

## THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE c. 500–1492

Byzantium lasted a thousand years, ruled to the end by self-styled ‘emperors of the Romans’. It underwent kaleidoscopic territorial and structural changes, yet recovered repeatedly from disaster: even after the near-impregnable Constantinople fell in 1204, variant forms of the empire reconstituted themselves. *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine empire* tells the story, tracing political and military events, religious controversies and economic change. It offers clear, authoritative chapters on the main events and periods, with more detailed chapters on outlying regions and neighbouring societies and powers of Byzantium. With aids such as maps, a glossary, an alternative place-name table and references to English translations of sources, it will be valuable as an introduction. However, it also offers stimulating new approaches and important findings, making it essential reading for postgraduates and for specialists. This revised paperback edition contains a new preface by the editor and will offer an invaluable companion to survey courses in Byzantine history.

JONATHAN SHEPARD was a University Lecturer in History at the University of Cambridge. Co-author of *The Emergence of Rus* (1996) with Simon Franklin, with whom he also co-edited *Byzantine Diplomacy* (1992), some of his many articles appear in *Emergent Elites and Byzantium* (2011). Edited volumes include *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe* (2007), *Byzantium and the Viking World* (with Fedir Androshchuk and Monica White, 2016) and *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic* (with Mladen Ančić and Trpimir Vedriš, 2017), *Viking-Age Trade* (with Jacek Gruszczyński and Marek Jankowiak, 2019) and forthcoming volumes include *Muslims on the Volga* (with Luke Treadwell) and *Political Culture in Three Spheres: Byzantium, Islam and the West* (with Catherine Holmes et al.).



*War at Sea*: Illustration of a sea-battle (*naumachia*) from a manuscript datable to c. 1060 (Cod. Marcianus Graecus 510, fol. 10v). The illustration, from the instruction, 'On Hunting' (*Cynegetica*), the design is probably on the lines of an illustration in a late antique manuscript. The picture reflects the Byzantines' continuing interest in their ancient past, but also their sense of naval prowess. An eleventh-century manuscript from Romania (Byzantium). (See further in I. Spatharakis, *The illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice Codex Marcianus 510*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 100.)  
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HISTORY OF THE  
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*c. 500–1492*

Revised Edition

Edited by

JONATHAN SHEPARD



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JONATHAN SHEPARD

*Formerly Lecturer in History, University of Cambridge*

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To Nicola



## PREFACE

This is a short preface for quite a lengthy book, but it is a means of paying tribute to those principally involved in the development, shaping and production of *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine empire* (or *CHBE*). Like the empire itself, the process of formation has been protracted, without a clear-cut starting-point, and such sense of direction as has been attained owes more to collaborative effort than it does to untrammelled autocracy.

Given the sizable number of persons contributing in one way or another, the preface's brevity entails a mere sketch of those without whose help and advice *CHBE* would have been a far more onerous and lengthy task. It was Bill Davies who originally encouraged me to take on remodelling materials already available, and several anonymous readers helped structure the volume. Michael Sharp took over from Bill at Cambridge University Press and he has been an extremely patient and supportive editor, ably assisted at various times by Liz Davey, Sinead Moloney, Liz Noden and Annette Youngman. Particular thanks should go to the following key players: Bernard Dod, our indefatigable and eagle-eyed copy-editor, whose attention to detail and wise counsel averted many a mishap; to Barbara Hird, our expert indexer, whose care and clarity have created a valuable additional pathway to Byzantium; to Patricia Jeskins, our assiduous proofreader; and to David Cox, our cartographer, whose splendid maps are closely integrated with the text of our chapters.

For bibliographic help I have to thank the following colleagues, who have supplied references and answered tiresome queries with speed and good grace: Jean-Claude Cheynet, Florin Curta, Peter Frankopan, Judith Gilliland, Michael Grünbart, Paul Herrup, James Howard-Johnston, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Lester Little, Margaret Mullett, Angel Nikolov, Paolo Odorico, Maureen Perrie, Günter Prinzing, Charlotte Roueché, Maciej Salamon, Alexios Savvides, Teresa Shawcross, John Smedley, Tsvetelin Stepanov, Alice-Mary Talbot, George Tcheishvili, Ida Toth, Vladimir Vavřínek and Mark Whittow. I should also like to thank the staff at the Bodleian, Taylorian Slavonic, Sackler, Oriental Institute and the other Oxford libraries, as well as the staff of the University Library in Cambridge.

