to succeed Saul as king of Judah.³ On the basis of official control stamps

¹ This article was submitted to *SPECULUM* in December, 1974. For illustrations and description of the plates, Erica Cruikshank Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 7 (Washington, 1961), 178–195; Andreas and Judith Stylianou, *Οί Θησαυροί της Λαμπουσής [The Treasures of Lambousa]* (Nicosia, 1969).

² On the contents of the two Lambousa hoards and their discovery, Stylianou, *Θησαυροί*, preface, pp. 65 f., n. 13a; on the conquest of Cyprus, George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 1 (Cambridge, Eng., 1949), 284 f.

³ In biblical order the subjects of the plates are (1) Shepherd David summoned by a Messenger, 1 Samuel 16.11 (Dodd, *Silver Stamps*, pp. 192 f.); (2) Samuel anoints David, 1 Sam. 16.13 (Dodd, pp. 186 f.); (3) David introduced to Saul, 1 Sam. 16.21 (Dodd, pp. 182 f.); (4) David slays the bear, 1 Sam. 17.34 f. (Dodd, pp. 194 f.); (5) David slays the lion, 1 Sam. 17.34 f. (Dodd, pp. 188 f.); (6) David tries on Saul's armor, 1 Sam. 17.38 f. (Dodd, pp. 184 f.); (7) David and Goliath, 1 Sam. 17.40–51 (Dodd, pp. 178 f.); (8) Marriage of David and Michal, 1 Sam. 18.27 (Dodd, pp. 180 f.); (9) David and Soldier, 1 Sam. 30.11 (Dodd, pp. 190 f.). Given the concentration of eight of the nine plates in 1 Sam. 16–18, I believe Dodd's identification of the last disk with 1 Sam. 30 unlikely. Instead I suggest that this meeting between a small David and a larger armed man illustrates David and his brother, Eliab, 1 Sam. 17.28 f, or David and Jonathan, 1 Sam. 18.1–4. The latter, a rare subject, appears as an illuminated initial in the Vespasian Psalter, fol. 31r; see David Wright, *The Vespasian Psalter. British Museum Cotton Vespasian A.1*, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* 14 (Copenhagen, 1967), 75, pl. IIa. The manuscript illumination differs from the silver plate in the costuming and gestures of the protagonists. On the Byzantine heritage of the Vespasian Psalter, Wright, *Vespasian Psalter*, pp. 77–80. Also revising the identification of some plates, Mariette van Grunsven-Eygenraam, "Heraclius and the David

applied during the process of manufacture, they are dated 613–629/630, roughly the first two-thirds of the reign of the emperor Heraclius (610–641).⁴

Despite their high quality, the David plates have only recently begun to receive their due attention.⁵ Earlier, André Grabar set the plates in an aulic context, suggesting that the intention of the artists was to draw a parallel between the reign of David and contemporary Byzantine emperors.⁶ Ernst Kitzinger recognized the implications of the style of the plates: by reviving certain qualities typical of the art of Theodosius I, the artists, on their emperor's behalf, were making "a conscious effort — not unnatural for a victorious usurper such as Heraclius — to stress the traditional and particularly to emulate standards and ideals associated with the early days of the Empire."⁷

In this article I hope to show that the association between the Byzantine emperor and David is not as simple as Grabar assumed and that although the evocation of Theodosian style is undeniable the plates may not have originated in the early years of Heraclius's reign, as Kitzinger implies, but at the very end of the time span provided by the control stamps. I shall demonstrate that the David plates belong to the period following his victory over the Persians in which Heraclius was concerned with his image, his authority and his historical role.

Heraclius was crowned emperor by the patriarch Sergius on 5 October 610, climaxing the revolt against the hated emperor Phocas that had been initiated by the new emperor's father.⁸ Heraclius inherited a war with the Persians that Chosroes II had reopened to avenge the death of Maurice, the predecessor of Phocas, and the problem of Slav and Avar migrations into the Balkans.⁹ Within a year of Heraclius's ascent, having rebuffed his diplomatic

Plates," *Bulletin antieke Beschaving* 48 (1973), 158–174; Steven H. Wander, "The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973), 89–104.

⁴ The stamps provide a *terminus post quem* for the finished product; the dates ascribed to the stamps are based on comparable imperial portraits on coins, Dodd, *Silver Stamps*, pp. 1–3, 10.

⁵ Kurt Weitzmann, "Prolegomena to a Study of the Cyprus Plates," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 (1970), 97–111; Kathleen J. Shelton, "A Reconsideration of the David Plates," M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1970 (I am grateful to Ms. Shelton for lending me a copy of her paper); also Grunsvan-Eygenraam and Wander, cited in note 3. I was unable to consult Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, "Die Bildzyklen zum Davidleben von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts," Dissertation, Munich, 1972.

⁶ André Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936), p. 96 f.

⁷ Ernst Kitzinger, "Byzantine Art in the Period between Justinian and Iconoclasm," *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen-Byzantinisten-Kongress* (Munich, 1958), p. 7.

⁸ On Heraclius's reign, George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed., trans. Joan M. Hussey (New Brunswick, 1969), pp. 87–112 (hereafter cited as Ostrogorsky, *History*); Andreas N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, trans. Marc Ogilvie-Grant, Harry T. Hionides, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1968–1972) (hereafter cited as Stratos, *Seventh Century*); tracing Heraclius's ascent to power, Norman H. Baynes, "The Military Operations of the Emperor Heraclius," *United Services Magazine* 46 (1913), 526–533, 659–666; 47 (1913), 30–38.

⁹ For the Slav and Avar influx, Paul Lemerle, "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VIIIe siècle," *Revue historique* 211 (1954), 265–308,

overtures, the Persians conquered Antioch, Edessa and Apamea in Syria and lay siege to Caesarea. The siege of Caesarea was lifted in 612, but a counterattack led by Heraclius in 613 against the Persians in Syria and Armenia was unsuccessful. The Persians soon conquered the remainder of Syria and Palestine; in the spring of 614 the city of Jerusalem fell to them. In 615 a Persian army occupied Chalcedon and threatened Constantinople. In 618 the Persians took Alexandria and then held Upper Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya, the granary of the capital. For reasons that modern historians have yet to agree upon, it was not until 621 that Heraclius began preparations for a new campaign against the Persians.¹⁰ To help finance that venture, Sergius opened the treasuries of the city's churches to the emperor.¹¹ Church plate and — according to one source — the bronze ox from the Forum Tauri were melted down for coinage.¹² On Easter Monday 622, having signed a treaty with the Avars, Heraclius set out for Asia Minor to defend his diminished empire against the Persians. Except for Maurice, he was the first emperor to take to the battlefield since Theodosius.¹³

When he returned to Constantinople more than six years later, in December 628, Heraclius entered the city in triumph, a triumph given mystical overtones.¹⁴ The Persians had been defeated; Chosroes had been deposed and murdered and his son and successor, Kavādh-Široe, had signed a peace treaty with Heraclius by which the Byzantines were to regain their prisoners and all captured territory.¹⁵ Heraclius spent the winter in Constantinople attending to details of ecclesiastical administration, among other business.¹⁶

esp. 287–300; Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 93 f., with bibliography; and Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1:315–337, 2:159–166. On the Persian war, Baynes, "Military Operations," 47:195–201, 318–324, 401–412, 532–541, 665–679; Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 95–104; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1:135–234. On the early years of the war, Walter E. Kaegi, Jr., "New Evidence on the early Reign of Heraclius," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 66 (1973), 318–325; Clive Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity," *English Historical Review* 90 (1975), 721–747.

¹⁰ According to Ostrogorsky the delay was due to the initiation of the theme system: *History*, pp. 95–100, with references to further bibliography. Lemerle implies inertia: "Quelques Remarques sur la règne d'Héraclius," *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, 1.2 (1960), 347–351. Anatole Frolow provides political and economic reasons for eventual action, but not for the delay: "La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 11 (1953), 88–93 (hereafter cited as Frolow, "Vraie Croix").

¹¹ Nicephorus, *Opuscula Historica*, ed. Charles de Boor (Leipzig, 1880), p. 15; also Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 1 (Leipzig, 1883), 303; Dodd, *Silver Stamps*, pp. 32 f.

¹² Ps.-Codinus, *Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, 2.53, ed. Theodore Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, 2 (Leipzig, 1907), 180.

¹³ Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 100.

¹⁴ Nicephorus, ed. de Boor, p. 22; Theophanes, ed. de Boor, pp. 327 f. Stratos's account is a composite based on Byzantine and modern sources: *Seventh Century*, 2:240–245. The mystical overtones are present in the surviving fragments of the description of the triumph by George of Pisidia, *Heracliadis* 3, acroaseos fragment 54, ed. Agostino Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7 (Ettal, 1959), pp. 292, 307 (hereafter cited as Pertusi, *Poemi*).

