

## ORIENTALISM IN LATE ANTIQUITY THE ORIENTAL IN IMPERIAL AND CHRISTIAN IMAGERY

ROLF MICHAEL SCHNEIDER (MÜNCHEN)

*In memory of Keith Hopkins*

The preoccupation of Rome with the Orient was obsessive – and as such a powerful element in the cultural process of shaping and re-shaping Roman identity throughout imperial times.<sup>1</sup> From the reign of Augustus onwards ‘Orientalism’ in Rome became an increasingly explicit and complex issue oscillating between such different poles as cultural demarcation and social integration.<sup>2</sup> These poles were complemented by a great fascination regarding all aspects of the Oriental.<sup>3</sup> This diversity of the Orient, which is so manifest in Roman imagery, has rarely been addressed.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, in modern research dominating has been, and still is, an understanding preconditioned by modern ideologies of friend and foe: portrayals of supreme and invincible Romans contrasted by portrayals of despised and subjugated barbarians.<sup>5</sup> In the visual narratives of imperial Rome, however, the Oriental – and he was not the only cultural Other – was clearly a more dazzling figure. Dressed in rich Oriental garb he embodied almost every identity from the east: mythical and/or religious figures such as Attis, Ganymedes, Mithras, Orpheus and Paris; figures of the past such as the Trojans, the mythical forefathers of the Roman; bygone and current enemies such as the Persians, Parthians and Sasanians. Even as the enemy the Oriental often took on the double role of despised barbarian and admired stranger. And, in distinctive contrast to the Roman figures of all other barbarians, only the Oriental was portrayed in irresistible beauty and in the gesture of actual service-ability. These visual concepts of Orientalism continued into the imagery of late

I warmly thank Josef Wiesehöfer for his kind invitation to the second Eutin-Colloquium on Persia, the participants for stimulating discussion, and last but not least Franz Alto Bauer, Henning Börm, Johannes Deckers, Keith Hopkins, Susanne Muth and the Rev. Thomas Pellaton for helpful comments. Photographs for this article were generously provided by the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Rome), the Hirmer Fotoarchiv (Munich), the Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke (Munich), and Trinity College (Cambridge).

1 Schneider 1998, pp. 95–146; Landskron 2005.

2 For the integration of non-Romans, Pohl 1997; Traina 2002, pp. 71–80.

3 For western conceptions of the Orient, Said 1995; Kurz 2000. – For discourses on Orientalism in the field of Classics, Dihle 1994; Schneider 1998, pp. 95–146; Hauser 2001, pp. 1233–1243; Wiesehöfer 2003.

4 For a critical approach, Elsner 1997, pp. 189–190; Beard/North/Price 1999, pp. 246–247.

5 For the Roman imagery of northern barbarians, Zanker 2000, pp. 410–419; Heitz 2003; Krierer 2004.

antiquity. Another continuing concept was the historicizing naming of the Sasanians by ancient writers. As their predecessors they were often called by the vague but ideologised ethnic term *Persae*, sometimes even *Parthi*.<sup>6</sup> The basic changes in the public, religious and domestic life of late antiquity stimulated new intricate interpretations of the Orient and the Oriental, interpretations which were again intensively addressed and articulated in the imagery of the time.

The quantity and quality of these changes was drastic. The rising power of the Sasanian empire challenged Rome and Constantinople in unparalleled ways.<sup>7</sup> A new administrative structure, political hierarchy and imperial ideology determined the Roman empire of late antiquity, and new mechanisms in its relationship to ancient Persia. Christianity in becoming the new state religion of the Roman empire not only increasingly dominated social life but it also increasingly expanded beyond its cultural borders – including Zoroastrian Persia.<sup>8</sup> And, new Christian communities inside and outside the Roman world provoked controversial discussions of new concepts of Christian life and belief – and Christian power.

The countless portrayals of the Oriental in late antique art opened up new historical dimensions for Roman perceptions of Persia. They provide evidence reaching beyond the horizon of written history – thus setting up new pathways to the complex issues of Roman Orientalism in late antiquity. To understand the paramount power of this imagery and ideology I will begin with a non-Roman portrayal of an Oriental, the Persian portrayal of a Sasanian king. This portrayal highlights more than any other the fundamental changes in the relations between Rome and Persia after 224. With the rise of the Sasanian kings for Rome the unthinkable happened. Shapur I defeated two Roman emperors, Gordianus III in 244 and Valerianus in 260, and forced Philippus Arabs in 244 to sign a costly peace treaty.<sup>9</sup> Shapur I celebrated his victories over the Romans with five large rock reliefs.<sup>10</sup> One of these reliefs was placed in the heart of the royal Achaemenid necropolis of Naqsh-e Rostam near Persepolis (fig. 2).<sup>11</sup> Alone the actual site of this relief was significant: next to the grave facade of the famous Achaemenid king Darius I and opposite a panegyric inscription translated into three different languages (Persian, Parthian, Greek),

6 Chavout 1992, pp. 115–125; Schneider 1998, pp. 111; Drijvers 1999, p. 195.

7 For a historical comparison of the two (super) powers, Howard-Johnston 1995, pp. 157–226; Winter / Dignas 2001; Wiesehöfer 2003 (discussing also the ideological preconceptions of such history).

8 Atiya 1991; Wiesehöfer 1993, pp. 362–382; Brown 1996, especially pp. 15–94, 136–158, 198–216; Wiesehöfer 2001, pp. 199–216; Wiesehöfer (in print).

9 Dodgeon / Lieu 1991, pp. 34–67; Millar 1993, pp. 151–157; Wiesehöfer 2001, pp. 160–161. From the same time onwards Roman prisoners of war (in particular engineering personnel) and other deported ‘western’ artisans were used by Sasanian authorities to implement new infrastructural and artistic measures in Persia (Kettenhofen 1997, pp. 298–308; Winter / Dignas 2001, pp. 259–260). This stimulated new activities in Persia, also non-intended ones such as new forms of cultural exchange and new enforcement of Christianity.

10 Herrmann 1989, pp. 13–33; Meyer 1990, pp. 237–302; Hofkunst 1993, pp. 72–88 (L. Vanden Berghe); Herrmann 1998, pp. 38–51; Alram 2000, pp. 268–272.

11 Herrmann 1989, pp. 13–33 figs. 1–4 pls 1–18; Meyer 1990, pp. 237–254 fig. 1.

the famous *res gestae* of Shapur I.<sup>12</sup> This portrayal shows the exact reversal of the visual ideology used by imperial Rome: now the subjugated Roman emperor, Philippus Arabs, has to kneel on the ground, with hands submissively stretched forward to the supreme Sasanian king high up on his horse. All this was an outright challenge to the Roman tradition showing the Oriental kneeling before a Roman authority (fig. 1).<sup>13</sup>

However, both despite and because of the Sasanian victories the imperial imagery and ideology of Rome did not change its course. On the contrary, the figure of the subdued Oriental remained a key motif of the visual narratives of late antique Rome. I will approach this imagery from two different historical contexts, which both show Orientals commissioned mainly by members of the Roman and Christian élite: imperial monuments erected in the political centres of Rome, Thessaloniki and Constantinople; and the Christian imagery of the three Persian Magi adopted throughout the Roman empire.

Conquered eastern (and northern) barbarians are the main subject of the reliefs decorating the pedestals of the triumphal arch of Constantine in Rome.<sup>14</sup> The bearded figure from one of the south pedestals is a typical Roman interpretation of the Oriental (fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> He is wearing long trousers, a long-sleeved tunic, a Phrygian cap and a mantle which falls in folds on his back. This Roman standardisation of the Oriental garb is complemented by a non-Roman stance, namely legs crossed and hands bound. Although the arch was (re-)built in memory of Constantine's domestic victory over his political rival Maxentius in 312 most of the reliefs show the emperor as *triumphator omnium gentium*.<sup>16</sup> This was the title transferred to Constantine immediately after the victory over Maxentius, on 29 October 312, the very day on which he marched triumphantly into Rome.<sup>17</sup> Already in earlier imperial imagery portrayals of subjugated people from east and north visualised the ideology of the absolute power of Rome, a power traditionally embodied by the Roman emperor. New and trend-setting, however, was the imagery of the arch of Constantine as regards of the exceptional quantity, comprehensive selection and visual omnipresence of non-Romans. All this demonstrated the prime importance of non-Romans for the public self-representation of the Roman emperor in late antiquity. Now no other portrayal legitimised his power more than the portrayal of non-Romans.

Portrayals of the Oriental were also present in the very heart of imperial life. Noteworthy are two reliefs of a richly decorated arch built between 308–311 for

12 For the inscription, Huyse 1999.

13 For this tradition, Schneider 1986, pp. 23–26, 29–50, 75–78 pls. 16,3–5, 17,7–9, 18,1–3, 19,1–5, 20–21, 23,2&4; Schneider 1998, p. 99, 100–101, 104–105 pl. 2.1, pp. 100–101, 108–109 pls. 1,3 (here, fig.2), 2,1–2, 14,1.

14 L'Orange / Gerkan 1939, pp. 103–136 pls. 24a-c, 25a-b, 26b-c, 27b-c, 28a-c, 29a-b, 30b-c, 31a-c.

15 L'Orange / Gerkan 1939, p. 112 no. 1 pl. 24a.

16 Pensabene / Panella / Jones 1999; Elsner 2000, pp. 149–184; Giuliani 2000, pp. 269–287; Conforto / Melucco Vaccaro / Cicerchia 2001.

17 Kienast 1990, p. 295.

Galerius' palace at Thessalonike (figs. 4 & 6).<sup>18</sup> Two imperial servants are portrayed in its two spandrels, both youthful Orientals of exotic beauty carrying an *imago clipeata* above their heads: the left one holds the personification of the city of Thessalonike, the right one the portrait of the Roman emperor Galerius.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to earlier Roman depictions of beautiful servants from the east now the tunic and trousers of the two Orientals are richly embroidered similar to those shown in some portrayals of Sasanian kings (fig. 20).<sup>20</sup>

### Tribute Processions in Imperial Imagery: Orient and Occident

A major change in the visual vocabulary of imperial narratives is marked by the invention of an imagery borrowed in part from the Classical past.<sup>21</sup> An important forerunner is shown on the front of a Roman sarcophagus in Paris made about 200 (fig. 5).<sup>22</sup> The Oriental Priam is kneeling in front of the Occidental Achilles (only partly extant). Priam is followed by a procession of Trojans all dressed in rich Oriental garb. They are carrying precious vessels to ransom Hector's body. The imagery of such processions, however, was formally standardized and systematically used for the first time in late antiquity, namely in the motif of the tribute procession of non-Romans offering gifts to the Roman emperor. An early example of this imagery is handed down by a relief panel decorating the triumphal arch next to Galerius' palace at Thessaloniki (fig. 7). Built perhaps in 303 the arch shows a complex visual interpretation of the emperor's victory over the Persians in 298.<sup>23</sup> The ideological relationship between the motif of the tribute procession and the Roman emperor is explicitly addressed, especially by the presence of Victory leading a parade of conquered Persians.<sup>24</sup> The fantastic splendour of their exotic homeland is shown in the form of precious metal vessels, richly filled boxes, luxurious fabrics, Indian elephants and rare beasts of prey.

Tribute processions of non-Romans from the Orient and Occident represent one of the most significant and powerful narratives of imperial imagery in late antiquity.<sup>25</sup> Core aspects of this imagery are exemplarily articulated by two ambitious monuments erected in Constantinople: the obelisk of Theodosius I and the column of

18 Schneider 1986, p. 93; Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1995; Mayer 2002, pp. 65–67 pl. 10.

19 Originally portrayed was not the bust of the city of Thessalonike (as such remodelled between 311–314) but of the empress Galeria Valeria; Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1995, pp. 40–47, 110–113 pls. 4, 11.

