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0521817463 - The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian

Edited by Michael Maas

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN



This book introduces the Age of Justinian, which was both the last Roman century and the first flowering of Byzantine culture. Dominated by the policies and personality of emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565), this period of grand achievements and far-reaching failures witnessed the transformation of the Mediterranean world. In this volume, twenty specialists explore the most important aspects of the age, including warfare, urbanism, economy and the mechanics and theory of empire. They also discuss the impact of the great plague, the codification of Roman law, and the religious controversies of the day. Consideration is given to imperial relations with the papacy, northern barbarians, the Persians, and other eastern peoples, shedding new light on a dramatic and highly significant historical period.

Michael Maas is Professor of History and Director of the Program in Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations at Rice University.

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*This book is dedicated with great respect and affection
to Peter Brown
on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.*

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CONTRIBUTORS



JOSEPH D. ALCHERMES is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History and Architectural Studies at Connecticut College.

LESLIE BRUBAKER is Reader in Byzantine Art History and Director of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Birmingham.

BRIAN CROKE is Executive Director of the Catholic Education Commission, Sydney.

FRED M. DONNER is Professor of Near Eastern History in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

PATRICK T. R. GRAY is Professor of Religious Studies in the School of Arts and Letters in the Atkinson Faculty of York University, Toronto.

GEOFFREY GREATREX is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa.

JOHN HALDON is Professor of Byzantine History in the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies and Head of the School of Historical Studies at the University of Birmingham.

KENNETH HOLUM is Professor of History at the University of Maryland.

PEREGRINE HORDEN is Reader in Medieval History, Royal Holloway, University of London.

CONTRIBUTORS

CAROLINE HUMFRESS is Lecturer in Late Antique and Early Medieval History at Birkbeck College, London.

DEREK KRUEGER is Professor and Head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

NICHOLAS DE LANGE is Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Cambridge.

A. D. LEE is Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at the University of Nottingham.

MICHAEL MAAS is Professor of History at Rice University.

CHARLES PAZDERNIK is Assistant Professor of Classics at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan.

WALTER POHL is Director of the Institute of Medieval Research at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and teaches medieval history at the University of Vienna.

LUCAS VAN ROMPAY is Professor of Eastern Christianity in the Department of Religion at Duke University.

CLAIRE SOTINEL is *Maître de Conférences* in Roman History at the University of Bordeaux.

CLAUDIA RAPP is Associate Professor in the History Department at the University of California at Los Angeles.

CHRISTIAN WILDBERG is Professor of Classics at Princeton University.

ABBREVIATIONS



ACO	Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
AnTard	Antiquité Tardive
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
CAH ₁₃	Cambridge Ancient History Vol XIII: The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425, ed. Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (Cambridge, 1998)
CAH ₁₄	Cambridge Ancient History Vol XIV: Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600, ed. Averil Cameron, Michael Whitby, and Bryan Ward-Perkins (Cambridge, 2000)
CCSG	Corpus christianorum, series graeca
CCSL	Corpus christianorum, series latina
CFHB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
ChHist	Church History
CollAvell	Collectio Avellana
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
CSCO/Copt	Scriptores Coptici
CSCO/Syr	Scriptores Syri
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
EI(2)	Encyclopedia of Islam, new edition
Elr	Encyclopedia of Iran
FHG	Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review
IstMitt	Istanbuler Mitteilungen

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ABBREVIATIONS

JGR	Jus Graeco-romanum
JÖB	Jarhbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JEChrSt	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
Jones, LRE	A.H.M. Jones, <i>The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey</i> (Oxford, 1964).
JRA	Journal of Roman Archeology
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
MéIRom	Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire, Ecole française de Rome
MGH AA	Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi
MittIÖG	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung</i>
NPNF	<i>A Select Library of Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers</i> ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace (New York, 1887–1894; repr. Grand Rapids 1952–1956)
OCP	Orientalia christiana periodica
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i>
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina
PO	Patrologia orientalis
PLRE	Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire
RIDA	Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
Stein, Bas-Empire, 1&2	Ernest Stein, <i>Histoire du Bas-Empire</i> I: <i>De l'état romain à l'état byzantin</i> (284–476) (edn. fr. J.-R. Palanque, Paris–Bruges, 1959) II: <i>De la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien</i> (476–565). (Paris, 1949); both repr. Amsterdam, 1968
TM	Travaux et mémoires. Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance

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SELECT LIST OF ANCIENT SOURCES



Agapetus. Sixth-century deacon, possibly of Hagia Sophia, whose *Mirror of Princes*, written between 527 and 548, advised Justinian on how to be a good ruler. Partial translation by Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford 1957), 54–63.

Agathias, c. 532–c. 580. A lawyer at Constantinople whose *Histories* continue Procopius's narratives: *Agathias, the Histories*, trans. J. D. Frendo (Berlin, 1975). In his *Kyklos*, or *Cycle*, he collected Greek epigrams, which are contained in the *Greek Anthology*, trans. W. R. Paton (Cambridge, Mass., 1916–1918).

Anonymous *Treaty on Strategy*. This discussion of defensive and offensive strategy was written by a professional soldier, probably in the sixth century. George T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, D.C., 1985).

Anonymous of Piacenza (see Piacenza Pilgrim).

Cassiodorus, c. 487–c. 580. Italian statesman and scholar. After his retirement from service under King Theoderic, he established a monastery at Vivarium in Calabria. His *Variae* or *Official Correspondence* collected edicts and letters he had written for Theoderic. *Variae*, trans. S. J. B. Barnish (1992) and *The Letters of Cassiodorus*, trans. Thomas Hodgkin (1886) contain selections. His *History of the Goths*, which no longer survives, was an important source for Jordanes. Charles C. Mierow, *The Gothic History of Jordanes* (1915).

Corippus, d. c. 567. This north African émigré to Constantinople wrote in Latin. His epic poem *Johannis* celebrated the victories of John Troglita over the Berbers in North Africa. *The Iohannis or de Bellis Libycis of Flavius Cresconius Corippus*, trans. George W. Shea (1998). His *Panegyric on Justin II*, which honors Justinian's successor, contains information about Justinian's death, Justin's succession, and political ideology. *Flavius*

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Cresconius Corippus, *In Laudem Iustini Augusti minoris, libri IV*, trans. Averil. M. Cameron (1976).

Cosmas Indicopleustes (first half of the sixth century). An Alexandrian merchant who traveled on the Red Sea and possibly went to India, Cosmas wrote the *Christian Topography*, which describes his voyages and attempts to refute Ptolemaic and Aristotelian astronomy, believing that the world's shape imitates the tabernacle of Moses. *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, trans. William McCrindle (London, 1897).

Cyril of Scythopolis, c. 525–c. 559. A Palestinian monk, whose *Lives of the Monks of Palestine* reveals much about ascetic practice in the desert monasteries of the sixth century. *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, trans. R. M. Price and John Binns (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1991).

Evagrius Scholasticus, c. 536–after 594. A lawyer at Antioch, whose *Church History* covers the years 431–594, especially valuable for the post-Justinianic period. *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Michael Whitby (2000).

John Malalas, c. 490–c. 575. An Antiochene bureaucrat who moved to Constantinople around 540 and wrote the *Chronicle*, or *Chronographia*, which tells the history of the world from the Creation to the death of Justinian. A valuable source for contemporary attitudes and beliefs. *John Malalas, The Chronicle*, translated by Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott, et al. (Melbourne, 1986).

John of Nikiu. A late-seventh-century Egyptian bishop who composed a chronicle in Greek (now lost), surviving only in Ethiopic, covering the period from Adam to the Arab conquest of Egypt. It is the only eyewitness account of the conquest. *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiou*, trans. R. H. Charles (London, 1916).

John Philoponos, c. 490–after 567 or 574. A Christian trained in Neoplatonic philosophy who taught at Alexandria, known especially for his criticism of Aristotle on many issues. *Philoponos: Against Aristotle on the Eternity of the World*, trans. Christian Wildberg (1987). Other works are also translated.