¹⁵ On the terms of this and the subsequent treaty, Frolow, "Vraie Croix," pp. 93–96.

¹⁶ Jean Louis van Dieten, *Geschichte der griechischen Patriarchen von Konstantinopel*, 4: *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I. bis Johannes VI (610–715)*, *Enzyklopädie der Byzantinistik* 24 (Amsterdam, 1972), pp. 22 f. Note that van Dieten's chronology is off by a year.

In the spring of 629 he left the capital and journeyed in Asia Minor, meeting with civic and church officials in an attempt to resolve the problem of ecclesiastical union with the Monophysite church in these territories.¹⁷ In July Heraclius was in Arabissos Tripotamos where he met with the Persian general Šahrbarâz for further negotiations. Šahrbarâz promised to return the reliquary of the True Cross, taken in the conquest of Jerusalem fifteen years earlier. By March of the following year (630), Heraclius had the relic in his possession and on the twenty-first of the month, together with his wife, Martina, he entered Jerusalem in order to restore the True Cross to its rightful place.¹⁸

One of the more perplexing factors in Heraclius's conduct of the war was his delay in resuming the conflict after having been defeated in his 613 campaign. Whereas later medieval and some modern historians view Heraclius's expeditions against the Persians as the first crusade or "the forerunner of the later crusades," there is no evidence that the capture of the Cross outraged the Byzantines or that the Persian conquest of Jerusalem impelled Heraclius to an immediate defense of the eastern frontier of his empire.¹⁹ Whatever the cause for the long Byzantine delay in re-engaging the enemy²⁰ and whatever the reason for the apparent silence on the Cross, it is clear from the sources that (a) Heraclius and his contemporaries viewed the war as a religious war and saw Byzantine successes over the Persians, and the Avars as well, as vindications of Byzantine religious conviction; and (b) the Cross took on enormous importance for Heraclius at the conclusion of the war. The religious motivations for the war are manifest in contemporary Byzantine sources, three of which are worth investigating here.

George of Pisidia, a cleric who was skevophylax of Hagia Sophia and later the emissary of the patriarch to Heraclius, accompanied the emperor on his first campaign against the Persians, 622–623.²¹ On his return he wrote an

¹⁷ On the negotiations with the Monophysite churchmen, the formulation of compromise Christological definitions and the political motivations of church union, see Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 107–109; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1:283–304; van Dieten, *Patriarchen*, pp. 24–51. Also, emphasizing ethno-political aspects, Henri Grégoire, "An Armenian Dynasty on the Byzantine Throne," *The Armenian Quarterly* 1 (1946), 4–21.

¹⁸ Resolving the conflicting reports of the sources, Frolow, "Vraie Croix," pp. 93–105, and Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 230–236. However, adhering to a) a 629 return, one of many suggested revisions in the chronology of the Heraclidean era, Ann S. Proudfoot, "The Sources of Theophanes for the Heraclidean Dynasty," *Byzantion* 44 (1974), 383; and b) a 631 return, van Dieten, *Patriarchen*, p. 23, and Venance Grumel, "La Reposition de la Vraie Croix par Héraclius à Jérusalem. Le Jour et l'année," *Polychordia. Festschrift für Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Wirth, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 1 (1966), 139–149.

¹⁹ Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 100; Kyra Ericsson, "The Cross on Steps and the Silver Hexagram," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 17 (1968), 155. On the reaction (or lack of it) to the conquest of Jerusalem and the capture of the Cross, Frolow, "Vraie Croix," pp. 91–93, and below, p. 224. For the western medieval perspective, Frolow, "La Déviation de la 4e croisade vers Constantinople, Note additionnelle: La Croisade et les guerres persanes d'Héraclius," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 147 (1955), 50–61.

²⁰ See above, n. 10.

²¹ For the few known facts of his life and a chronology of his work, Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 12–16.

encomium, *Expeditio Persica*, in which one finds reflections of the Byzantine ideological position on the war. The poem combines detailed reporting on the campaign with elaborate praise of Heraclius, the latter frequently in the form of highly complimentary comparisons with biblical, historical and mythological heroes.²² But the Christian, or theological, framework within which Heraclius and the Byzantine Empire functioned is readily apparent. At the outset the poet invokes the trinity as cosmocrator; he asserts his faith and that of his emperor in the creator-cosmocrator and he introduces the enemy, ἄθεσμοι βάρβαροι, who worship created things — a horse, fire and water — and opposing principles.²³ Heraclius, the *condottiero* of God (to use Agostino Pertusi's translation of ὑποστράτηγος) is repeatedly noted to be commanded, protected and inspired by the deity.²⁴ Most important, in a speech which the poet has Heraclius deliver, the relationship of emperor and army to God and the resulting imperative to fight the Persians are set forth. The emperor asserts that his authority is based on love, not fear, that he wishes to counterpose the force of φιλανθρωπία against the great violence that tyranny arms against the law. But the βασιλεὺς and δεσπότης of all and the leader of the armies is the Lord. With him the command is secure; through him there is more piety in victory. It is necessary, according to Heraclius, that the Byzantines, as the Lord's creatures, proceed against the idolatrous enemy, who sullied their altars and contaminated their churches, who wished to uproot the vine of the Word from the earth. Heraclius concludes his address with an awkward paraphrase of Psalm 136.9, saying that they who kill the children of Persia will be blessed.²⁵

A comparable document is a letter written by Heraclius to the people of Constantinople, preserved in the *Chronicon Paschale*. Written 8 April 628 and read in Hagia Sophia on 15 May, the letter recounts the events of February, March and early April, including the fall and death of Chosroes and the offer of peace by his successor.²⁶ The terms Heraclius uses for Chosroes are significant. The emperor summons his people to praise the Lord and rejoice, "for the arrogant Chosroes, who fought against God, is fallen." Heraclius names Chosroes's sin: he spoke evil against "our Lord, Jesus Christ, the True God, and his undefiled mother." Repeatedly Heraclius terms the Persian θεομάχος and θεομίσητος. The Byzantine army is φιλόχριστος; it and Heraclius "learned the favor and goodness of God towards us, who guided us and

²² For references to Heracles, Alexander, Achilles, Moses, Daniel, Elijah, Noah, Phineas, Xerxes, Perseus, Galen, P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder, Constantine, and Stilicho, see Pertusi, *Poemi*, index 1.

²³ *Exp. Pers.*, 1, lines 1–34 and, again on the cosmocrator, 3, lines 385–399 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 84 f., 133). On Persian veneration of the sun, *Exp. Pers.* 2, lines 300 f.; 3, lines 205 f.; of the moon, *Exp. Pers.* 2, lines 249, 371 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 109, 111, 115, 125).

²⁴ *Exp. Pers.* 1, lines 248–252; 2, lines 24–29, 73–75, 170–174, 245 f.; 3, lines 253–255, 295, 400–403 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 96, 97 f., 100, 105, 108 f., 127, 129, 133).

²⁵ *Exp. Pers.* 2, lines 88–115 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 101 f.).

²⁶ *Chronicon Paschale*, PG 92:1017–1026. For the letter's date, Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 236.

continually guides and protects us." In the Byzantine victory the taunts and blasphemies of Chosroes were avenged.²⁷

A third text deriving from the period of the Persian war is the sermon delivered by Theodore Synkellos on 7 August 627 to commemorate the first anniversary of the lifting of the Avar siege of Constantinople. Theodore, a member of the clergy of Hagia Sophia, was an active participant in the event, having been designated to treat with the Avars.²⁸ As did George of Pisidia, this author accords the Byzantines and Avars and Persians familiar epithets, approbative and opprobrious respectively.²⁹ He identifies the adversaries and their leaders with biblical, historical and mythological persons and groups, but he surpasses George in devising an historical—primarily biblical—perspective on events. Theodore's purpose in his sermon is to demonstrate that Old Testament prophecies pertinent to the destruction of Jerusalem applied to Constantinople. For example, the union of the kings of Syria and Samaria to conquer Jerusalem in the day of King Ahaz, an unworthy descendant of David, to which the prophet Isaiah was a witness, is seen as foreshadowing recent events.³⁰ The Persians and Avars are identified with Syria and Samaria, Constantinople with Jerusalem, and the patriarch Sergius with Isaiah and Moses. However, Theodore finds the "prophetic outline discordant" in Ahaz, "for my βασιλεύς is faithful, and an unerring character of piety," and a God-given "God-loving βασιλεύς."³¹ Isaiah's prophecies applied "to us" and only in shadow or model were they intended for Ahaz and his subjects.³² Elsewhere in the sermon the Avar Chagan and his followers are seen as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel in which was foretold the coming against Israel of an enemy from the north, Gog of the land of Magog.³³ The Syrian-Samaritan alliance against Jerusalem and the advent of Gog were not the sole prophetic enactments of

²⁷ For Chosroes's insults and blasphemies, Theophanes, ed. de Boor, p. 301, and Sebèos, *Histoire d'Héraclius par l'évêque Sebèos*, ed. and trans. Frédéric Macler (Paris, 1904), pp. 79 f.