20 See below note 68.

21 Schneider 1992, pp. 897–899, 902, 905–907, 916, 927–928; Grüner 2005.

22 Grassinger 1999, pp. 60–61, 208–209 no. 40 pl. 36.1; 37.1–3.

23 Laubscher 1975; Schneider 1992, pp. 934–935.

24 Laubscher 1975, pp. 57–61, 133–134 pls. 40.1, 43–44 (“Fries B I 18”); Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1995, pp. 34–35, 109 pl. 16.

25 For the *Herrscherbild* in late antiquity, Engemann 1988, pp. 966–1047. For the iconography of tribute processions, Schneider 1992, pp. 934–941, 944–956; Ploumis 1997, pp. 125–141; Grüner 2005.

Arcadius. In 390 Theodosius I placed in the middle of the *spina* of the Hippodrome the city's first Egyptian obelisk.<sup>26</sup> And, for the first time in the history of any Egyptian obelisk its marble base was decorated throughout with sculpted portrayals. The relief on the north-west side distinguished by the Greek version of the dedicatory inscription shows a detailed depiction of Roman imperial power in two panels (fig. 8).<sup>27</sup> The larger upper panel depicts four enthroned Roman emperors sitting inside the imperial box: Theodosius I, the tallest of all, is represented in the middle; next to him and considerably smaller are the two other *Augusti*, Valentinian II on the right and Arcadius on the left; and further on the left the prince Honorius. The four emperors are framed by two rows of imperial officials standing outside the imperial box: the lower row in the foreground shows high magistrates of the imperial court; the upper row in the background members of the imperial guard recognizable as Teutons by their distinctive hairstyle. The smaller lower panel shows two tribute processions of kneeling barbarians symmetrically and hierarchically related to Theodosius I, who is sitting exactly in the centre above them. The non-Romans offer the Roman emperor precious gifts from their homelands: on the right representatives of northern tribes wear mantles made of wild skins; on the left Orientals are dressed in the luxurious garb of the east. The main message of this portrayal is obvious: the Roman emperor Theodosius I is the one and only true centre of the world dominating all its people and benefiting from both Orient and Occident in different ways. The Teutons in the upper panel indicate in pointed juxtaposition to what extent barbarians were a vital element of the identity of the Roman emperor in late antiquity. In the upper panel i.e. in an elevated position on a level with the emperor northern barbarians represent trustworthy military servants. In the lower panel i.e. in a humble position northern barbarians are portrayed doing obeisance to the Roman emperor above them. This imagery was a striking demonstration of the universal potentialities of imperial power.<sup>28</sup>

Probably in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century Arcadius commissioned a column with a spiral of sculpted bands. Erected on his own Forum in Constantinople, this monument has now been almost entirely destroyed. However, it is described by later travellers and documented in several drawings, the best of which are from 1574.<sup>29</sup> Crucial for my argument are the depictions shown on the column's base, in particular the reliefs which originally decorated the west side (fig. 9).<sup>30</sup> Organised in four horizontal panels one above the other the reliefs were closely related to each other: by their visual syntax and ideological readings as well as by their strict symmetry and verti-

26 Effenberger 1996, pp. 207–283; Schneider 2004, pp. 168–170. For further obelisks in Constantinople, Iversen 1972, pp. 34–50.

27 Bruns 1935, pp. 36–43 figs. 36–43; Küllerich 1998, pp. 34–45 figs. 5–9 & 12, pp. 132–135 figs. 63–64; Deckers 2002, pp. 11–12 fig. 1 (bibl.); Mayer 2002, pp. 115–124 pl. 16,3.

28 This complexity merits further attention, Schneider 1992, pp. 943–944; Mayer 2002, pp. 231–232.

29 For these drawings, now in the possession of Trinity College, Cambridge, Kollwitz 1941, pp. 19–20.

30 Freshfield 1921/22, pp. 87–104; Kollwitz 1941, pp. 33–58 Beilage 5–7 (Beilage 6: west side); Engemann 1984, pp. 345–349; Deckers 2002, p. 21 fig. 8; Mayer 2002, pp. 144–150 fig. 53.

cal hierarchy. The central focus of the top panel is the cross set into a wreath which is held by two flying *Victoriae* thus emphasizing the cross as the ultimate symbol of the victory of Christ. The central figures of the second panel from the top are the two Roman emperors, Arcadius and Honorius, framed by members of the imperial court. Next to the emperors are placed the high magistrates followed by the imperial guard. The first figure on each side carrying a shield with a Christogram may be distinguished as a member of the personal bodyguard of the emperor. The third panel from the top shows two tribute processions of gift-offering barbarians both led by a figure of Victory vertically related to the two emperors and the symbol of the cross above: on the left are tribes from the Occident, on the right people from the Orient. Only the latter are additionally characterised by an exotic predator, a tiger or leopard. The bottom panel is reserved for figures of conquered enemies and captured arms. Predominant here are the weapons of the east, especially bows, arrows and quivers. The four panels show the first known imperial depiction which portrays the victorious cross of Christ in relation to the power of the Roman emperor over the world.

This imagery set a new standard in the visual narratives of late antiquity. A famous example is the ivory diptych Barberini from an eastern workshop of the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 12).<sup>31</sup> The diptych displays the same ideas of hierarchy, symmetry and ideology. The centre of the top panel depicts the bust of Christ as cosmic *imago clipeata* carried by two Victory-like angels. The large middle panel is reserved for a Roman emperor sitting in full array on a horse. The panel below him is given to two tribute processions of barbarians, this time Orientals only, Persians on the left and Indians on the right. They are related to both the imperial figure of Victory between them and the Roman emperor above them.

The numerous portrayals showing processions of gift-offering Orientals doing obeisance to the Roman emperor (normally placed in a panel above) point to a visual interpretation of an imperial ceremony widely attested by late antique writers.<sup>32</sup> This ceremony applied to all regardless of whether they were actually conquered or not.<sup>33</sup> Legations from as far as Britannia and India regularly came to the imperial court of the Roman emperor in Constantinople.<sup>34</sup> Particularly legations from the rich kings of the east offered in humble posture precious gifts.<sup>35</sup> This is explicitly addressed on the fragmented diptych Castello Sforzesco, a diptych probably made in Constantinople of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 10)<sup>36</sup>. The imperial diptych Castello Sforzesco refers to the same ideas of hierarchy, symmetry and ideology as the im-

31 Delbrueck 1929, pp. 188–196 pl. 48; Volbach 1976, pp. 47–48 no. 48 pl. 26; Cutler 1991, pp. 329–339 pl. 51–59; Schneider 1998, pp. 117–117 pl. 18; Cormack 2000, pp. 44–45 colour fig. 22; Deckers 2002, p. 15 fig. 4b.

32 For written descriptions of such portrayals now lost, Kollwitz 1941, pp. 37–38, 54–55.

33 On victory celebrations, McCormick 1990, pp. 35–130.

34 Güterbock 1906, pp. 4–26; Helm 1932, pp. 387–436; Treitinger 1938, pp. 197–204; Kollwitz 1941, pp. 38–43, 64–66; Diebler 1995, 187–218; Deckers / Restle / Shalem 2005. For tribute payments of Roman emperors to eastern kings, Isaac 1995, pp. 129–132.

35 Cutler 2001, pp. 247–278.

36 Delbrueck 1929, pp. 196–199 no. N 49 pl. 49; Volbach 1976, pp. 48–49 no. 49 pl. 26.

perial diptych Barberini (fig. 12). The upper panel replaces the bust of Christ with the bust of Constantinopolis which is carried by two figures of Victory; the large middle panel now lost portrayed a Roman emperor; the lower panel depicts two tribute processions of barbarians, again solely of Orientals: here Persians offer to the (absent) Roman emperor above not only their exotic treasures but also their own people as their most valuable gifts.

Legations offering gifts belonged to the most important imperial ceremonies. Roman emperors received and sent legations for many political and ideological reasons.<sup>37</sup> For example, whenever a new Roman emperor or a new Sasanian king was installed both were expected to inform each other by a special legation.<sup>38</sup> The continuous flow of legations to Constantinople demonstrated and legitimized more than any other imperial act the ubiquitous power of the Roman emperor over the peoples, resources and territories. In this respect the court of the Roman emperor in Constantinople was a place of unrivalled cosmopolitan prestige, a place which housed the most colourful people, the most costly commodities and the most exotic gifts from all over the world.

#### Tribute Processions in Christian Imagery: The Three Persian Magi

A more complex reading of the reality and imagery of tribute processions from the east developed in the context of Christian narratives, namely with the new portrayal of the adoration of the Infant Jesus by the three Persian Magi.<sup>39</sup> This portrayal was introduced in Rome around or shortly after 300, i.e. roughly at the same time as tribute processions of gift-offering barbarians became popular in imperial imagery. The portrayal of the three Persian Magi quickly became one of the most frequently depicted and most widely distributed bible stories in late antique art. The three Persian Magi constituted not only one of the most common portrayals of the Oriental but also one of the most prominent Christian depictions linked to imperial imagery. Portrayals of the three Magi were present in most Christian contexts, especially churches and catacombs, and were represented in most of the visual media of late antiquity: mosaics (figs. 16–17), paintings, reliefs and sarcophagi (figs. 14–15, 19) as well as metal and ivory vessels, ivory diptycha (figs. 10, 12–13), gold glasses, pulpits, church doors, reliquaries, pilgrim ampullae (fig. 18), pilgrim tokens, textiles (fig. 16), gems, etc.

An elaborate example of the adoration of the Infant Jesus by the three Persian Magi is shown on the bottom panel of the ivory diptych Etschmiadzin from an ea-

37 Helm 1932, pp. 387–397, 415–422; Kollwitz 1941, pp. 40–42; Deckers / Restle / Shalem 2005. For the interplay between imperial ceremony and urban context, Bauer 1996, pp. 379–388; Bauer 2001, pp. 27–61.

38 Helm 1932, pp. 388–389.

39 Kehrer 1909, pp. 1–102; Gerke 1963; Deckers 1982, pp. 20–32; Vikan 1991, pp. 80–87; Schneider 1992, pp. 944–953; Jastrzebowska 1994, pp. 105–113; Gaborit-Chopin 1995, pp. 49–63; Korol 1996, pp. 213–224; Teteriatnikov 1998, pp. 381–391; Centanni / Molteni 1999, pp. 93–146; Attula 2000.

stern workshop of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 13).<sup>40</sup> The top panel depicts two angels carrying the cross as the symbol of Christ's victory; the centre panel depicts enthroned Mary with the Infant Jesus; the bottom panel depicts again Mary with the Infant Jesus, this time in the context of the three Persian Magi. The Magi are of different ages and richly dressed in the Oriental garb. They are humbly bent forward to present gifts with hands covered. The Infant Jesus is sitting on Mary's lap; both are distinguished by her high chair, the Christian *cathedra*. At the back of the *cathedra* Joseph (?) is sitting probably on a low footstool. A hovering angel behind the three Magi points to the Infant Jesus, who is guarded by another angel standing in the background.

