


# Did the Byzantines call themselves Byzantines? Elements of Eastern Roman identity in the imperial discourse of the seventh century\*

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*This article examines the term ‘Byzantine’ as it appears in the 678 Sacra of Constantine IV to Pope Donus. Unlike most other late antique and medieval usages of the term, that is, to describe individuals from Constantinople, the Emperor used the term in relation to Palestinian, Cilician and Armenian monastic communities in Rome. The article considers a number of possible readings of the term and suggests that, in the context of distinction between Eastern and Western Romans, the term functioned as a designation for Eastern Romans.*

**Keywords:** Byzantine identity; Romanness; division of the Roman Empire; Old Rome–New Rome; ‘Greek’ monasteries in Rome

In recent years there has been growing scholarly interest in Eastern Roman identity. Scholars have offered new approaches to this subject suggesting new, but conflicting, ways of understanding the way in which the inhabitants of what we call the ‘Byzantine’ or ‘Eastern Roman’ Empire viewed themselves. Despite the variety of interpretations regarding the collective identity of these people, there is a consensus that the state and its social elites identified as Roman throughout the centuries. In fact, it is believed that the term ‘Byzantine’, which many modern historians use instead of ‘Roman’, was coined by Hieronymus Wolf in the sixteenth century in order to distinguish the classical Roman Empire from its medieval Greek-speaking

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continuation. It is therefore not surprising that Anthony Kaldellis has questioned how far we can lean on the term ‘Byzantine’, given that ‘Roman’ was the main self-descriptive term used by the inhabitants of the empire.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that the term ‘Byzantine’ (*Byzantios*) in Greek sources almost always indicates a direct relation with the city of Constantinople, the ancient Greek colony of Byzantium. There are so many examples of this usage that citing them all would be an almost impossible and pointless task. Indicatively, I will cite a novel of Justinian both because of its gravity as an official imperial text and because I will later use it to help construct my argument. The novel in question, Novel 89, unmistakably employs the term ‘Byzantine’ (*Byzantios*) to designate the citizens of Constantinople by way of distinction from the citizens of Rome, who are described as Romans (*Romaïos*).<sup>2</sup> This acknowledged fact is attested in modern dictionaries according to which the term Byzantine applied only to the inhabitants of Constantinople and not to the entire population of the empire.<sup>3</sup>

My study will not attempt to change this view. I will not argue that ‘Byzantine’ had been used as an adjectival descriptor for the entire empire functioning as a synonym for ‘Roman’. Instead I will suggest that ‘Byzantine’ could be used, in the context of a distinction between Eastern and Western Romans, as a synonym for ‘Eastern Roman’. This distinction required a world-view of a united Roman ecumene divided into two halves.<sup>4</sup> In this context, Eastern Romanness was simply seen as one form of Roman tradition, but not the only one. A rare, if not unique, example of such usage occurs in the seventh century, where the term ‘Byzantine’ was used officially by the imperial chancery in order to describe individuals who were culturally ‘Eastern Romans’; that is, who represented the culture of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire.

In 678 the Emperor Constantine IV (668–85) dispatched an imperial command (*Sacra*) to Pope Donus (676–78) in Rome asking him to make preparations for an ecumenical synod that would put an end to the theological dispute concerning whether Christ possessed both a human and a divine will.<sup>5</sup> He asked the Pope to send

1 A. Kaldellis, *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA 2019) ix–xv.

2 *Corpus Iuris Civilis, Novellae* (CIC), eds. R. Schoell and W. Kroll, Novel 89, 432: ἡ ἐκ τῆς δε τῆς μεγάλης ὄρητο πόλεως ἡ ἐκ τῆς ἔτι πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης ... ἢ εἰ τις ἐλεύθερος ἅμα καὶ Ῥωμαῖος ἢ Βυζάντιος εἶη (whether he derives from this great city or from Old Rome ... or if he is free and at the same time citizen of Rome or Constantinople). All translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

3 See indicatively the lemma ‘Byzantion’ in A. Kazhdan (ed.) *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, and ‘Byzantius’ in P. Geary (ed.) *Lexikon des Mittelalters*.

4 For the history and evolution of the two halves of the Roman Empire: P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity A.D. 200–1000* (Oxford 1988). John Haldon has suggested that the usage of such language by the imperial chancery reflected the emperor’s claims to universal authority: J. Haldon, *The Empire That Would not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival 640–740* (Cambridge, MA 2016) 120–1.

5 The literature on Monothelism is extensive; here I cite only a recent monograph which has played a crucial role in my understanding of the topic: P. Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Los Angeles 2014).

representatives to the imperial city and described in detail how the papal delegation should be constituted: ‘from your most Holy Church, if your Beatitude wishes, it will suffice to send three persons, or more, as many as your Beatitude wishes, from the council up to twelve metropolitans and bishops, while from the four Byzantine monasteries from each monastery four monks.’<sup>6</sup> One would assume that the term ‘Byzantine’ in this case indicated monastic communities originating in Constantinople. However, the monasteries Constantine was referring to had nothing to do with the city of Byzantium.

Before turning to these monastic communities, we should look into the transmission of the text of the Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680/1) in which the term appears. The Greek text of the Acts survives only in relatively late manuscripts (15<sup>th</sup> c.) based on the text that the deacon Agatho<sup>7</sup> re-edited in 713 after the Monothelete Emperor Philippikos Bardanes (711–13) had the copies of the Acts that were kept in the palace destroyed.<sup>8</sup> The Latin text of the Acts, which was produced in Rome between 682 and 701 by Greek-speakers proficient in Latin, survives in much earlier manuscripts (the earliest dating to the eighth or ninth century) which spread throughout western Europe.<sup>9</sup> Despite the very complex transmission of the text, the term ‘Byzantine’ in the *Sacra* of Constantine appears in all manuscripts of both the Greek and the Latin text.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is quite safe to assume that we are dealing here with the original term used by the imperial chancery and not with a later interpolation.

