

Empires
and
Superpowers
Their Rise & Fall

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**Five Brief Studies from a Seminar
produced by the
Society for the Preservation
of the Greek Heritage**

and held at the
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.
March 16, 2002

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Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage
5125 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W.
Suite 38
Washington, DC 20016

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Table of Contents

The Contributors	ii
Introduction Costa Carras	iii
Democracy, Empire and Disaster: The Athenian Expedition to Sicily Michael Sarbanes	1
The Roman Empire Myles McDonnell	8
The New Roman and Romaic Empire Costa Carras	14
The Most Powerful Empire: Ottoman Flexibility and Military Might Gábor Ágoston	19
The British Empire Geoffrey Treasure	19

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Introduction

In March 2002, the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage organized a conference at Georgetown University on *The Rise and Fall of Five Empires*, all five relevant to the Greek heritage. The conference was held at a time when there was some discussion in Washington as to whether the US was now an imperial power. Thus, quite apart from the relationship of the five chosen empires to the Greek heritage, there hung in the air a number of questions concerning the possible relevance of these five imperial histories to the United States today.

At the conference, it was argued that to describe the US as an imperial power represented an undesirably loose use of language. An empire conquers and administers territory most of whose inhabitants do not share the allegiance held by those governing the empire. A hegemonic power employs force or influence to control developments beyond its frontiers but does not necessarily administer any territories over which it exercises influence. If these definitions are accepted, the US is clearly far more of a hegemonic than an imperial power, although admittedly most of our five empires have been hegemonic powers as well as empires, and the borderline between the two is not hard to cross.

The distinction is in any event not so clear as to render valueless an analysis of past imperial experiences. Furthermore, it is clearly relevant to examine carefully the interaction between a democratic constitution and the dispatch of military expeditions to a remote region, or the possible impact of epidemiological or environmental developments on the balance of power, or again the issue of the openness of an empire to other peoples, or an empire's ethos. These are all issues of permanent interest.

None of the five empires these papers examine enjoyed the same degree of worldwide military preponderance the US currently enjoys. The US can, in principle at least, unlike earlier world powers, both intervene in countries all around the world

and build up an empire. In fact, when it has acted imperially, it has done so not to create an empire, but to express or maintain its hegemonic position. Nevertheless, many of the characteristics that lead to the rise and fall of empires operate also in the instance of hegemonic powers.

Certain questions were put to all our speakers. Their papers were not required to answer them, but to bring the essential points in the history of their respective empires alive to a non-scholarly audience. The list of the ten questions follows:

1. What was the military basis for the creation and maintenance of each empire?
2. What was the economic basis for the creation and maintenance of each empire?
3. What was the cultural, religious or ideological basis for the creation and maintenance of each empire?
4. What were the characteristics of the particular mixture of ideology and pragmatism displayed in the creation and maintenance of each empire?
5. To what extent were the individual qualities of leaders (whether rulers or others) important in the creation and maintenance of each empire?
6. What psychological factors held together those who created and maintained the empire?
7. What changes were observed over time in the relationship between center and periphery (remembering it is at the periphery of empire that the application of hegemonic power is most natural)?
8. To what degree did each empire decline and fall because of military defeat?

9. To what degree did a particular empire decline and fall as a result of:
- a reduced determination to behave in an imperial manner;
 - an intensification and strengthening of opposition to the empire from external enemies or internal opponents;
 - Or the effect of extraneous events in weakening the empire and/or strengthening its opponents?
10. What has been the major impact of these empires on the world today and on the Greek heritage in particular?

Both the papers and the discussion proved so stimulating that it was decided to publish the papers, together with chronological tables and brief bibliographies for the benefit of those who might wish to take their interest in the subject further. The SPGH hopes these papers will encourage further discussion of the many and important issues, historical and contemporary, that these papers raise.

Democracy, Empire and Disaster: The Athenian Expedition to Sicily

Michael A. Sarbanes

At daybreak on a summer morning in 415 B.C., with high spirits and grand ambitions the Athenian democracy launched the most costly and splendid Hellenic force that had ever been sent out by a single Greek city up to that time.¹ She deployed the greater part of her military forces, followed it with major reinforcements several years later, and met with utter disaster. Nearly 40,000 Athenian and allied soldiers and sailors were killed or taken prisoner. In Thucydides' poignant understatement, "few of many returned home". The empire, Athens, and the democracy were left vulnerable and dramatically weakened. A decade later, after internal strife and external struggles, the great walls of Athens were pulled down to the accompaniment of Spartan flutes and the democracy replaced -for a time—by the repressive oligarchical rule of Thirty.

The expedition gives keen insight into the vitality and the weaknesses of Athenian democracy at the height of its power. At the same time, it points out the issues surrounding a more general historical phenomenon - world leadership by a democracy. Three democracies have been the dominant power in their world: Athens in the 5th C. B.C., Britain in the Victorian Era, and the United States after the Second World War.² Each of these societies and the worlds they bestrode were vastly different, but they faced some common challenges in connecting their

domestic politics and foreign policy. Athens — the first, smallest, and most direct of these democracies— exhibited these challenges with particular clarity, and the Sicilian expedition displays them in especially high relief.

Indeed, the Sicilian expedition is the first exhibit in any argument that democracies are ill suited to rule empires. Basic characteristics of democracy —open discussion, procedures for changing leadership, and popular ratification of major policy decisions—have often been viewed as liabilities in the exercise of power abroad. De Tocqueville joined a long line of commentators when he observed in 1831

“Foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which a democracy possesses; and they require on the contrary the perfect use of almost all those faculties in which it is deficient. . . . a democracy is unable to regulate the details of an important undertaking, persevere in a design, and to work out its execution in the presence of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy and it will not await their consequences with patience.”³

An early sympathizer with these views was Thucydides, our main historical source for the Peloponnesian War. In the case of the Sicilian expedition, Thucydides blames the democracy for two somewhat contradictory sins —on the one hand for making a disastrous error of judgment in authorizing the expedition to Sicily and on the other for failing to adequately execute that decision, which might otherwise have had a good chance of success. For both faults, however, Thucydides places the blame squarely on the democratic system, on the wrong headedness of the demos and the irresponsible weakness of the “champions of the people” .⁴ On the strategy,

“They not only acted contrary to [Pericles’] advice in all these things, but also in matters that apparently had no connection with the war they were led by private ambition and private greed to adopt policies which proved injurious both as to themselves and their allies”.

And on the tactical execution,

“those who were responsible for it, instead of taking additional measure for the proper support of the first troops which were sent out, gave themselves over to personal intrigues for the sake of gaining the popular leadership and consequently not only conducted the military operations with less rigour, but also brought about, for the first time, civil discord at home.”

While Thucydides is clear that the Athenian political system is at fault, he gives a rather unsatisfactory explanation of the domestic factors which caused the expedition to be undertaken in the first place and which contributed to its failure. To the extent he focuses on these issues at all, his stress is on rivalry between various personalities for the leadership of the people [προστασια του δημου] which provides only a partial picture of the domestic factors that affected the expedition. While Thucydides

distinguished subtle layers of causation in international relations, his discussions of domestic politics show less sophistication. He was no doubt hampered by the fact that for twenty years, including the period during which this expedition was planned and conducted, he did not witness internal developments firsthand, for he was in exile from Athens for his military failure as an Athenian general.

However, using evidence from his own narrative and other sources it is possible to piece together more satisfactory answers to some basic questions about why Athens attacked Sicily with such disastrous results. Did

the international situation make the expedition necessary? What arguments were deployed for and against the expedition and what gave those arguments their force? Who stood to benefit from the conduct or success of the expedition? Where was the political center of gravity in Athens at this time? How did internal factional politics affect the conduct of the expedition? The answers to these questions illuminate the origins of this catastrophe, and the challenges facing a democratic empire.

The International Situation:

The starting point is the international situation that Athens faced in the period leading up to 415 B.C.E. The restlessness and aggressiveness of Athenian policy in this period cannot be explained by threats in the international environment. In terms of her basic survival, prosperity, and the maintenance of her empire, Athens in 415 was in a relatively comfortable position compared with the rigors of her earlier rule. The basic equation of Athenian survival remained intact: her population was safe inside her great Long Walls, fed by grain imports⁵ guaranteed by her wealth and naval superiority, which were in turn assured by the steady tribute from the subject allies. The empire funded the fleet and the fleet enforced the empire, and kept the lifelines open, especially the grain route to the Black Sea.

This equation was invincible as long as the grain suppliers would sell, the empire remained docile and the fleet remained superior. There is no evidence that Athens suffered a major disruption of her grain supplies in these years.⁶ The souring of relations with Macedon and Thrace no doubt lowered imports from these areas, but the main routes remained secure to major food sources in the Black Sea and the island of Euboea. Revolt was a perennial feature of the Athenian empire, but the period after the Peace of Nicias was particularly quiet in this respect. Nor in 421-416 was there any power in immediate view which

could challenge Athenian naval mastery. Athens remained mistress of the seas until her great fleet was destroyed in Sicily.

In Athens' major theatres of concern—mainland Greece, the Aegean Empire and Black Sea, Persia, and the West - Athens' freedom of action was limited in many directions, but she was not under any sort of direct threat to her survival or to her empire.