This visual narrative differs significantly from the one written biblical source, the gospel of Matthew (II,1–12).<sup>41</sup> Matthew reports: "After Jesus was born at Bethlehem Magi from the Orient (*magi ab oriente*) arrived in Jerusalem, asking 'Where is the King of the Jews who has just been born? We observed the rising of his star, and we have come to pay him homage'." After the Magi had met king Herod to ask him about the new born King (*rex*) they set out, "and the star which they had seen at its rising went ahead of them until it stopped above the place where the Infant was. At the sight of the star they were overjoyed. Entering the house, they saw the Infant with Mary his mother, fell down to the ground in homage to him (... *et proclidentes adoraverunt eum*). Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts (*munera*): gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But, since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went away to their own country by another route."<sup>42</sup>

The gospel makes it evident as to how much the visual narrative of the diptych Etschmiadzin embellishes the written text. The gospel says nothing about the number, the dress, the covered hands and the age of the Magi; and nothing about Mary being seated, her prestigious chair, her husband Joseph and the two angels.<sup>43</sup> Much of this visual interpretation derived from the imperial imagery of tribute processions and the Oriental. The dress of the three Magi is based on the Roman perception of the Oriental garb. The same applies to the iconography of the Magi's age. The first has a longer beard, the second a shorter one, whereas the third has no beard. Such differentiation of age is already depicted on a Christian sarcophagus in Castiliscar from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 19).<sup>44</sup> Here, the exotic Otherness of the three Persian Magi is highlighted by three camels standing in the background. Up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, however, the three Magi were normally portrayed without a

40 Brentjes 1974, p. 119 pl. 73 (splendid illustration); Volbach 1976, pp. 94–95 no. 142 pl. 75 (right); Deckers 1982, pp. 21–22 figs. 2, 3b; Schneider 1998, pp. 117–118 pl. 19.

41 Perhaps first written in Antiocheia at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century the gospel was later further edited and substantially revised, Hopkins 1999, pp. 290–321; Kraszewski 1999, pp. 15–18; Luz 1999, 1033–1034; see below note 74. For the non-biblical texts on the three Persian Magi starting in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Kehrer 1908, pp. 11–20; Dassmann 1973, pp. 316–322.

42 For the text with intensive critical commentary, Brown 1977, pp. 166–201.

43 For further discussion about the three Persian Magi, Centini 1999, pp. 61–91; Panaino 1999, pp. 31–60; Piras 1999, pp. 7–30.

44 Bovini 1954, pp. 56–61 no. 8 (especially pp. 60–61) fig. 15; Koch 2000, p. 523 n. 18 (bibl.).



beard, a portrayal which emphasised their desirable beauty and attractive youthfulness.<sup>45</sup> The Christian angels of the diptych Etschmiadzin took shape and function from the goddess Victory and imperial officials in late antique art: the angel on the right replaces Victory leading a tribute procession of barbarians (figs. 7, 9, 12), the angel on the left the imperial guard of the Roman emperor (figs. 8–9). The same applies to the gesture of covered hands. It refers to an imperial ritual depicted, for example, on the column of Marcus Aurelius erected in Rome around 190. Here Sarmati are portrayed with hands covered, dressed in Oriental garb and bent forward to pay obeisance to the Roman emperor who is standing on a raised platform (fig. 11).<sup>46</sup> The gesture of covered hands is also common in the imagery of rock reliefs commissioned by the Sasanian kings, Ardashir and Shapur I.<sup>47</sup> Here the custom seems to be used to characterise people near the king.<sup>48</sup> Not only singular motifs but the entire composition of the diptych Etschmiadzin (fig. 13) was closely related to imperial narratives: the Christian diptych shows the same formal layout, semantic symmetry and ideological hierarchy as in imperial imagery (figs. 8–10, 12).

Numerous portrayals of the three Magi attest how explicitly elements of the imperial imagery were selected, how obviously they were transformed and how widely they were used.<sup>49</sup> To outline the range of visual and ideological potentialities related to this imagery I will discuss four portrayals. Selected from different media, contexts and times these four portrayals represent four different perspectives which highlight the process of the ongoing re-telling and re-interpretation of the New Testament story.

I will begin with the depiction on the narrow side of the sarcophagus of Catervinus and Severina from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century now standing in the cathedral of Tolentino (figs. 14–15).<sup>50</sup> Here the three Persian Magi are set within the architecture of stately power: prestigious city-gates and fortified walls provide for the Christian narrative an imperial-like frame. Mary with the Infant Jesus is not sitting on a Christian *cathedra* but a *sella curulis*, an official symbol of power which was in real life reserved for imperial males and Roman magistrates.<sup>51</sup>

A very different imperial portrayal of the three Persian Magi is shown on a mosaic from around 440 in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome built between 432 and

45 For this visual tradition which is attested from the reign of Augustus onwards, Schneider 1998, pp. 104–105, 107–110, 116–118.

46 Scheid / Huet 2000, p. 358 fig. 68; Deckers 2001, p. 11 fig. 26. For the imperial tradition of this motif and its adoption in late antiquity, Treitinger 1938, pp. 63–67; Deckers 1979, pp. 628–629 fig. 17, pp. 650–651 fig. 34 (A); Darmon 1980, pp. 121–125 no. 31 pl. 90; Deckers 1996, pp. 151–156; Engemann 1996, pp. 548–549.

47 Relief of Ardashir near Istakhr: Hinz 1969, pl. 57. – Reliefs of Shapur I near Bishapur: Herrmann 1980, fig. 5 (figures 3–5, 7), pls. 54–56; Herrmann 1983, fig. 2 pls. 9, 10–12, 14, 15b, 16–19. – Relief of Shapur I at Naqsh-e Rostam: Herrmann 1989, fig. 1 pls. 1&3.

48 Meyer 1990, pp. 252–253.

49 See above note 39.

50 Klauser 1966, pp. 39–40, 78–79 pl. 28,1; Nestori 1996, pp. 80–82 fig. 73; Dresken-Weiland 1998, pp. 52–54 pls. 56,4, 57,1–2; Deckers 2001b, p. 745.

51 Schäfer 1989, pp. 46–195.

440. Here the three Persian Magi are prominently placed on the upper left side of the triumphal arch (fig. 17).<sup>52</sup> This (unique) image and the others next to it portray stories related to Christ's infancy. Now the three Persian Magi are organised in strict symmetry to the centre, the Infant Jesus. He is sitting on a monumental throne of imperial splendour and showing his insignia of power, the nimbus and the cross. The throne and footstool are made of gold studded with jewels, gems and pearls. Behind the imperial throne four angels act as Jesus' personal guard dressed in pure white and grouped in pairs around the star right above him. This heavenly aspect is complemented by a historical landmark, the fortified town of Bethlehem on the right. On either side of Jesus' throne sits a woman: on his right Mary brought up to date by her imperial robe richly adorned with jewels and gold in colour; on his left probably Rachel wearing a plain blue mantle over a golden dress. Next to Rachel are two of the Persian Magi, the third is to Mary's right and next to this Magus is another figure, Joseph. Thus the symmetry is complete – and Joseph intricately linked to the three Persian Magi. The gifts offered by the three Persian Magi are placed on silver trays. This depiction is one of the most detailed, colourful and formalised portrayals of the three Persian Magi known to us from late antique art. The rich ornament, jewellery and garb of the three Persian Magi is related to both distinctive elements of the dress code of Sasanian kings as well as to a specific Roman interpretation of it.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore the entire composition of the mosaic's narrative is linked to imperial imagery: not only the throne, the guards and the splendour but also the central composition stressing both hierarchy and symmetry. This mosaic stimulated readings both different and complementing. One reading was certainly to demonstrate the unique divinity and absolute supremacy of Christ. This message was enhanced by the presence of the three Orientals, the Persian Magi offering gifts to the Infant Jesus. Another reading was to mark the obvious proximity between Christian religion and imperial ideology, between the ultimate power of Christ in heaven and the actual power of the Roman emperor on earth.

Pilgrim ampullae produced in vast numbers in 6<sup>th</sup> century Palestine and made of lead and tin document the enormous diffusion of centralised compositions of the three Persian Magi throughout the Mediterranean. New visual elements within this imagery are shown on an ampulla now in the treasury of the cathedral of Monza (fig. 18).<sup>54</sup> Again the Infant Jesus held by Mary marks the centre. This time she is sitting like an empress on an imperial-like throne. To the right of Christ are the three Persian Magi, to his left three shepherds. This shows two important visual inventi-

52 Hack 1967, pls. 6, 18–20; Brenk 1975, pp. 24–27 fig. 48; Deckers 1982, pp. 27–28, 30 fig. 14; Gandolfo 1988, pp. 112–115 with colour fig.; Miles 1993, pp. 159–160; Schubert 1995, p. 85; Marini Clarelli 1996, pp. 336–337; Cormack 2000, pp. 33–34 colour fig. 14; Ensoli / La Rocca 2000, pp. 635–637 (A. Millela).

53 See below note 68.

54 Grabar 1958, pp. 16–17 no. 1 pls. 1–2; Volbach 1958, p. 93 pl. 254 (bottom); Deckers 1982, pp. 27, 29 fig. 13; Conti 1989, pp. 28–33 no. 1; Vikan 1991, pp. 77, 80–87; Jastrzebowska 1994, pp. 108–109 fig. 3.

ons, both perhaps introduced in the 6<sup>th</sup> century:<sup>55</sup> the first of the three Persian Magi is now kneeling in a similar way to the kneeling barbarian in imperial imagery (figs. 1, 8–9);<sup>56</sup> and three shepherds have been added. In contrast to the three Persian Magi who offer their gifts in ritualised formality the three shepherds are depicted more informally, each in a different stance and with a different emotion. The three shepherds stimulated new readings. Formally they are necessary for the symmetrical set-up of the depiction; in most other aspects, however, they are deliberately portrayed as an asymmetrical complement to the three Persian Magi. Both groups typify ideas portrayed in imperial imagery: the rich garment of the three Persian Magi reflects the luxurious garb of the Oriental, whereas the rustic simplicity of the three shepherds corresponds to the rudimentary clothing of the northern barbarian. Both groups embody different religious, social, ethnic and cultural contexts thus emphasizing further aspects of the all-encompassing powers of Christ.

The last depiction is perhaps the most pointed and intricate of all. It marks further aspects of the complex relations between imperial and Christian imagery. This depiction is part of a unique set of mosaics in the apse of the church of San Vitale in Ravenna built and decorated around 540.<sup>57</sup> These mosaics transform all the walls into gold and flood them with colourful imagery: this creates a powerful visual space beyond the conventional confines of interior architecture. The pictorial centre-piece of the church, the mosaic of the dome of the apse, shows Christ as *kosmokrator* sitting on top of the celestial globe. Directly related to this portrayal but placed in a lower zone are two mosaics, both on each side of the apse wall and both depicting members of the imperial (and Episcopal) court. The two mosaics portray a procession of worshippers represented in much detail but not related to any specific historical event.<sup>58</sup> On the left wall the emperor Justinian is holding a shallow gold basket; on the right his wife, the empress Theodora, a gold cup studded with gems (fig. 16). Both are characterised by the holy nimbus. Theodora, however, is particularly distinguished: her nimbus is much larger than that of the emperor, only she is placed in front of prestigious architecture, an apse-like niche, and only she is dressed in an imperial robe richly embroidered with figures. Woven with golden thread into the lower hem of her purple robe is a small portrayal of the three Magi offering gifts. Missing, however, are the Infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary (fig. 16).<sup>59</sup>

This unusual and subtly placed portrayal of the three Magi must have stimulated many, even seemingly contradictory readings – and must have inspired a wide

55 For the imagery of both the three shepherds and the three Magi, Warland 1994, pp. 371–385; Attula 2000, pp. 46–47.

56 For the imagery of kneeling figures in front of Christ, Krause 2000, pp. 22–34.

57 Deichmann 1958, pls. VIII–X (colour), 311, 351–375; Deichmann 1969, pp. 241–243, 247–248, 254–256; Deichmann 1976, pp. 165–166, 178–187; Engemann 1984, pp. 348–356; Elsner 1995, pp. 177–189; Angiolini Martinelli 1997, pp. 207–214, 217–219 colour figs. 421–427, 434–440, 451–460; Cormack 2000, pp. 58–62 colour figs. 32–34; Deckers 2002, pp. 22–38.