Turning to the monasteries mentioned by the Emperor, Rome was home to a number of Oriental monastic communities which were leading proponents in Dyothelite theology; that is, the theology that prevailed in the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680/1) and became the official doctrine of the empire. Roughly thirty years before this letter was drafted, these monastic communities had played a crucial role at the Lateran Council of 649, which condemned Monotheletism and rejected the imperial policy of banning any discussion on the topic. These communities had produced extensive compilations of patristic texts (*florilegia*) that supported the Dyothelite position.<sup>11</sup> Maximos the Confessor, arguably the most prominent member of the Oriental monastic community of Rome, was instrumental in the struggle over the wills of

6 *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (ACO), Series Secunda, 2 vols., ed. R. Riedinger, vol. 2, part 1, 6: ἐκ μὲν τῆς καθ’ ὑμᾶς ἀγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας, εἰ μὲν ἀρέσκει αὐτῇ ἐν τρισὶ πρόσωποις ἀρκεσθῆναι, ἐπεὶ καὶ πλείονας, ὅσους ἀρέσκει αὐτῇ, ἐκ δὲ τῆς συνόδου ἕως δεκαδύο μητροπολιτῶν τε καὶ ἐπισκόπων, ἐκ δὲ τῶν τεσσάρων Βυζαντιῶν μοναστηρίων ἐξ ἑκάστου μοναστηρίου ἄββάδας τέσσαρας.

7 *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire I (641–687)* (PBE), Agatho 3; *Prosopographie der Mittelbyzantinischen Zeit* (PmbZ), Agathon 132.

8 ACO, vol. 2, part 1, vii–ix.

9 R. Riedinger ‘Die lateinischen Handschriften der Akten des VI. Konzils (680/681) und die Unzialkorrekturen im Cod. Vat. Regin. Lat. 1040’, *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 22 (1980) 37–49.

10 ACO, vol. 2, part 1, 7: *de quattuor vero monasteriis Bizanteis* (*Vizanteis* in two manuscripts).

11 A. Grillmeier, trans. P. Allen and J. Cawte, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 1 (Atlanta 1987) 73–5.

Christ.<sup>12</sup> He led the Dyothelite opposition to imperial religious policies from the 630s until his death in exile in 662. A fact that demonstrates the extent of the influence of Maximos and the rest of the Oriental monks on Rome is that the Acts of the Lateran Council seem to have been drafted originally in Greek and afterwards translated into Latin.<sup>13</sup> The Lateran Council may have been a mere approval of the translated text produced by the Oriental monks.<sup>14</sup>

In this light, it becomes evident that it was representatives of these monastic communities that Constantine IV requested in his *Sacra*, for it was precisely these groups that had, since the middle of the seventh century, enjoyed a reputation as strong advocates of Dyothelite orthodoxy and deep theological expertise. Nonetheless, his use of the term ‘Byzantine’ in relation to these monasteries requires a close examination of their composition. The best source of information regarding this matter is the Acts of the Lateran Council. In the second session of the council, on October 5, 36 monks received permission to present a petition. In the text they are described as Greeks (Γραικοί/*Greci*) who either had just arrived in Rome or who had already dwelled there for a long time.<sup>15</sup> Those who appear as the heads of these communities were: John, abbot of the monastery of Mar Saba in Palestine; Theodore, abbot of the African monastery of St Saba; Thalassios, abbot of the Armenian monastery of Renati in Rome; and George, abbot of the Cilician monastery of St Anastasios in Aquas Salvias in Rome.<sup>16</sup>

The Palestinian monks established in Rome a monastic community dedicated to St Saba which was destined to become the most important Roman monastery in the following centuries.<sup>17</sup> Jean-Marie Sansterre believes that the monks who settled in Rome were Palestinians who had previously been in Africa, and he associates their move with the great Arab raid in North Africa in 647/8 which had rendered the province unsafe. Maximos the Confessor, a Palestinian monk belonging to this community, came to Rome from North Africa in 645/6 in order to prepare the ground for the anti-Monothelite council. This date can be seen as the foundation of the monastery of St Saba in Rome, also called *Cella Nova*.<sup>18</sup>

The Armenian monastery of Renati was founded before the Sabaite community, and its occupants were likely among those referred to when the Acts of the Lateran Council mentioned Greeks who had already been long resident in Rome. Sansterre argues that

12 PBE I Maximos 10; PmbZ Maximos 4921.

13 R. Riedinger, ‘Die Lateransynode von 649 und Maximos der Bekenner’, in *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur* (Freiburg 1982) 111–21.

14 R. Riedinger, ‘Griechische Konzilsakten auf dem Wege ins lateinische Mittelalter’, *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 9 (1977) 253–301, 256.

15 ACO, vol. 1, 48.

16 ACO, vol. 1, 48, 50, 57.

17 J. M. Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne (milieu du VIe s.-fin du IXe s.)* (Brussels 1983) 22.

18 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 22–9.

the founders of this monastery were perhaps Armenian monks who had lived in various monastic communities in Palestine and were forced to flee during either the Sassanian (613–14) or the Arab (634–38) conquest of the Levant.<sup>19</sup> The monastery of St Anastasios was founded by monks from Cilicia under similar circumstances. Sansterre maintains that this community moved to Rome in the 640s after the Arab conquest of Syria (634–38) and the evacuation of Cilicia by Herakleios (610–41). According to him, the monks brought with them the relic of St Anastasios the Persian and established a monastery in his honour.<sup>20</sup> Phil Booth, however, has suggested that the community existed long before it received the relics of the Saint and that it was already established by the time John Moschos and Sophronios visited the city in the late 610s.<sup>21</sup>

In any case, it is evident that these three monastic communities were founded by and manned with refugees from the Levant and that they had no direct connection to Constantinople. The fourth of the monasteries mentioned in the imperial *Sacra* was probably the Domus Arsicia, a community that provided half of the monks who participated in the papal delegation to the Sixth Ecumenical Council.<sup>22</sup> This fact implies that the monastery was highly esteemed in contemporary Rome and that some of its monks were competent theologians. Despite its apparent influence on the theological stage in the second half of the seventh century, unfortunately no further information about it survives. The Domus Arsicia does not appear on the list of privileges of Leo III (807). This absence suggests that it ceased to exist at some point between the 680s and the beginning of the ninth century.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, there is no information regarding its composition and the origin of its monks. One cannot therefore exclude a connection between this particular monastery and Constantinople; even if this were the case, the majority of the monastic communities referred to by Constantine would have nevertheless originated in the Levant.

