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Gilbert Dagron
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Emperor and Priest

The Imperial Office in Byzantium

This is a revised and translated edition of Gilbert Dagron's *Empereur et prêtre* (1996), an acknowledged masterwork by one of the great Byzantine scholars of our time.

The figure of the Byzantine emperor, a ruler who sometimes was also designated a priest, has long fascinated the western imagination. This book studies in detail the imperial union of 'two powers' against a wide background of relations between Church and state and religious and political spheres.

While in the medieval West the empire was broken down into its various temporal realms, leaving spiritual matters to the papacy, the Byzantine East preserved the structures of an empire whose ruler – the anointed successor of David – received directly from God his mission to lead his Christian subjects. In this sense, the emperor was a priest, albeit 'of another priesthood' or a quasi-bishop. Historians have continued the debate on this subject since the time of the Reformation, declaring 'caesaropapism' to be a malady of the East. Yet the ambiguities and nuances of this divided imperial role can still be perceived today. Presenting much unfamiliar material in complex, brilliant style, as much for western medievalists as for Byzantinists, it will attract all historians concerned with royal and ecclesiastical sources of power.

> . . . a profound exploration of wide-ranging aspects of Byzantine thought and perception – a veritable pilgrim's guide to the Byzantine soul . . . This is a very significant book for Byzantine specialists, one of the most stimulating to appear for some time, but it will also be of great use to those outside the field of Byzantine studies . . . Indeed, no one interested in the varieties of earthly sovereignty should be unaware of it. (John W. Barker in *Speculum*)

GILBERT DAGRON is Professor Emeritus of Byzantine History and Civilisation at the Collège de France, Honorary President of the International Committee on Byzantine Studies and a member of the Institut de France.

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The Imperial Office in Byzantium

GILBERT DAGRON
Collège de France

Translated by
JEAN BIRRELL

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Acknowledgements

This book continues and completes research carried out over many years at the Collège de France: it is therefore appropriate that I should mention here all those who, by their presence and their comments, have helped me to bring to fruition an initially tentative project. I am also indebted to Mme Ghislaine de Feydeau for her careful reading of the text and to M Constantin Zuckerman for revising the notes; to both my thanks.

I had talked to my old friend Pierre Nora about the king-priests and priest-kings who fascinated me, though I was far from confident that they would interest readers accustomed to keep their distance from Byzantium. He was brave enough to read the typescript and propose its publication in the *Bibliothèque des Histoires*.

It is a great honour for me to see this English version of my book, with a few corrections and additions, appear in a prestigious series published by Cambridge University Press. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Judith Herrin of King's College London for suggesting and encouraging this project. A translation, it is sometimes said, is a betrayal; in this case it has produced a new book, which owes much to the skill, intelligence and patient labour of Jean Birrell, to whom I offer my warm thanks. In venturing, so to speak, onto their own ground, and addressing them in their own language, I would like to pay tribute to the brilliant school British Byzantinists have created and sustained at a high level, to evoke my personal contacts with many of them and to record my admiration for their learning, their culture and, of course, their humour.

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Bibliographical abbreviations

AASS *Acta Sanctorum*

ACO *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*

Anal. Boll. *Analecta Bollandiana* (Brussels)

BHG F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, 3rd ed., I–III, Brussels, 1957, completed, *Novum Auctarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae Graecae*, Brussels, 1984

Bonn *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, Bonn, 1828–97

Byz. *Byzantion* (Brussels)

ByzForsch. *Byzantinische Forschungen* (Amsterdam)

ByzSlav. *Byzantinoslavica* (Prague)

BZ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (Munich, then Cologne)

CJ *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, II: *Codex Iustinianus*, ed. P. Krüger, repr. Berlin, 1963

CTh. *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. T. Mommsen and P. M. Meyer, repr. Berlin, 1954

CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

DACL *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, I–XV, Paris, 1907–53

Darrouzès, *Regestes* J. Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, I: *Les Actes des Patriarches*, fasc. 4: *Les Regestes de 1208 à 1309*; 5: *Les Regestes de 1310 à 1376*; 6: *Les Regestes de 1377 à 1410*, Paris, 1971–9

De cerimoniis *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, ed. I. I. Reiske, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn, 1829, vol. I. For chaps 10–106 of book I, the numbering

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is from the manuscript, with, in brackets, the misleading numbering of the Bonn edition, which conceals a gap of nine chapters.