58 Deckers 2002, pp. 29–38.

59 Deichmann 1958, pls. 360–361, 367; Angiolini Martinelli 1997, p. 214 colour fig. 440; Teteriatnikov 1998, pp. 382–384 figs. 1–2; Deckers 2002, pp. 28–29, 35–37. – For a bronze ring showing the three Magi without Jesus and Mary, Vikan 1991, p. 87 pl. 11c.

range of religious, political and ideological connotations. The most frequently suggested reading so far is: as once the Persian Magi so now the Roman emperor and the Roman empress offer precious gifts to Christ who is sitting high above them in heaven on top of the celestial globe (an imperial seat already used in the imagery of Roman emperors).<sup>60</sup> More specific and complex are the implications resulting from the immediate context of the portrayal of the three Magi shown on the empress' robe: one after another, the first one half hidden behind a fold. Why were they depicted on Theodora's dress, why next to her feet, and why without the Infant Jesus? The hem position indicates not only a personal relationship between the empress and the three Persian Magi but also a hierarchical difference between them and Theodora, a reading strengthened by late antique writers. They repeatedly emphasise how much the empress liked to receive foreign legations and demand the Persian Proskynesis.<sup>61</sup> Additionally the absence of Jesus allows an assimilation of Mary and Theodora, the most distinguished person depicted on the church's mosaics. Theodora is the only one besides Christ to receive adoration and gifts from the three Persian Magi.<sup>62</sup> This pointed relationship between Theodora and the three Persian Magi could have stimulated further readings. The empress was an active supporter of the Monophysites, a powerful Christian movement little favoured in the west but particularly popular in the east.<sup>63</sup> In this respect the three Persian Magi could have embodied also a specific religious and political loyalty of Oriental Christianity to Theodora: as the imperial patroness of the Monophysite movement in the east and as the empress of paramount (Christian) powers portrayed in the west. To sum up, the portrayal of the three Magi at Theodora's feet underlines the wide range of visual strategies used by the imperial court. A main characteristic of these strategies was to select, adopt and manipulate from Christian imagery what was thought to be effective for the purposes of imperial ideology. This raises the question as to whether the empress herself was involved in the intricate design and the subtle messages of the mosaic(s) in San Vitale. Of similar significance was another portrayal of the three Persian Magi in the same church. Archbishop Agnellus (557–570) singled out the figures of the three Persian Magi to adorn the famous purple altar cloth and placed his own portrait next to them.<sup>64</sup>

60 Schneider 1997, p. 109 pl. 8,2.

61 Procopius, *Panegyricus in Anastasium* 15,15 & 30,23; Paulus Silentarius 58 ss.; Lydus, *De Magistratibus Populi Romani* 26,23; Zonaras 14,6–7; Justinianus, *Novellae* 8,1, 28,5, 29,4.

62 For further connections between the empress Theodora and the Virgin Mary in Italy, Cormack 2000, p. 62.

63 For Theodora, Spruit 1970, pp. 109–136; Browning 1971; Irmscher 1988, pp. 89–94; Pazdernik 1994, pp. 256–281; Leppin 2000, pp. 75–85. – For the Monophysite movement, Frend 1972.

64 Mango 1972, p. 108 (Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, XXVIII [*De Agnello* c. 88]). For the purple altar cloth commissioned by archbishop Maximianus (546–556), Mango 1972, pp. 106–107 (Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, XXVII [*De Maximiano* c. 80]).

## Orientalism in Late Antiquity

Different sources highlight the constant and obvious preoccupation of late antique Rome and Constantinople with the east: not only the ongoing discourse about the Orient handed down by numerous writers but also and, in particular, the outstanding quantity, quality and variety of portrayals of the Oriental in imperial and Christian narratives. It was a preoccupation of such omnipresence that it seems to equal if not outmatch the widespread Orientalism of earlier imperial times. The historical focus of Roman Orientalism remained the Persian, who was politically brought up to date in late antiquity by the regime of the Sasanian kings. In general the Roman portrayal of the Oriental was not based on indigenous models of different peoples but standardized by the ideologised imagery of western art. This imagery was conceptually integrated into the different landscapes of Roman life, into the very heart of Roman culture. At the same time, it was an imagery of cultural counter-models confirming core aspects of Roman identity and Roman ideology. As in earlier imperial times Roman views of the Persian were manifold, oscillating between the despised barbarian subdued by Rome and the fascinating cultural Other representing aspects such as exotic splendour, irresistible attraction, outright admiration – and legendary power. In the imagery of late antiquity these complex sets of different perceptions were newly addressed and articulated.

The invented motif of barbarians offering some of the world's most precious gifts was now especially linked to portrayals of servile Orientals, portrayals referring to all the people of the east, from the Persian Magi to the Sasanian kings. Figures of Orientals in late antique art were often shown with new detail and ornament in their dress:<sup>65</sup> in imperial imagery, for example, the triumphal arch of Galerius (fig. 7) and the arch attributed to his palace (figs. 4 & 6) both in Thessaloniki, further the diptychs Castello Sforzesco (fig. 10), Barberini (fig. 12) and Halberstadt,<sup>66</sup> in Christian imagery, for example, the three Persian Magi depicted in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (fig. 17), an ambo from Thessaloniki and the ivory diptych Etschmiadzin (fig. 13).<sup>67</sup> A richer ornamented Oriental garb related such portrayals more explicitly to the extreme luxury of eastern fabrics and the lavish dress code of the Sasanian kings as shown, for example, on the Sasanian silver-gilt plate of Yazd-gard I in New York (fig. 20).<sup>68</sup> A similar interest in more narrative detail might have also stimulated a further differentiation in the age of the three Persian Magi as

65 A distinct tendency to detail regarding the ornament and colouring of the Oriental dress is already manifest in paintings showing Mithras, paintings datable to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century: Andreae 1973, colour pls. 105–106.

66 Volbach 1976, pp. 42–43 no. 35 pl. 19 (Halberstadt), pp. 48–49 no. 49 pl. 26 (Castello Sforzesco).

67 Ambo from Thessaloniki: Volbach 1958, p. 59 pls. 78–79; Warland 1994, pp. 371–385; Engemann 2001, pp. 57–60.

68 Harper 1981, pp. 63–64 pl. 16. For similar ornamentation of the official dress of Sasanian kings depicted on Sasanian silver-gilt plates, Harper 1978, pp. 48–50 no. 12 with colour fig.; Harper 1981, pp. 57–61, 68–70, pls. 13–14, 20, 38. – For Roman descriptions of the luxurious dress code of Persian-Sasanian nobles, Herodianus, 6,4,4; Ammianus Marcellinus, 18,6,22; 19,1,3; 23,6,84; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Elagabalus* (23,3), *Aurelianus* (28,4–5; 29,2; 33,1–34,6).

shown on the ivory diptych Etschmiadzin (fig. 13) and the Christian sarcophagus in Castiliscar (fig. 19).<sup>69</sup>

A significant but late interpretation stressing the lifelike imagery and the power of Christian portrayals of the three Persian Magi is an *ekphrasis* handed down in the *epistola synodica patriarcharum orientalium* (VII,8). Here it is argued that even the Persian forces when ravaging eastern parts of the Byzantine empire were spellbound and overpowered by this imagery. The *ekphrasis* is part of a petition alleged to have been addressed to the emperor Theophilus by a council held at Jerusalem in 836: “... Helena ... erected the great church of the Mother of Gods at ... Bethlehem, and on its outer western wall she depicted in mosaic [perhaps at the time of Justinian] the holy nativity of Christ, with the mother of God holding the life giving Infant on her bosom and the adoration of the gift-bearing Magi. When the godless Persians devastated all the cities of Romania and Syria, and burnt to ashes the holy city of Jerusalem [in 614] they came to the holy town of Bethlehem, and when they beheld the images of their fellow countrymen, i.e. of the Persian Magi versed in astronomy, they respected the persons represented as if they were alive, and out of reverence and love towards their ancestors, left the great church unharmed and free of any damage ...”<sup>70</sup>

The most important change in the use and understanding of the late antique imagery of the Oriental, however, is its new religious dimension, its explicit and constant integration into the heart of Christian narratives from around 300 onwards. In this context the western complexity of the Persian Magi is of particular historical interest. In Classical Greek and Latin sources, the term Magi refers primarily to a peculiar sect of Persian priests who performed all sorts of strange ‘magic’.<sup>71</sup> From Hellenistic times the Magi become more and more stylised as the incarnation of wise men. Leading Christian authorities of the 4<sup>th</sup> and earlier 5<sup>th</sup> centuries such as Pope Leo I (Rome), Johannes Chrysostomus (Antioch and Constantinople), and Augustinus (Carthage, Rome and Milan) link the three Magi explicitly to Christian power and imperial ideology.<sup>72</sup> They often call the Magi barbarians and interpret their adoration of the Infant Jesus as the ultimate manifestation of his dominion over the world. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, uses the adoration of the Magi as the obvious example to demonstrate the universal belief in Christ and his power over all people, especially the cultural Other and the non-Christian: “He was born in Judaea, and the Persians came to worship (προσκυνῆσαι) him. He it is who even before his bodily manifestation won victory over the opposing demons and trophies of idolatry. So all gentiles everywhere, rejecting the customs of

69 But see above note 44.

70 Translation after Mango 1972, p. 114. For the imagery of the church in Bethlehem, Kühnel 1987, pp. 133–149, especially pp. 134–135.

71 Duchesne-Guillemain 1985, pp. 149–157; Graf 1996, pp. 24–36, 48–54, 99–100; Jong 1997; Den Boeft 1999, pp. 207–215; Burkert 2003, pp. 113–133.

72 Johannes Chrysostomus, in *Matthaeum homiliae* 6,1 & 7,4–5 (= *Patrologia Graeca* 57–58, 65, 77–79); Augustinus, *sermones* 33,3 (= *Patrologia Latina* 54,242); Leo Magnus, *sermones* 38,1 (= *Patrologia Latina* 54,260).

their fathers and the impiety of idols, are henceforth placing their hope in Christ and dedicating themselves to him, as one can see with one's own eyes."<sup>73</sup>

Above all it was the portrayal of the three Persian Magi that constantly reminded the late antique viewer of the interrelation between imperial and Christian imagery – and imperial and Christian Orientalism. The scope and the power of this interrelation was explicitly addressed: the three Persian Magi of Christian art (figs. 13–19) are barely distinguishable from the gift-offering Orientals of imperial imagery (figs. 7, 9–12), and vice versa. How much the special focus on the three Persian Magi was indeed a result of Christian strategies, imperial ideologies and Roman Orientalism is manifest in further evidence. In the New Testament the story of the three Magi only appears in the gospel of Matthew. It was an addition which shows how consciously and eagerly the narrative of the three Magi was shaped and developed as a core element of both first the New Testament and later Christian imagery.<sup>74</sup> We have no information about the very beginning of this imagery and its original context. The earliest known images of the three Magi, however, are attested in Rome, in catacombs dated around 300 or a little later. Shortly afterwards two different visual concepts of the three Magi appeared throughout the Roman empire: a row of three Magi proceeding to Mary with the Infant Jesus or a symmetrical set-up with the central focus on the Infant Jesus sitting on Mary's lap.<sup>75</sup> This process of reception suggests two prototypes, perhaps invented in or pre-shaped by Rome.