²⁸ "Homilia de bello Avarica," ed. Leo Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, reprint from *Dissertationum philologicarum Academiae Litterarum Cracoviensis* 30 (Cracow, 1900), pp. 298–320 [2–24]; on the author, Franjo Barišić, "La Siège de Constantinople par les Avars et les Slaves en 626," *Byzantion* 24 (1954), 373 f.; Paul J. Alexander, "The Strength of Empire and Capital as seen through Byzantine Eyes," *SPECULUM* 37 (1962), 346 f.

²⁹ For example, the emperor is *θεοφιλέστατος* (Sternbach, pp. 299, lines 3 f., and p. 302, line 10); the Persians, *ἐχθρῶν τοῦ θεοῦ* (p. 302, line 9); the Avars, *τὸ μυσαρώτατον ἔκτρομα* (p. 300, line 37), *ὀλέθριον γέννημα* (p. 300, line 40); their leaders, *κύν ἄλλος βάρβαρος, λυσσώδης καὶ μεμηνώς* (p. 300, lines 16 f.).

³⁰ Sternbach, pp. 298–300.

³¹ Sternbach, pp. 298, lines 38–40; p. 299, lines 3 f. For Isaiah-Sergius p. 299, line 4; p. 303, lines 16 f. For Moses-Sergius, p. 304, line 31–p. 305, line 16, esp. p. 304, line 40–p. 305, lines 1, 14 f. For Gideon-Bonos, p. 303, lines 37–39; p. 305, lines 16–18. For Joshua-Bonos, p. 303, line 37. For Hezekiah's ambassadors (2 Kings 18.18)-three citizens of Constantinople, p. 306, lines 20–25. For Israelites-Constantinopolitans, p. 304, lines 21–23; p. 316, lines 33–37. For Jerusalem-Constantinople, p. 301, lines 6 f.; p. 313, lines 35–39. For Jordan-Bosphoros, p. 300, lines 30 f. For Red Sea-Golden Horn, p. 308, lines 8–15; p. 311, lines 17–40, p. 318, lines 7 f.

³² Sternbach, p. 299, lines 26–28.

³³ Sternbach, pp. 314–316.

the Perso-Avar siege. Theodore Synkellos also demonstrates how the fate of Constantinople was foretold in the conquests of Jerusalem by Nebu'zarad'an, captain of the bodyguard of Nebuchadrez'zar, king of Babylonia, in 587 B.C., and by the Romans under Titus in 70 A.D., conquests witnessed by Jeremiah and Josephus.³⁴ Theodore draws his analogies not so much on the basis of agreement in the details of the sieges as in terms of complex calendric parallels. In addition to these typologies, characterized by one scholar as having "an element of intellectual playfulness,"³⁵ Theodore provides a detailed account of the ten-day siege and testifies to the diligence, wisdom and piety of Sergius, Bonos, the absent emperor and his young son, Heraclius Constantine, who was left in charge of Constantinople during his father's campaigns. It is important to note, however, that Heraclius was not only identified with the deficient Ahaz. In the course of the sermon he is likened to David and his son, to Solomon. For example, in concluding, Theodore calls upon Isaiah to speak to the city and he paraphrases the prophet's utterance, "For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for the sake of my servant David" (Isaiah 37.35). Theodore continues, "For our βασιλεὺς is also [like] David in his piety toward the divine and in his gentleness. But may the Lord crown him with victories, just as with David; may he make his son who reigns with him both wise and peaceful like Solomon, granting him piety and orthodoxy, just as with his father."³⁶

The importance of the sermon of Theodore Synkellos lies in the fact that within a year of its occurrence, the traumatic siege of Constantinople has been firmly situated in the context of divine planning. The author has elevated his city to a divinely protected and favored position as the new Jerusalem; he has enhanced the status of the populace and its leaders by viewing their predicament and actions in the light of biblical and historical prophecy.³⁷ To the view of the war subscribed to by George of Pisidia and Heraclius, that of an adversary relationship between those who love and those who hate God, Theodore adds this new perspective, at once divine, biblical and historical. Several years after the war and, perhaps, influenced by Theodore and Heraclius, George of Pisidia began to take a broader view. In his *Hexaemeron* he implies a relationship between the six days of creation and God's rest on the seventh day and Heraclius's six-year war against the Persians followed by a period of peace.³⁸

³⁴ Sternbach, pp. 309 f.

³⁵ Alexander, "Empire and Capital," p. 347.

³⁶ Δαβὶδ γὰρ καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος βασιλεὺς τῆ τε εὐσεβείᾳ τῆ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον καὶ τῆ πρὸς τοῦς ὑπηκόους πραότητι. ἀλλὰ καὶ νίκαις αὐτὸν καθὰ τὸν Δαβὶδ στεφανώσοι ὁ κύριος, παῖδά τε τὸν σὺν αὐτῷ βασιλεύοντα σοφὸν ἅμα καὶ εἰρηνικὸν κατὰ Σολομῶντα ποιήσειεν, χαριζόμενος αὐτῷ καθὰ καὶ πατρὶ τὸ εὐσεβὲς καὶ ὀρθόδοξον. Sternbach, p. 320, lines 20–24. See, too, p. 302, lines 9–17; p. 313, lines 35–39.

³⁷ For the intensification of the cult of Mary as a result of the siege, Frolov, "La Dédicace de Constantinople dans la tradition byzantine," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 127 (1944), 61–127, esp. 89–97.

³⁸ *Hexaemeron*, PG 92:1425–1578. Dating the poem after 630, Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 16. This image was borrowed by Theophanes, ed. de Boor, pp. 327 f.

Explicit as the contemporary Byzantine sources are on the religious aspects of the war, they are generally silent on the capture of the True Cross by the Persians. George of Pisidia mentions miraculous icons and the sign of the cross under which the Byzantine armies fought and Constantinople was protected. Although he refers to the cross as “the wood,” τὸ ξύλον, and thus possibly alludes to fragments of the True Cross in Byzantine possession, George does not mention that the Persians had captured the Cross in their conquest of Jerusalem.³⁹ But, later, when the reliquary materializes again, George makes an immediate association between the Cross and the war. Having heard of the imminent return of the Cross to Jerusalem through a letter of Heraclius, George celebrates this event in his poem, *In restitutionem S. Crucis*.⁴⁰ He exalts the emperor for having recovered the Cross. Heraclius killed Chosroes, δράκοντος and θηρίον, not with the poisons of Medea, but by stabbing him with the wood [of the Cross]. The poet envisions the triumphal entry of Cross and emperor into Jerusalem; he calls upon the apostle Paul and the emperor Constantine to appreciate the power of the Cross and the greatness of the emperor who had found it in the Persian furnaces, i.e., temples. He marvels at his emperor who was able, paradoxically, to reduce the Persian fire to ashes with the wood [of the Cross], the wood which Chosroes had once scorned and then felt as a lance in his heart.⁴¹ He compares the Cross to the ark of the covenant for its affect on its enemies. George of Pisidia thus sees the rediscovery of the Cross and its return to Jerusalem as the fitting conclusion to the Persian war.⁴²

But, there is far more significance in the rediscovery of the True Cross and its return to Jerusalem than in its providing a tangible symbol of the end of the war. The Cross — and Heraclius’s use of it — provides an introduction to the post-war period and the issues and problems which confronted

³⁹ On the icon, see *Exp. Pers.* 1, lines 139–144; for mentions of the cross, *ibid.*, 2, lines 252 f.; 3, lines 415–420 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 91, 109, 134). Maurice had a fragment of the Cross set at the point of his lance: Theophylactus Simocatta, *Historia* 5.16, ed. de Boor (Leipzig, 1887), p. 220; Frolow, “Vraie Croix,” p. 92, n. 2. The capture of the Cross is mentioned in the *Chronicon Paschale*, PG 92:988, and described by Antiochus Strategos, “Antiochus Strategos’ Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614,” trans. Frederick C. Conybeare, *English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 502–517. Grabar believes the cross motif on Heraclian coins from 615–628 alludes to the captive relic: *L’Iconoclasm byzantin. Dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957), p. 29. For other views of its significance, Frolow, “Numismatique byzantine at archéologie des lieux saints,” *Mémorial Louis Petit. Mélanges d’histoire et d’archéologie byzantines, Institut français d’études byzantines* (Bucarest, 1948), p. 90; Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, 2, pt. 1 (Washington, 1968), 244–256, cat. nos. 1–4 (hereafter cited as Grierson, *Coins*); and Ericsson, “Cross on Steps” (see above, n. 19), pp. 149–153.