Any potential Syracusan threat could be no more than a glimmer on a very hypothetical horizon in 421-415. There were some creditable arguments that could make Athens want to keep Syracuse from getting too strong. First, a strong and hostile Syracuse with a sizable and growing fleet might theoretically threaten Athenian control of the islands in the West. These islands (and the mainland kingdom of Ambracia) were important militarily first because Athenian fleets needed their harbors and shores to avoid the hostile shores of the Peloponnese where Sparta was dominant. Moreover, Athenian raids and blockades of the Peloponnese would require firm bases in the West. At the time of the declaration of war, the Athenians were concerned to shore up their position in the region because they wanted to have the islands in order to encircle and attack the Peloponnese.⁷ Secondly, the Sicilian trade link, especially in grain, concerned both Athens and her enemies; Athens wanted to preserve her own connection while severing that of the Peloponnesian states to Sicily.⁸ In this connection, three Athenian generals with sixty ships in 427-424 are specifically charged to cut off the grain imports to the Peloponnese.⁹

A dominant, active and hostile Syracuse might conceivably pose a potential threat to Athens' existing military and trade interests, but, there were few signs in 415 that this hazard was likely to materialize in the immediate future. There is no evidence that Syracuse or Sparta's other

Sicilian and Italian Dorian allies had rendered military assistance during the Archidamian War despite Sparta's request.¹⁰ Moreover, there are no signs that Syracuse or other states in the West were actively looking to the East to expand their power. Syracuse had been wracked by internal divisions and would always have to focus on the potential threat posed by Carthage before possibly posing a significant threat to Athenian imperial interests. At the time of the Athenian decision to invade, the Siceliots seem to have kept well on their side of the existing boundaries of influence as defined by Nicias — "the Ionian Sea, if one sail[s] along the coast, and the Sicilian, if one cross[es] the open deep."¹¹

This international environment did not preclude a conservative Athenian policy of preserving what she had and enjoying the fruits of her hegemony. Yet, Athens pursued a much different strategy. Athenian activity shifted about from the North and Amphipolis, to the mainland at Mantinea, spilled over into minor mischief in the Persian borders, and settled, finally and tragically, on an unprecedented attack on Syracuse. To understand the Sicilian expedition we must look inside the borders of Attica, at the underlying arguments, interests, and procedures that resulted in the expedition.

Security and Glory: the Imperial Dilemma at Athens

The Athenian debate on the expedition, according to Thucydides' account, was dominated by security and glory and the blurred distinction between them. This conflation of honor and security is typical for an imperial state for several reasons. First, international power produces a certain prestige, and once this prestige has come to be expected as part of a nation's culture, it becomes part of the existing way of life and thus one of the goods which national security seeks to protect. Second, prestige and reputation become important tools in the international

scene. A reputation for ferocity, wealth, competence, or largesse breeds expectations and perceptions that become part of the calculation of other states and hence part of the international environment. If it will damage a nation's reputation, a failure, an ineffective action, or even a failure to act can be perceived as a defeat and thus as a threat to national security, though it may have no effect on a nation's measurable power. This blurred area between national honor and security finds its ultimate expression in the "domino argument", which claims that any appearance of weakness will fatally undermine the entire power of the nation.

The arguments set forth in the Athenian debates on whether to attack Syracuse shed some light on the popular mindset at the time. While Thucydides does not offer a word-for-word transcript, one can assume that his description of what was said at least covers major arguments that were crafted to resonate with the beliefs and concerns of the assembled citizens. The debate focused primarily on security and honor. Unlike many deliberations on military interventions in the Athenian Assembly, this debate was conspicuously devoid of commonplace ideological arguments -democratic ideals, anti-barbarian attitudes, tribal loyalties. Syracuse was another democracy, the expedition was to attack another Greek state not a barbarian, and tribal allegiances were sufficiently mixed up in the alliances on both sides as to create no clear incentive. The absence of these considerations fits with Thucydides' general belief that such arguments are mere window-dressing for the real concerns of fear, honor and interest.

Thucydides' description of the fateful debate which led to the decision to attack Sicily gives us at least some idea of how security mixed with glory entered in contemporary Athenian political debate. Security and fear were an

ever-present part of life in the international system of 5th C. Greek city-states. Relations among cities were competitive, dangerous and harsh. Stronger states -Athens chief among them— compelled weaker ones to submit or destroyed them. Athens had good reason to fear losing her advantage. As Pericles put it fifteen years before the Sicily expedition, “the empire you hold is a tyranny, which it may seem wrong to have assumed, but which certainly it is dangerous to let go.” At the same time, honor and shame dominated the personal ethos of the Greeks in general, and the political significance of collective glory and shame pervades Athenian political life in particular.¹²

According to Thucydides’ report, three major lines of argument are advanced in the debate -the embassy from Eggesta, a Sicilian City that was a traditional opponent of Syracuse, argues that Athens’ security demands that she invade, Nicias that Athens’ security requires that Athens not invade, and Alcibiades that Athens’ glory and reputation demand that she invade. In the end, Alcibiades and the appeal to honor carries the day.

The enemies of Syracuse present a straightforward argument that the expedition was necessary to protect Athens from an emerging Syracusan threat. Their chief and most effective argument was that:

“if the Syracusans should go unpunished for depopulating Leontini, and by destroying those of their allies that were still left should get the whole of Sicily in to their power, there was danger that some time, lending aid with a great force, both as Dorian to Dorians on account of kinship, and at the same time as colonists to the Peloponnesians that had sent them out, they might help to pull down the power of the Athenians. It would be wise, therefore with their allies that were still left, to oppose the

Syracusans, especially as the Egestaeans would furnish money sufficient for the war.”

This Egestaeon argument —that Syracuse must be snuffed out before it consumes Athens— must have dominated the first assembly which had decided to send sixty ships to Sicily.

Still, some Athenians clearly looked askance at the Egestaeon request. These conditions for Syracuse to become a serious threat - conquest of all Sicily, kinship, and colonial filial loyalty- are at best remote. Moreover, the intensity of the Athenian fear of a clear and present danger is somewhat called into question by the fact that Athens sent envoys to make sure Egesta had enough money to finance the expedition before taking any other steps. Nicias, Thucydides says, disavowed the Athenian stake in the Egestaeon conflict and condemned the insincerity of the Athenian justification.¹³ He argues that the dictates of national security forbid a major expedition to Sicily. First, he argues that the risks involved in the expedition and the remaining hazards at home are too great to commit to faraway seas a force of such magnitude —at this point in the debate still a force of only sixty ships! The enemies Athens will be leaving behind and the tenuous nature of the peace make the perils at home too pressing for distant ventures. “We must resolve not to run into danger while the state is still amid the waves, and reach out after another empire before we have secured that which we have....”¹⁴

But Nicias is unable to make an effective appeal to Athenian honor. There is no kudos in simply riding along on the waves as he advises. His is the precarious task of convincing his listeners that the threat from Syracuse is a lesser danger than those which Athens already faces, without making Syracuse sound so weak that it seems easy pickings for hungry imperialists. Moreover, given a mood of

Athenian pride so strong that none dare speak out against the expedition in the end¹⁵, he must avoid the charge that he is afraid of the Syracusans. Indeed, rather than appealing to the sense of honor, Nicias seems to be chiding the Athenians for what he perceives as an overweening and dangerous pride, especially among the young and inexperienced. They now shortsightedly despise Sparta and glory in their supremacy.

“You have no right, however, to be elated at the misfortunes of your opponents, but only when you have mastered their spirits should you feel confidence; nor must you believe that the Lacedaemonians, on account of their humiliation, have anything else in view than to discover in what way they may even yet defeat us and retrieve their own dishonor —the more so as they have been in the highest degree and for the longest time courting a reputation for valour.¹⁶

By contrast, Alcibiades' makes a direct appeal to imperial pride and zeroes in on the domino argument to support his cause. Alcibiades dismisses Nicias' assertions that the risks of a Sicilian expedition are unconscionable by deriding the fighting quality of the Syracusans, casting aspersions on their mixed origins, their disordered politics, their weakness in hoplites, and their hostile relations with the barbarians. He argues that they are nothing to fear, in apparent contradiction to the Egestans who are urging the expedition to begin with. Alcibiades dismisses almost offhandedly Nicias' charge that Athenian security will be imperiled by an expedition of this scope, citing the naval reserves that will assure Athenian mastery of the seas even in the unlikely event that the whole expedition is lost.¹⁷

Having downplayed the risks Syracuse might pose to Athens' security, Alcibiades' primary arguments mine the

nebulous ground between national security and national glory. He makes a classical domino argument in which the danger from Syracuse is purely secondary. Instead, Alcibiades contends that it is an indispensable part of the Athenian character to expand their empire. For every empire, any exception to or softening of this imperial urge undermines the very possession of empire.

“If we should all keep quiet or draw distinctions of race as to whom we ought to assist we should add but little to our empire and should rather run a risk of losing that empire itself....And it is not possible for us to exercise a careful stewardship of the limits we would set to our empire; but, since we are placed in this position, it is necessary to plot against some and not let go our hold upon others, because there is a danger of coming ourselves under the empire of others, should we not ourselves hold empire over other peoples”.¹⁸

Alcibiades' logic and facts are by no means unassailable here, but they do not need to be. His appeal is to a well-developed Athenian identity. The thrill of attack, the prestige born of being powerful and feared, the reputation for constant action —these are the household gods of Athenian empire to which Alcibiades appeals. He justifies his own fitness to command in terms of the honor his private extravagance has brought to the Athenian state. He then turns to one of the most potent of Athenian political arguments, the example of the forefathers. The power of this appeal to ancestry had immediate and forceful impact on the Athenian citizen. He was surrounded by the legacy of the imperial past. There were 192 figures on the frieze of the Parthenon, the same number as those who had died at Marathon. According to Isocrates, the talents from

the tribute used to be brought in procession one-by-one alongside the sons of those who died acquiring it.¹⁹ Alcibiades argues that the same hostile array now ranged against Athens had not deterred their fathers, who had faced simultaneous Persian opposition as well. To match their fathers' glory the Athenians must undertake this mission. The historical accuracy of this argument is dubious in the extreme, but its political impact cannot be doubted.

Alcibiades' line of argument recalls many of the words of Pericles fifteen years earlier, but with a fundamental difference in the policy aim. Where Pericles had appealed to Athenian pride and history to keep them steady in the exercise of imperial power during the terrible days of the plague, Alcibiades demands not just diligence and toughness, but conquest, expansion, limitless growth. For Pericles, even if Athenian power declined a little, the rewards of her glory — "the splendor of the moment and the after glory"²⁰ — would be sufficient reward to the patriotic Athenian. According to Alcibiades on the other hand, the reward is in the process of conquest, rather than in the enjoyment of it.

Once the huge expedition had been sent forth, honor and security take on a new relationship. Once an imperial power is engaged in battle, security and pride become even more intertwined. It would be a shameful failure for the Athenians to retreat having set off with such a glorious expedition, and it would be extremely dangerous for the security of the state if the Athenians were to lose or to be unable to withdraw safely. However, as the stakes and strains of the expedition increase and the prospects grow more dim over several years, this unity begins to unravel. Security more and more seemed to argue for withdrawal, especially after the failure of the night attack under Demosthenes (413 B.C.E.) when the very survival of the Athenian force was clearly in danger. However, the

extravagant hopes with which the Athenians had set out and the severity with which they punished unsuccessful generals make Nicias hesitate, as it turns out fatally.²¹ At this juncture when the salvation of Athens seems to require retreat, the political legacy of glory and shame presses a weak leader onwards to disaster.

iii. The Athenian Imperial Economic Complex and the Sicilian Expedition

The discussion above highlights a striking continuity in the appeals to security and honor from the time of Pericles to the primacy of Alcibiades. The overall balance sheet of empire also showed continuity -it remained a beneficial enterprise. However, in the intervening 15 years, there had been significant changes in "sub-balance sheets" -in the structure of the Athenian economy and in the material interests of the electorate.