In the light of imperial ideology of late antiquity and its relationship to the new state religion of Christianity the basic reason for the selection of this particular narrative as a new focus of Christian identity becomes obvious. The story of the three Persian Magi is the only New Testament narrative which links the birth of Christ to adoration by religious and cultural Others. The exceptional success of the imagery of the three Persian Magi throughout the Roman empire can be attributed to further reasons. One was their distinct Otherness regarding eastern religion and philosophy based on their legendary reputation as 'magic' priests and keepers of unrivalled wisdom. Another was the ethnic body of the Magi, the Persian, the most outstanding representative of the cultural Other in Roman discourses about non-Roman cultures. Persia was, more than any other realm, the only other cultural, religious and military superpower directly adjacent to the empire of Rome; and considered the antagonist of the west since the glorified victories of the Greeks over the Persians.<sup>76</sup> This aspect was further highlighted by the singular rank given to the portrayal of the three Persian Magi in the context of Christian narratives: this portrayal was the only Christian depiction explicitly articulating the adoration of the Infant Jesus.

The continual preoccupations, interpretations and re-constructions of Roman Orientalism in late antiquity mark also basic differences in the reception of the cul-

73 Athanasius, *de incarnatione* 37,5 (= Sources Chrétiennes 199,398). Translation after Thomson 1979, pp. 224–227.

74 The Christian mission at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the history of Matthew's own community and pre-Matthean narratives contributed to the shaping of this story; for further discussion, Brown 1977, pp. 181–183, 190–196.

75 Schneider 1992, pp. 944–953.

76 Wiesehöfer 2002, pp. 209–232.

tural Other in Rome and Persia. As far as we know the Sasanians did not invent and cultivate a similar preoccupation with the Occident as the Romans did with the Orient. In general the Sasanian discourses on Rome seem to have been distinctively different from the Roman discourses on Persia. This again has many reasons. One of them is manifest in the different structure and strategy of both religions: monotheistic Christianity deliberately addressed all peoples whereas polytheistic Zoroastrianism mainly focused on Persian 'nationals'.<sup>77</sup> Although both religions were closely linked to state power, the often postulated concept of a Zoroastrian 'state religion' implemented by the first Sasanian kings is not endorsed by contemporary sources. For the most part the Sasanian authorities responsible for politics and religions did not urge non-Persians to become worshippers of Zoroastrianism. However, they did not allow members of the Persian élite to convert from Zoroastrianism to Christianity – only under sentence of death by the Magian clergy.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, Persians normally granted non-Persians permission to worship their own God(s) as long as they paid tribute and remained loyal to the Sasanian state. This applied also to the Christians who constituted (despite occasional persecution mainly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century) the largest and most important religious minority in Sasanian Persia.<sup>79</sup> In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century Nestorian Christians served Sasanian kings, especially Chosraus II, even in the highest public offices.<sup>80</sup> Consequently persecuted were only the Manichaeans, and these equally from Roman and Sasanian authorities because of their universal religious doctrines and their loose re-interpretation of key terms borrowed from both Christianity and Zoroastrianism.<sup>81</sup>

Any Zoroastrian equivalent of the Christian imagery of the three Magi was unthinkable. This was one of the principle contrasts to Roman Christianity: while Persian Zoroastrianism was factually restricted to Persian culture and ethnicity, Christianity aimed principally at the opposite, to convert all people regardless of their specific belief, ethnicity and culture. This expansive and missionary character of Christianity gave the Roman emperors from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards a new ideological base, a base from which they claimed power over the peoples, religions and cultures of the world: those who adored Christ also did obeisance to the Roman emperor.<sup>82</sup> It is in this context that the late antique imagery of the Oriental and the three Persian Magi became one of the most distinctive and powerful symbols of Roman Orientalism.

77 For a present understanding of Zoroastrianism, Boyce 1984; Boyce / Grenet / Beck 1991; Gnoli 1993; Wiesehöfer 2001, pp. 199–200, 210–215; Stausberg 2002; Burkert 2003, pp. 109–133.

78 Brock 1984, p. 5–7.

79 Brock 1984, pp. 1–19; Wiesehöfer 1993, pp. 362–382; Brown 1996, pp. 204–211; Wiesehöfer 2001, pp. 199–216. Furthermore, see above note 9. – For persecutions of Christians also, Winter / Dignas 2001, pp. 240–244, 247–249.

80 Brock 1984, p. 3; Brown 1996, pp. 207–208.

81 Wiesehöfer 2001, pp. 206–208; Winter / Dignas 2001, pp. 237–240.

82 Bellen, 1994, S. 11–15; Ando 2000, pp. 346–349; Deckers 2001a, pp. 3–16.



## Bibliography

- Atiya, A.S. 1991, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, 2nd edition, Millwood.
- Alram, M. 2000, "Die Kunst im Sasanidenstaat", in: W. Seipel (ed.), *7000 Jahre persische Kunst, Meisterwerke aus dem iranischen Nationalmuseum in Teheran*, (Ausstellung des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien, 22. November 2000 bis 25. März 2001), Milan / Vienna, pp. 262–276.
- Ando, C. 2000, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London.
- Andreae, B. 1973, *Römische Kunst*, Freiburg im Breisgau.
- Angiolini Martinelli, P. (ed.) 1997, *La Basilica di San Vitale a Ravenna*, Modena.
- Attula, A. 2000, *Barbaren vor dem Kaiser – Magier vor Christus, Untersuchungen zu den Wurzeln eines spätantiken Bildthemas* (unpublished M.A.-Thesis, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald), Greifswald.
- Bauer, F.A. 1996, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike, Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Konstantinopel und Ephesos*, Mainz am Rhein.
- Bauer, F.A. 2001, "Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity", in: *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia*, (N.S. 1), vol. 15, pp. 27–61.
- Beard, M. / North, J. / Price, S. 1998, *Religions of Rome*, vol. I, *A history*, Cambridge.
- Bellen, H. 1994, "Christianissimus Imperator: Zur Christianisierung der römischen Kaiserideologie von Constantin bis Theodosius", in: R. Günther / S. Rebenich (ed.), *E fontibus haurire: Beiträge zur römischen Geschichte und zu ihren Hilfswissenschaften*, (Heinrich Chantreine zum 65. Geburtstag), Paderborn, pp. 3–19.
- Bovini, G. 1954, *I sarcofagi paleocristiani della Spagna*, Vatican City.
- Boyce, M. 1984, *Zoroastrians, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 2nd edition, London.
- Boyce, M. / Grenet, F. / Beck, R. 1991, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3, *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman rule*, (Handbuch der Orientalistik, vol. 1, Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten, vol. 8, Religion, vol. 1, Religionsgeschichte des alten Orients, vol. 2.2), Leiden.
- Brenk, B. 1975, *Die frühchristlichen Mosaiken in S. Maria Maggiore zu Rom*, Wiesbaden.
- Brentjes, B. 1974, *Drei Jahrtausende Armenien*, Vienna / Munich.
- Brock, S. 1984, "Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties", in: S. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, London, pp. VI, 1–19, [first published in: S. Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity, Studies in Church History*, vol. 18, Oxford 1982].
- Brown, P. 1996, *Die Entstehung des christlichen Europa*, München, [first published as: *Divergent Christendoms, The emergence of a Christian Europe, 200–1000 A.D.*, Oxford 1995].
- Brown, R.E. 1977, *The Birth of the Messiah, A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*, New York / London / Toronto / Sidney / Auckland.
- Browning, R. 1971, *Justinian and Theodora*, New York.
- Bruns, G. 1935, *Der Obelisk und seine Basis auf dem Hippodrom zu Konstantinopel*, (Istanbuler Forschungen, vol. 7), Istanbul.
- Burkert, W. 2003, *Die Griechen und der Orient, Von Homer bis zu den Magiern*, (first published as: *Da Omero ai Magi, La tradizione orientale nella cultura greca*, Venice 1999), Munich.
- Centanni, M. / Molteni, M. 1999, "Dall'adorazione dei Magi, alla figura della Maestà: l'intreccio delle fonti letterarie e iconografiche", in: *I tre saggi e la stella, Mito e realtà dei re Magi*, Rimini, pp. 93–146.
- Centini, M. 1999, "I Magi, la festa e il rito: le tradizioni folkloriche dell'Epifania", in: *I tre saggi e la stella, Mito e realtà dei re Magi*, Rimini, pp. 61–91.
- Conforto, M.L. / Melucco Vaccaro, A. / Cicerchia, P. et al. 2001, *Ariani e Costantino, Le due fasi dell'arco nella valle del Colosseo*, Milan.
- Cormack, R. 2000, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford History of Art), Oxford.
- Chauvot, A. 1992, "Parthes et Perses dans le sources du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle," in: M. Christol et al. (eds.), *Institutions, société et vie politique dans l'empire romain au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.C.*, Rome.
- Conti, R. (ed.) 1989, *Il Duomo di Monza, I tesori*, Milan.

- Cutler, A. 1991, "Barberiniana, Notes on the Making, Content and Provenance of Louvre, O.A. 9063", in: *Tesserae, Festschrift für J. Engemann*, (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband, vol. 18), Münster, pp. 329–339.
- Cutler, A. 2001, "Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 55, pp. 247–278.
- Darmon, J.-P. 1980, *Nymfarum Domus, Les pavements de la maison des Nymphes à Néapolis (Na-beul, Tunisie) et leur lecture*, (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain, vol. 65), Leiden.
- Dassmann, E. 1973, *Sündenvergebung durch Taufe, Buße und Märtyrerfürbitte in den Zeugnissen frühchristlicher Frömmigkeit und Kunst*, Münster.
- Deckers, J.G. 1982, "Die Huldigung der Magier in der Kunst der Spätantike", in: *Die Heiligen Drei Könige*, (Katalog zur Ausstellung des Wallraf-Richartz-Museums in der Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle Köln, 1. Dezember 1982 – 30. Januar 1983), Cologne, pp. 20–32.
- Deckers, J.G. 1979, "Die Wandmalerei im Kaiserkultraum von Luxor", in: *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, vol. 94, pp. 600–652.
- Deckers, J.G. 1996, "Vom Denker zum Diener, Bemerkungen zu den Folgen der konstantinischen Wende im Spiegel der Sarkophagplastik", in: B. Brenk (ed.), *Innovation in der Spätantike*, (Kolloquium Basel, 6. und 7. Mai 1994), Wiesbaden, pp. 137–184.
- Deckers, J.G. 2001a, "Göttlicher Kaiser und kaiserlicher Gott, Die Imperialisierung des Christentums im Spiegel der Kunst", in: F.A. Bauer / N. Zimmermann (eds.), *Epochenwandel? Kunst und Kultur zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, (Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie), Mainz am Rhein, pp. 3–16.
- Deckers, J.G. 2001b, "Review of Nestori 1996", in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. 94, pp. 741–751.
- Deckers, J.G. 2002, "Der erste Diener Christi. Die Prokynese der Kaiser als Schlüsselmotiv der Mosaiken in S. Vitale (Ravenna) und in der Hagia Sofia (Istanbul)", in: N. Bock et al. (eds.), *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge*, (Actes du colloque de 3<sup>e</sup> Cycle Romand de Lettres Lausanne-Fribourg, 24–25 mars, 14–15 avril, 12–13 mai 2000), Rome, pp. 11–70.
- Deckers, J.G. / Restle, M. / Shalem, A. 2005 (eds.), *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte*, Heft 4 (about gifts and tributes).
- Deichmann, F. W. 1958, *Frühchristliche Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Baden-Baden.
- Deichmann, F.W. 1969, *Ravenna. Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. I, *Geschichte und Monumente*, Wiesbaden.
- Deichmann, F.W. 1976, *Ravenna. Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. II, *Kommentar*, 2. Teil, Wiesbaden.
- Delbrueck, R. 1929, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler*, Berlin / Leipzig.
- Den Boeft, J. 1999, "Pure rites: Ammianus Marcellinus on the Magi", in: J.W. Drijvers / D. Hunt (eds.) 1999, *The late Roman world and its historian: interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, London / New York, pp. 207–215.
- Diebler, S. 1995, "Les hommes du roi, Sur la représentation souveraine dans les relations diplomatiques entre Byzance et les Sassanides d'après les historiens byzantins du sixième siècle", in: *Studia Iranica*, vol. 24, pp. 187–218.
- Dihle, A. 1994, *Die Griechen und die Fremden*, Munich.
- Dodgeon, M.H. / Lieu, S.N.C. 1991, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, AD 226–363, A Documentary History*, London / New York 1991.
- Dresken-Weiland, J. 1998, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, vol. II, *Italien mit einem Nachtrag Roma und Ostia, Dalmatien, Museen der Welt*, Mainz am Rhein.
- Drijvers, J.W. 1999, "Ammianus Marcellinus' image of Arsaces and early Parthian history", in: J.W. Drijvers / D. Hunt (eds.) 1999, *The late Roman world and its historian: interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, London / New York, pp. 193–206.
- J. Duchesne-Guillemin 1985, "The Wise Men from the East in the Western Tradition", in: *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, vol. 1, (Acta Iranica, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Hommages et Opera Minora), Leiden, pp. 149–157.
- Effenberger, A. 1996, "Überlegungen zur Aufstellung des Theodosius-Obeliskens im Hippodrom