John the Lydian (John Lydus), 490–c. 565. A bureaucrat in the praetorian praefecture in Constantinople and an antiquarian scholar. He wrote three treatises that preserve much information from earlier sources while responding to contemporary controversies. *On Offices* (*De magistratibus*) is translated as *Ioannes Lydus On Powers or The Magistracies of the Roman State* by Anastasius C. Bandy (Philadelphia,

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1983). *On Months* and *On Portents* have not yet been translated into English.

Junillus Africanus, d. c. 549. Chief legal officer at Constantinople after Tribonian's death, his *Handbook of the Basic Principles of Divine Law* presented a handbook of Christian exegesis for students. Translation by Michael Maas in *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean* (Tübingen, 2003).

Justinian, Roman emperor who reigned from 527–565. He was the author of many theological texts, some of which are translated by Kenneth P. Wesche, *On the Person of Christ* (Crestwood, N.Y., 1991). His *Corpus iuris civilis* (*Corpus of Civil Law*), which gathered prior Roman law and jurisprudence, consisted of the *Institutes*, *Code*, and *Digest*. He also published new laws called *Novellae* or *Novels*. P. Birks and G. MacLeod, trans., *Justinian's Institutes* (1987); J.A.C. Thomas, *The Institutes of Justinian* (1975); and Alan Watson, ed., *The Digest of Justinian* (1998). The *Novels* and the *Code* are translated (unreliably) by S. P. Scott in *The Civil Law* (Cincinnati, 1932).

Marcellinus Comes (Count Marcellinus). Sixth-century functionary at Justinian's court, he wrote a chronicle covering the eastern Mediterranean world during the years 379–534. As an eyewitness to events and a user of public documents, he is an important source for the reigns of Anastasius, Justin I, and Justinian. Brian Croke, *Chronicle of Marcellinus: Translation and Commentary* (Sydney, 1995).

Menander Protector. This late-sixth-century historian was a member of the palace guard under the emperor Maurice (r. 582–602). He composed a continuation of Agathias's *History* covering the period from 558–582. His work survives only as excerpts for a tenth-century Byzantine encyclopedia. R. C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985).

Paschal Chronicle (*Easter Chronicle*). The author of this early-seventh-century chronicle covering the Creation to 629 is unknown. It contains material on the Age of Justinian not found elsewhere. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, trans., *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD* (Liverpool, 1989).

Paul the Silentiary. A court official late in Justinian's reign, he composed a *Description of Saint Sophia* recited at the second dedication of the cathedral in 562. *Sancta Sophia*, trans. W. R. Lethaby and H. Swainson (London, 1894).

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Peter the Patrician, c. 400–565. A lawyer and diplomat who served Justinian as master of offices for twenty-six years, he negotiated in Italy with the Goths and with Persian kings. Fragments of his writings survive. Some are translated into English by G. Greatrex and S. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Part II: 363–628 AD, Narrative Sourcebook* (London, 2002).

Photius, c. 810–c. 893. Patriarch of Constantinople, whose *Bibliotheca*, or *Library*, contains summaries and comments on hundreds of earlier Greek sources, many now lost. *Bibliothèque*, French trans. René Henry (1959–1977); *The Library of Photius*, trans. John N. Freese (1920) contains only the first 165 of Photius's summaries.

Piacenza Pilgrim. The account of this late-sixth-century traveler to the Holy Land contains much information about religious practice at holy sites, sacred geography, and architecture. John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, Eng., 2002).

Procopius of Caesarea. The most important historian of Justinian's reign and an eyewitness to many events. His *Wars*, in eight books, deals with the Vandalic, Gothic, and Persian conflicts; *Buildings* celebrates Justinian's public works; and the *Secret History* or *Anecdota* is a vicious attack on the emperor, his court, and his policies. All Procopius's works are translated by H. B. Dewing and G. Downey (Cambridge, Mass., 1914–1940). *The Secret History*, trans., G. A. Williamson (London, 1966).

Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite. His chronicle, the earliest extant work of Syriac historiography, deals with Byzantine–Persian relations during the period 494–506. It describes the misfortunes of the city of Edessa in Syria. *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, trans. Frank R. Trombley and John W. Watt (Liverpool, 2000).

Romanos the Melode. Sixth-century deacon in Constantinople, whose hymns reflect contemporary piety and religious practice. Excellent translations of selected hymns: Ephrem Lash, trans. *St. Romanos the Melodist, Kontakia: On the Life of Christ* (1995) and R. J. Schork, *Sacred Song from the Byzantine Pulpit: Romanos the Melodist* (1995). His complete works are translated by Marjorie Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist*, 2 vols. (Columbia, Mo., 1970).

Suda. A lexicon written about 1000 that compiles much information about earlier historians and other writers. The *Suda* is now being translated online: www.stoa.org/sol.

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Theophylact Simocatta, early seventh century. The last historian writing in the classical tradition, he composed a narrative of the reign of emperor Maurice (582–602) as well as other works on natural history and theology. *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, trans. Michael Whitby, and Mary Whitby (Oxford, 1986).

CHRONOLOGY



- c. 482 Birth of Justinian
- c. 495 Justinian comes to Constantinople
- 518 Anastasius dies, Justin I becomes emperor
- 521 Consulship of Justinian
- c. 525 Marriage of Justinian and Theodora
- 527 Justinian becomes emperor
- 528 Law codification begins
- 529 First version of Justinian's *Code* appears; Academy in Athens closed; Samaritan revolt
- 531 Khusro I becomes Great King of Persia
- 532 Nika revolt; Eternal Peace with Persia signed
- 533 *Digest* published; Belisarius defeats Vandals
- 534 Belisarius celebrates triumph in Constantinople
- 535 Attack on Ostrogothic kingdom begins
- 537 Hagia Sophia dedicated in Constantinople
- 540 Khusro invades Syria and sacks Antioch
- 542 Plague epidemic begins; Jacob Baradaeus organizes anti-Chalcedonian church
- 545 Truce with Persia
- 546 Justinian issues edict condemning the Three Chapters
- 548 Death of Theodora
- 550 Attack on Visigothic Spain begins
- 551 Breach between Justinian and Pope Vigilius
- 552 Narses defeats Goths in Italy
- 553 Franks invade Italy; Fifth Ecumenical Council condemns Three Chapters
- 554 Italy pacified and reorganized through the "Pragmatic Sanction"; silkworm eggs smuggled into Roman empire
- 558 Dome of Hagia Sophia collapses; Avar envoys in Constantinople

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CHRONOLOGY

- 559 Slavs and Kotrigur Huns attack Constantinople and are stopped by Belisarius
- 562 Fifty Years Peace (Eternal Peace) with Persia
- 565 Justinian endorses apthartodocetism; Justinian dies, Nov. 14.; Justin II becomes emperor
- 568 Lombards invade Italy
- c. 570 Birth of Muhammad
- 578 Tiberius Constatine becomes emperor
- 579 Khusro I dies
- 580s Slav invasion of Greece
- 582 Maurice becomes emperor
- 591 Maurice restores Khusro II to Persian throne
- 590 Gregory the Great becomes pope
- 602 Phocas overthrows Maurice and becomes emperor