Dig. *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, I. *Iustiniani Digesta*, ed. T. Mommsen and P. Krüger, repr. Dublin-Zurich, 1966

Dölger, *Regesten* F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, I–III, Munich-Berlin, 1924–33, repr. (1 vol.) Hildesheim, 1976

DOP *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (Washington)

DS *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique* (Paris, 1937–)

DTC *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, I–XV, Paris, 1930–62

EEBS *Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon* (Athens)

FHG *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, I–V, Paris, 1874–85

Goar, *Euchologion* J. Goar, *Euchologion, sive Rituale Graecorum*, Venice, 1730, repr. Graz, 1960

GRBS *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* (Duke University)

Grumel, *Regestes* V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, I: *Les Actes des Patriarches*, fasc. 1: *Les Regestes de 381 à 715*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1972

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Histoire du christianisme *Histoire du christianisme*, ed. J.-M. Mayeur, C. L. Piéti, A. Vauchez and M. Venard, IV: *Evêques, moines et empereurs* (*610–1054*), ed. G. Dagron, P. Riché and A. Vauchez, Paris, 1993; V: *Apogée de la papauté et expansion de la chrétienté* (*1054–1274*), ed. A. Vauchez, Paris, 1993

Inst. *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, I: *Iustiniani Institutiones*, ed. P. Krüger, repr. Dublin-Zurich 1966

JAC *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* (Munster)

Jaffé, *Regesta* P. Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificorum Romanorum*, 2nd ed. revised and added to by G. Wattenbach *et al.*, I–II, Leipzig, 1885–8, repr. Graz, 1956

Janin, *Constantinople byzantine* R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1964

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JÖB *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* (Vienna)

JRS *Journal of Roman Studies* (London)

Justinian, *Novellae* *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, III: *Novellae*, ed. R. Schöll and G. Kroll, repr. Berlin, 1963

Koukoules, *Byzantinon bios* P. Koukoules, *Byzantinon bios kai politismos*, I–IV, Athens, 1948–57

Mansi *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J. D. Mansi, I–XXXI, Florence/Venice, 1757–98

MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab a. C. 500 usque ad a. 1500* (Hanover)

OCP *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome)

Oikonomides, *Listes* N. Oikonomides, *Les Listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris, 1857–66

PG Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1857–66

PL Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1844–64

PLRE *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, I: *A.D. 260–395*, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971); II. *A.D. 395–527*, by J. R. Martindale (Cambridge, 1980); IIIA and B: *A.D. 527–641*, by J. R. Martindale (Cambridge, 1992).

PO *Patrologia Orientalis*

Rhalles–Potles, *Syntagma* G. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Syntagma ton theion kai hieron kanaon*, I–VI, Athens, 1852–9

RE Pauly-Wissowa-(Kroll), *Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*

REB *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* (Paris)

REG *Revue des Etudes Grecques* (Paris)

SC Collection des Sources Chrétiennes

TM *Collège de France*, *Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance*, *Travaux et mémoires* (Paris)

VizVrem. *Vizantijskij Vremennik* (Moscow)

Zepos, *Jus* J. and P. Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, I–VIII, Athens, 1931

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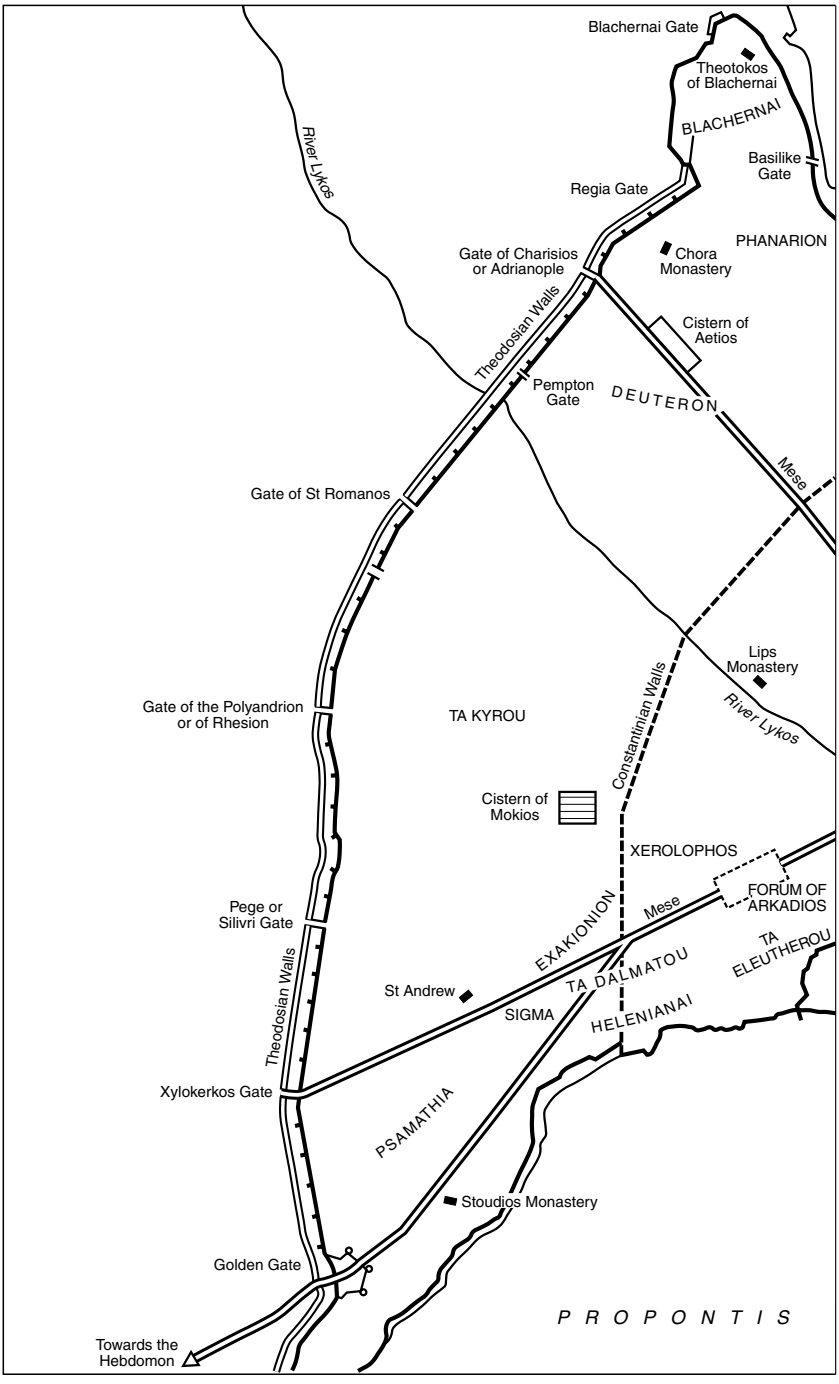