- von Konstantinopel (mit einem Beitrag von Karl-Heinz Prieße)", in: B. Brenk (ed.), *Innovation in der Spätantike*, (Kolloquium Basel, 6. und 7. Mai 1994), Wiesbaden, pp. 207–283.
- Elsner, J. 1995, *Art and the Roman viewer, the transformation of art from the pagan world to Christianity*, Cambridge.
- Elsner, J. 1997, "The origins of the icon: pilgrimage, religion and visual culture in the Roman east as resistance to the centre", in: S. Alcock (ed.), *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, (Oxbow Monographs, vol. 95), Oxford, pp. 178–199.
- Elsner, J. 2000, "Form the culture of *spolia* to the cult of relics: the arch of Constantine and the genesis of Late Antique forms", in: *Papers of the British School at Rome*, vol. 68, pp. 149–184.
- Engemann, J. 1979, "Akklamationsrichtung, Sieger- und Besiegtenrichtung auf dem Galeriusbogen in Saloniki, Anlässlich des neuen Buches von H.P. Laubscher", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 22, pp. 150–160.
- Engemann, J. 1984, "Die religiöse Herrscherfunktion im Fünfsäulenmonuments Diocletians in Rom und in den Herrschermosaiken Justinians in Ravenna", in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster*, vol. 18, pp. 336–356.
- Engemann, H. 1988, "Herrscherbild", in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 14, Stuttgart, pp. 966–1047.
- Engemann, J. 1996, "Biblische Themen im Bereich der frühchristlichen Kunst", in: G. Schöllgen / C. Scholten (eds.), *Stimuli, Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum, Festschrift für Ernst Dassmann*, (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband, vol. 23), Münster, pp. 543–556.
- Engemann, J. 2001, "Zur Hinzufügung eines Engels in die Magierhuldigung auf dem Ambo aus Thessaloniki", in: G. Brands / J.-N. Andrikopoulou-Strack / D. Dexheimer / G. Bauchhenß (eds.), *Rom und die Provinzen: Gedenkschrift für Hanns Gabelmann*, (Beihefte der Bonner Jahrbücher, vol. 53), Mainz, pp. 57–60.
- Ensolì, S. / La Rocca, E. (eds.) 2000, *Aurea Roma, Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana*, (Roma, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 22 dicembre 2000 – 20 aprile 2001), Rome.
- Erdmann, K. 1969, *Die Kunst Irans zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, Berlin.
- Frend, W.H. 1972, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement, Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, Cambridge.
- Freshfield, H. 1921/22, "Notes on a Vellum Album Containing Some Original Sketches of Public Buildings and Monuments Drawn by a German Artist who Visited Constantinople in 1574", in: *Archaeologia*, vol. 72, pp. 87–104.
- Gaborit-Chopin, D. 1995, "Les trois fragments d'ivoire de Berlin, Paris et Neveres", in: C. Moss / K. Kiefer (eds.), *Byzantine East, Latin West, Art-historical studies in honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, Princeton, pp. 49–63.
- Gandolfo, F. 1988, "La Basilica Sistina: i mosaici della navata e dell'arco trionfale", in: C. Pietrangelo (ed.), *Santa Maria Maggiore a Roma*, Florence, pp. 110–123.
- Gerke, F. 1963, *Die drei Weisen aus dem Morgenlande, ihre Entstehung und Bedeutung in der Kunst des christlichen Altertums*, Mainz am Rhein.
- Giuliani, L. 2000, "Des Siegers Ansprache an das Volk: Zur politischen Brisanz der Frieserzählung am Constantinsbogen", in: C. Neumeister / W. Raeck (eds.), *Rede und Redner: Bewertung und Darstellung in den antiken Kulturen*, (Kolloquium Frankfurt a.M., 14.–16. Oktober 1998), Möhnesee 2000, pp. 269–287.
- Gnoli, Gh. 1993, *Iran als religiöser Begriff im Mazdaismus*, Opladen.
- Gottwaldt, J.M.E. (ed.) 1844–48, *Hamzah, 'al-'Isfahani: Tarikh sini muluk 'al-'ard wa-'al-'anbiya' – Hamzae Ispahanensis annalium Libri X*, vol. 1–2, Leipzig.
- Grabar, A. 1958, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza, Bobbio)*, Paris.
- Graf, F. 1996, *Gottesnähe und Schadenzauber, Die Magie in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, München.
- Grassinger, D. 1999, "Die mythologischen Sarkophage, 1. Teil, Achill – Adonis – Aeneas – Aktaion – Alkestis – Amazonen", in: G. Koch / K. Fittschen / W. Trillmich (eds.), *Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs*, 12<sup>th</sup> vol., 1<sup>st</sup> part, Berlin.

- Grüner, A. 2005, "Gabe und Geschenk in der römischen Staatskunst", in: H. Klinkott / R. Müller-Wollermann (eds.), *Geschenke und Steuern, Zölle und Tribute, Antike Abgabenformen in Anspruch und Wirklichkeit*, (Akten des Workshops, Tübingen 1.–4.7.2004), in print
- Güterbock, K. 1906, *Byzanz und Persien in ihren diplomatisch-völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen im Zeitalter Justinians: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Völkerrechts*, Berlin.
- Hack, B. (ed.) 1967, *I mosaici della Patriarcale Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore in Roma*, Offenburg.
- Harper, P.O. 1978, *The royal hunter: art of the Sasanian empire*, (Exhibition catalogue Asia House Gallery, New York, winter 1978), New York.
- Harper, P.O. 1981, *Silver vessels of the Sasanian period*, vol. 1, *Royal Imagery on sasanian silver vessels*, New York.
- Hauser, S.R. 2001, "Orientalismus", in: *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 15,1, Stuttgart / Weimar, pp. 1233–1243.
- Heitz, Chr. 2003, *Nördliche 'Barbaren' in der römischen Bildkunst: die Guten, die Bösen und die Häßlichen*, (unpublished Ph.D.-Dissertation, Archäologisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg), Heidelberg.
- Helm, R. 1932, "Untersuchungen über den auswärtigen diplomatischen Verkehr des römischen Reiches im Zeitalter der Spätantike", in: *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, vol. 12, pp. 375–436.
- Herrmann, G. 1980, *The Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Bishapur: Part 1, Bishapur III, Triumph attributed to Shapur I*, (Iranische Denkmäler, vol. 9, II), Berlin.
- Herrmann, G. 1983, *The Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Bishapur: Part 3, Bishapur I, The Investiture/Triumph of Shapur I? Bishapur II, Triumph of Shapur I*, (Iranische Denkmäler, vol. 11, II), Berlin.
- Herrmann, G. 1989, *The Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam: Naqsh-e Rostam 6, The Triumph of Shapur I* (Iranische Denkmäler, vol. 13, II), Berlin.
- Herrmann, G. 1998, "Shapur I in the East, Reflections from his Victory Reliefs", in: V.S. Curtis / R. Hillenbrand / J.M. Rogers (eds.), *The art and archaeology of ancient Persia: new light on the Parthian and Sasanian empires*, London / New York, pp. 38–51.
- Hofkunst 1993, *Hofkunst van den Sassanieden, Het Perzische rijk tussen Rom en China [224–642]*, (Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis, 12 februari tot 25 april 1993), Brussels.
- Hopkins, K. 1999, *A world full of gods. Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman empire*, London.
- Howard-Johnston, J. 1995, "The Two Great Powers in Late Antiquity: a Comparison", in: A. Cameron (ed.), *The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East*, vol. 3, *States, Resources and Armies*, Princeton, N.J., pp. 157–226.
- Huyse, Ph. 1999, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Ka'ba-i Zardušt (ŠKZ)*, vol. 1–2, (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, vol. III,1), London.
- Irmscher, J. 1988, "Kaiserin Theodora", in: *Die Frau in der Antike* (Kolloquium der Winkelmann-Gesellschaft, Stendal 1985), Stendal, pp. 89–94.
- Irwin, K. M. 1985, *The liturgical and theological correlations in the associations of representations of the three Hebrews and the Magi in the Christian art of late antiquity*, (Ph.D., Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, University of California), Berkeley (Microfiche).
- Isaac, B. 1995, "The Army in the Late Roman East: the Persian Wars and the Defence of the Byzantine Provinces", in: A. Cameron (ed.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies*, Princeton, pp. 125–155.
- Iversen, E. 1972, *Obelisks in Exile*, vol. II: *The Obelisks of Istanbul and England*, Copenhagen.
- Jastrzebowska, E. 1994, "Boten, Magier und Pilger", in: *Boreas. Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie*, vol. 17, pp. 105–113.
- Jong, A. de 1997, *Traditions of the Magi, Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature*, (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, vol. 133), Leiden.
- Kehrer, H. 1908, *Die heiligen drei Könige in Literatur und Kunst*, vol. I, Leipzig.
- Kehrer, H. 1909, *Die heiligen drei Könige in Literatur und Kunst*, vol. II, Leipzig.
- Kettenhofen, E. 1997, "Deportations, II. In the Parthian and Sasanian Periods", in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. VII, Costa Mesa, pp. 297–308.