It should also be mentioned that there were two additional Oriental monastic communities in Rome in the 670s: the Syrian monastery of Boetiana, which was founded after 649 and dissolved by Pope Donus (676–78) on the grounds of heresy;<sup>24</sup> and the abandoned monastery of St Erasmus that Pope Adeodatus (672–76) re-founded, populating it with Greek-speaking monks.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that either the news of the foundation of St Erasmus had not reached Constantinople by 678, when the emperor issued the *Sacra*, or simply that the *basileus* was interested only in the well-established and reputable Oriental monastic communities of Rome. These were in all probability the three communities that took part in the Lateran

19 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 13, 18.

20 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 13–17.

21 Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 111.

22 ACO, vol. 2, part 1, 18.

23 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 37–8.

24 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 37.

25 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 35, 152; J.M. Sansterre, 'Le monachisme byzantine en Rome', in *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'alto medioevo 3–9 aprile 1986* (Spoleto 1988) 705.

Synod of 649, along with the mysterious community of Domus Arsicia, which played an important role in the Third Council of Constantinople.

Given these considerations, one has to accept that on this occasion the term 'Byzantine' did not indicate Constantinopolitan origin, so alternatives need to be considered. One could, for example, argue that the emperor employed this term to refer to monastic communities affiliated with the Church of Constantinople. Nonetheless, the term 'Byzantine' even in this sense can prove problematic. First of all, these monasteries were under the jurisdiction of the pope, and not of the patriarch of Constantinople. And before moving to Rome, these communities belonged ecclesiastically to the patriarchate of Jerusalem and perhaps Antioch as well. They were never linked administratively to the patriarchate of Constantinople.

It is even doubtful whether the liturgical tradition of the communities in question was identical to that of the capital. Worldly churches and monasteries in Constantinople, before the Studite reform of the ninth century, followed the *Typikon* of the Great Church, which was distinct from the Sabaitic *Typikon* that reflects the liturgical tradition of the monasteries in Palestine.<sup>26</sup> The latter was in all likelihood followed by at least the Roman monastery of St Saba and, perhaps with variations, by the other Oriental monasteries in Rome. Additionally, Constantinople in the seventh century mostly followed the liturgies of St John Chrysostom and of St Basil of Caesarea, whereas some of the Oriental monasteries in Rome seem to have followed the liturgy of St James, which was preferred in Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> Even in regard to the liturgies of John Chrysostom and Basil, liturgical manuscripts from southern Italy containing these liturgies preserve numerous formulas which derive from the Palestinian liturgy of James. This indicates that Greek-speaking communities in these provinces followed the ecclesiastical tradition of Syria and Palestine and not that of Constantinople.<sup>28</sup> Palestinian influence is also evident in the Italo-Greek hymnographic tradition.<sup>29</sup> These phenomena have been attributed by scholars to the influence of the Syrian and Palestinian communities that arrived in the West during the

26 J. Getcha, *Le typikon décrypté : manuel de liturgie byzantine* (Paris 2009) 43–50.

27 Sansterre has shown that there is eighth-century evidence for this practice at the monastery of St Agatha, which makes it plausible that the seventh-century Palestinian communities in Rome also followed this tradition: J. M. Sansterre, 'Où le diptyque consulaire de Clementinus fut-il remployé à une fin liturgique?' *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 641–7, esp. 47; M. McCormick 'The imperial edge: Italo-Byzantine identity, movement and integration A.D. 650–950' in H. Ahrweiler and A. Laiou (eds), *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire* (Washington DC, 1998) 37.

28 Jacob has also discerned influence from Egypt and has argued that the Syro-Palestinian influence was more evident in liturgical manuscripts from Sicily, Calabria and Otranto: A. Jacob, 'L'evoluzione dei libri liturgici bizantini in Calabria e in Sicilia dall' VIII al XVI secolo, con particolare riguardo ai riti eucaristici' *Calabria bizantina. Vita religiosa e strutture amministrative* (1974) 47–69; A. Jacob 'Deux formules d'immixtion syro-palestiniennes et leur utilisation dans le rite byzantin de l'Italie méridionale', *Vetera Christianorum* 13 (1976) 29–64, esp. 63–4; Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 18, n. 94.

29 G. Schirò and A. Gonzato, 'Per un'edizione di Analecta hymnica e codicibus eruta Italiae inferioris', in *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten kongresses* (Munich 1960) 539–55, esp. 540.

seventh century, the most distinguished of which were the monastic communities that settled in Rome.<sup>30</sup> The aforementioned examples suggest that the term 'Byzantine' could not have been used to denote an ecclesiastical bond between the Roman Oriental monasteries and Constantinople.

Nonetheless, one could reasonably suggest that their relation to Constantinople was of a linguistic nature. Given that the capital of the empire had become overwhelmingly Greek-speaking by the end of the seventh century, one might assume that the Emperor employed this term in order to distinguish between the Latin-speaking and the Greek-speaking monasteries of Rome. In this sense, the term 'Byzantine' would simply mean 'Greek-speaking'. This argument is not without merit. Evidently, these communities are described as 'Greek' in Western sources, both in Latin texts, which use the term *Grecus*, and Greek ones, which use the form Γραικός. As already mentioned, these communities produced compilations of Greek patristic texts in support of Dyothelitism, both for the Lateran Synod of 649 and the Third Council of Constantinople in 680/1. Some of their members were versed in Greek patrology and participated in both councils speaking Greek. These monasteries were also centres of Greek culture. They have been associated with the production of hagiographical works in Greek, the copying of Greek manuscripts, and the translation of texts from Greek to Latin and vice versa. They also probably held a great number of Greek manuscripts in their libraries.<sup>31</sup>

It is doubtful, however, whether all members of these Oriental communities had the same proficiency in Greek, and that Greek was the only language they used. In their day-to-day interaction many of these monks might have used Syriac or, especially in the case of Renati, Armenian. Among the monks who followed Maximos to Rome it seems that there was a great number of Syriac speakers.<sup>32</sup> It should be highlighted that Chalcedonian monastic communities in Palestine, including Mar Saba, were multilingual. Some of their monks copied Syriac texts and translated Greek works from and into Syriac.<sup>33</sup> The pluralistic composition of Mar Saba, in particular, is depicted in the earliest surviving manuscript of its *Typikon*, the twelfth-century Codex

30 McCormick, *Imperial Edge*, 36–8; Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 17–21.

31 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 73–6, 131–40, 174–86.