⁴⁰ Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 225–230; commenting on the chronology of events, pp. 230–237.

⁴¹ *In restit. S. Crucis*, lines 21–24, 27–38, 54–60, 64–68 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 226–228). Grabar suggests that Chosroes may have captured the Cross because since the time of Tiberius II official iconography proclaimed it to be the agent of Byzantine victory: *L’Iconoclasm*, p. 29.

⁴² Pertusi suggests that as Heraclius’s letter of 628 (preserved in the *Chronicon Paschale*) influenced the *Heraclias* of George of Pisidia, the latter’s *In restit. S. Crucis* may reflect some elements of the tone and expression present in the 630 imperial communiqué: *Poemi*, p. 237, notes on lines 1 ff.

the emperor once the Persians ceased to be a menace. Modern scholars view the re-invention of the Cross as a political expedient, for Heraclius was open to severe and continuous criticism for having taken his niece as his second wife. The connection between the marriage and the restoration of the Cross had been observed by a contemporary; the monk Antiochus Strategos wrote: “. . . King Heraclius took it [the Cross] to Jerusalem on the occasion of his going there with Martina, who was daughter of his father’s brother; and he had married her against the law, and was therefore very much afraid that the high priests would rebuke him on the score of that indecent action.”⁴³ According to Anatole Frolow and Paul Lemerle, Heraclius re-invented the Cross in order to dispel his opposition and consolidate his moral authority, “en se purifiant en quelque sorte à leurs yeux de son mariage incestueux, dans l’éclat d’une cérémonie extraordinaire qu’il présida avec Martine, et qui montrait à tous sans contestation possible que le Ciel avait été avec lui.”⁴⁴ In addition Frolow suggests that the re-invention of the Cross may be seen, or was intended by Heraclius to be seen, as a prelude to the discussions and councils planned for 631 in which the issue of ecclesiastical union was to be treated.⁴⁵

It is, in fact, difficult not to approach the re-invention of the True Cross in political terms, especially once one takes into account several contemporary actions on the part of Heraclius. Each of these actions may be seen in terms of Byzantine imperial ideology; their cumulative effect insured Heraclius’s authority and enhanced his prestige. As Constantine before him had made the Roman Empire safe for Christians, Heraclius made the Holy Land safe for them again. As Constantine, according to popular belief, had found the True Cross⁴⁶ and built the splendid Holy Sepulchre complex in which to enshrine it, so Heraclius re-invented the Cross, brought it to Jerusalem and back to its shrine. As Constantine had encouraged and helped finance the erection of Christian monuments in the Holy Land, so Heraclius sponsored the restoration of monuments destroyed by the Persians and provided for the financing of this work by allotting Syrian tax revenues to the patriarch of Jerusalem.⁴⁷ Heraclius thus *acts out* a fundamental aspect of Byzantine imperial ideology, that is, the emperor as the new Constantine.⁴⁸ Earlier em-

⁴³ Ed. Conybeare, p. 516. Martina was the daughter of the sister of Heraclius: Nicephorus, ed. de Boor, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Frolow, “Vraie Croix,” pp. 101–105; the quotation is from Lemerle, “Remarques” (see above, n. 10), pp. 352 f.

⁴⁵ Frolow, “Vraie Croix,” pp. 101–105; also Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1:251 f.

⁴⁶ See, for example, George of Pisidia, who, addressing Constantine, writes: “τὸν σταυρὸν . . . ὅν σὺ μὲν κεκρυμμένον τὸ πρῶτον εὔρες εἰς τὸν δὲκεῖον τόπον” (*In restit. S. Crucis*, lines 56 f. [Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 227]).

⁴⁷ Eutychius, *Contextio gemmarum, sive Annales*, PG 111:1091; for Constantine’s patronage, Richard Krautheimer, “Constantine’s Church Foundations,” *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für christlichen Archäologie*, Trier, 1965, 1 (Vatican City, 1969), 237–254.

⁴⁸ The fundamental study of the cult of the emperor in Byzantium remains that of Otto Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell* (1938; repr., Darmstadt, 1956). On Constantine and David as ideals, pp. 129–135. For references to

perors, such as Marcian, Justin I and Justinian, had been addressed or acclaimed as the new Constantine; one emperor, Tiberius II, had joined to his name that of the first Christian emperor.⁴⁹ Heraclius gave three of his sons his own name combined with that of Constantine; he and his dynasty exploited their association with Constantine in official documents, inscriptions and coinage.⁵⁰ But such visual and verbal references are almost overshadowed by the re-invention of the True Cross. By thus associating himself via traditional forms and novel actions with Constantine, his hallowed predecessor, Heraclius sought to insulate himself from criticism and to bolster his authority. The message borne by these actions did not elude his contemporaries. George of Pisidia provides a striking example in his *In restitutionem S. Crucis* in which the basis for the analogy is the True Cross. Literally translated, the verses in question read:

May Constantine the Great laud such as you [Heraclius] for another will not suffice in eulogizing you. Constantine, appear again in Rome; applaud your son, seeing how he restored your [legacy] which he received confused. It is proper that now you, having left the celestial city, take part with us in joy in the terrestrial city. Your spirit was, in fact, sad and distressed as long as you did not see the Cross returning and triumphant, that Cross which you first rediscovered hidden in its own place and which your son [Heraclius] brought back although it was not merely hidden, but had reached the Persian furnaces. You have, in fact, a son by grace of divine providence, just as if a Constantine were found fortified by the life-giving wood.⁵¹

Heraclius was not only following in the footsteps of Constantine, but also in those of a more distant predecessor, that is, David. Most immediately, Heraclius and David have in common their entries into Jerusalem for purposes of installing there the symbols and treasures of their respective reli-

Constantine in coinage of the late sixth and early seventh centuries, Grabar, *Iconoclasm*, pp. 27–30, and below, n. 50.

⁴⁹ For documentation and further examples, Treitinger, *Reichsidee*, pp. 130 f.

⁵⁰ The sons were Heraclius the new Constantine (Ἡράκλειος ὁ νέος Κωνσταντῖνος), born 612; the other Constantine (Κωνσταντῖνος ἕτερος), born 615/616; and little Constantine (Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ μικρός), born 625/626 and known as Heraclius or Heraclonas. See Grierson, *Coins*, 2, pt. 2:385, 389 f. For inscriptions in which both father and first-born son are termed new Constantine, Grégoire, *Recueil des Inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure*, 1 (1922, repr., Amsterdam, 1968), 21 f., 40, cat. nos. 79 f., 113. For the documents, Nov. XXIV, XXV, Johannes and Panagiotes Zepos, *Jus graecoromanum*, 8 vols. (Athens, 1931), 1:33, 37. The Constantinian legend, ἐν τούτῳ νίκῃ, reappears in the coinage of Heraclius Constantine and his son Constans II: Grierson, *Coins*, 2, pt. 2: 406, 442–458, cat. nos. 58–62, 64–69, 72–78, 87. Collecting the means by which Heraclius evoked his predecessor, Irfan Shahîd, "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972), 309 f., n. 65, and Frolov, "Croisade et les Guerres persanes" (see above, n. 19), pp. 56–58. The latter provides examples of western medieval conflation of Heraclius and Constantine.

⁵¹ *In restit. S. Crucis*, lines 47–63 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 227 f.); on the emperor's influence on the poet, see above, n. 42. Grégoire suggests that Heraclius came to be called the new Constantine as a result of his recovery of the Cross: *Inscriptions*, 1:22. Constantine's vision, Helena's discovery of the Cross, and Heraclius's re-invention of the Cross are celebrated in the feast of the Exaltation of the True Cross: see *The Festal Menaion. The Service Books of the Orthodox Church*, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London, 1969), pp. 131–163.

gions which had been held captive. Heraclius returned the Cross; David introduced the ark of the covenant to the capital he had recently established for his kingdom (2 Samuel 6). Although Heraclius's contemporaries do not appear to have commented upon his being like David in this specific instance, there are two examples of parallels drawn between the ark and the Cross. George of Pisidia compared their respective powers against their enemies in his poem on the restitution of the cross and Antiochus Strategos remarked that neither the Cross nor the ark had been tampered with in captivity.⁵² I suggest that Heraclius's visit to Jerusalem in 630 was designed not only to evoke Constantine, but also David, and that, in evoking David, it was but one of a number of acts occurring at the termination of the Persian war designed to ally Heraclius with his biblical forerunner.