The aggregate benefits of empire help to set the stage. After the Peace of Nicias, annual tribute had lightened somewhat since the reassessment of 425, but remained at ca. 900-1000 talents in 418/417 - 415-414.²² These direct revenues were supplemented by a host of indirect economic benefits of empire, especially trade. The expectation of increased revenue led the Athenians to replace direct tribute with a 5% levy on all trade within the empire in 413; this implies that the annual trade under Athenian jurisdiction was more than 18000 talents, much of which traffic would pass at some stage through the Piraeus itself. Services, silver, slaves, and "the many one percents, court fees, mines, markets, harbours, rentals, confiscations..."²³ continued to swell the flow of wealth into Athens.

However, in seeking to understand the decision to attack Sicily, the important issue is not whether the balance sheet between Athens and her subjects showed a net profit, but who benefited and in what way. In an

imperial democracy, the economy features an imperial-economic complex, whose more modern and more specific version is the “military-industrial complex”. Some theories have sought to understand imperialism and foreign policy almost exclusively in terms of the expansive needs of the internal economy. While an exclusive focus in this direction overlooks many questions, the allocation of benefits and burdens is a ubiquitous, essential and eternal political issue. Who wins and who loses?

At each stage of the growth of the Athenian Empire, a constant issue of Athenian politics was in what way and to what extent the material desires and needs of the varied Athenian demos should be satisfied by exploiting the subject allies. Some of the uses of imperial revenue benefited the whole populace at large —like the splendor of the Acropolis or a decree that stipulated that a portion of the tribute be used to improve the water supply. But, in most cases, the economic significance of any imperial policy depended on how it affected the detailed material position of various classes and elements of the Athenian population. For this purpose, within the balance sheet of empire, further distinctions must be made. Three questions are essential:

- How were the different benefits of empire distributed among various elements of the population?
- What was the impact on Athenian economic life of the almost continuous conflict from 431-418 B.C.E., known as the Archidamian war?
- How important were the anticipated economic effects of the Athenian expedition to Sicily in the decision to invade?

Both rich and poor benefited from the Athenian empire. Some passages imply class divisions over imperial measures. For example, Plutarch treats the ascendance of Pericles as a product and cause of these divisions. He writes,

“Now there had been from the beginning a sort of seam hidden beneath the surface of affairs as in a piece of iron, which faintly indicated a divergence between the popular and the aristocratic programme; but the emulous ambition of these two men [Pericles and Thucydides, son of Melesias] cut a deep gash in the state and caused one section of it to be called the ‘Demos’ and the other the ‘Oligoi’.”

Some further insight can be gained by looking at information from the immediate post-imperial period. In Aristophanes’ comedy *The Ecclesiazusae* (performed in 393-1), Praxagora chides “Someone proposes new ships for the navy; the poor say yes, the rich men and the farmers say no.” And, Plutarch’s surprise that the rich too support the Sicilian expedition implies that they normally opposed such measures.

However, we must treat these claims skeptically. The rich are by no means denied their share of the fruits of empire. The Athenian general Phrynichus argues that the subject allies are unlikely to welcome a change to oligarchy in Athens because many of the former wrongs were committed under the leadership, at the suggestion, and in the interest of the Athenian gentry.²⁴ The wealthy Athenian stood to gain from the empire in a number of ways. First, by landholdings abroad. Speaking in 393, Andocides mentions the desire in Athens to recover the hyperopia or overseas properties and the debts of the imperial era. In some cases, these landholdings could be huge; the Attic Stelai mention one Oeonias whose property in Euboea alone is worth 81 talents, nearly three times more than the highest tribute paid by any state in the empire. Since it was common ancient Greek practice to forbid foreigners from owning land, these acquisitions were probably technically illegal, but clearly in practical terms quite familiar.²⁵ The sycophant in Aristophanes’ *The Birds*

line 1460 is suspected of bringing suit against an absent subject citizen and then flying off to confiscate the land while the hapless defendant is en route to Athens to defend himself. This obnoxious practice (and the public practice of establishing settlements of Athenians on confiscated lands in the empire, known as cleruchies) is explicitly outlawed in the terms of the Second Athenian Confederacy in 377 B.C.²⁶

There is also an obvious “negative benefit” of empire to the wealthy Athenian that he does not have to pay for the fleet out of his own taxes. Even if no empire existed a prudent foreign policy (especially for a grain importer like Athens) would require a strong navy. The harsh tribute reassessment of 425 was attributed to the demagogues, but the wealthy were probably quite enthusiastic; only a year earlier the costs of the Samian revolt had made it necessary to impose a 200 talent levy on the wealthier citizens. If there were no empire and no tribute, the burden for building and supplying triremes would fall on wealthy citizens, as it did in the 4th C. In addition, the incidentals accruing to the wealthy included acting as proxenoi, providing the subject states with diplomatic and forensic representation in Athens, a role which offered prestige as well as money to well-born Athenians. Thus, the stakes of the rich in Athens’ empire do not bear out simple generalizations about the support of the poor and the opposition of the rich to imperial rule.

The non-rich and the poor also shared in the fruits of empire, indirectly from trade and services and directly in the form of cleruchies and colonies, military service, employment for domestic improvements, pay for attendance in courts and the assembly, and an assured grain supply. Public employment and income was an important regular source of income to a large number of Athenians, whether in military service, administration,

or employment on public works. While many sources point out the Athenian reliance on public pay,²⁷ Plutarch goes so far as to call Athens an [εμμισθος πολις], a city for hire, subsisting largely on public pay:

“And it was true that [Pericles’] military expeditions supplied those who were in the full vigour of manhood with abundant resources from the common funds, and in his desire that the unwarlike throng of common labourers should neither have no share at all in the public receipts, nor yet get fees for laziness and idleness, he boldly suggested to the people projects for great constructions, and designs for works which would call many arts into play and involve long periods of time, in order that the stay-at-homes, no whit less than the sailors and sentinels and soldiers, might have a pretext for getting a beneficial share of the public wealth.”²⁸

How much was the state pay actually worth to the Athenian? By 431 an armored hoplite soldier and a rower in the fleet would receive 1 drachma per day plus food. (There were six obols to a drachma). Jury duty was 2 obols per day until 425/4 when it was raised to 3 obols per day. At a later date, Demosthenes reckons that 2 attic obols per day can buy food for one man, while Sinclair estimates that a family of four could subsist on about 2.5 obols per day for food alone, and 3.5 obols for all basic needs.²⁹ In any event, the pay was certainly sufficient to make jury duty financially attractive to the poorer elements of the population. In Aristophanes’ comedy *The Wasps*, Bdelycleon mocks Demos’ eagerness for jury pay:

“That’s what makes me choke most of all, when in comes a pansy young man, the son of Chaereas, spreads his legs like this, waggles his body voluptuously, and tells you to arrive early

and in good time to judge, because any of you who arrives after the sign goes up won't get his three obols."³⁰

If not their primary source of income, these public allotments were at least an important supplement. In addition, in comparison with the work which day laborers or craftsmen would normally perform, jury duty was a relatively cushy job.

It is essential in this regard to note the ancient Greek and Athenian contempt for private wage labor. To be employed regularly by a wealthier employer is tantamount to slavery. But, to be employed by the state, even if performing precisely the same duty, is socially acceptable. As Attica grew more urbanized and the economy more complex the poor Athenian farmer or laborer, now living in the city, found his traditional social and economic status in a squeeze. Economically, many important private economic functions were performed by metics (foreign inhabitants) and slaves. The poor citizen's attempt to set up a small independent business might well be undercut by a wealthier man's slave labor or a metic's competition. Indeed, wealthy metics or even independent slaves might be in economic terms better off than Athenian citizens.

At the same time, the traditional definition and basis of social and economic status, land ownership, was increasingly less relevant in the city. The attraction of state service as an alternative to "wage slavery" will have increased with each Spartan ravaging invasion, or influx of slaves (as after Melos) or foreigners. The poor Athenian citizen could both maintain his social distinction and support himself by discharging the extensive duties of an imperial citizen.³¹

The empire ensured both the need and the financial resources for large scale public employment in military and civilian pursuits. In the civilian sphere, leaving aside

special projects like the Acropolis, Athenian imperial democracy had a large number of civil and military functions or posts which regularly required citizens to fill them. The Constitution of Athens, by an unknown author but attributed, claims that the public expenditures in the absence of a major military project served to feed more than twenty thousand men, nearly two thirds of the adult male citizen population. The list of functions gives an idea of the economic importance of public employment: 6000 jurymen, 1600 archers, 1200 cavalry, 500 dock guards, 50 watchmen in the city, 700 archontes administrators at home and another 700 abroad; at some later time, there were also 2500 hoplites, 20 guard ships and 10 tribute collecting ships (with a crew of 200 for each ship); also the rotating administrative committee (prytaneis), orphans, and prison-wardens were publicly supported.¹²

Militarily, even outside a major war, the requirements of maintaining the empire and squashing various revolts ensured a steady expenditure of imperial tribute. The suppression of Samos in 440/39 cost 120 talents, and that of Potidaea beginning in 432 more than 2000 talents.¹³ In the Peloponnesian War, military expenditure rose sharply, and from 431-426 the Athenians spent 700 talents per year borrowed from various Athenian treasuries in addition to expenditures directly from tribute.

Of course, the political implications of these extensive military expenditures depend directly on another question: who actually served as sailors and soldiers? If the fleet and hoplites were all slaves, metics or mercenaries, then an expedition would have only an indirect impact on Athenian citizens by increasing the tribute available, rather than a direct one by providing employment and booty.