32 This is implied in the Syriac Life of Maximos the Confessor: S. Brock (ed. and trans.), 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximos the Confessor', *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973) 299–346, 317–19.

33 S. Brock, 'Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The translation of St. Isaac the Syrian', in J. Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaitic Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Leuven 2001) 201–8; Tannous offers a detailed account of such translations and the production of Syriac manuscripts in Syria and Palestine mostly in Chalcedonian monasteries: J. Tannous, 'Byzantine Syriac: Language and religious community in the Middle East', in E. Bolman et al. (eds), *The Byzantine Near East: A New History* (Cambridge forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Tannous for making his work available to me before its publication and for bringing to my attention important scholarship about Syriac-speaking monastic communities in the Levant.

Sinaiticus Grecus 1096, which also survives in Syriac.<sup>34</sup> Even if this late source does not necessarily reflect seventh-century realities, it implies a tradition of institutional bilingualism. In this light, it would not be surprising if languages other than Greek were used in the liturgy too: it is not unlikely, for example, that the Armenian monastery of Renati celebrated the mysteries in Armenian.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, the Cilician and Palestinian monasteries of Rome might have used Greek and Syriac together in the liturgy: such bilingual services were common both in Syria and Palestine.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the only explicit information about Oriental monasteries in Rome using Greek as a liturgical language comes from the eighth and the ninth centuries, when Popes Paul I (757–61) and Paschal (817–24) founded monasteries under the instruction to offer their prayers in Greek.<sup>37</sup>

This is not to argue that the Oriental monasteries were not predominantly Greek-speaking, or that the linguistic element is not important in our discussion. If one accepts that Emperor Constantine used the term in question in order to distinguish Oriental monks from their Latin-speaking Benedictine brethren, language becomes inevitably an important differentiating factor. It is no accident that the papal chancery seems to have made this distinction by using the terms *Grecus* and *Latinus* respectively.<sup>38</sup> However, the differences between the two communities went beyond language.

Clemens Gantner has shown that the papal chancery used the term *Grecus* as equivalent to ‘Eastern Roman’.<sup>39</sup> They used it to describe a person who was culturally an Easterner, and not simply Greek-speaking. The Greek language, nonetheless, was an important component of Eastern Roman identity. Gantner argues that the papal chancery used the term with increasing frequency during the eighth century, when there was an urgent need for distinction between Rome’s own *Romanitas* and the Roman tradition represented by Constantinople. In this sense, the term emphasized the use of the Greek language by the Eastern Roman state as ‘the most distinguishing

34 The *Typikon* distinguishes between Roman and Syrian monks, who in this period could have been both Arab and Syriac-speaking. A Syriac translation of this *Typikon* is preserved at the monastery of St Catherine in Sinai in two thirteenth-century manuscripts: J. Thomas et al (eds), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders’ Typika and Testaments* (Washington DC 1998) 1311–18.

35 Sansterre admits this possibility, although he claims that the Armenian monks spoke Greek more than their mother tongue. He does not cite a source. Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 63, n. 9.

36 J. Tannous, ‘Byzantine Syriac’; S. Brock, ‘The Syriac new finds at St. Catherine’s monastery, Sinai, and their significance’, *The Harp: A Review of Syriac and Oriental Studies* (2011) 39–52, esp. 39–42.

37 *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, Introduction et Commentaire*, 2 Volumes, ed. L. Duchesne (Paris 1886) vol. 1, 464–5; vol. 2, 54.

38 Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, 63, n. 8.

39 C. Gantner, *Freunde Roms und Völker der Finsternis. Die päpstliche Konstruktion von Anderenim 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (Vienna 2014) 70–138, esp. 88–100; C. Gantner, ‘The label ‘Greeks’ in the papal diplomatic repertoire in the eighth century’, in W. Pohl and G. Heydemann (eds), *Strategies of Identification: Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout 2013) 303–49.



feature of difference'.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, he also notes that up to the mid-eighth century, the Lateran used the term *Grecus* only for individuals or groups of people from the Eastern parts of the empire, but never for the empire as a whole or for the emperor. This changed only after the mid-eighth century, along with the political orientation of the city of Rome.<sup>41</sup>

It should be noted, however, that this use of the term 'Greek' was not necessarily a Roman novelty. Despite the fact that most texts that appear to refer to Eastern Romans as Greeks originate in Rome, for example the *Liber Pontificalis* and the Acts of the Lateran Council in 649, they might also reflect Eastern perceptions and usages of the term. The Acts of the Lateran Synod were written originally in Greek and only later translated into Latin. This means that the author who described the Oriental monks in Rome as Greeks (*Greci/Γραικοί*) was in all likelihood one of them. Similarly, the biographers of the popes described as 'Greeks' in *the Liber Pontificalis* wrote in a period in which the Lateran was home to a great number of Oriental clergy.<sup>42</sup> It would be surprising if such individuals chose a term that was not used at all by their Eastern Roman colleagues or one which they found offensive.<sup>43</sup> In fact, some of these authors may have been Easterners themselves.<sup>44</sup>

Constantine IV, nonetheless, did not choose a term that emphasized the linguistic difference between East and West: he did not call these monasteries 'Greek'. Instead he used the term 'Byzantine' which, as mentioned, was usually reserved for the inhabitants of the capital. Constantinople, though, had been the administrative centre of the East since the fourth century. She was the seat of the Eastern Roman emperor, and from the late fifth century on of the sole Roman emperor. Additionally, she housed some of the most important civil institutions of the Eastern half of the empire, such as the prefecture of the East and the Constantinopolitan senate.<sup>45</sup> Most importantly, however, Constantinople was the symbolic and ideological centre of the Roman world in the East. Since her foundation, she was styled the 'New Rome' and perceived as the Eastern centre of Romanness, and by the seventh century of Christianity.<sup>46</sup>

40 C. Gantner, 'The label Greeks', 328.

41 Gantner, *Freunde Roms*, 107–36; Gantner, 'The label Greeks', 322–39.

42 P. Theodoropoulos, *The Riddle of the Greek Popes: Social Change and Imperial Influence in Seventh- and Eighth-Century Italy* (Diss. London 2018) 57–62.