- Kienast, D. 1990, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt.
- Kiilerich, B. 1998, "The obelisk base in Constantinople: Court art and imperial ideology", in: *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia*, (Series Altera in 8°), vol. 10, pp. 3–194.
- Klauser, T. 1966, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage in Bild und Wort*, (Antike Kunst, Beihefte, vol. 3), Olten.
- Koch, G. 2000, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage*, (Handbuch der Archäologie), München.
- Kollwitz, J. 1941, *Oströmische Plastik der theodosianischen Zeit*, Berlin.
- Korol, D. 1996, "Ein frühes Zeugnis für ein mit einer neutestamentlichen Szene geschmücktes Tempion, Die Darstellung der Magierhuldigung aus einer Kirche des 5. Jh. in Trani", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 39, pp. 200–224.
- Krause, K. 2000, "Darstellungen der Kreuzesverehrung auf palästinensischen Pilgerampullen", in: *Mitteilungen zur Spätantiken und Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 2, pp. 9–51.
- Kraszewski, C.S. 1999, *The Gospel of Matthew with Patristic Commentaries*, (Studies in Bible and early Christianity, vol. 40), Lewiston / Queenston / Lampeter.
- Krierer, K.R. 2004, *Antike Germanenbilder*, (Denkschriften Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, vol. 318), Vienna.
- Kühnel, G. 1987, "Das Ausschmückungsprogramm der Geburtsbasilika in Bethlehem, Byzanz und Abendland im Königreich Jerusalem", in: *Boreas. Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie*, vol. 10, pp. 133–149.
- Kurz, I. 2000, *Vom Umgang mit dem Anderen, Die Orientalismus-Debatte zwischen Alteritätsdiskurs und interkultureller Kommunikation*, (Bibliotheca Academica, vol. 5), Würzburg.
- Landskron, A. 2005, *Parther und Sasaniden. Das Bild der Orientalen in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, (Wiener Forschungen zur Archäologie, vol. 7), Vienna.
- Laubscher, H.P. 1975, *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*, (Archäologische Forschungen, vol. 1), Berlin.
- Leppin, H. 2000, "Kaiserliche Kohabitation: Von der Normalität Theodoras", in: Chr. Kunst (ed.), *Grenzen der Macht, Zur Rolle der römischen Kaiserfrauen*, (Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge, vol. 3), Stuttgart, pp. 75–85.
- L'Orange, H.P. / Gerkan, A. von 1939, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens*, Berlin.
- Luz, U. 1999, "Matthaios", in: *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 7, Stuttgart / Weimar, pp. 1033–1034.
- Mango, C. (ed.) 1972, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453, Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.
- Marini Clarelli, M.V. 1996, "La controversia nestoriana e i mosaici dell'arco trionfale di S. Maria Maggiore", in: C. Barsanti (ed.), *Bisanzio e l'Occidente, Arte, archeologia, storia, Studi in onore di Fernanda de' Maffei*, Rome, pp. 323–344.
- Mayer, E. 2002, *Rom ist dort, wo der Kaiser ist, Untersuchungen zu den Staatsdenkmälern des dezentralisierten Reiches von Diocletian bis zu Theodosius II*, (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, Monographien, vol. 53), Mainz / Bonn.
- McCormick, M. 1990, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West*, Cambridge (first published 1986).
- Meyer, M. 1990, "Die Felsbilder Shapurs I.", in: *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, vol. 105, pp. 237–302.
- Miles, M.R. 1993, "Santa Maria Maggiore's fifth-century mosaics: Triumphal Christianity and the Jews", in: *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 86, pp. 155–175.
- Millar, F. 1993, *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C – A.D. 337*, Cambridge/Mass.
- Nestori, A. 1996, *Il mausoleo e il sarcofago di Flavius Iulius Catervius a Tolentino*, (Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, Monumenti di antichità cristiana, II serie, vol. 13), Vatican City.
- Panaino, A. 1999, "I Magi e la ricerca del Salvatore", in: *I tre saggi e la stella, Mito e realtà dei re Magi*, Rimini, pp. 31–60.
- Pazdernik, C. 1994, "Our most pious consort given us by God, Dissident reactions to the partnership of Justinian and Theodora, A.D. 525 – 548", in: *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 13, pp. 256–281.

- Pensabene, P. / Panella, C. / Jones, M.W. et al. 1999, *Arco di Costantino tra archeologia e archeometria*, Rome.
- Piras, A. 1999, "I Magi persiani", in: *I tre saggi e la stella, Mito e realtà dei re Magi*, Rimini, pp. 7–30.
- Ploumis, I.M. 1997, "Gifts in the Late Roman Iconography", in: S. Isager / B. Poulsen (eds.), *Patron and Pavements in Late Antiquity*, (Halicarnassian Studies, vol. II), Odense, pp. 125–141.
- Pohl, W. (ed.) 1997, *Kingdoms of the Empire, The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, (The Transformation of the Roman World, vol. 1), Leiden / New York / Cologne.
- Said, E.W. 1995, *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London, (first published 1978).
- Schäfer, T. 1989, *Imperii Insignia, Sella curules und Fasces, Zur Repräsentation römischer Magistrate*, (Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung, 29<sup>th</sup> Ergänzungsheft), Mainz am Rhein.
- Scheid, J. / Huet, V. (eds.) 2000, *La colonne Aurélienne, Autour de la colonne Aurélienne, Geste et image sur la colonne de Marc Aurèle à Rome*, (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études Sciences Religieuses, vol. 108), Turnhout.
- Schneider, R.M. 1986, *Bunte Barbaren, Orientalenstatuen aus farbigem Marmor in der römischen Repräsentationskunst*, Worms.
- Schneider, R.M. 1992, "Barbar II (ikonographisch)", in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Suppl. I, Stuttgart, pp. 895–962.
- Schneider, R.M. 1997, "Roma Aeterna – Aurea Roma, Der Himmelsglobus als Zeitzeichen und Machtsymbol", in: J. Assmann – E.W.B. Hess-Lüttich (eds.), *Kult, Kalender und Geschichte, Semiotisierung von Zeit als kulturelle Konstruktion*, (Special Issue of Kodikas/Code, An International Journal of Semiotics, vol. 20, no. 1/2), pp. 103–133.
- Schneider, R.M. 1998, "Die Faszination des Feindes, Bilder der Parther und des Orients in Rom", in: J. Wiesehöfer (ed.), *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse, Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin 27.–30. Juni 1996*, (Historia Einzelschriften, vol. 122), Stuttgart, pp. 95–146.
- Schneider, R.M. 2004, "Nicht mehr Ägypten, sondern Rom, Der neue Lebensraum der Obelisken", in: *Stüdel Jahrbuch, Neue Folge*, vol. 19, pp. 155–179.
- Schubert, U. 1995, "Die Kindheitsgeschichte Jesu als politische Theologie am Triumphbogenmosaik von Santa Maria Maggiore in Rom", in: C. Moss / K. Kiefer (eds.), *Byzantine East, Latin West, Art-historical studies in honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, Princeton, pp. 81–89.
- Sperduti, L. 1996, "La Basilica paleocristiana", Luciani, R. (ed.), *Santa Maria Maggiore e Roma*, Rome.
- Spruit, J.E. 1970, "De mogelijke invloed van keizerin Theodora op Justiniaanse constitutiones", in: *Plus Est En Vous, Opstellen over recht en cultuur, Aangeboden aan Prof. Mr. A. Pitlo*, Haarlem, pp. 109–136.
- Stausberg, M. 2002, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 1, Stuttgart.
- Stefanidou-Tiveriou, Th. 1995, Το μικρό τόξο του Γαλερίου στη Θεσσαλονίκη, (Βιβλιοθήκη της Ἐν Ἀθήναις Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας, vol. 151), Athens.
- Teteriatnikov, N. 1998, "The 'Gift Giving' Image: The Case of the Adoration of the Magi", in: *Visual Resources, An International Journal of Documentation*, vol. 13, pp. 381–391.
- Thomson, R.W. (ed.) 1971, *Athanasius, 'Contra Gentes' and 'De Incarnatione'*, Oxford.
- Traina, G. 2002, "Le gentes d'orient fra identità e integrazione", in: *Antiquité tardive, Revue internationale d'histoire et d'archéologie (IV<sup>e</sup>–VIII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, vol. 9, pp. 71–80.
- Treutingen, O. 1938, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell*, Jena.
- Vikan, G. 1991, "'Guided by land and sea'. Pilgrim art and pilgrim travel in early Byzantium", in: *Tesserae, Festschrift für Josef Engemann*, (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 18), Münster, pp. 74–92.
- Volbach, W.F. 1958, *Frühchristliche Kunst, Die Kunst der Spätantike in West- und Ostrom*, München.
- Volbach, W.F. 1976, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Rö-

- misch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum zu Mainz, Kataloge Vor- und Frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer, vol. 7), Mainz am Rhein.
- Warland, J. 1994, "Der Ambo aus Thessaloniki: Bildprogramm, Rekonstruktion, Datierung", in: *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, vol. 109, pp. 371–385.
- Wiesehöfer, J. 1993, "Geteilte Loyalitäten. Religiöse Minderheiten des 3. und 4. Jahrhunderts n.Chr. im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und dem sāsānidischen Iran", in: *Klio, Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte*, vol. 75, pp. 362–382.
- Wiesehöfer, J. 2001, *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London / New York, (first published 1996).
- Wiesehöfer, J. 2002, "'Griechenland wäre unter persische Herrschaft geraten ...', Die Perserkriege als Zeitenwende?", in: S. Sellmer / H. Brinkhaus (eds.), *Zeitenwenden, Historische Brüche in asiatischen und afrikanischen Gesellschaften*, (Asien und Afrika, Beiträge des Zentrums für Asiatische und Afrikanische Studien [ZAAS] der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, vol. 4), Hamburg, pp. 209–232.
- Wiesehöfer, J. 2003, "Iraner und Hellenen: Bemerkungen zu einem umstrittenen kulturellen Verhältnis", in: S. Conermann/J. Kusber (eds.), *Studia Eurasiatica. Kieler Festschrift für H. Kulke zum 65. Geb.*, (Asien und Afrika, Beiträge des Zentrums für Asiatische und Afrikanische Studien [ZAAS] der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, vol. 10), Hamburg, pp. 497–524.
- Wiesehöfer, J. (in print), "Narseh, Diokletian, Manichäer und Christen", in: J. Tubach (ed.), *Christen im Sasanidenreich* (in print).
- Winter, E. / Dignas, B. 2001, *Rom und das Perserreich, Zwei Weltmächte zwischen Konfrontation und Koexistenz*, Berlin.
- Zanker, P. 2000, "Die Gegenwelt der Barbaren und die Überhöhung der häuslichen Lebenswelt, Überlegungen zum System der kaiserzeitlichen Bilderwelt", in: T. Hölscher (ed.), *Gegenwelten zu den Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms in der Antike*, Munich / Leipzig, pp. 409–433.