The use of slaves as rowers is not attested in Athenian literature before the emergency of 406/405, and this situation was so unusual that these slaves were

enfranchised, an almost unheard of event in ancient Athenian practice.³⁴ Mercenaries, metics and islanders clearly played an important role in the fleet. For example, Dover takes Nicias' address to the sailors at Syracuse before the last-ditch effort to break out of the Great Harbor as proof that the great majority of the sailors were mercenaries or islanders. Further evidence is the Corinthian claim that the Athenian sailors' loyalty could be purchased and Pericles' statement that the loss of the foreigners among the sailors would be serious.³⁵ However, this evidence is by no means clear and other evidence suggests the opposite. The Old Oligarch stresses the skill of the Athenian sailor, the Athenian Constitution mentions 20 triremes for coastal protection as providing citizen sailors with constant employ Aristophanes refers to the *thranites* the upper rank employ of rowers as saviors of the city [σωσιπολις], and Plutarch reports that Athens kept 60 triremes in constant commission in which large numbers of citizens were trained.³⁶ On balance one can confidently assume that there were always a sizable number of citizens among the rowers and specialists of the ships, along with a significant number of islanders and mercenaries.

Since many Athenian citizens were involved in imperial service, the distinctions between *thetes* and *zeugitai* and between sailors and hoplites are essential. Because its radical democratic system ensured participation, and these two economic or military classes together clearly constituted a large majority, their composition and the concordance or dissonance of their interests was the linchpin of Athenian imperial politics.

The Solonian distinction between *zeugitai* (those who could afford a hoplite panoply) and *thetes* (those who could not) still existed in the 5th C., at least formally; for example, the Brea Decree specifies that a cleruchy settlement is to be composed of *zeugitai* and *thetes*, and the

Ath.Pol tells us that no man would say he was one of the *thetes* when being questioned for the archonship.

But, in practice these formal classes were a continuum with a sizable grey area of poorer *zeugitai* and wealthier *thetes* —a large middling group on the edges of these archaic economic distinctions who possessed or were provided with armor and were willing both to row and to fight. Indeed the Brea Decree's specification that cleruchs must be *thetes* and *zeugitai* may be meant to ensure that some poorer Athenians, still classified as *zeugitai*, would be able to gain a share in the new settlement. Surely, it is not meant to prevent *hippeis* (those who could afford to be in the cavalry) and *pentakosiomedimnoi* (the wealthiest category) from being cleruchs, for why would they abandon their comfortable and jealousy guarded status?³⁷

The imprecise military category of *epibatai* -ship-borne fighting men like the modern marines— provides further evidence that the line between *thetes* and hoplites was fluid. While several references suggest these marines were only *thetes*, these seem to refer to situations that were in some way exceptional.³⁸ Other references suggest strongly that the *epibatai* were composed of hoplite/sailors in the nebulous economic class between *zeugitai* and *thetes* classification. For example, Demosthenes' 300 *epibatai* in 426, are later referred to as hoplites by Thucydides, and are hailed as "the best men Athens lost in the war."³⁹ Since there is no sign that these are specially picked troops, the curious accolade and the mixed reference suggest that many *epibatai* are hoplites.⁴⁰ Similarly, in the 4th century, Lysias chides Andocides for his failure to serve in various capacities including as hoplite or as *epibates*, implying that both roles were open to him. Finally, Aristotle in the *Politics* refers to *epibatai* as free men and part of the infantry, drawing no distinction between the land force and this special marine force.

Just as there were downwardly mobile hoplites who acted as sailors, there were upwardly mobile *thetes*. Certain key personnel among the *thetes*, like the *thranites* and specialists [υπερεσιται] were accorded extra status and sometimes extra pay. ⁴¹ And, a hoplite catalogue⁴² probably would have included at least some former *thetes* who had been given hoplite armor as *epibatai* or who might have acquired armor in other ways, though they would still require training. In particular, the bodies which were stripped after each battle must have provided a constant source of armor into Athens, presumably lowering the cost of a panoply to aspiring *thetes*. ⁴³

Thus, the simple conception of an unskilled, homogenous naval mob on one hand and a peasant hoplite army on the other is seriously distorted. There were distinctions of function and of status which operated in a continuum from the poorest *thetes* to the hoplite. It is likely that the confusion in economic and social status which this clearly represented would have the political effect of blending these soldiers and sailors who lived, fought and died together into a relatively solid social class. The emotional appeal of the radical democrats at Munychia in 403 to the hoplites who stand opposed to them (who must have been among the richer hoplites, rather than the ones discussed above) is on precisely these terms. ⁴⁴ Given the increasing social and economic importance of public employ discussed earlier, this large group of poorer hoplites and more prosperous *thetes* would have had a definite solidarity of economic interest in an active and expanding empire.

Moreover, the Archidamian war from 431-421 B.C.E., the influx of citizens inside the city walls, the years of empire conducted according to Pericles' advice had wrought major changes which it is unlikely anyone, even someone as long-headed as Pericles, had foreseen. It is well

to keep in mind Bagehot's observation about the impact of charter reform in England:

“A new constitution does not produce its full effects as long as all its subjects were reared under the old constitution, as long as statesmen were trained by the old constitution. It is not really tested until it comes to be worked by statesmen and among a people neither of whom is guided by different experience.”

In Athenian democracy, the imperial policies of Pericles resulted in a decisive shift of political power to the *thetes* and poorer *zeugitai* whose numbers grew and whose interest in empire solidified over the course of the Archidamian war. From the time of Pericles to that of Alcibiades, the “naval mob, those who in economic terms were well-served by an active naval and imperial policy, swelled in size, influence and interest in an aggressive imperial policy.

When the Spartans invaded Attica in 431, the Athenians brought their families and goods within the walls of the city and sent their livestock to Euboea. The devastation of Attica by five Spartan invasions —while not on the scale or intensity of the later Decelean destruction after the Sicilian expedition— affected the agricultural viability of many homesteads. The experience of moving into the city and of participating in the excitement and dash of urban Athenian imperial life must certainly have caused at least some to wish to remain in the city, despite the horrendous initial experience of the plague. One might expect this effect especially among the young.

The Attic economy was remarkably diverse, but the repeated invasions of the Peloponnesian forces had rendered real damage. Consider a poor Athenian peasant who like his ancestors before him has lived in the countryside ⁴⁵. At the beginning of the Archidamian War he has to pack

up all his portable belongings and rush into the city of Athens. At the same time, he must somehow try to send as much of his livestock as possible to Euboea. The Spartan invasions are short, but for him they are devastating. His house is burned, whatever possessions he left behind are smashed or stolen, his vines are destroyed, his olive trees cut down⁴⁶, his grain harvest burned, any animals that did not get to Euboea are lost (though some pigs probably came into the city) and the fate of untended beehives is uncertain. When the Spartans have left it may be possible to cultivate some grain (it has a growing season in the spring of less than three months)⁴⁷ and vegetables. But the olives and grapes which were the mainstay of the Attic agricultural economy are destroyed. Since it takes 15 years for a new olive tree to start producing, his mainstay has vanished.

At the same time, with these other agricultural staples decimated, there would have been a more urgent need to cultivate all the land in grain or vegetables to compensate. In Attic agriculture, biennial fallow was a common practice. The failure to adhere to this over several seasons would begin to cause diminishing returns on the land. Even the Acharnian charcoal burners may have faced difficulties as the increased population of the city strained the available wood supply.

After the initial terror of the plague, city life must have become more familiar and attractive. While overcrowding was a problem only partially alleviated by cleruchies and colonies, there was fairly steady commercial activity or employment in the military or lawcourts, and the food supply would in any event have been secure. Three obols per day to judge cases was by any reckoning and in any situation far easier than the backbreaking labor which made up the peasant's daily lot in life. Despite the fond remembrances of Aristophanes' comic character

Dikaiopolis (which should not be taken for the reality of village life), farming was then as it is now a physically exacting and difficult life. In addition, the excitement and pageantry of the imperial city made city life an exhilarating atmosphere. For the young in particular, the enticements of the city may have made a traditional rustic life seem dreary.⁴⁸

In addition, there could be little incentive to make a permanent move back to the homestead in the village outside Athens. From 431-425, a Spartan invasion could be expected the next year. Why rebuild a house and restock a farm if it were only to be again destroyed the following summer? Even after the capture of the Spartans at Pylos, which provided some sort of ransom to prevent more invasions, the threat remained. And, even after the Peace of Nicias in 421 B.C.E., the Corinthians and Boiotians were constantly threatening at the borders of Attica; a ten-day truce was little incentive to return to a bucolic lifestyle.

In this context, the economic lure of Sicily was powerful. Thucydides plainly states that the great desire to sail fell on “the great multitude -soldiers and sailors — who hoped not only to get money for the present but also to acquire additional dominion which would always be an inexhaustible source of pay”.⁴⁹ If the invasion were successful, Sicily would be the jewel in the crown of the Athenian empire, rich beyond all comparison with other Athenian dominions. As one of the breadbaskets of the Ancient world, it would go far to solving Athens’ constant anxiety about food.⁵⁰ Italian timber for ships would also alleviate another perennial supply problem. Moreover, the cities of Sicily could bring in an almost inconceivable amount of tribute if the conquest were effective. By the time of the expedition, six years of relative peace and consistent tribute had refilled the Athenian coffers, and the

demos might well hope both to receive these savings in wages and replace them with still more rewarding income.

In terms of its immediate impact on the economy, the Sicilian expedition can be seen as an Alcibiadean version of the Periclean building program of the 430's, providing employment and income on a massive scale to Athenians of all stripes.⁵¹ A very brief overview of the sheer scale and variety of the expenses involved solely in the first expedition makes the economic impact plain. Counting simply the Athenian part of the armament, the first expedition took 100 triremes, 1500 Athenian *hoplites ek katalogou*, 700 *thetic epibatai*, 400 Attic bowmen, and 30 cavalry (followed in the spring of 414 by 250 more horsemen and 30 mounted archers). In addition, the expedition bought all the available grain reserves in Athens and placed them on 30 food-bearing transports, and employed citizen master-bakers, stone masons, carpenters, and wall-building workmen of various kinds. Many others gained business from the feverish preparation, or followed voluntarily for the trade involved in this massive armament. The second expedition brought 70 more ships with soldiers and accoutrements although at this point, the financial strain of the war was causing embarrassment and the conquest of Sicily was more a necessary means of recouping losses than a stimulation to the economy.