43 For pejorative connotations of the term *Gr(a)ecus* in Latin: M. Dubuisson, 'Graecus, Graeculus, Graecari: l'emploi péjoratif du nom des Grecs en Latin', in S. Said (ed.), *Ελληνισμός. Quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'identité grecque* (Leiden 1991) 315–35, esp. 331–5.

44 McKitterick suggests that a portion of the *Liber Pontificalis* might have been composed by certain clergymen from the circle of Pope Constantine, about whom I have argued in my PhD thesis that they were probably Easterners: Theodoropoulos, *The Riddle*, 58–9, 127–8, 175–89. See further: R. McKitterick, 'The Papacy and Byzantium in the seventh and early eighth century sections of the *Liber Pontificalis*', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 84 (2016) 241–73, 270.

45 The creation of the Constantinopolitan senate by Constantine the Great confirmed the status of his city as New Rome differentiating it from previous imperial cities: G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 300 à 451* (Paris 1974) 47, 119–46.

46 G. Dagron, *Naissance*, 43–74; L. Grig and G. Kelly, 'Introduction: From Rome to Constantinople' in eL. Grig and G. Kelly (eds), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2012) 3–30;

One should bear in mind that the role of Constantinople as the political and cultural centre of the East was further enhanced during the seventh century because of the loss of other major urban centres, first to the Persians and then to the Arabs. Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, all patriarchal sees and metropolitan cultural centres, had by the 640s fallen to the Arabs.<sup>47</sup> In other words, during the reign of Constantine IV, Constantinople was the only Eastern metropolis and patriarchal see within the borders of the empire. The territorial shrinkage of the empire also resulted in significant administrative changes. The role of the emperor and his ministers in Constantinople became increasingly important. The state became much more centralized and the capital came to exercise a much closer and direct control over the remaining Eastern provinces.<sup>48</sup>

In this light, it seems that Constantine IV used *Byzantios* to denote communities that belonged culturally to the former Eastern half of the empire, whose administrative and ideological centre had for centuries been Constantinople. In this way, the Emperor, who was probably aware of the composition of these monasteries, employed the term ‘Byzantine’ for Palestinian, Cilician and Armenian monks who resided in Rome.<sup>49</sup> It is striking that these men not only likely did not originate in Constantinople, but also came from provinces which, by the 670s, were no longer part of Roman domains. Thus, the term ‘Byzantine’ might have even been used in a way that transcended the borders of the empire and encompassed Christian populations from regions under Arab control. In any case, it is clear that the word ‘Byzantine’ was used in an abstract sense, which in this context can be understood as ‘Eastern Roman’.

It is possible that the Emperor did not invent this broad meaning of the term. Kaldellis has suggested that two fifth-century historians, Priskos and Malchos, might have already used the word ‘Byzantine’ in such way. According to the *Souda*, Priskos’ work was entitled *Byzantine History* (Ἱστορία Βυζαντιακή), whereas the title of Malchos’ work was the *Byzantiaka* (Βυζαντιακά). Given that these historians lived in a period in which the empire was effectively divided into two halves, Kaldellis argues that this was perhaps an experimental use of the term in order to indicate that their work had an East Roman standpoint. However, as the same scholar acknowledges, the

P. Alexander, ‘The strength of empire and capital as seen through Byzantine eyes’, *Speculum* 37 (1962) 339–57, esp. 339–47.

47 Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die*, 17.

48 J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, MA 1990) 173–207.

49 Apart from the general fame of these communities, some of their most prominent members were brought to Constantinople and tried for treason in the 650s and 660s. These trials were major events in the capital and it is highly probable that the authorities were well informed about these monasteries. Constantine IV probably knew the exact composition of the monastic communities in Rome and their background. For a detailed analysis of these trials: W. Brandes, ‘Juristische’ Krisenbewältigung im 7. Jh.? Die Prozesse gegen Papst Martin I. und Maximos’ Homologetes’, *Fontes Minores* 10 (1998) 141–212.

nature of this evidence does not allow us to interpret these terms with any degree of certainty.<sup>50</sup>

A more secure basis for this hypothesis is provided by the nature of the passage in which our 'Byzantine' monks appear. More specifically, Constantine IV used the term in his instructions regarding the composition of the papal delegation for the ecumenical council. One would assume that his main aim was to be understood by the pope so that he could receive the monks he was asking for. The fact that the Emperor did not feel the need to clarify what he meant by 'Byzantine,' implies that he was confident that he would be understood and that an explanation would be unnecessary. By its turn, his confidence implies that the word 'Byzantine' in this period had the capacity to convey a much broader meaning than Constantinopolitan.

Further support for this view can be found in the way Pope Agatho understood the phrase. Agatho responded to the imperial request for Byzantine monks by sending three monks from two different Oriental monasteries of the old capital, Renati and Domus Arsicia, and the abbot of a Sicilian monastery, a certain Theophanes, who later became Patriarch of Antioch.<sup>51</sup> After Theophanes' election, his place in the papal delegation was covered by a monk from the Roman St. Saba.<sup>52</sup> This implies that Theophanes and the other monks were seen as Byzantines by Agatho, and it was expected that they would be received as such in Constantinople. This reveals that Byzantine monks were not only to be found in Rome, but in Sicily. Whether he was a native Sicilian or an immigrant from the East,<sup>53</sup> the case of Theophanes indicates that the term 'Byzantine' in this context meant 'Eastern Roman', someone culturally affiliated with the Eastern part of the empire, either in terms of language, customs, fashion or religious practices. It seems that the Emperor and the Pope understood the term in the same way. Even the translators of the *Sacra* did not consider the term problematic or worthy of an interpretation and left it as such in the Latin text.