Colleagues who clarified various points along the thousand-year trek, or who freely provided access to unpublished materials of value for this work include Jane Baun, Jeffrey Featherstone, Paul Fouracre, John Haldon, Rosemary Morris, Pananos Sophoulis and Monica White. Particular thanks are due to Catherine Holmes, Mike Maas and Andrew Roach, who read the introduction and some of the chapters that follow, and who warned of cul-de-sac and quicksands to be charted or – hopefully – avoided.

On the technical side, help with translation and transliteration was given by Lawrence Conrad, Jeffrey Featherstone, Tim Greenwood, Mona Hamami and Marina Kujic. Jenny Perry saved me on several occasions when Macs failed to talk to PCs, and vice versa, while Nigel James of the Bodleian initiated me into the mysteries of digital map-making. Locating and sourcing illustrations was made easier through the assistance of Nancy Alderson, Michel Balard, Theodore van Lint, Cyril Mango, Nicholas Mayhew, Dorothy McCarthy, Denys Pringle, Michael Stone and Robert Thomson. Particular thanks go to our neighbours, Vanessa and Peter Winchester, to whom I am indebted for several pictures of Constantinople. These thanks should be accompanied by apologies for a certain lack of sociability in recent years – and extended to all remaining friends.

It is a commonplace to thank one's immediate family for their help and endurance in these endeavours. However, I must single out my wife, Nicola, who took on the role of editorial assistant on the project without, I think, appreciating the sheer scale of activity involved. As I have often pointed out to her, this could be seen as due penance for failing to attend my lectures on Byzantium and its neighbours all those years ago in Cambridge! Without Nicola, the volume would probably not have been published this decade, and I am profoundly grateful for her patience, counsel and support.

However, those most indispensable are the volume's contributors. The chapters whose first incarnation was in *The Cambridge ancient history* or *The new Cambridge medieval history* have been joined by important new contributions expanding and elaborating on relevant themes. But it goes without saying that, notwithstanding all the help and advice received along the way, I take responsibility for such mistakes or errors as may have crept into the finished work.

#### NOTES ON USING THIS VOLUME

Our approach to transliteration may induce unease among some colleagues – and invite charges of inconsistency – but we have tried to make proper names and technical terms accessible to the English-speaking world wherever possible. Greek has been transliterated and bars have been used to

distinguish *ēta* from *epsilon* and *ōmega* from *omicron* in the case of individual words and technical terms, but abandoned for proper names. Greek forms of proper names have generally been adopted in Parts II and III – Komnenos instead of the Latinised Comnenus, for example – in contrast to Part I, set in late antiquity, when Latinised names seem appropriate. In general, we have adopted a ‘b’ and not ‘v’ when transliterating the Greek letter *bēta*. However, where a name is more or less domiciled in English usage, we have let it be, e.g. Monemvasia and not Monembasia. Where the names of places are probably so familiar to most readers in their Latinised forms that the use of a Greek form might distract, the Latinised form has been retained in Parts II and III – Nicaea instead of Nikaia, for example. Familiar English forms have been preferred out of the same consideration – Athens not Athenai, for example – and in Part III, when the empire’s possessions were being taken over by speakers of other tongues, the place names now prevalent have generally been preferred – Ankara instead of Ankyra, for example.

Arabic diacritics have been discarded in proper names, with only the ayn (‘) and hamza (‘) retained in the form shown, on the assumption that the diacritics will not help non-Arabic readers and may actually distract from name recognition and recall; however, full diacritics have been retained for individual words and technical terms. We have tried to be consistent yet accessible in transliterating other key scripts, such as Armenian and Cyrillic, using for the latter a modified version of the Library of Congress system.

Detailed notes on how to use the bibliography can be found below at pp. 936–8. Chronological sectioning for the secondary bibliography is – like the periodisation of history itself into mutually exclusive compartments – rather arbitrary. **The bibliography of secondary works should therefore be treated as a whole and the reader failing to find a work in one section should try the others.**

The Glossary and Tables are not intended to be comprehensive guides. The Glossary offers a selection of the technical terms, foreign words and names of peoples and institutions appearing in *CHBE*. But wherever possible, these are explained in the context of a chapter and only the more problematic proper names have a Glossary entry (see also Maps 3 and 52). Likewise, the lists of rulers and genealogies have been kept to a minimum, since they are available in more specialised works. The list of alternative place names is intended to help the reader locate some towns and regions which were known under radically different names by diverse occupants or neighbours, and to offer modern equivalents where known.

The maps are designed to reconcile accessibility for anglophone readers with a sense of the form prevalent during the chronological

section of *CHBE* in question, not wholly compatible goals. The maps are intended to be viewed as an ensemble, and readers unable to spot a place in a map positioned in one chapter should look to adjoining chapters, or (aided by the list of alternative place names and the index) shop around.