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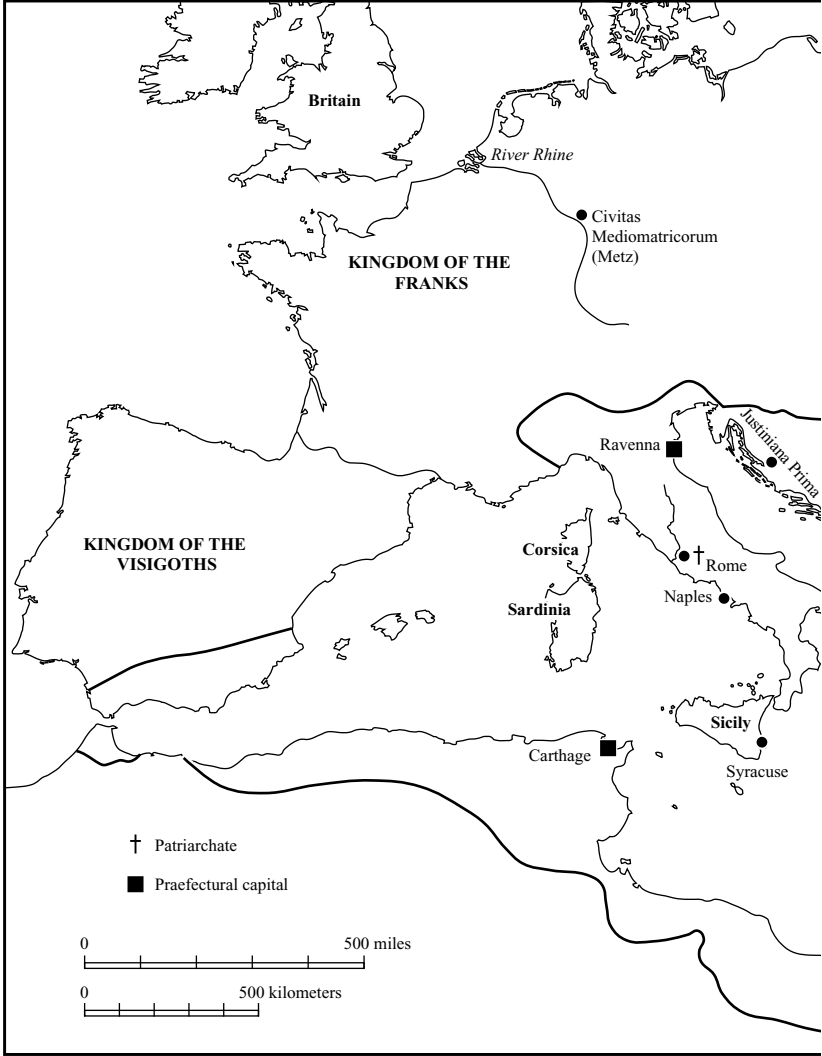