This interpretation of the term is further supported, when it is read in its historical context and in conjunction with similar terms in contemporary texts. As mentioned, the *Sacra* of Constantine was an expression of the Emperor's desire to put an end to the Christological debates that had been dividing the empire since the 630s. This division was not simply a theological one: it also had significant political ramifications, becoming, for instance, the ideological vehicle for two rebellions against Constans II. In 646 Gregory,<sup>54</sup> exarch of Carthage, proclaimed himself emperor in

50 A. Kaldellis, 'From 'Empire of the Greeks' to 'Byzantium': The politics of a modern paradigm-shift', in J. Ransohoff and N. Aschenbrenner (eds), *The Invention of Byzantium in Early Modern Europe* (Washington, DC, forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Kaldellis for making his work available to me before publication.

51 PBE I Theophanes 5; PmbZ Theophanes 8082. For this choice of Agatho as evidence for Sicilian influence on Rome: Theodoropoulos, *The Riddle*, 137–40.

52 ACO. Vol. 2, part 2, 711.

53 For a discussion about Theophanes' origin: Theodoropoulos, *The Riddle*, 114–15.

54 PBE I Gregorios 1; PmbZ Gregorios 2345.

Africa, while three years later Olympios,<sup>55</sup> exarch of Ravenna, did so in Italy. The Lateran Council of 649 was thus convened in the context of rebellion and defiance of imperial authority. This was the reason that the clergymen who played a key role in the council, namely Pope Martin (649–55),<sup>56</sup> Maximos the Confessor, his disciple Anastasios<sup>57</sup> and Anastasios the Apokrisiarios,<sup>58</sup> were put on trial for treason rather than their theological views.<sup>59</sup>

The information that we possess about the trials and the fate of these clergymen derives from their own letters and Dyothelete texts from the 650s and 660s, probably written by clergymen from their circle.<sup>60</sup> In these texts the Dyothelete dispute is often portrayed as a debate between East and West. It is important to remember that ecclesiastically it was the Church of Rome that led the opposition to imperial religious policy, and politically the two rebellions occurred in Western provinces. While it came in for a hostile reception in the West, Monotheletism appears to have been quite popular in the East, something which accentuates the division mentioned.<sup>61</sup> What is interesting for the purposes of our discussion, are the terms used to express this distinction between East and West, and the possibilities of meaning that they contain.

The best-known example of such language comes from an account of the trial of Maximos in 655, the *Relatio Motionis*. The imperial authorities accused Maximos of having had a dream in which two choirs of angels, one from the West and one from the East, cried acclamations for Gregory and Constans respectively, with the western one overpowering the eastern.<sup>62</sup> This was seen as a portent of a final victory of Gregory, whose power base was in the West.<sup>63</sup> The same motif can be seen in a text that describes Maximos' discussions with the bishop Theodosios of Caesarea and certain high court officials, while he was imprisoned in Bizya in 656. In one of them, the patrician Epiphanius laid against Maximos the allegation that the entire West and those in the East that looked to him were in revolt and were unwilling to be reconciled with Constantinople.<sup>64</sup> In both cases, the terms 'East' and 'West' are used in a geographical sense indicating the two halves of the empire.

55 PBE I Olympios 1; PmbZ Olympios 5650.

56 PBE I Martinos 6; PmbZ Martinus 4851.

57 PBE I Anastasios 1; PmbZ Anastasios 237.

58 PBE I Anastasios 66; PmbZ Anastasios 238.

59 Brandes, 'Juristische Krisenbewältigung', 155, 168, 208, 210.

60 Brandes, 'Juristische Krisenbewältigung', 154–9.

61 J. Tannous, 'In Search of Monotheletism', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68 (2014) 29–67.

62 *Relatio Motionis*, ed. P. Allen and B. Neil, *Scripta Saeculi VII Vitam Maximi Confessoris Illustrantia: una cum latina interpretatione Anastasii Bibliothecarii iuxta posita* (Leuven 1999) 1–51, 17.

63 For a detailed analysis of the implications of Maximos' dream: Brandes, 'Juristische Krisenbewältigung', 185–91.

64 *Disputatio Bizyae*, ed. P. Allen and B. Neil, *Scripta Saeculi VII Vitam Maximi Confessoris Illustrantia: una cum latina interpretatione Anastasii Bibliothecarii iuxta posita* (Leuven 1999) 53–151, 131.

Another example, however, shows that such distinctions were not always expressed in purely geographical terms. In perhaps the most frequently quoted passage from the *Relatio Motionis* the Sakellarios, who played a key role in Maximos' trial, asked him 'Why do you love the Romans and hate the Greeks?' and Maximos replied 'We have a commandment not to hate anybody. I love the Romans as sharers of the same faith, whereas I love the Greeks as sharers of the same language.'<sup>65</sup> It is important to note, as Wolfram Brandes has observed, that it is not likely that the text is a faithful account of the trial. Brandes argues that the author, perhaps Anastasios the Apokrisiarios, was not an eye-witness to the trial, and that he composed the text based on notes sent to him by either Anastasios the disciple or Maximos himself.<sup>66</sup> Apart from Brandes' general reservations about the text's trustworthiness as a historical source, one should note that the term 'Greek' (*Grecus*/Γραικός) might sometimes have pejorative connotations, which make it less likely that one of the most senior imperial officials might have used it to describe the emperor and his government. Additionally, the fact that until the middle of the eighth century the papal chancery did not use the word 'Greek' to describe imperial officials, let alone the emperor, implies that the term was not used in an official context. Therefore, it is very likely that the phrase in question was put in the mouth of the Sakellarios by the author of the *Relatio Motionis*. For this reason, I will analyse the terms 'Roman' and 'Greek' not as uttered by an imperial official, but as written by an Eastern clergyman of the seventh century.