Along with that of Constantine the example of David was held up to the Byzantine emperor and the populace as that of an ideal ruler. Because he was divinely chosen to rule, had forged a theocratic concept of government, and served as his people's intermediary with their divinity, David provided a multifaceted prototype for the ruler of the Christian Roman Empire.⁵³ Acclaimed as "the new David," crowned in ceremonies containing references to his Old Testament forerunner, his virtues associated with those of the prophet-king — even his sins, in some cases — the Byzantine emperor could scarcely fail to be aware of this analogy.⁵⁴ Sometimes, the analogy could be

⁵² The ark and the Cross share similar miraculous powers: the ark was believed to kill those who touched it or looked into it (1 Samuel 5.11, 6.19; 2 Samuel 6.7), while, according to George of Pisidia, the Cross could lance, afflict and shoot darts (*In restit. S. Crucis*, lines 73–77 [Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 228]). For other powers ascribed to the Cross, see the liturgies for the Exaltation of the Cross, *Menaion*, pp. 131–167. Antiochus Strategos reported of the Cross: "And it was set up altogether unopened; for just as the ark of the covenant was left unopened among strangers, so was the life-giving tree of the Cross," ed. Conybeare (see above, n. 39), p. 516. Antiochus also credits the Cross with inspiring fear in its captors, pp. 512 f.; cf. 1 Samuel 5, an account of the panic caused by the ark among Philistines.

⁵³ On the emperor as the new David in Byzantium, Treitinger, *Reichsidee*, pp. 81, 130–135; and in the medieval west, with its roots in Byzantium, Heinrich Fichtenau, "Byzanz und die Pfalz zu Aachen," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichischen Geschichtsforschung* 59 (1951), 25–35; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae. A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1946), pp. 56–70; Percy E. Schramm, "Das Alte und das Neue Testament in der Staatslehre und Staatssymbolik des Mittelalters," *La Bibbia nell' alto medioevo*, *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano sull' alto medioevo* 10 (Spoleto, 1963), pp. 229–255, esp. pp. 235–240; Hugo Steger, *David rex et propheta. König David als vorbildliche Verkörperung des Herrschers und Dichters im Mittelalter nach Bilddarstellung des 8–12. Jahrhunderts*, Erlanger Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kunstwissenschaft 6 (Nuremberg, 1961). Also on David and the new David, Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy, Origins and Background*, 2 vols., *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 9 (Washington, 1966) (hereafter cited as Dvornik, *Pol. Phil.*).

⁵⁴ Examples of address and acclamation as the new David: a) by the crowds in the Hippodrome, Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De cerimoniis* 2.78 (69), 2.82 (73), ed. and trans. Albert Vogt, *Constantin Porphyrogénète, Le Livre des cérémonies*, 2 vols. in 4 pts. (1935–1940; repr., Paris, 1967). 2, pt. 1:127 f., 167; b) by popes, bishops and clerics: 1) Pope Leo to Constantine IV, PL 96:409 f.; 2) the bishop of Armenia Prima to Leo I, Gian Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence, 1759–1798), 7:587; 3) bishop of Maronia to Justinian,

taken quite far indeed, as, for example, in the case of Justinian. Having waged war against the Persians, Goths and Vandals in order to reunite once

Mansi, 8:831 f.; and 4) the assembled clergy at the Council of Chalcedon to Marcian, Mansi, 7:169C.

Examples of associations made in coronation ceremonies: a) the twelfth-century Grottaferrata Codex Crypt. Γ B 1, see Frank Edward Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1901), 378, 380 (hereafter cited as Brightman, "Coronations"); b) a Paleologan example, Ps.-Codinus, *De Officiis*, ed. and trans. Jean Verpeaux (Paris, 1966), pp. 353 f.; c) Kievan ceremonial, inspired by the Byzantine, Dvornik, "Byzantine Imperial Ideas in Kievan Rus," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9/10 (1955/56), 117–120; d) the crown of Constantine Monomachus, fragments of which depict dancing girls and thus may refer to the women who danced before the victorious David (1 Samuel 18.6). Some art historians have suggested restoring to the Monomachus crown an enamel plaque representing an enthroned David; see Klaus Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the Fifth to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Irene R. Gibbons (Greenwich, Conn., 1967), pp. 96–104.

Examples of David as a model for or compared to the emperor: a) Constantius: Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium imp.* 5.20, PG 25:601 f., 621 f. (see Dvornik, *Pol. Phil.*, 2:736, nn. 49 f.); b) Theodosius I: Ambrose, *De Apologia Prophetarum David ad Theodosium Augustum*, CSEL 32, pt. 2:297–335; c) Theodosius II: 1) Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.22, PG 67:788; 2) Sozomenos, *Historia ecclesiastica*, preface, PG 67:844–852; d) Heraclius: Theodore Synkellos, see above, p. 223; f.; e) Basil I: 1) Photius, Homily 18, ed. and trans. Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 3 (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 314, and carmina by the same, PG 102:577–583; 2) Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *Vita Basilii* 89, *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn, 1838), p. 335. See also Gyula Moravcsik, "Ἀνάγνωσμα ἀφιερωτικὸν ποίημα περὶ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Βασιλείου Α΄," *Εἰς Μνήμην Κ. Ι. Ἀμάντου* (Athens, 1960), pp. 7–9; idem, "Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961), 69; Sirarpie der Nersessian, "The Illustrations of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris gr. 510," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962), 222; Vogt, *Cérémonies*, 2, pt. 2:140. The best example of the use of David as the prototype for an erring ruler is provided by Ambrose when he rebukes Theodosius for the massacre at Thessaloniki, Epistle 51.7–10, PL 16:1211 f.; see also Paulinus, *Vita Sancti Ambrosii* 24, PL 14:37 f.

The bishop of Rhodes traced the lineage of Leo I back to David: Mansi, 7:580 f.

For David as a figure of the emperor in Byzantine art, Grabar, *L'Empereur* (see above, n. 6), pp. 93–97. The major extant examples in which the emphasis is on the ruler David, not the prophet David, are the David plates and the Paris Psalter, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. grec 139 (Henri-Auguste Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du VIIe au XIVe siècle* [Paris, 1929], pls. I–VIII).

For the emperor's privileges in the sanctuary and their Old Testament basis, Dvornik, *Pol. Phil.*, 2:644 f.

Two relics associated with David were in imperial possession. According to the report of a late-ninth-century visitor to the capital, a small golden table said to have belonged to David was brought into the triclinium when the emperor dined; similar tables associated with Solomon, Korah and Constantine were also brought out: Alexander A. Vasiliev, "Harun-ibn-Yahya and his Description of Constantinople," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 5 (1932), 157. The horn of oil with which Samuel anointed David was kept in the Nea according to Anthony of Novgorod, who visited Constantinople ca. 1200. He wrote, "the horn from which Samuel poured oil over David the King is there [in the Nea] as is the rod of Moses. . . . This staff and horn are covered with precious stones," *Kniga palomnik . . . Antonia Arkhiepiscopa novgorodskogo*, ed. Khrisanth M. Loparev, *Pravoslavnyi Palestinskii Sbornik* 51 (St. Petersburg, 1899), 19 (I am indebted to Prof. George Majeska for this reference and translation). One wonders if the horn of oil was used in the unction of the emperor once this rite had been introduced in the twelfth century: Brightman, "Coronations," pp. 383–385.

Byzantine lands and Christian peoples under his rule and having attempted to find the solutions to problems of Christological controversy in his Empire, Justinian may have realized the parallels between his efforts and those of David, who had united the worshippers of one God in one nation and then sought to unify their beliefs and practices. As a result, Justinian may have seen himself as the new David *par excellence*, or conversely, David as a figure prophetic of himself. The basis for this contention is the portrait of David, one of a series of images of Old Testament prophets, in the mosaic decoration of the apse of the Church of the Theotokos in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. This head of David bears a striking resemblance to a portrayal of Justinian in S. Vitale, Ravenna.⁵⁵ But, if in the case of Justinian one notes parallels in actions and efforts to those of the Old Testament ideal, in the case of Heraclius, one will find the parallels to be even more extensive, covering a series of events and situations in his public career and reaching into his private life as well.

Neither David nor Heraclius came to his throne by orderly succession. David was anointed king of Judah by the men of Judah at Hebron (2 Samuel 2.4), but he had to fight Saul's surviving son, Ishbosheth, who was king of Israel (2 Samuel 2.9). At the end of a long civil war, the victorious David was king of Judah and Israel; he then conquered the Jebusite city of Jerusalem "and dwelt in the stronghold and called it the city of David" (2 Samuel 5.3, 6-9). Heraclius, as noted, came to power in the revolt against Phocas. Thus both men were usurpers. David was the anointed and chosen of the Lord (1 Samuel 16.13; 2 Samuel 6.21) and Heraclius, according to Byzantine monarchic philosophy as articulated, for example, by George of Pisidia, was chosen by the Word of God, elevated by God, possessed of the inspired wisdom of spiritual energies, armed with the Holy Scriptures and inflamed by God. He ruled with the Lord from a common throne.⁵⁶ Both David and Heraclius were tyrant-killers: David of the dreaded Philistine, Goliath (1 Samuel 17) and Heraclius, of Phocas, that "Caledonian tyrant, armored half-breed of cyclopean heritage," and of Chosroes.⁵⁷ Both men led their armies in holy

⁵⁵ Weitzmann, "Loca Sancta and the representational Arts of Palestine," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 32, fig. 2; for S. Vitale, see Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York, 1961), pl. 166.