## PREFACE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

A principal objective of the *Cambridge history of the Byzantine empire* is to make the empire's outlines and story more accessible to newcomers from the English-reading world, and a paperback version can only further this end. Three caveats are worth sounding here.

Firstly, the book's focus falls primarily on events, the policies declared and deeds done by rulers and political elites, their various conflicts and attempts at consensus, the religious creed and rites that legitimised them, together with their material bases of support. There are no pretensions to systematic coverage of every single aspect of Byzantium and its civilisation, although guidance about other possible approaches features in the Introduction.

Secondly, the focus of the contents veers drastically between the centre, the periphery and peoples beyond, with the empire's inner provinces (in so far as there were any) receiving relatively short shrift. This is a reflection partly on the scope of our more reliable written sources, and partly on the fact that over half this book's chapters owe their origins to other *Cambridge history* series, as the Introduction makes clear (p. 10 and n. 24). But it also registers a peculiarity of the Byzantine empire. The politico-military centre in Constantinople was fixed and (until 1204) virtually impregnable, with the imperial and the ecclesiastical 'establishment' setting standards in unison, for all their differences in emphasis and occasional altercations. Beyond the City's walls, though, things were more negotiable, even if religious orthodoxy and notions of law, order and the payment of taxes held surprisingly firm (as our chapters show). The locus of effective imperial control over territories shifted markedly over time, and the spheres of Byzantine cultural influence mutated, too. Byzantine writers would sometimes remark on the ebb and flow, with churchmen interpreting military and territorial losses as God's wrath, punishment of His people for their sins. For example, describing the nomads' virtual encirclement of the City in 1091, John the Oxite lamented: 'Now the frontiers of the empire of the Romans are reduced to the acropolis of Byzantion [i.e. Constantinople] towards the east and to the Golden

Gate to the west!<sup>1</sup> Within a decade, the emperor had re-asserted his control across much of the Balkans and western Asia Minor, in the process doing something to trigger the First Crusade (see p. 622 below). This episode illustrates how much the interplay between the capital and societies far beyond the empire's formal borders mattered for its resilience and survival, perhaps also serving to vindicate the attention paid to these societies here.

A third caveat is that this paperback's text is essentially that of the hardback. There has been no attempt to update the original bibliography systematically, let alone to rejig its Anglophone bias. Works described there as 'forthcoming' or 'in preparation' now have the appropriate updated details, if publication has since occurred. Where major new editions or translations of key primary sources have appeared or are known to be forthcoming, these have been added to the bibliography and to the annotations citing them. These include a meticulous rendering of *The codex of Justinian* based on the translation of Justice Fred H. Blume; the translation of key legal texts of the Isaurian era, such as the *Ecloga*, by Mike Humphreys; Ihor Ševčenko's edition and translation of Book V of Theophanes Continuatus (*Life of Basil*), and an edition and translation of the first four books of this work by Jeffrey Featherstone and Juan Signes Codoñer; Anthony Kaldellis' and Dimitris Krallis' translation of Michael Attaleiates' *Historia*; Charlotte Roueché's online edition and translation of Kekaumenos' *Strategikon*; George Dennis' edition and translation of Leo VI's *Tactica*, as emended and supplied with critical commentary by Everett Wheeler and John Haldon; and the translations by John Wortley of John Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Byzantine history* and by Anne Moffatt and Maxene Tall of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De cerimoniis*. Translation into English of collections of our source materials alongside individual works increases apace, and two new series have appeared since publication of the hardback edition of our volume: the *Dumbarton Oaks medieval library* and *Translated texts for Byzantinists* from Liverpool University Press. Where possible, we have taken cognisance of these translations in the relevant footnotes. However, it should be noted that the translations in the text remain those of the authors of the respective chapters.

Readers undaunted by a multiplicity of tongues will find continuous updates on publications in the bibliography of the flagship journal for Byzantine studies, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, published twice-yearly. The wealth of languages in the secondary literature to be found there reflects the importance of Byzantium to many societies in western Eurasia. Diplomatic circumstances prompted the French President of the day, Jacques Chirac, to declare in 2004, 'Nous sommes tous des enfants

<sup>1</sup> John the Oxite, *Speech*, pp. 34–5.

## PREFACE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

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de Byzance' ['We are all children of Byzantium'], including modern Turkey among its progeny. This earned him criticism on grounds of factual inaccuracy. And yet the phrase may have resonance for those who turn the pages of this book – for example Chapter 24, 'The Roman orthodox world'. The ancient empire had a way of leaving a lasting mark, not least on its foes.

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