In the case in question, the author makes a distinction between 'Romans' and 'Greeks'. In my understanding, the word 'Roman' here refers to the Church of Rome and perhaps by extension to those Christians belonging to the Western patriarchate, which encompassed the whole Western half of the empire.<sup>67</sup> The term 'Greek' appears to have an equally broad meaning. The Sakellarios called 'Greeks' those to whom he thought Maximos was hostile. He definitely included the Church of Constantinople, the imperial government, and the emperor himself in this usage. Throughout his trial, Maximos was accused of splitting the Church, of committing treason against the empire, and of not respecting the emperor.<sup>68</sup> Thus, by using this term the author was identifying the Sakellarios, the emperor, all the officials of the government and the clergy belonging to the Patriarchate of Constantinople as 'Greeks'. In this way, the East-West division was expressed with two different descriptors, geographic linguistic. Rome, the ecclesiastical centre of the West and the old capital of the empire, was made to represent the West in a kind of synecdoche, whereas the extensive use of the Greek

65 *Relatio Motionis*, 47: Διὰ τὴ ἀγαπᾶς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, καὶ τοὺς Γραικοὺς μισεῖς; ... Παραγγελίαν ἔχομεν τοῦ μὴ μισῆναι τινά. Ἀγαπᾶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ὡς ὁμοπίστους, τοὺς δὲ Γραικοὺς ὡς ὁμογλώσσους.

66 Brandes, 'Juristische Krisenbewältigung', 155, n. 90 and 92. For a discussion about the possible authors of the text: *Scripta Saeculi VII*, xv.

67 J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton 1987) 121.

68 *Relatio Motionis*, 12–51, esp. 13, 29.

language in the East became the main representative trait of the other half of the Roman Empire.

If one brings to mind the passage from Justinian's novel discussed at the beginning of the article, one notes that in this context the most symmetrical descriptor to correspond to 'Roman' would be 'Byzantine', as in the *Sacra* of Constantine. For Justinian, the two Romes were the two centres of the empire and had a special place in the rhetoric of his legislation. New Rome was the most fortunate reigning city, whereas Old Rome was the see of the pontiff, the first prelate of Christendom, and the historical heartland of the Romans.<sup>69</sup> The ideological importance of the two Romes for the sixth-century Roman ruling class can also be seen in the consular diptychs, especially those from the East, which often depict the consul flanked by the personifications of Rome and Constantinople.<sup>70</sup> It should be mentioned that throughout the *Relatio Motionis* and other texts of the period the term 'Roman,' when not used to describe the empire in its totality, is used with a strict geographical meaning to denote the inhabitants of the city and the Church of Rome. As we have seen, this is also the case with the word 'Byzantine'. This shows that *Rhomaïos* and *Byzantios* could be used in a broader sense, as a metonym, which included the inhabitants and represented the culture of the Western and Eastern halves of the empire respectively.

In fact, one finds in the same text, *Relatio Motionis*, the same binary also expressed with the terms 'Roman' and 'Byzantine.' When the patrician Troilos and the *epi tes basilikes trapezes* Sergios Eukratas visited Maximos in this cell, they asked him 'And what will you be in a position to do, should the Romans be united with the Byzantines?'<sup>71</sup> In this case, the terms used are symmetrical, referring to the Churches of Rome and Constantinople respectively, and by extension to those under their jurisdiction. In this context most of the population of Anatolia and of the eastern Balkans could fall under the category 'Byzantine,' for they belonged to the patriarchate of Constantinople. This is an additional example of how *Byzantios* can acquire a broader meaning when implicitly linked with institutions which are based in Constantinople, but whose authority transcends the city's geographical limits.

This trend can be found in other contemporary texts originating in the same circle. In other Dyothelite writings about Maximos the Confessor, Constantinople (Byzantium)

69 Rome appears as the origin of Law and the seat of the chief Pontificate: CIC, Novel 9, 91–2; the primacy of Rome is also affirmed in Novel 131, 655. The ideological connection with Rome occurs also indirectly through her founder Romulus and his ancestor Aeneas in Novel 25, 196; similarly, through Caesar in Novel 30, 224; and the ancient Roman senate, which appears to be the origin of imperial power in Novel 62, 332. For the propagandistic use of the Roman past by Justinian: M. Maas, 'Roman history and Christian ideology in Justinianic reform Legislation', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 40 (1986) 17–31.

70 A. Cameron, 'Consular diptychs in their social context: New eastern evidence', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 11 (1998) 384–403.

71 *Relatio Motionis*, trans. P. Allen and B. Neil, in *Maximos the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford 2002) 48–74, 63; *Relatio Motionis*, 33: Καὶ τί ἐχεις ποιῆσαι, τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐνουμένων τοῖς Βυζαντίοις;

appears in a rather negative tone. In the prologue of the letter sent by Anastasios the disciple to Theodosios of Gangra,<sup>72</sup> written either by Theodosios himself or by Theodore Spoudaios,<sup>73</sup> Constantinople is referred to as ‘wretched Byzantium’ (*misero Byzantio*).<sup>74</sup> In another work probably of the same author the city is called ‘deplorable’ (*ἀθλία*).<sup>75</sup> The author’s negative attitude towards the imperial government and the Church of Constantinople are expressed against the city that housed both institutions. ‘Byzantium’ in this instance transcends the strict notion of a city and becomes a symbol of imperial oppression and heresy. This is yet another testimony that geographical terms could acquire a broader meaning in the seventh century.

If one accepts my interpretation of the term ‘Byzantine’ in the *Sacra* of Constantine IV, then one needs to consider a series of implications. As far as the imperial discourse of the seventh century is concerned, my interpretation of the word ‘Byzantine’ indicates that the imperial chancery in 678 still understood the late Roman distinction between Western and Eastern Roman Empire, despite the fact that the last institutional remnant of this division, the Roman senate, had disappeared by the end of the sixth century.<sup>76</sup> At the same time it implies that the cultural difference between East and West was clear and pronounced. This fact allowed groups of individuals residing in the West to be described as Easterners and vice versa. Most importantly, it shows that in the context of distinction between East and West, the East was denoted by a term deriving from its political and ideological centre, namely Constantinople.

It is important to remember that this choice of words by the imperial chancery was careful, since in other texts from the seventh century this distinction was made by the use of linguistic terms. Evidence indicates that the term *Grecus*/Γραικός could be used in order to indicate an Eastern Roman and that it was not restricted to the West. However, the use of the term seems to have been casual and never part of the official imperial rhetoric. The term ‘Byzantine’ appears to have been the politically correct equivalent, which could be used by the emperor himself. If one accepts that the dialogue between the Sakellarios and Maximos the Confessor in the *Relatio Motionis* does not represent the language used by court officials and the state, then the *Sacra* of Constantine becomes the only secure example (to my knowledge) of the way the government and the emperor perceived and described Eastern Romanness in the seventh century.