⁵⁶ *In Heracliam ex Africa redeuntem*, lines 1-13, 53, 69 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 77-81). On Byzantine monarchic philosophy and coronations, Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (London, 1955), pp. 168-172; Brightman, "Coronations," pp. 359-392; Peter Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance in the Later Roman Empire," *Byzantion* 15 (1940/41), 49-60; Wilhelm Ensslin, "Das Gottesgnadentum des autokratischen Kaisertums der frühbyzantinischen Zeit," *Studi bizantini e neoellenici* 5 (1939), 154-166; idem, "Gottkaiser und Kaiser von Gottes Gnaden," *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung 6 (Munich, 1943); Rodolphe Guiland, "Le Droit divin à Byzance," *Études byzantines* (Paris, 1959), 203-233.

⁵⁷ The classification of Phocas is that of Theophylactus Simocatta, ed. de Boor, p. 20. George of Pisidia makes frequent reference to Phocas as a tyrant, e.g., *In Heracl. ex Afr. red.*, lines 40, 59; *In Bonum*, line 58; *Bell. Avâr.*, lines 49-57; *Heraclius* 1, line 148, and 2, lines 5, 22, 35; and to

wars against infidels, men of other races, enemies who, on the one hand, did not believe in the deity of the Israelites, and, on the other, mocked the God of the Byzantines, enemies who had carried off the hallowed symbols of the two religions. David and Heraclius won their wars, recaptured the sacred objects central to the spiritual life of their peoples and installed them — the ark and the Cross — in Jerusalem.

Each man had his share of personal problems which brought him considerable public condemnation. David, husband to many women, “displeased the Lord” in his adulterous alliance with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11.27). For this the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke David and forewarn him of the misfortunes which would descend on his family and rule (2 Samuel 12.1–14). Heraclius married twice: his first wife, Eudocia, whom he had wed immediately after his coronation, died in August 612, having borne two children. In 614 Heraclius married Martina, the daughter of his sister, by whom he had at least nine children.⁵⁸ From the start, Heraclius’s second marriage was condemned as incestuous. Patriarch Sergius had tried to dissuade Heraclius from entering an uncanonical union, but the emperor went ahead with his plans. The patriarch performed the ceremony, crowned the new Augusta and baptized their children.⁵⁹ However, the objections to the marriage on the part of the emperor’s family, the clergy and the people never abated. According to Antiochus Strategos, Heraclius was afraid of rebuke by the clergy.⁶⁰ Nicephorus, writing almost two hundred years later, but using seventh-century sources, considered Heraclius’s illness (dropsy) just punishment for his incest.⁶¹ The ever-present sense of sin and scandal which Heraclius suffered is reflected in the poems of George of Pisidia.⁶²

As a result of their multiple marriages, David and Heraclius had the problem of complex succession to their thrones. In the case of David, one of

Chosroes as a tyrant, *Exp. Pers.* 2, lines 92–97; *Bell. Avar.*, lines 346 f. (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 79, 165, 178, 247, 251, 252, 253, 101, 192). See, too, Theodore Synkellos, ed. Sternbach, p. 300, line 23.

⁵⁸ Nicephorus, Theophanes and the anonymous of the *Chronicon Paschale* made random mention of Heraclius’s families. Crediting Heraclius and Martina with nine children, Angelo Pernice, *L’Imperatore Eraclio. Saggio di Storia Bizantina* (Florence, 1905), pp. 293 f.; and with eleven, Grumel, *Traité des Études Byzantines. I. La Chronologie* (Paris, 1958), p. 362. See, too, Grierson, *Coins*, 2, pt. 1:216; 2, pt. 2:385 f., 389 f.; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1:94–96, 358; Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 112; van Dielen, *Patriarchen* (see above, n. 16), pp. 2–6.

⁵⁹ Nicephorus, ed. de Boor, p. 14; Theophanes, ed. de Boor, pp. 300 f.; Grumel, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, 1, fasc. 1, *Les Regestes de 381 à 715* (Socii Assumptionistae Chalcedonenses, 1932), p. 114, no. 284.

⁶⁰ For Antiochus’s account, see above, p. 225.

⁶¹ Nicephorus, ed. de Boor, p. 27. The early deaths and physical deformities of the offspring of Heraclius and Martina were seen as punishment for the incestuous union: Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 112; Grierson, *Coins*, 2, pt. 2:389, n. 4.

⁶² For references, some guarded, others patent, to this condition, according to Pertusi, see *Exp. Pers.* 3, lines 343–348, 407–410; *Bell. Avar.*, lines 122, 145, 184; *Herackas* 1, lines 140–147 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 131, 133 f., 181 f., 184, 246 f., and for Pertusi’s commentary, pp. 160 f., 213, 267).

his sons struggled to usurp his power shortly after the affair with Bathsheba, but failed (2 Samuel 13–18). Later David's surviving sons plotted to succeed their aging father (1 Kings 1). In January 613 Heraclius named his first son, Heraclius νέος Constantine, born in 612, Augustus. Heraclius Constantine was married in 629 and was presented with a son the following year, thus assuring a succession for two generations.⁶³ Soon afterward, however, bowing to the pressure of Martina, Heraclius began to promote the status of two of their sons: Heraclonas, born in 626, was named Caesar in 632 (the same year his step-brother was consul) and Augustus in 638 and David, born in 630, was made Caesar in 638.⁶⁴ With the death of Heraclius, a bitter and tragic struggle for power would erupt between his sons and their partisans, a struggle which would lead to the deaths or the maimings and exiles of the principals.⁶⁵

The similarities in the lives of David and Heraclius may well be obvious to the modern observer, but they are of little value to this hypothesis without evidence that Heraclius and his contemporaries recognized them. The ideological basis of the Byzantine imperial office surely would have made Heraclius aware of its Old Testament foundations and its founder. It was to David that the Lord had promised a descendant, "the throne of [whose] kingdom" the Lord would "establish . . . for ever" (2 Samuel 7.13). The descendant was Christ, whose image on earth was the Byzantine emperor. Byzantine imperial power was but a terrestrial image of divine power. Like David and Christ, the Byzantine emperor was the shepherd of his people and the chosen of God, the link between man and God.⁶⁶ Imperial ceremonial and acclamations would have reminded Heraclius of his status as the new David, as may have the patriarch Sergius. For Sergius was the focus of a small circle of literary clerics who were fond of seeing current events and their participants as revivals of Old Testament and Greco-Roman history and of mythology. As we have read in the sermon of Theodore Synkellos, not only were the emperor and his oldest son identified with David and Solomon, but the patriarch was referred to as Isaiah and Moses.⁶⁷ In the work of George of Pisidia the patriarch is again viewed as another Moses while the emperor is compared to at least a half-dozen biblical figures and an equal number of non-biblical ones, none of which, however, provides more

⁶³ Theophanes records the birth of Heraclius's grandson: ed. de Boor, p. 335. He was named Heraclius at birth, known as Constantine, but he ruled as Constans II (641–668): Grierson, *Coins*, 2, pt. 2:402.

⁶⁴ Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 112; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 2:139–141.

⁶⁵ Ostrogorsky, *History*, pp. 113 f.; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 2:175–205.

⁶⁶ For example, referring to the emperor as a shepherd, George of Pisidia, *Exp. Pers.* 3, lines 322–335 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 130).