Simplified map of Constantinople

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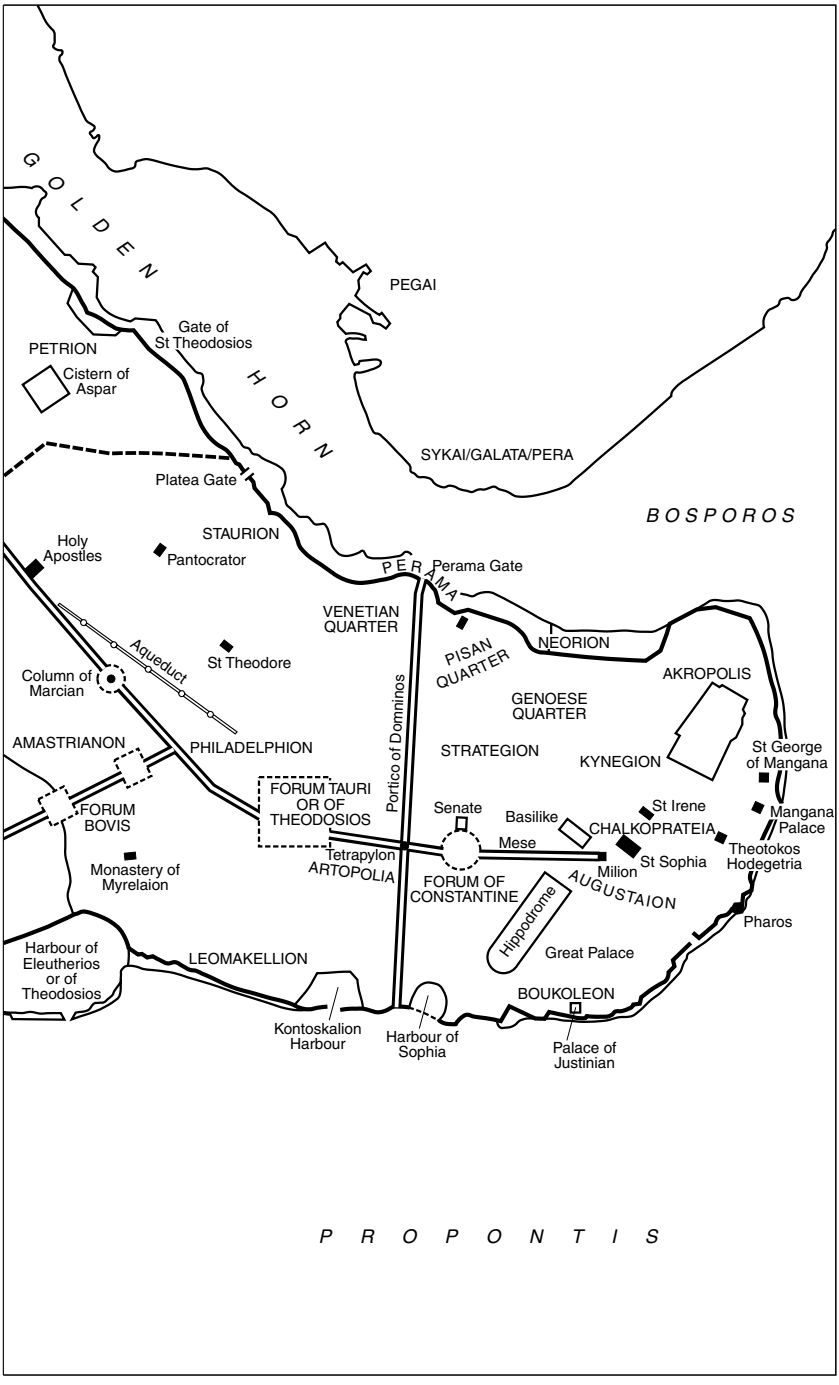

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