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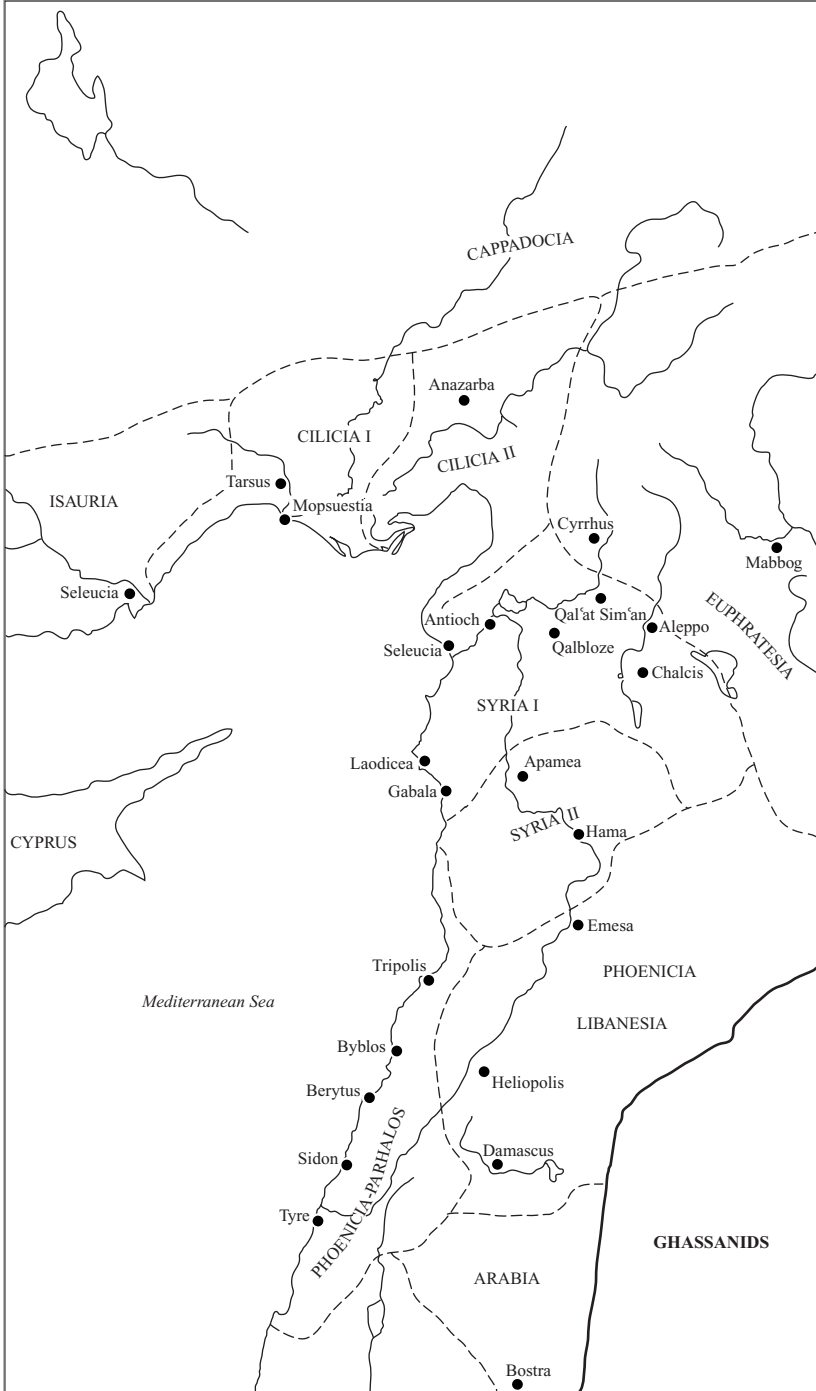
MAPS