⁶⁷ For these and other typologies, see above, pp. 222 f. Little has been written on the cultural aspects of Sergius's patriarchate. For brief remarks, van Dieten, *Patriarchen*, pp. 54 f.; Lemerle, *Le Premier Humanisme byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au Xe siècle*, Bibliothèque Byzantine 6 (Paris, 1971), pp. 77–79.

than a casual analogy.⁶⁸ One can hardly fail to be reminded of the comparable Old Testamentary conceits in the courts of Charlemagne and his successors, culminating in the portrait of Charles the Bald as David the psalmist in the Vivian Bible.⁶⁹

Once it was perceived as a religious war, involving the efficacy of the respective deities of the adversaries, the Persian war would assuredly have made Heraclius aware of its — and his — Old Testament precedents. Two Byzantine texts, to which I have referred, furnish evidence of Heraclius's perception of the conflict. In his *Expediitio Persica*, George of Pisidia has Heraclius cite David in an address to his army. The emperor paraphrases Psalm 136.9 with the effect of crediting David with the sanction to murder the Persians.⁷⁰ A second example of an allusion to David on the part of Heraclius is found in his letter of April 628. Heraclius used biblical phraseology, particularly the phraseology of Psalms, in the significant instance of reporting his victory over the Persians.⁷¹

The realm of official titulature provides another approach to Heraclius's perception of his office and role. In 629 Heraclius adopted as his official title the formula *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεὺς* and completed the shedding of the Roman, dynastic and military titles previously employed by a Byzantine emperor.⁷² According to Irfan Shahīd the adoption of the new title may be understood as inspired by biblical precedent and prompted by messianic concepts. Shahīd views the formula *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεὺς* as one appropriate for the ruler of an empire with a christo- or biblio-centric

⁶⁸ For Sergius as Moses, *Bell. Avar.*, lines 493–499 (Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 198). The same image appears in an encomium on the Persian martyr, St. Anastasius; Pertusi, “L’Encomio di S. Anastasio martire Persiano,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 76 (1958), 9–14; and in the *Hexaemeron*, lines 1870–1874, PG 92:1576. For Heraclius's antetypes, see above, n. 22. None of George's analogies is ever as intricately conceived as those of Theodore. His references are more universal, perhaps designed as much to display his learning as to compliment his subject. Unlike Theodore's typologies, George's do not appear to have been designed to provide explanations for recent events. As the poet of Heraclius's exploits, he sees himself in a class with Demosthenes, Homer, Apelles, Plutarch and unspecified Athenian artists; he challenges them to speak or write about, or paint this new hero, Heraclius, as they had celebrated the heroes of their own time. See Pertusi, *Poemi*, index 1. On the poet's classical learning and poetic style, *ibid.*, pp. 32–48. George attests to Sergius's patronage in *Bell. Avar.*, lines 10–15, 130–164, 226–245 (*ibid.*, pp. 176, 182 f., 186 f.), and in *Hexaemeron*, lines 32 f., 50 f., PG 92:1429 f.

⁶⁹ On the western medieval ruler cult, see n. 53; also Peter Bloch “Das Apsismosaik von Germigny-des-Prés. Karl und das alte Bund,” *Karl der Grosse. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, 3. *Karolingische Kunst*, ed. Wolfgang Braunfels, Hermann Schnitzler (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp. 258 f.; Charles Reginald Dodwell, *Painting in Europe: 800–1200*, Pelican History of Art (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 21 f., 37, 41. For Charles the Bald-David in the Vivian Bible, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 1, Dodwell, *ibid.*, pl. 37.

⁷⁰ *Exp. Pers.* 2, lines 113–115: “δὲ οὐς ὁ Δαβὶδ ἐνθῶως ἐφθῆγγατο μακάριος εἰπὼν ὅς τὰ τέκνα Περσίδος πέτρας προσαντέκρουσεν ἡδαφισμένα” (Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 102).

⁷¹ *Chronicon Paschale*, PG 92:1017; Grabar, *Iconoclasm* (see above, n. 39), p. 27.

⁷² Zepos, *Jus* (see above, n. 50), 1:36; studying the implications of the title, Shahīd, “Iranian Factor” (see above, n. 50), pp. 295–320. Ostrogorsky, however, views the adoption of the title as an example of Hellenization; *History*, pp. 106 f.

culture, for a ruler who had recently concluded a long religious war, whose triumph was celebrated with mystic overtones. This scholar suggests that in adopting this new formula Heraclius was influenced by the biblical view that a king held office by the grace of God and that Heraclius's conception of the *βασιλεία* had been shaped by the Old Testament prophets or the writings of Eusebius.⁷³ He finds 629 to have been a pivotal year in history, both from the modern perspective and in the perspective of Heraclius and his contemporaries, for they seem to have viewed the year as the start of a new age. Given the mystical references in the *Hexaemeron* Shahīd suggests that

Heraclius might very well have thought he was opening the last phase of the millennium as a *praeparatio* for the Second Coming. The assumption of the *basileia* in 629 may be related to these hopes; the title *basileus* was most appropriate for reflecting an imperial image which was conceived by contemporaries as messianic or even a self-image which had in fact become messianic.⁷⁴

Heraclius's actions in the last years of the 620s and the first years of the 630s do indeed support this hypothesized self-image. In 630, the year following the adoption of the title *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς*, Heraclius journeyed to Jerusalem in order to restore the True Cross which he had recovered from the Persians. One can hardly fail to be struck by the workings of divine (or imperial?) economy and providence which brought him there. The "new David" was returning to the "city of David" the wood on which the "son of David" (Matthew 1.1) had been sacrificed. The Cross and the pilgrimage became the means by which Heraclius could visibly and effectively associate himself with David and Christ and Constantine, with Jerusalem, the seat of David's kingdom and the terrestrial center of Christianity.⁷⁵ From Jerusalem Heraclius went forth to execute the spiritual responsibility incumbent on the emperor, to reconcile the Monophysites of Syria and Armenia to orthodox Christianity, a responsibility or mission whose antecedents are Old Testamentary.⁷⁶

Two further details, minor but nonetheless revealing, help to substantiate my view that Heraclius was aware of and acted to enhance his identification with David. With one exception his children were given names which were essentially dynastic, Roman or imperial (Heraclius and Constantine in several combinations, Epiphania, Flavius, Fabius, Theodore, Marinus, August-

⁷³ Shahīd, "Iranian Factor," pp. 302 f.; in his n. 35, Shahīd expresses his belief that the David plates may bear a relation to the adoption of the new title.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 307 f.

⁷⁵ A western medieval tradition has Heraclius enter Jerusalem by the same gate as Christ, with disastrous results. See Hrabanus Maurus, Homily 70, PL 110:133 f. and, in his account of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Caxton (London, 1900), 5:128 f.

⁷⁶ Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1:255 f., 291–297. For the emperor as guarantor of orthodoxy, Baynes, "The Byzantine State," and "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," *Byzantine Studies* (see above, n. 56), pp. 47–65, 168–172; Brightman, "Coronations," pp. 371, 374, 380, 388; Charanis, "Coronation" (see above, n. 56), pp. 55–60; Dvornik, *Pol. Phil.*, 2, chapters 10–12.

rina, Febronia). The exception was the son born 7 November 630 and named David, born the same year his parents had been in Jerusalem, with David *in utero*.⁷⁷ Even in his misfortunes Heraclius was reminded of the parallel with David. In Antioch in 635 the emperor's brother, Theodore, was gossiping about Heraclius's marriage with Martina. He made a pun on her name, paraphrasing Psalm 51.3: "ἡ ἁμαρτία αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ διὰ παντός."⁷⁸ Psalm 51 was written by David after his rebuke by Nathan for his adulterous union with Bathsheba. Enraged, Heraclius publicly humiliated Theodore and sent him to Constantinople, having ordered Heraclius Constantine to place the man under guard.

With its roots in traditional imperial ideology, the identification of Heraclius and David was nurtured in the Persian war. For the war, with its religious motivations, stimulated not only epical writing, but also inflated self-images. In the immediate post-war period a constitutional alteration — if one accepts Shahîd's interpretation — and a series of acts on the emperor's part furthered the association. The new title *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεὺς* succinctly expressed the bond between the ruler and the divine source of his authority. As if in reward for the adoption of that title, Heraclius soon secured assurances that the Persians would return the True Cross. Within a year he entered Jerusalem with the relic and all the ceremony attending an imperial *adventus*, evoking parallels with Constantine, David and even Christ. Soon afterward a son was born to Heraclius and Martina and named David. From the available evidence we do not know whether Heraclius saw himself as a messiah in these years. But that same evidence unmistakably informs us that Heraclius had the example of David on his mind, and in this period of peace to an extent possibly even greater than he had had in wartime, in politics and religion, in his public life and in private. Ironically, when his brother Theodore compared David and Heraclius for their shared ever-present sense of sin, Heraclius was angered. The parallelism had grown too inclusive.

Now, returning to the David plates, I shall attempt to date them more precisely within the span of years provided by their official stamps, 612–629/630, and with reference to events which have been treated above. While the basic format of the plates, details of costume and setting establish the imperial circumstances of their manufacture, the subjects of the David cycle do not contribute to the solution of the question of date.⁷⁹ Those who wish

⁷⁷ Theophanes, ed. de Boor, p. 335. For the names of his children, see the Pernice, Grumel and Stratos references in n. 58.

⁷⁸ Nicephorus, ed. de Boor, p. 23.