In total, on an estimate of 200 men per trireme, on the Attic triremes⁵² alone there were 20,000 men in the first expedition. Even if only half of these were Athenians, that implies 10,000 Athenian sailors plus 700 *thetes epibatai* and 1500 *hoplites* were mobilized and employed on the expedition in addition to various hangers-on, out of a total adult male citizen population of 30-40,000. In total, a third to a half of Athenian citizens may have been involved directly in just the initial venture, with another large

portion arriving later in the second expedition. In the economic context of Athens in 415, this immediate economic impact and the mouth-watering visions of Sicilian fields and tribute provided a potent inspiration as the Assembly considered its next step.

The Democratic Process and the Sicilian Disaster

As in any democracy, security, glory, economic interest, and ideology ultimately had to find practical expression through the “democratic process”⁵³ and foreign policy decisions had to refer back relatively frequently for popular approval. As used here, democracy is essentially a procedural description, applicable to a wide range of societies and beliefs; the essential minimum features are that discussion be open, that the ultimate approval or disapproval rests with the citizens at large, and that this popular opinion find practical and regular expression (most obviously by voting).

Imperial democracies face peculiar difficulties in each of the basic phases of policy making: 1. information and interpretation; 2. decision-making; 3. execution and control. While Athens, Britain and the United States each have drastically different structures and political customs, there are basic continuities in the difficulties which they faced.

First, foreign affairs are fundamentally different from domestic affairs in the way people obtain their knowledge. In domestic issues, there is a very significant element of direct experience and of informal second hand information. If the economy is doing poorly, citizens feel it themselves or hear about it from someone they know. If a given domestic policy is damaging public order or offending popular sentiment, people directly experience and know it.

But in foreign affairs this feature of democratic knowledge is absent. How are people to make sense of

places and people whom most never see? In this context, the source and slant of information and interpretation are all important. Far more than in domestic affairs, information and interpretation of foreign affairs is liable to be concentrated in the hands of a select few. In a modern democracy, these few may include members of the media as well as government officials. But the sources of information remain far more limited than in domestic affairs. Who are these experts? Do they agree on their interpretations of the outside world? What outlooks or ideologies do they hold? And, finally, perhaps most importantly, whom do the "people" or their responsible representatives believe? These questions are fundamental to foreign policy in a democracy.

The internal political processes of a democracy raise the potential problem that foreign and domestic politics may become "unhinged" — a decision or a development in one may occur with little or no reference to the other, but still have far-reaching effects. Because democratic decisions on foreign affairs arise out of an open debate and some kind of voting, the interplay and relative strength of various political groups, personalities, and factions is essential. These "parties" usually have a distinct position on a whole range of issues, some exclusively domestic, some mainly foreign. Personalities, interest groups and political parties can seize on foreign issues as grist for the electoral mill, seeking narrow partisan advantage with relatively little regard for the international environment or broader national interests. Or, political fortunes may change for reasons completely remote from foreign affairs, but the attendant change in personnel may have major foreign policy implications. This "unhinging" may make foreign policy seem extremely volatile or insensitive to the actual situation abroad.

Finally, the problem of control or oversight is more severe in foreign policy than in any other sphere of democratic government. From home, it is difficult to know whether a policy is being implemented as decided in a distant place and whether a new response is needed. This difficulty is exacerbated by the frequent need for secrecy and immediate action in foreign events, particularly military ones. In situations where discretion or surprise is essential to the national interest, the conflict of democratic practices and external requirements is often stark. One cannot take the entire electorate on a diplomatic mission or to a battlefield. How then can a democracy achieve the necessary element of operational flexibility without undermining democratic control over foreign affairs?

In terms of information, the difficulties imposed by an expedition to the other side of the Greek world were clear. Thucydides introduces the Sicily expedition by commenting scornfully that most of the Athenians were ignorant of the great size of the island or the number of its inhabitants.⁵⁴ This comment should be qualified; after all an expedition of 60 ships had operated in Sicily in the mid-420's and the veterans of that expedition would no doubt have had some information; Plutarch describes the clusters of Athenians gathered around maps drawn in the dust by these veterans.⁵⁵ Still, the essential point remains—the Athenians were unsure of what they were undertaking and had to rely on the facts cited by various politicians. This leads to an acerbic exchange in the speeches preceding the expedition. Alcibiades claims that the conquest of Sicily will be easier than anyone thinks, from what he hears. Nicias throws these very same words, no doubt dripping with sarcasm, into Alcibiades' face, arguing that from what he hears in fact the cities will be more troublesome than anyone thinks.⁵⁶ The demos has to

choose between these assessments with no sound basis for discernment.

The problems inherent in this situation become clear almost immediately with the discovery that the claims and reports of Egestaeon wealth are mere fabrications.⁵⁷

Once the expedition sets sail, distance exacerbates the difficulties. Nicias takes to sending letters in part to decrease the distortion in communication which distance and messengers foster, and he is constantly anxious that the Athenians, who do not know the situation on Sicilian ground, will treat him harshly out of their ignorance as well as their spite.

The peculiarities of Athenian decision-making also had an independent and decisive impact on the Sicilian expedition. One must keep constantly in mind that the Assembly could be an extremely volatile and spontaneous political environment; amendments from the floor could affect a motion in crucial ways and there were few restrictions on the will of the demos assembled. This is dramatically evident in the Assemblies which decided to undertake the expedition. The first assembly decided to send an expedition of 60 ships, a large but not unheard of expedition, the same number as had previously gone to Sicily in the 420's. In arguing against this venture, Nicias adopts a disastrous bluff; to dissuade the demos from the expedition he attempts to overawe it with the size of the commitment he deems necessary for success. The demos in effect takes the bait, and suddenly a large expedition of 60 ships has become a colossal one of 100 ships. Now the expectation for success and the perils of failure—for the generals personally and for Athens collectively—have increased dramatically.

The difficulties inherent in this decision-making process were aggravated by bitter personality struggles, religious scandal, and by the gap which the great size of the

expedition created between the army and the demos. Thucydides tends to give almost exclusive credit for motivation in Athenian politics to the desire of various individuals for honor.⁵⁸ While his emphasis is overstated, the importance of personal competition in Athenian politics is essential. Nicias' magnificent display at the Delos festival in 417⁵⁹ was answered by Alcibiades at the 416 Olympics. At all times, the personal rivalry between the men was inextricably linked with their policy differences.

The potential for foreign policy and domestic politics to become unhinged found fruition in the controversy surrounding the mutilation of the Herms —square pillars with an erect phallus and a face of Hermes which stood at the doors of Athenian homes and in sacred places. Sometime between the decision to send an enormous armament against Sicily and the flotilla's scheduled departure, all the Herms in Athens were mutilated. This outrage plunged the city into a frenzy of recrimination, especially since the offence was to Hermes, the god of travelers on the eve of such a long voyage. For Alcibiades' many enemies, this desecration, coupled with Alcibiades' reputation as a free-thinking libertine, created an ideal chance to unhorse Alcibiades.

The investigation soon turned into a witch-hunt for heretics of all sorts, not merely those who had mutilated the Herms. When rumours surfaced of heretical aristocratic ceremonies mocking the mysteries in which included Alcibiades' circle participated, religious feeling became the justification for a political struggle of the highest importance. The political motivation for the mutilation of the Herms is unclear, but certainly Alcibiades would have little motivation for undermining his most glorious adventure.⁶⁰ In the general atmosphere of religious outrage, however, such niceties were overlooked; Alcibiades was implicated in a general anti-religious,

antidemocratic scandal with which his political enemies attacked him. Exploiting the gap in political attitude between the citizens at home and those in the army, they waited to press charges until Alcibiades and the expedition had left behind an older audience, more suspicious and resentful of Alcibiades high-handed style and libertine personal life.⁶¹ They were thus able to send for him to return to stand trial, and face a possible death penalty.⁶²

This is an example of the “unhinging” of domestic politics from foreign policy. It is unlikely that the anti-Alcibiades movement at home was identical to opposition to the Sicilian expedition; if it was, why was there no move to recall the force, but rather a massive reinforcement? It was primarily a partisan move against Alcibiades for essentially domestic reasons of envy and desire for power, but its implications for the Sicilian policy, as Thucydides says⁶³, were very serious.

Finally, control, which is a perennial problem for every democracy, was made more difficult by the distance and unpredictable fortunes of the Sicilian expedition. The instructions to the generals were extremely vague, perhaps for reasons of secrecy. On the other hand, a degree of control was sought in the careful choice of the three commanding generals.⁶⁴ The combination of three generals -Nicias, Lamachus and Alcibiades -originally represented a mixture of caution, competence, and initiative. When Lamachus is killed and Alcibiades decides to become a consultant for the Spartans rather than return home to face trial on his impiety, the balance is destroyed.

Nicias' cautious nature and political sensitivity now play out as fatal flaws. Once the night attack had failed and the Athenian situation was growing steadily more hopeless, Nicias remained so concerned with the impact of retreat on his political reputation at home that he is quite literally ready to take an entire army down with him rather than

risk being “put to death on a shameful charge and unjustly at the hands of the Athenians.”⁶⁵ His suicidal military decision has little to do with military calculation and much to do with the political pride of Nicias and the volatility of the Athenian demos. Partisan developments at home and unforeseen leadership developments in Sicily end up with Nicias hesitating in his tent while Athenian hopes rotted in the Great Harbour of Syracuse.

Conclusion: Empire Lost, Democracy Restored

The disaster in Sicily traumatized the Athenian imperial democracy and shows the challenges of a democracy acting as a world power. The foreign policy of a democracy, this episode suggests, is particularly sensitive to internal changes in power and interest among the citizenry such as the increasing reliance on state and military pay among the *zeugitai*. A democracy's policy is particularly susceptible to emotional appeals, like Alcibiades' exhortation that the Athenians expand their glory in the tradition of their father's tradition and not merely rest on their laurels. A democracy must educate a particularly large number of citizens about the international situation, often about lands -like Sicily- about which very few citizens have any personal knowledge. And, a democracy's foreign policy may alter significantly as a result of domestic developments that have little or no relation to the international situation, like the mutilation of the Herms and the subsequent treachery of Alcibiades.