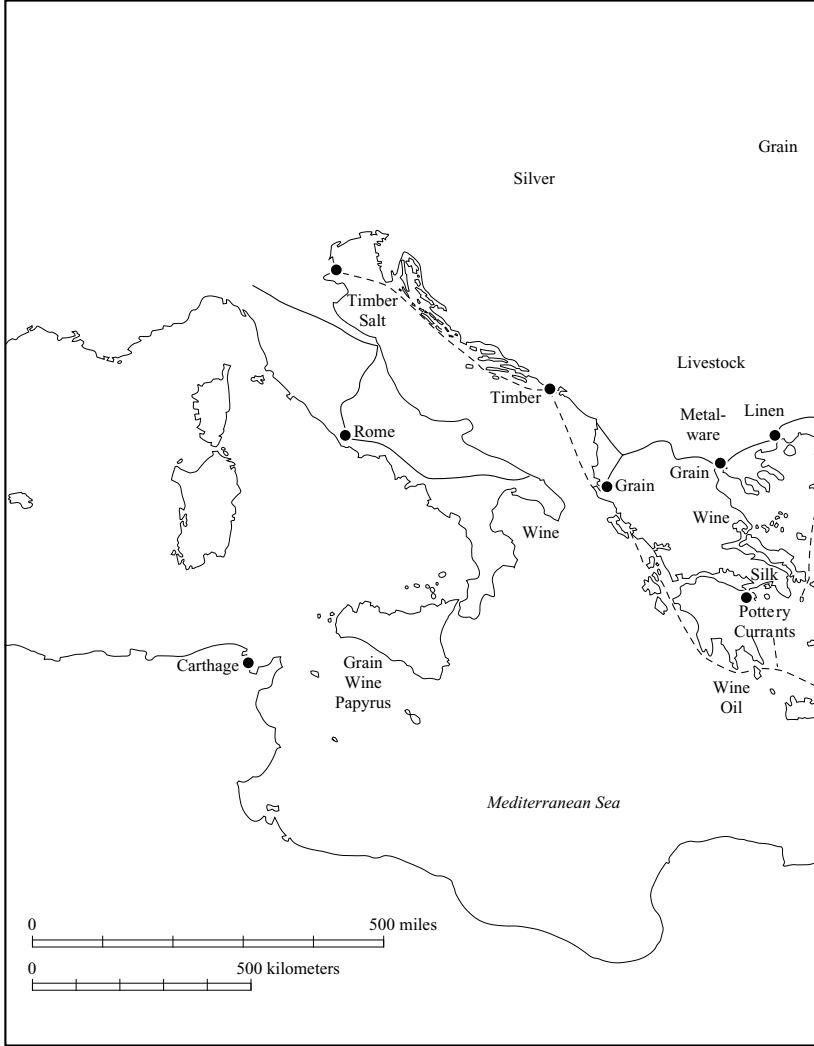
MAP 1. Justinian's empire in 565





MAP 2. The eastern provinces of the Roman Empire





MAP 3. Resources, production, and trade in Justinian's empire

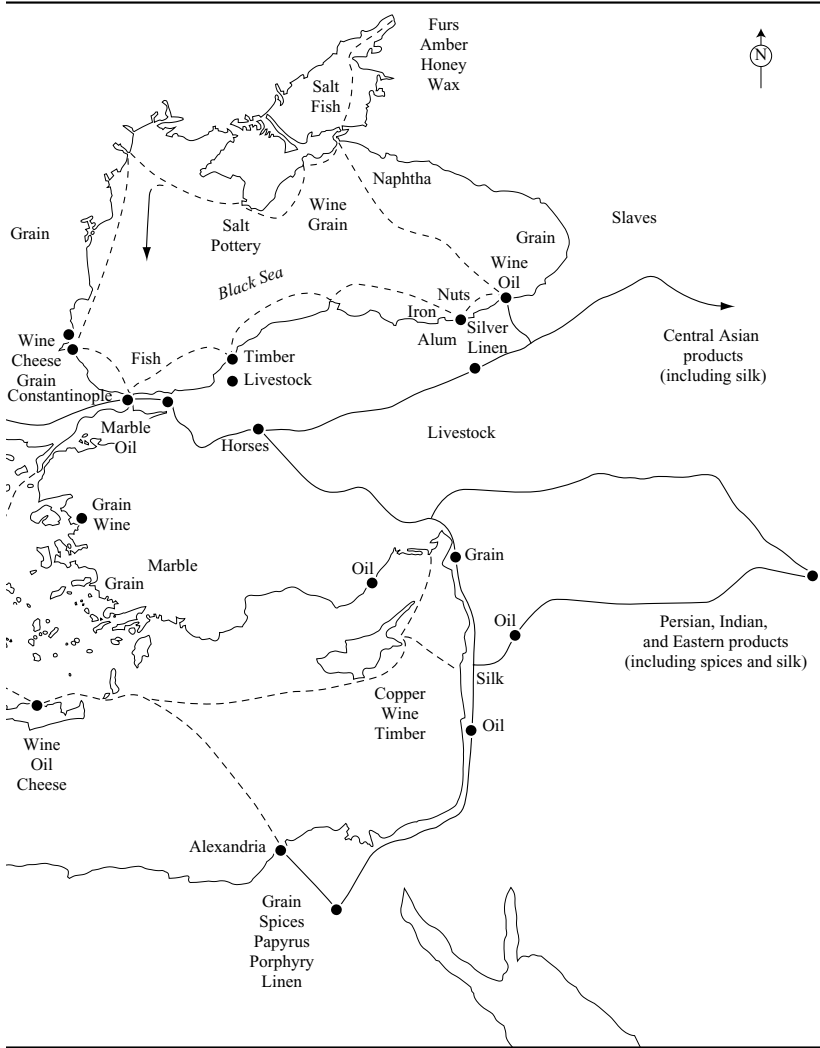
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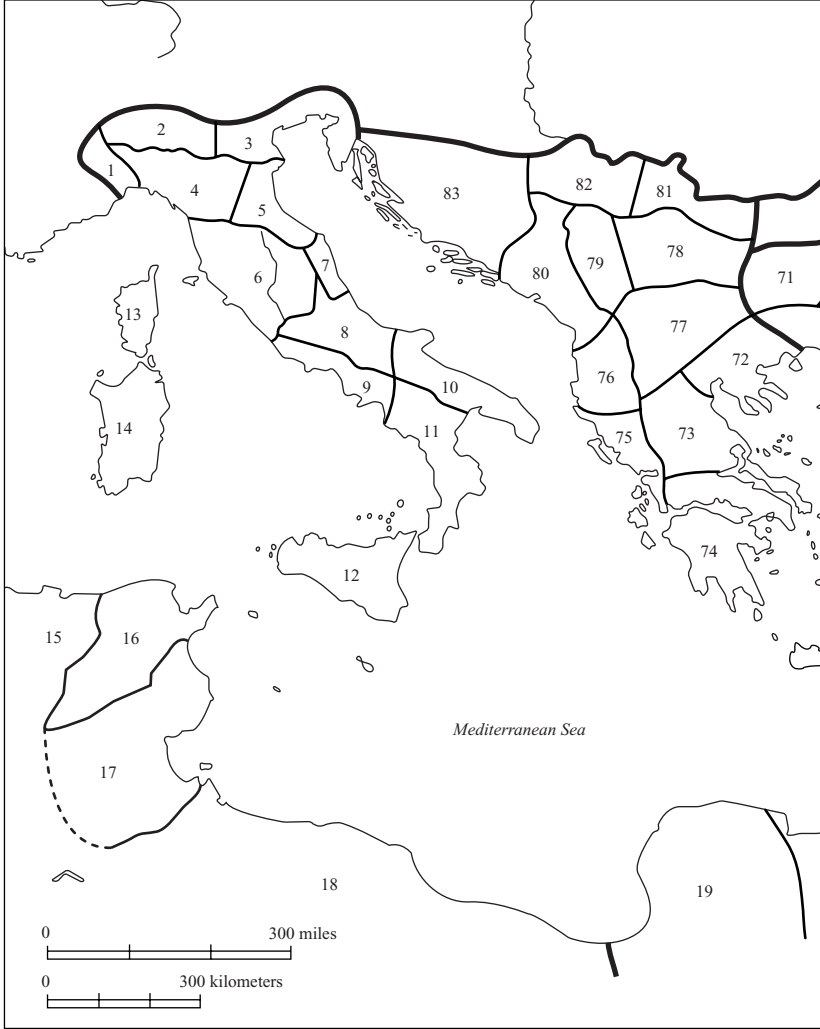
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- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1 Alpes Cottiae | 15 Numidia | 29 Palaestina II |
| 2 Aemilia | 16 Zeugitania | 30 Phoenice |
| 3 Venetia | 17 Byzacena | 31 Theodorias |
| 4 Liguria | 18 Tripolitania | 32 Cyprus (in <i>quaestura exercitus</i>) |
| 5 Flaminia | 19 Libya Pentapolis | 33 Phoenice Libanensis |
| 6 Tuscia et Umbria | 20 Libya Inferior | 34 Syria II |
| 7 Picenum | 21 Arcadia | 35 Syria I |
| 8 Samnium | 22 Thebais Inferior | 36 Euphratensis |
| 9 Campania | 23 Augustamnica II | 37 Osrhoene |
| 10 Apulia et Calabria | 24 Aegyptus I and II | 38 Mesopotamia |
| 11 Lucania et Bruttium | 25 Augustamnica I | 39 Armenia III |
| 12 Sicilia | 26 Palaestina III | 40 Armenia IV |
| 13 Corsica | 27 Palaestina I | 41 Armenia I |
| 14 Sardinia | 28 Arabia | 42 Armenia II |

MAP 4. Administrative organization of the empire