⁷⁹ Efforts to date the plates on the basis of subject matter are to some extent hampered by ignorance concerning the original number of plates. However, two factors suggest that the complete set may have survived: 1) concentration of subject matter in 1 Samuel 16–18 (see above, n. 3) and 2) the dimensions and compositions of the plates. Four plates, each featuring two figures, measure 14 cm. in diameter; four plates, each having five figures appearing against an arcuated background, are ca. 26 cm. The ninth plate, depicting the three stages of David's

to advance an early date might observe that the subjects are concentrated in David's early years and hence set forth a parallel for a youthful emperor of Byzantium. But, then, might it not have been to the advantage of the youthful emperor, especially if he were using such a means to promote his authority, for the series to have included a plate displaying an enthroned David or David elevated on a shield?⁸⁰ Similarly, with their emphasis on youthful exploits and valor, the plates may be viewed as inappropriate objects with which to compliment an aging ruler, thus frustrating those who would support a late date on the basis of subject matter.⁸¹ The victory over Goliath may be seen as a reference to Phocas, to Chosroes, or even to Razatis, as recently proposed.⁸² David's marriage to Michal may provide an antetype for either of Heraclius's unions, especially the second as it wanted some form of sanction. Furthermore, Heraclius's first wife had died in 612, a year before the earliest possible date for the plates. The choice of subjects thus fails to offer an unequivocal index to the date of the David plates.

As noted above, Kitzinger has suggested that the plates originated early in the period 613–629/630 and represented an attempt by Heraclius to associate his rule with that of Theodosius the Great via stylistic qualities.⁸³ According to Kitzinger, Heraclius may have felt the need to evoke the early years of the Empire because he was a usurper. But, was Heraclius's hold on the imperial office all that unsteady in his first years in office? Were there widespread objections to his rule? In a recent article, Walter Kaegi has presented the results of his scrutiny of a new edition of the life of St. Theodore of Sykeon.⁸⁴ Seeking information on the political and military history of Heraclius's early years, Kaegi found evidence for resistance to Heraclius's rule on the part of a general, Komentiolos, the brother of Phocas, who had quartered his army in Ancyra. However, by early 611, at the latest, Komentiolos was slain and his rebellion over.⁸⁵ This internal problem is thus solved two years prior to the earliest possible date for the David plates. Other Byzantine sources indicate the widespread relief that

encounter with Goliath, measures 49.4 cm. Thus a balanced series of nine objects, "suitable for hanging," the main plate and its satellites grouped as four pairs or two units of four. For the courtly, imperial qualities of the plates, see the Weitzmann and Shelton papers cited in n. 5 above. Shelton, Grunsven-Eygenraam and Wander (articles cited in n. 3) try to connect the subjects of the plates with specific events in Heraclius's reign. Wander considers the display of the plates: "Cyprus Plates," p. 96 and fig. 10.

⁸⁰ For examples of these subjects, see the *Vespasian Psalter*, fol. 30v (Wright, *Vespasian Psalter* [see above, n. 3], frontispiece), and the *Paris Psalter*, fol. 6v (Omont, *MSS. Grecs* [see above, n. 54], pl. VI).

⁸¹ At the close of the Persian war Heraclius was more than fifty years old: Pertusi, *Poemi*, p. 267, commenting on *Heraclias* 1, line 141.

⁸² For the Razatis proposal and a late date, Wander, "Cyprus Plates," pp. 103 f.

⁸³ See above, p. 218 and n. 7. For the Theodosian qualities of the plate depicting David before Saul, Weitzmann, "Prolegomena," pp. 106–111.

⁸⁴ Kaegi, "Early Reign" (see above, n. 9), pp. 308–330.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 308–320.

Heraclius's victory over Phocas brought, especially to well-educated residents of the capital.⁸⁶ Thus, Kitzinger's reason for the early dating, attractive as it appears at first, does not find support in the circumstances or the sources. Furthermore, if the intention of the artists was to evoke the Theodosian period, or Theodosius himself, via stylistic qualities, there need be no time limit placed on such an effort. An established emperor as well as a new one might wish to attach himself to Theodosius and his age. And in fact the points of contact with Theodosius increased as Heraclius's rule progressed; both men led their armies personally and both men met severe ecclesiastical censure for their actions.⁸⁷

Yet another factor can be considered in opposition to an early dating for the David plates. In 621 Heraclius collected the silver in Constantinople, including the liturgical objects. Could such a precious and prominent series of silver plates have escaped confiscation? Unless they had been hidden by an owner who was deaf to appeals for patriotic sacrifice or had already been shipped out of the capital, the David plates — had they been manufactured prior to 621 — surely would have met the same fate as the church treasures handed over by patriarch Sergius. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the plates can have originated during the war (622–628), given the continuing need to pay the military and purchase supplies.⁸⁸ For these reasons it seems most likely that the David plates were manufactured within a few years of the termination of the war, that is, mid 628–629/630.

It is these very years which witnessed the culmination of the association between Heraclius and David, an association based in the imperial cult, but intensified as a result of the Persian war, the conflict to which the Byzantines gave biblical dimensions. Heraclius emerged from the war the savior of his people and nation, the victorious champion of his God. He had killed the tyrant who had blasphemed the Lord, destroyed churches and ravaged holy men and women. Heraclius had earned to a greater degree than any of his recent predecessors the designation the “new David,” and, as well, that of the “new Constantine.” Imperial acts and propaganda within the next few years enhanced this image, whether designed purposely to do so or not, as Heraclius took the title *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς*, miraculously recovered the True Cross and restored it to Jerusalem and began the process of seeking theological concord, the new David seeking to unify the new Israelites in their faith in the Lord. One should not overlook the problems Heraclius faced at the end of his second and the beginning of his third decade of rule.

⁸⁶ See for example the debate between Philosophy and History in Theophylactus Simocatta, ed. de Boor, pp. 20–22; George of Pisidia, *In Heracl. ex Afr. red.* (Pertusi, *Poemi*, pp. 77–81). However, Lemerle credits Sergius with the change in atmosphere: *Humanisme* (see above, n. 67), pp. 77–79.

⁸⁷ Heraclius for his marriage, Theodosius for the massacre at Thessaloniki; for the latter, Ambrose, Epistle 51, PL 16:1211 f.

⁸⁸ On the diversion of silver and gold from manufacturing and trade to coinage, Dodd, *Silver Stamps* (see above, n. 1), pp. 32 f.

Of course, he did not foresee the imminent loss to the Arabs of the recently hard-won lands, but he knew the religious problem would not be solved easily. He had his difficulties with the church and the people because of his marriage. The Balkans were not quiet. The image of the emperor as the new David *par excellence* may have been promoted as much to celebrate past achievement as to encourage confidence in the present and future. The last years provided by the control stamps thus appear to be the most likely for the creation of the David plates.

Finally, I might suggest that while it is possible that the David plates may have been commissioned by a highly-placed Byzantine official, one who had access to the silver reserves, in order to honor Heraclius, it is far more likely that the emperor himself was their patron. It is tempting to consider the David plates as a superlative, multipartite, highly personalized variety of the imperial medallion, which Heraclius commissioned as his predecessors had commissioned gold or silver medallions in order to bestow them as gifts. Heraclius may have ordered the plates not only as a form of personal glorification but for their intrinsic value. For after the war Heraclius had his debts, financial, political and personal, and he had pledged to repay those whose silver he had confiscated in 621. I propose that in 629 or, more likely, 630, Heraclius ordered the manufacture of the David plates in order to be able to bestow them upon an as yet — and perhaps forever — unknown recipient, a person to whom he stood in debt.⁸⁹ Whereas the imperial medallion portrayed an emperor in terms of official regalia, the David plates depict the ideal prototype of the Byzantine emperor, commissioned by one who may have thought himself to be not only the new David, but the consummate David.

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⁸⁹ Neither the recipient of the plates nor the possibly distinct possessor of the treasures buried at Lambousa has been convincingly identified. Grierson, writing before the appearance of Dodd's *Silver Stamps*, suggested a Syrian refugee in Cyprus, ca. 609/610: "The Kyrenia Girdle of Byzantine Medallions and Solidi," *Numismatic Chronicle*, ser. 6.15 (1955), 55–70. Marvin C. Ross suggested a Cypriote with connections in Constantinople: "A Byzantine Gold Medallion," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957), 249 f. Grunsven-Eygenraam, concerned with the recipient of the plates, considered John the Almoner and Sergius. The death of the former in 619 precludes his being the recipient if my dating is correct. Sergius remains a tempting but problematic prospect. If he were the recipient, how did the plates reach Cyprus? Upon his death in 638 would the plates have gone into private ownership or into a church treasury? Unless Sergius had advanced Heraclius private funds in 621, can the emperor have afforded such an expensive gift in the light of his considerable debts? See Grunsven-Eygenraam, "David Plates," p. 174.