Political instability at home and a desperate struggle for survival in the Aegean followed close on the heels of the defeat and culminated in surrender and stasis in 404/3. The Long Walls, symbol of Athenian invincibility and ambition, were demolished to the sound of Spartan flutes, and a repressive and bloody oligarchy ruled the city. The Athenian expedition to Sicily has been interpreted by

Thucydides and others as evidence that the “people” cannot be trusted with the complex and weighty business of foreign policy. Indeed, the dangers of an inclusive foreign policy found full expression in the terrible last marches of the Athenians and the diseased prison-quarries of Syracuse. It was as bad a foreign policy debacle as any democratic imperial power has ever experienced. The empire was never restored.

But the democracy was. Therein lies another side to this picture. In the midst and aftermath of this disaster, one is struck by the resilience and energy of the Athenian democrats, both immediately on the heels of the annihilation of the expeditionary force and in the period of civil war and internal strife that led ultimately to the reestablishment of the democracy. The full democracy was reestablished by 403 B.C.E. and Athens entered into another sustained period of extraordinary cultural achievement. The demos may have lost the war, and even lost confidence for a while, but ultimately it did not lose its faith in the democratic system.

In this light, one can read the Athenian disaster in Sicily as a testimony to the strength of the democratic system, rather than as a testimony to the unfitness of a democracy to exert world leadership. It is quite possible that an insulated elite might have carried out a similarly disastrous policy. History has no lack of examples of a dictator or oligarchy overreaching with comparable results. But an analogous failure of a foreign policy formulated by an insulated elite would almost certainly discredit the system of government that gave rise to it. It would be difficult to imagine citizens who had played no role in deciding a major debacle reacting with the resilience, fortitude and commitment which the Athenians displayed in the years following the Sicily catastrophe. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Sicily expedition is not how the

democracy caused the disaster and the loss of empire, but that the democracy recovered from the disaster and the loss of empire.

The Athenian experience in Sicily suggests that an imperial democracy faces choices that determine whether it is at heart more fundamentally committed to being a democracy or being an empire. To choose democracy means accepting some of the messiness and indiscipline that characterizes the democratic process. It also means placing a high value on educating and engaging ordinary citizens about the complexities of the international environment. To choose empire means restricting the untidiness of democracy where this is seen as damaging to national security and reducing the role of citizen to an uninformed object of manipulation of existing prejudices and attitudes. It would correspondingly deposit more authority in the hands of an elite and insulate that elite from interference by the larger electorate.

The choice between imperial power and democratic values is a live question today at the start of the 21st century. It is uncertain how the current “war on terror” will affect internal principles of American democracy and whether the U.S. will invest in creating an electorate that is as informed about the world as it is powerful in the world. In modern democracies like the U.S., power is not exercised directly by the electorate as at Athens. There are many intervening layers of institutions -e.g. the press, the diplomatic corps, the lobbying corps, the military, business organizations, ethnic lobbies —that filter information and shape the decision-making process. Still, the quality of each of the institutions of a democracy and the decisions they reach depends on a broad range of “non-expert” citizens being informed and engaged.

A fundamental commitment to democracy over empire means that the demands of global security will be

constrained by fundamental rights that are central to modern liberal democracy, though these will inevitably create some difficulties for safeguarding security in the short term. It also demands a purposeful effort to provide citizens at all levels the tools and opportunities to engage the world. This has major implications for the education system, the press, travel and exchange, and, perhaps most importantly, for political leadership and dialogue.

The Athenian experience during and after Sicily is the first example in history of a democracy losing its empire. It suggests that an informed, engaged electorate is essential, if the inherent problems that democracies face on the world stage are to be satisfactorily managed. It suggests that even when the electorate is engaged, democracies can make disastrous mistakes. Finally, and most important for those who believe in the inherent value of democratic government, it suggests that an informed and engaged citizenry can sustain a vibrant democracy even through the trauma of losing an empire. ■

Notes

¹ 1 Th. VI. 31. 1.

² The meaning of "Democracy" must be understood relative to other contemporary societies, but at a minimum means that a relatively wide range of social and economic classes and functions participate at some level in the political process, at least through some regular voting involving all citizens. The Roman Republic, though an empire with certain democratic features, falls outside this category because authority rested with the decisions of the aristocratic Senate, which was neither chosen by the people nor bound to obey regular expressions of popular opinion.

³ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Ch. 13

⁴ Cf. De Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, p. 336, for Thucydides' attitude to popular opinion and the mob.

⁵ The extent of Athenian dependence on grain imports is a notoriously thorny problem (e. g. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World* for a low estimate and Green, *Armada from Athens* for a high one). I will assume that in normal circumstances she was dependent on foreign imports of grain to feed 1/2-3/4 her resident population.

⁶ Green in *Armada from Athens* argues that the Athenian food situation in 417-415 was so desperate that starvation loomed and hence action was essential. The evidence does not nearly support this claim, and Green's conclusions are based on assumptions about the Athenian population that are astronomic.

⁷ Th.II.7.3.

⁸ Cf. Westlake, "Athenian Arms in Sicily:427-424 B.C.", pp.392ff.

⁹ Cf. Westlake, "Athenian Arms in Sicily, 427-424 B. C. ", *Historia*, IX (1960) .

¹⁰ Th. II. 7 . 2.

¹¹ Th. VI. 13.1.

¹² Of the 50 references to *αισχρος*, *αισχυνη*, and *αισχυνηθαι* in Thucydides, 45 come in speeches, and its meaning takes on various subtle shades of difference in each situation; this should alert us both to the caution with which we must treat the term and to its central political

importance. Cf. Gomme HCT.V. 111.1. n., Dodds, E. R. The Greeks and the Irrational, Loraux, The Invention of Athens.

¹³ Th. VI. 8. 4, VI. 9. 1.

¹⁴ Th.VI.9.5.

¹⁵ Th. VI. 24. 4

¹⁶ Th.VI.11.6.

¹⁷ Th.VI.17.8.

¹⁸ Th. VI. 18.2.

¹⁹ Isoc., On Peace.82.

²⁰ Th.II.64.5-6.

²¹ Th.VII.48.3-4.

²² For a more thorough treatment of the balance-sheet of empire, cf. Meiggs, op.cit., Ch.14, and Finley, Economy and Society in Ancient Greece, Ch. 3.

²³ Ar. V. 659-660

²⁴ Th. VIII. 48. 5-6.

²⁵ cf. Lactor, pp.146-148, on ways in which this might occur, e.g. marriage, purchasing confiscated property or taking land as security on loans.

²⁶ Tad, 123. Lactor 60.

²⁷ Ar. V. 695,700-704,714.

²⁸ Plu.Per.12.3. Andrewes (JHS 1978) has challenged the specifics of these lines and Wade Gery's general argument that Thucydides son of Melesias represented an anti-imperial policy. But, he does not dispute the economic impact of Pericles' program and the central role of empire in it.

²⁹ Dem.iv.28. Sinclair, Democracy and Participation in Athens, p.129.

³⁰ Ar. V. 686-690

³¹ Cf. Humphreys, "Economy and Society in Classical Athens", Gli Annali 39, 1970, and Gomme, CR, 1920, p.82.

³² Aris. Ath.Pol., 24.3 and Rhodes note.

³³ Th.II.70.2.

³⁴ The mention of σκληροί in Th. VII. 13 probably does not refer to slaves in the fleet. cf. Gomme, HCT,VII.13.2 note.

³⁵ Th.VII.63.3, 64.1 (Nicias), 1.121.3 (Corinth), 1.143.1 (Pericles).

³⁶ Ps.Xenophon, 1.19-20, Ath.Pol.24.3, Plu. Per.11.4.

³⁷ The archives of the Athenian cavalry (Hesperia,1972) and Ar.Clouds.69 suggest that hippeis status was the real social dividing line.

³⁸ Thucydides refers in the 415 expedition to 700 *θητες επιβαται* and after the collapse in Sicily to *επιβατας οπλιτων εκ καταλογου* which has been taken by some (e.g. Gomme VI.43.2.n) to mean that normally epibatai were not drawn from the hoplites. However, in the first case, perhaps thetes are required because those zeugitai who wished and were selected to go were already included in the expedition's large hoplite force. And in the second case, the decimation of the thetes who had armor in the Sicilian disaster may have made an exclusively hoplite force of epibatai necessary.

³⁹ Th. III, 98.4

⁴⁰ Th. III. 95. 2,98.4, and Gomme note.

⁴¹ Th. VI. 31. 3 .

⁴² The existence of the hoplite catalogue is itself uncertain though Thucydides (VI.26.2,31.3 and VII.16.1), and Demosthenes (13.4) use the term.

⁴³ Pritchett (The Greek State at War, pp.240-295) assumes that all panoplies were destined for sacred shrines; such strictness would be surprising in view of the attested sale of booty, the use of captured naval armaments, and the expense of armor.

⁴⁴ Xen.Hell. 11.4.20-22.

⁴⁵ Th.II.14. .2

⁴⁶ Aristophanes' stress on the loss of grapes and figs and the absence of references to olives are puzzling (cf. Hardy, "The Hellenica Oxyrhincia and the Devastation of Attica" pp. 351-3). But, the references stress consumption rather than production; olives are relatively easy to transport and were probably available in quantity, while grapes and figs (unless dried) spoil quickly and in Greece even today are preferred picked fresh from the vine or tree.

⁴⁷ Gomme, HCT, ii.19.1.n.

⁴⁸ G.Forrest (Yale Classical Studies xxiv, 1975, pp. 37-58) outlines a generation gap between young oligarchic aristocrats and others, and Aristophanes Clouds portrays another. One can envision an analogous gap in attitude and lifestyle between eager young urban hoplites and rowers and their peasant farmers

⁴⁹ Th. VI. 24 . 3 .

⁵⁰ Cf. Green, *Armada from Athens*, p.91.

⁵¹ Th. VI. 31. 5.

⁵² There were 41 allied ships as well.

⁵³ A succinct discussion of the working of Athenian democracy with interesting comparisons to Britain and the United States is Gomme, *More Essays*, pp. 177-193. Also, cf., Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens.*, 1988.

⁵⁴ Th. VI. 1.1.

⁵⁵ Plu.Nic. 12, Alk. 17.

⁵⁶ Th.VI.17.6, 20.2 .

⁵⁷ Th . VI. 46 . 1.

⁵⁸ Perhaps the most grizzly example is when two Athenian general send Corcyrans oligarch prisoners to a truly horrible torture and death because, Thucydides matter of factly reports, they did not want anyone else to gain the honor of taking the prisoners back to Athens. Th. IV. 47 . 2-3

⁵⁹ Pluto Nic.3.4-4.1.