72 PBE I Theodosios 75; PmbZ Theodosios 7816.

73 PBE I Theodoros 343; PmbZ Theodoros 7439.

74 *Anastasii Apocrisarii Epistola ad Theodosium Gangrensem*, ed. P. Allen and B. Neil, *Scripta Saeculi VII Vitam Maximi Confessoris Illustrantia: una cum latina interpretatione Anastasii Bibliothecarii iuxta posita* (Leuven 1999) 171–89, 172. For the authorship of the prologue and the letter: P. Allen and B. Neil, *Scripta Saeculi VII*, xxi–xxii.

75 *Hypomnesticum*, ed. P. Allen and B. Neil, *Scripta Saeculi VII Vitam Maximi Confessoris Illustrantia*, 191–227, 211.

76 E. Stein, ‘La disparition du Sénat de Rome à la fin du VIe Siècle’, *Bulletin de la classe des lettres de l’Académie de Belgique* 25 (1939) 308–22, 312.

What is more, the interpretation advanced here has certain implications for contemporary Byzantine studies. It shows, against common belief, that the term ‘Byzantine’ as a synonym for ‘Eastern Roman’ is not a modern invention. It had already been used by the emperor himself in relation to monastic communities from the Eastern half of the Roman Empire. Remarkably, the word ‘Byzantine’ was understood in the seventh century as having a meaning similar to the one that contemporary historians ascribe to it, namely a designation for Eastern Romans. Nevertheless, contemporary historians use the term for the empire and its culture writ large, whereas the emperor used it as a descriptor of individuals who were culturally Easterners. For Constantine IV all his subjects were Romans, but in the context of distinction between Eastern and Western Romans, the Easterners were described as Byzantines.

To be sure, our contemporary use of the term stems from a completely unrelated tradition. Hieronymus Wolf, who is thought to have coined the modern meaning of the term, did not use the term ‘Byzantine’ having in mind the distinction between Eastern and Western Romans. Instead he built on a Western medieval tradition of treating the empire as ‘the empire of Constantinople’, which in a more antiquarian idiom becomes ‘the empire of Byzantium’.<sup>77</sup> In fact, this empire was for Wolf (and for most Western scholars up to the nineteenth century) ‘the empire of the Greeks’.<sup>78</sup> Since the second half of the eighth century, Western sources referred to the Eastern Roman Empire as the empire of the Greeks, questioning in this way the Romanness of the empire.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, contemporary scholarship inherited the term ‘Byzantine’ as a descriptor of the Eastern Roman Empire from a tradition that did not treat the empire as Roman.

This fact makes this seventh-century usage of the term a useful tool for the discussion about terminology, for it allows scholars to connect the established usage of the term to a tradition that acknowledges the Romanness of the empire. Nonetheless, one should bear in mind that Constantine IV used the term ‘Byzantine’ in a cultural sense and not of the state as a political entity. Moreover, this usage of the term appeared in a specific ideological context that later disappeared. To be more precise, this distinction between Eastern and Western Romans requires that Western provinces and most importantly Rome remain part of the empire. This ceased to be the case during the second half of

77 For Wolf’s antiquarian word-choice in the context of the Renaissance: C. Rapp, ‘Hellenic identity, romanitas and Christianity in Byzantium’ in K. Zacharia (ed.), *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity* (Aldershot 2008) 127–47, esp. 129. Similarly Kaldellis attributes Wolf’s usage of ‘Byzantine’ to the influence of the work of Laonikos Chalkokondyles, whose work stems from a Neohellenic standpoint: Kaldellis, ‘From Empire of the Greeks’. For a very interesting twelve-century example and discussion of this phenomenon: Z. Černáková, ‘The naming of Byzantium and the Old French *Partonopeus de Blois*’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 43 (2019) 42–59.

78 For a detailed discussion about the evolution of the usage and meaning of ‘Byzantine’ in modern scholarship: A. Kaldellis, ‘From Empire of the Greeks’.

79 Kaldellis, ‘From Empire of the Greeks’; Rapp, ‘Hellenic identity’, 141.



the eighth century, when Rome changed her political orientation and the Byzantine state stopped being the empire of two Romes.

Another point that arises from this discussion is what (and whom) modern scholars choose to describe as 'Byzantine' and consequently what (and who) is to be covered by the field of Byzantine studies. As argued above, the use of the term by Constantine IV included individuals who resided in the Western part of the empire and whose homeland was then under Arab control. Understanding Byzantinicity/Eastern Romanness in cultural terms, therefore, creates the potential to include populations that lived outside the borders of the empire. Such a realization reinforces the notion that there can be Byzantines without or outside the Byzantine state. Jack Tannous' research on Syriac and Arab-speaking Chalcedonians under Islamic rule has highlighted that these communities were seen as Roman/Byzantine for centuries after their homeland ceased to be part of the empire, and that they are equally heirs of Eastern Romanness. Nevertheless, they often lie outside the research-focus of modern Byzantinists.<sup>80</sup> In this regard, this reading of the *Sacra* of Constantine IV calls for a more inclusive field of Byzantine studies which will include Christian populations from the former Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.

Finally, my reading of the term 'Byzantine' emphasizes the ideological importance of Constantinople for the development of Eastern Romanness. The city was far more than the administrative centre of the Eastern Roman Empire. It was the symbolic centre of Romanness and Christianity in the East. Following a similar cognitive process with the one that allowed all citizens of the empire to be called 'Romans', Constantine IV extended the demonym of New Rome to all Eastern Romans. In this way, a 'Byzantine' could be a Palestinian monk who prayed in Syriac in Rome. Three and a half centuries after her foundation, Constantinople had become the embodiment of a distinctive Roman tradition, which in the following centuries would be called into question by the heirs of Western Romanness. Paradoxically, it was this last period of ideological unity of the Roman world that created the circumstances for the Byzantines to call themselves Byzantines.

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80 Tannous, 'Byzantine Syriac'.