## Photo credits

Fig. 1: Ashmolean Museum (Oxford). – Fig. 2: from Herrmann 1989, pl. 1. – Fig. 3: from L'Orange / Gerkan 1939, pl. 24a. – Figs. 4–7, 11–13, 19: Photographic library, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke (Munich). – Fig. 8: from Bruns 1935, fig. 37. – Fig. 9: Trinity College (Cambridge). – Fig. 10: from Delbrueck 1929, pl. 49. – Figs. 14–16: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Rome), negative nos. 60.1404, 60.1405, 57.1760. – Fig. 17: from Brenk 1975, fig. 48. – Fig. 18: Hirmer Fotoarchiv (Munich), negative no. 561.3118. – Fig. 20: from Harper 1981, pl. 1





Fig. 1 Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, reverse of brass sestertius of Trajan (Rome, 114–117): Trajan appointing the Parthian king Parthmaspates



Fig. 2 Naqsh-i Rostam, Rock relief (after 260): Philipus Arabs kneeling in front of Shapur I



Fig. 3 Rome, arch of Constantine, pedestal, south side (312–315):  
Oriental captives (female, child, male) and trophy

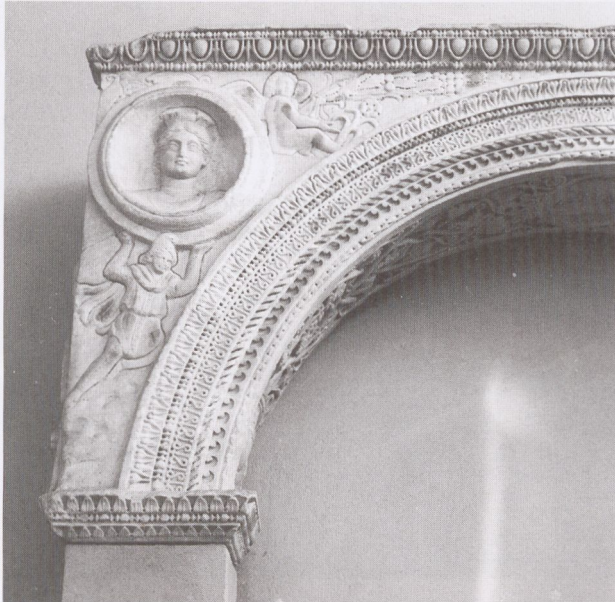


Fig. 4 Thessaloniki, marble arch, from Galerius' palace (308–311):  
Oriental carrying an *imago clipeata* of Thessalonike



Fig. 5 Paris, Musée du Louvre, Roman sarcophagus (about 200):  
 gift procession of Trojans with Priam kneeling in front of Achilles (only partly extant)



Fig. 6 Thessaloniki, marble arch, from Galerius' palace (308–311):  
 Oriental carrying an *imago clipeata* of Galerius



Fig. 7 Thessaloniki, arch of Galerius, two relief panels, south-eastern side (c. 303):  
Persians paying tribute to Galerius

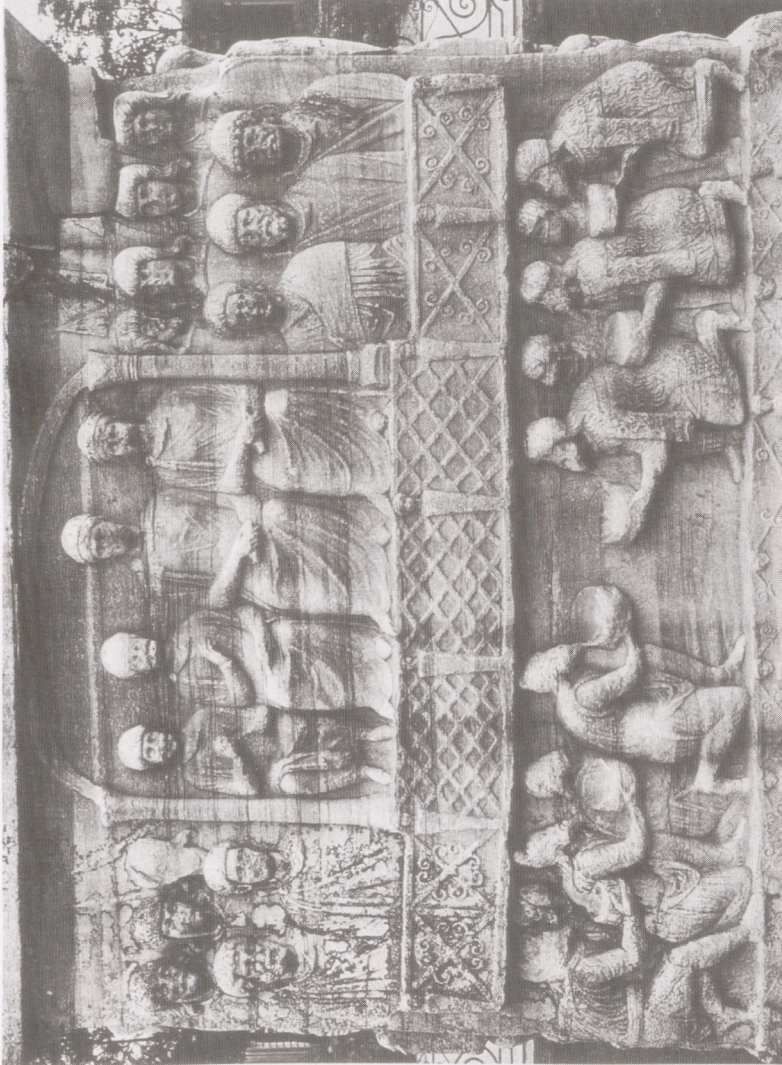


Fig. 8 Constantinople, base of the obelisk of Theodosius I, north-western side (c. 390): barbarians from Orient and Occident paying tribute to Theodosius I

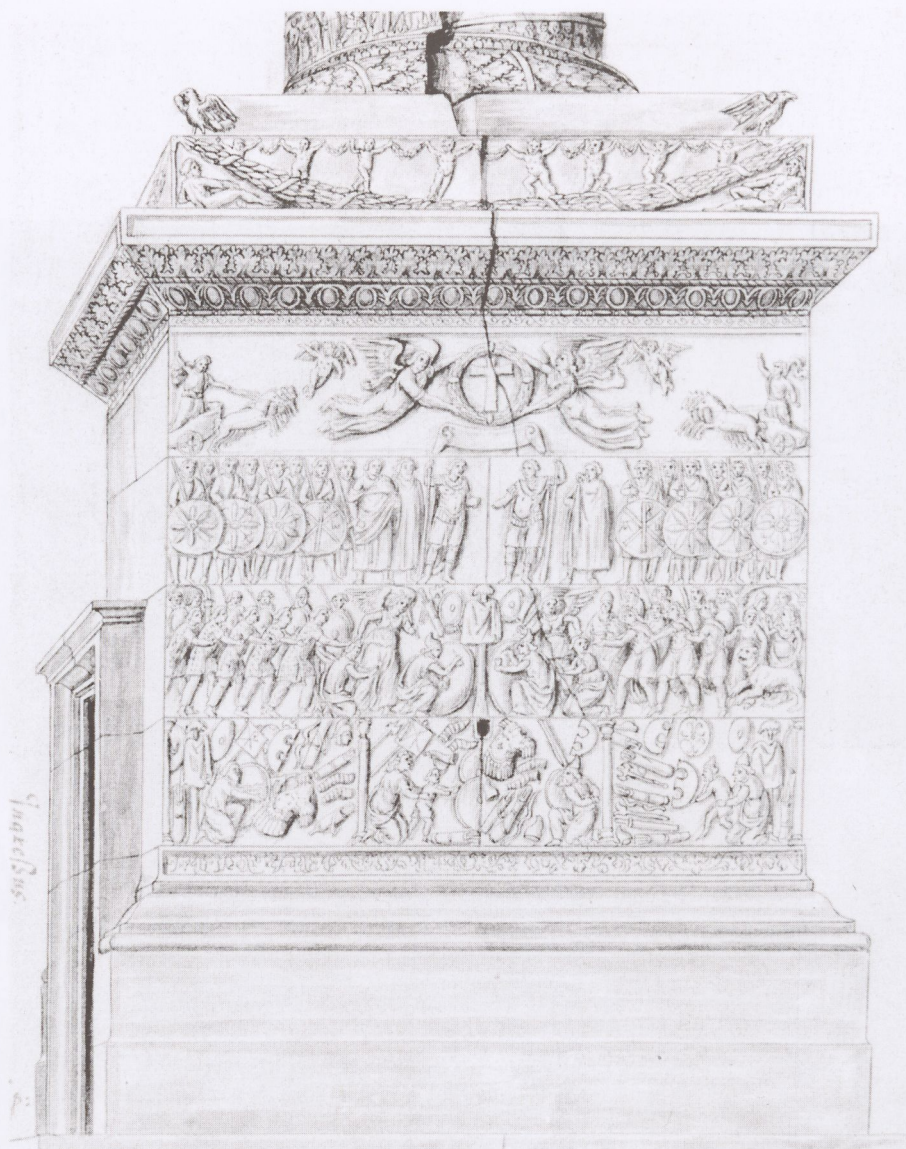


Fig. 9 Constantinople, lost relief of Arcadius' column, west side (c. 400), shown in an anonymous drawing (1574): barbarians from Orient and Occident paying tribute to Arcadius, Honorius and the cross of Christ



Fig. 10 Milan, Castello Sforzesco, ivory diptych, upper and lower panel (early 6<sup>th</sup> century):  
Persians paying tribute to a Roman emperor (not extant) and the bust of Constantinopolis



Fig. 11 Rome, column of Marcus Aurelius, scene no. 49 (c. 190):  
Sarmati with covered hands doing obeisance to Marcus Aurelius



Fig. 12 Paris, Musée du Louvre, ivory diptych Barberini (first half 6<sup>th</sup> century):  
 Persians and Indians paying tribute to a Roman emperor and the bust of Christ





Fig. 13 Yerevan, Matenadaran, ivory diptych from Etschmiadzin' (6<sup>th</sup> century):  
the three Persian Magi adoring the Infant Jesus held by Mary



Fig. 14 Tolentino, cathedral, sarcophagus of Catervius and Severina, narrow side (late 4<sup>th</sup> century): the three Persian Magi adoring the Infant Jesus held by Mary (left part)



Fig. 15 Tolentino, cathedral, sarcophagus of Catervius and Severina, narrow side (late 4<sup>th</sup> century): the three Persian Magi adoring the Infant Jesus held by Mary (right part)



Fig. 16 Ravenna, San Vitale, imperial mosaic of the apse (c. 540):  
Theodora with the three Persian Magi portrayed on the hem of her robe



Fig. 17 Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, mosaic of the triumphal arch (432–440):  
the three Persian Magi (and Joseph) adoring the Infant Jesus

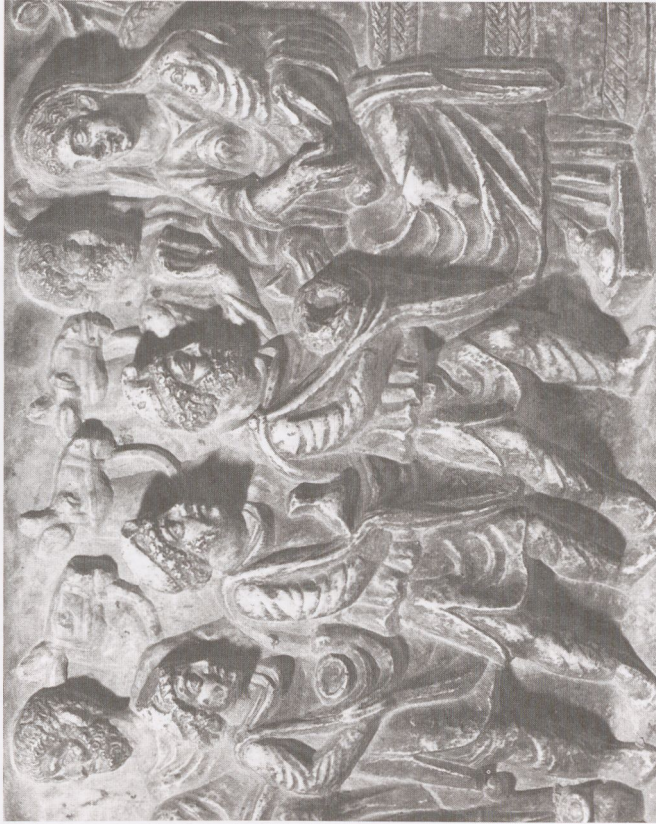


Fig. 19 Castiliscar, church, sarcophagus, front side (1<sup>st</sup> half 4<sup>th</sup> century):  
the three Persian Magi adoring the Infant Jesus held by Mary



Fig. 18 Monza, cathedral, pilgrim ampulla, lead and tin  
(6<sup>th</sup> century): the three Persian Magi and three  
shepherds adoring the Infant Jesus held by  
Mary



Fig. 20 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, silver-gilt plate of Yazdgard I (399–421): the king slaying a stag