⁶⁰ Other writers, (e. g. Lysias. vi. 51, Demosthenes, xxi. 147, Diodorus, xiii.2.3f,5.1) implicate Alcibiades in both the Hermokopid affair and the Mysteries. However, the distinctions drawn elsewhere and the fact that Alcibiades simply had no motivation to mutilate the Herms outweigh these probably confused allegations. Cf. Gomme, HCT, pp.276-281.

⁶¹ Th. VI. 28-29.

⁶² Th. VI. 60.4.

⁶³ Th.VI.15.3.

⁶⁴ An inscription from the first assembly stipulates that the demos must decide whether to give command to one or to more than one general. ML p. 239.

⁶⁵ Th. VII . 48 . 4 .

Chronology

509 B.C.E. Reforms of Cleisthenes establish basic outlines of Athenian democracy

490 B.C.E. Athenians and allies defeat Persian expeditionary force at Marathon.

480-479 B.C.E. Greeks defeat Persian invasion

478-7 B.C.E. establishment of the Confederacy of Delos to protect Greek states against the Persians. The Confederacy gradually evolved into the Athenian Empire.

458 B.C.E. Athens completes the Long Walls, giving her the ability to defend against a land attack

449 B.C.E. Peace of Greeks under Athenian leadership with Persia. "Peace of Callias"

450-430 B.C.E. Massive building program using tribute from the Empire creates the Athenian Acropolis, including the Parthenon.

431-421 War between Athens and the Peloponnesians (the Archidamian War)

431 B.C.E. Pericles' funeral oration

430 B.C.E. The Great Plague, Pericles dies in 429 B.C.E..

421 B.C.E. Peace of Nicias ends Archidamian War

416 B.C.E. Athens crushes Melos. Thucydides' famous Melian Dialogue.

415-413 B.C.E. Athenian expedition to Sicily ends in disaster

411 B.C.E. Oligarchic revolution in Athens

410 B.C.E. Democracy restored

405 B.C.E. Athenian naval defeat at Aegospotami

404 B.C.E. Athens surrenders. Athenian Long Walls are destroyed. Oligarchical "Rule of the 30" established.

403 B.C.E. Athenian democracy reestablished

378-7 B.C.E. Second Athenian League established to protect Greek states against Spartan oppression.

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Translations where not otherwise noted are from Loeb version of Thucydides and Plutarch, Sommerstein version of Aristophanes, and Rhodes translation of the Athenian Constitution by Aristotle. Abbreviations in footnotes are in accordance with Liddell-Scott Lexicon. Gomme-Andrewes-Dover *Commentary on Thucydides* abbreviated HCT, Hornblower, *The Athenian Empire*, abbreviated Lactor. Books and articles cited in Bibliography are not given full reference in footnotes.

The Roman Empire

Myles McDonnell

Introduction

Discussing the whole of the Roman Empire in one turn is daunting, if only because of its enormity. At its greatest extent, it stretched from the border of Scotland and Gibraltar in the west, to the southeastern coast of the Black Sea and the Tigris River in the east, from south to north from the Sahara to the North Sea. In terms of duration, Rome's dominance of the Mediterranean world lasted for over 500 years. But if we are to understand the Roman Empire, we must, in fact, deal with two empires, or rather two distinct imperial phenomena. One was a process of continual war and extraordinary expansion, and of hegemony turning into empire, which took place during the time that Rome was a republic. (The Roman Republic is traditionally dated from 509 to 27 BC, but in terms of expansion, and perhaps of the development of government also, the critical period is from around 350 to about 50 BC.) The second imperial phenomenon occurred in Rome of the Caesars, what is called the Roman Empire in English, more clearly in German, *die römische Kaiserzeit*. Although there was occasional territorial expansion under the Caesars—into Britain, and what is now Morocco and Algeria, Hungary and Romania, and Iraq respectively—the process of empire during this period was primarily that of developing, exploiting, and defending territories that had been conquered earlier.

In addressing these two imperial phenomena, however, I will discuss not only military and administrative

matters— that is, how the Romans conquered and then held onto their empire—, but also the effects of empire on the Romans themselves, and on the peoples they conquered. For not only was the joining of the two categories, domestic and foreign, central to the Roman way of thinking —articulated in Latin by the ubiquitous collocation *domi militiaeque*—, but, as recent events have illustrated so clearly, military and cultural imperialism are in fact inseparable.

The Republic—Military affairs, hegemony, and empire

Under the Republic, Rome's army was a militia. The soldiers who conquered first their Latin neighbors, then the various peoples of Italy—Etruscans, Umbrians, Samnites, Greeks, and Gauls—, who took from the Carthaginians Sicily, then Spain, and who, during the first half of the second century BC, gave Rome dominance over the Aegean and the Greek east, were farmers. The Roman republican army was a militia, but a highly practiced and efficient one. As in most archaic states, military service under the Roman Republic was restricted to more prosperous citizens—men who had a stake in the state, and who could afford the armor that the state did not provide. Citizen farmers who met the property qualification were eligible for active service from the age of 17 (or whenever their fathers decided they were mature enough to serve) to age 46. From then until they reached the age of 60 they were on emergency reserve duty. Although the Roman Republic was engaged in war virtually every year, it was naturally not the case that every Roman man actively participated in all of the 29 odd annual campaigns for which he was eligible. Sixteen, or perhaps twenty years of service seems to have been the maximum required, after which one became *emeritus*, and was normally exempt from service. Still, during the Republic an extraordinarily high proportion of Rome's citizens served in the army. Keith

Hopkins concluded that the proportion of citizens serving in the army of the Roman Republic over a sustained period of time is unprecedented for pre-industrial societies, and commented that “the conclusions seem staggering.”

While on campaign soldiers received minimal pay, from which the cost of provisions was subtracted. Discipline was paramount, and severely enforced. For a serious infraction a soldier was clubbed to death by a gauntlet of his fellows. If a whole unit was found guilty, decimation was practiced, whereby one-tenth of the unit, arbitrary chosen, was clubbed to death. Displays of courage, however, were rewarded with the highest forms of public recognition—in the field, praise from the commander and military decorations, at home, special status at state festivals and houses decorated with enemy spoils. Victory in war brought individual Roman soldiers booty, a significant source of new wealth in a peasant society. But it also provided land, confiscated from the enemy, to poor Romans, enabling more Roman men to meet the property qualifications for military service. Victories also brought great and ever-increasing wealth to Rome’s senatorial elite. The lion’s share of booty went to victorious generals, and by the beginning of the second century BC, this had reached truly enormous sums.

If military service was central to the lives of ordinary Roman citizens, it was even more important for the Republic’s elite. Young upper-class Romans formed the Roman cavalry until the last decades of the second century, when they were replaced by foreign auxiliary horsemen. Roman cavalymen were required to serve in ten campaigns, and they seem to have fought in cavalry units until they were about 35 years old, at which time stirrup-less and saddle-less riding made equestrian combat physically impractical. For the political elite—the senatorial order—military service was essential. Ten years cavalry service was required to qualify a candidate for the

first magistracy in the sequence of annual elected offices—the *cursus honorum*. Furthermore, the Roman electorate regarded a reputation for martial prowess and military success as far and away the most important qualification for holding office and command. After serving in the cavalry for ten years or more, then holding various positions of military responsibility as one ascended the *cursus honorum*, a man who was elected to a magistracy that conferred command of an army was an experienced officer. The high command of the Roman republican army was in no sense amateurish.

Roman conquests over a period of three and a half centuries were the result of a highly practiced and disciplined army, experienced and skilled commanders, and large reserves of military manpower (on which see below). But in addition, the way in which the Roman practiced war, both tactically and strategically, was significantly different from those of contemporary peoples. In the mid-second century BC, the Greek historian Polybius gave a chilling description of the Roman method of sacking cities, in which all living things, humans and animals alike, were killed and mutilated. He specifically noted the terror inspired by the sight of dogs and other animals dismembered. A century later Julius Caesar described how he himself had sacked the Thessalian city of Gomphi in order to instill terror in neighboring cities. Such conduct was also regularly practiced on a larger scale. In 167 BC Lucius Aemilius Paullus, a paragon of Roman generalship, in one day destroyed 70 cities and enslaved 150,000 persons in Epirus. Numerous other examples of these types of calculated terrorism could be added.

Recently this practice of the Romans has been invoked to argue against, of all things, terrorism as an effective method of fighting wars. It was claimed by Caleb Carr, in his book, *The Lessons of Terrorism* (2002), and seconded in a NY Times article by Nicholas Kristof, that Rome's brutal

destruction of Carthage in 146 BC (the destruction of Corinth in the same year might be added) is proof of the ineffectiveness of terrorism, because in the end it only sparked further rebellion. This is utter nonsense. There is little evidence that Roman acts of calculated terrorism led to further rebellion, certainly not in North Africa, or in Greece. It is true that the crushing of the Jewish rebellion of AD 66-74 was followed by another in AD 132-135. But after the even more brutal suppression of the second revolt, resistance disappeared forever. State terrorism practiced on the large scale, in fact, can be highly effective, and the Romans proved it.

Conquest is one thing, maintaining control of conquered peoples another. Roman success in the latter was due in large measure to unique aspects of Roman statescraft, one of the most important of which was the treatment of conquered Italic peoples. Rome was flexible and relatively open to extending the benefits of Roman citizenship, in part or in whole, to conquered Italians. This policy was quite different from that employed by non-Roman states. When, for example, Athens in the fifth century created a naval empire in the Aegean, subject states were compelled to pay annual tribute, and Athenian citizenship was not extended to the people of the subject states. Rome treated conquered Italic states quite differently. Some of them, generally Latin-speaking, were wholly incorporated. So, for example, in 388 BC the citizens of the town of Tusculum (some 15 miles south-east of Rome) received the Roman citizenship. But Tusculum also remained an independent civic entity, albeit with no independent foreign policy, which had a considerable degree of local control. Henceforth Tusculans were citizens of their native town, and of Rome; they had what was referred to as a dual *patria*. Members of elite Tusculan families then had a choice. They could remain in Tusculum and exercise the limited powers of local magistrates in their

home town, or they could go down to Rome and compete in the larger arena of Roman politics. The latter course necessitated the patronage of an established Roman noble family, frequently achieved through marriage. Some of the great noble families of the Republic, the Manilii, Fulvii, and Porcii, originated in Tusculum.

To non-Latin Italic peoples and states that were culturally more distant, Rome gave the status of *municipium*, derived from the Latin word for "burden" or "obligation." Regular members of such communities had the burdens of Roman citizenship, in that they were liable for military service and citizen taxes, but they did not have the vote; they were *cives sine suffragio*. Full Roman citizenship, with the right to vote and hold public office, however, was extended to the communities' elite. *Municipia*, of course, had no independent foreign policy, but followed that of Rome. Eventually the status of *municipium* became a kind of 'half-way house' to full Roman citizenship. When, after a period of serving with the Roman army, citizens of a *municipium* were deemed to be sufficiently 'Romanized,' their community was granted Roman citizenship. The Sabines, for example, were given the status of *municipium* in 290 BC, and received Roman citizenship in 268. Other communities waited longer. Arpinum, the hometown of Marius and Cicero, became a *municipium* in 303, but waited until 188 to receive Roman citizenship.

The two statuses discussed above were bestowed only on favored peoples. Most conquered Italic states were not treated so leniently. After being defeated by the Romans, most states had their best land confiscated; they were bound by treaties which specified their obligations to Rome; they lost any independent foreign policy, as well as some degree of independent self-government; and they received neither the Roman citizenship nor access to it.

They were called *socii*—"allies"—, or *foederati*—"those bound by treaty." Land confiscated from such peoples could either be allotted to poorer Roman citizens, or become the site of a new and semi-independent community called a Latin colony—usually the case when the conquered territory was far from Rome and adjacent to unconquered territory. A Latin colony comprised anywhere from 2500 to 4000 colonists. These were poor Romans, who gave up their Roman citizenship in order to acquire land and to become citizens of remote new communities, situated in or near to hostile territory, which they would, in all likelihood, have to defend. The citizens of such colonies did, however, have the benefits of a favored status in that they held what were called "Latin Rights"—hence Latin Colonies—: the right to make contracts that would be honored under Roman law; the right to contract a marriage fully recognized by Roman law; and the right, if they chose to exercise it, to move back to Rome and become full Roman citizens. Latin colonies were planted in or around hostile, or coveted, territories, and served as bases for the introduction of Roman arms into such territories. They played a critical role in the Roman domination of Italy and were regarded as "outposts of conquest."

What is unusual and surprising, however, is that none of the statuses into which conquered Italic peoples fell, not even the least favored of treaty-bound allies, required the payment of tribute to Rome. This policy was significantly different from that of other ancient states, and significantly more effective. If we take again the Athenian Empire as an example, a major grievance and cause of resistance among Athens' subject states was the imposition of taxes. What the Romans did instead, was to insist that all categories of allied and subject Italic states provide not tribute, but a fixed number of soldiers for Rome's annual campaigns. The Roman attitude to subjugated Italy seems to have

been—keep your wealth, but give us your sons—, and it was eminently successful. Little resistance to Roman hegemony occurred among Italic peoples (the Samnites are the major exception). Perhaps this was because for peasants, sons were easier to come by than land and its produce. But Rome's policy also afforded positive benefits to the subjugated. Although many sons of Italic families never returned from fighting Rome's wars, given the regular success of Roman arms, many more did, and they returned as victors with booty—again, a significant source of new wealth in peasant societies. In effect, by compelling conquered Italic peoples to partake in Rome's continuing wars of conquest, the Romans were giving them 'a piece of the action,' so to speak. Not only did this quell resistance, but it permitted the conquered peoples to become, over time, more and more familiar with the Romans, their language and their customs.

This policy, in addition, provided the Romans with large and ever-increasing reserves of first-class fighting men, which allowed Rome not only to expand simultaneously on different fronts, but to continue to fight a war to victory, even after having suffered serious defeats. In the early third century, for example, the professional army of the Greek general Pyrrhus crushed the Romans in battle after battle, inflicting high casualties in the process. But such victories were indeed 'Pyrrhic,' because with each success the limited number of professional Greek soldiers was diminished, while the Romans, calling up their manpower reserves from Latin colonies, from *municipia*, and from the Italian allies, were able to place new armies in the field to oppose Pyrrhus' steadily dwindling forces. In the end, Roman generals learned from their defeats, and Rome prevailed.

Rome's dominance over Italy falls clearly under the category of hegemony rather than empire. This began to change after Rome conquered extra-Italian territories. After depriving Carthage of Sicily and Sardinia by victory

in the First Punic War (264-241), in 227 Rome made of these islands its first two provinces. A Roman province was territory under martial law, governed by a Roman magistrate, and held by an occupying Roman army. The presence of Roman garrisons was necessary to control overseas territories, sometimes quite distant from Italy. This entailed considerable expense, which the Romans met by compelling provincial communities to pay them taxes. That was the theory. In reality provincial governors regularly used Roman armies of occupation to loot provincial or neighboring communities, and provincial taxes were increasingly employed to finance amenities in Rome.

With the creation of additional provinces—two in Spain in 197, in 146 Macedonia and Africa (today, Tunisia), Asia (today, Western Turkey) in 129, Gallia Narbonensis (Today, Provence) in 121, and Cilicia (Today, South Turkey) in 102—, Roman domination of the Mediterranean changed from hegemony to empire. But the change did not happen all at once. In the Greek east, Rome's overwhelming military superiority allowed it to continue a policy of hegemony over humbled, but still independent Greek kingdoms and city-states. The reasons for this policy, and for its abandonment over the course of the second century, as one by one these territories were made into provinces of the Roman Empire, are complex and debated. But one reason has surely to do with Roman pragmatism. Why should the Romans assume the expense of maintaining garrisons in a territory they could control with merely the threat of superior force? For a good part of the second century, Rome dominated the Greek east, much as the Soviet Union managed, for a time, to control central Europe. But when, in the end, the policy did not work, the Romans changed it, and remained in control.

The Republic—Domestic affairs and empire

Conquest made Rome wealthy, and consequently the city of Rome became a center of immigration. Because Rome was a slave-owning society, much of the immigration was forcible, and because the chief source of slaves in the republican period was war captives, the numbers of slaves brought to Rome was large. The great majority of slaves were employed on the land, where they were worked hard, sometime brutally, and where their lives were wretched and short. Luckier slaves were brought to cities, many to Rome, where they were employed in domestic service, or in the businesses of their masters. If they were luckier still, they were freed. The institution of a tax on freed slaves as early as 357 BC, shows that manumission must have been relatively common at that time. It certainly was common in the late Republic. As the Roman attitude towards the extension of its citizenship was unusual, so was its attitude towards slavery, and in much the same way. Freedom is, of course, a much desired status in any slave-holding society, and on being freed an ex-slave in an ancient community gained much. But at Rome an ex-slave—*libertinus* in Latin—gained more. For when the slave of a Roman citizen was manumitted, he or she not only became free, but in addition, automatically became a Roman citizen. Given the high regard placed on citizenship in all ancient societies, this was highly unusual. In a Greek *polis*, for example, citizenship was far too exclusive to be automatically, or even regularly given to freed slaves.

The huge numbers of enslaved war captives brought to Italy were responsible for great changes that occurred in the economic and social structures of the ancient Romans. But the presence of foreign slaves was also one of the most important, and most under appreciated causes of what was by far the most profound cultural effect that foreign conquest had on the Romans—'Hellenization.' As a category 'Hellenization' is complex, representing a wide

array of cultural forms and patterns of behavior, and reaction to it naturally varied according to the particular aspect of Greek culture under consideration, as well as to individual preferences and experiences. Despite this, standard historical accounts of the ‘Hellenization’ of the ancient Romans present it as a monolithic, almost entirely elite phenomenon, in which Greek intellectuals and teachers (some of whom, it is admitted, might have come to Rome as war captives) introduced Greek literature, philosophy and art to upper-class Romans. That this is the dominant historical explanation is perhaps not entirely inexcusable, since almost all Latin literature was written by, about, and for the upper classes—almost, but not all.

The comedies of Plautus (c. 206-184 BC) are the oldest Latin literature to survive intact (earlier works survive only in fragmentary condition). The names of 130 plays are attributed to Plautus; 21 of them survive. The comedies, which were enormously popular, are free adaptations of Greek originals. In addition to rendering the Greek plays into Latin, Plautus also changed them into musicals, much in the way that Lerner and Loewe transformed Shaw’s *Pygmalion* into *My Fair Lady*. Plautine comedy is, in more ways than one, a prime example of Greek influence on Roman society of the mid-Republic.

One of the most striking things about Plautus’ works is the high number of Greek words in them, on average about 90 per play. Since the plays were adapted from Greek originals, in itself this is perhaps not surprising. But in addition to their frequency, Greek words and phrases often occur in jokes and word-play, and in performance they were clearly spoken rapidly. In order for the plays to have been as popular as they were, the Greek in them must have been understood by most of Plautus’ audience. Since that audience comprised a broad cross section of Roman society, the frequent occurrence of Greek words and phrases presupposes a considerable knowledge of Greek among a

wide spectrum of the population of Rome in Plautus' time.

The large number of Greek words in the popular plays of Plautus has either been ignored, or explained away, by those who provide a wholly elite account of 'Hellenization' at Rome. According to one widely-held view, which I will call the 'trickle-down' theory, extensive knowledge of the Greek language was limited to the educated classes of Rome. Somehow, it is claimed, enough knowledge of Greek seeped down from these upper-class Romans into Rome's non-elite to enable the latter to understand the numerous Greek jokes in Plautus. The difficulty with this thesis is that those who propose it offer no socio-linguistic mechanism by which it might have worked, and it is not easy to envision the circumstances in which large numbers of uneducated Romans could have acquired enough Greek to comprehend and enjoy Plautus' plays, merely by rubbing shoulders with the cultural elite.

Another explanation, more egalitarian if also more ethnocentric, is what may be termed the "doughboy" thesis, originally proposed by one of the greatest American historians of ancient Rome, Tenny Frank. Drawing on the experiences of US infantrymen serving in WW I, Frank suggested that as Americans serving in France had acquired a rudimentary French vocabulary, so Roman soldiers serving in Greek-speaking Southern Italy and Sicily, and later in Greece itself, had learned a sufficient amount of Greek so that, on returning to Rome, they could understand Plautus' frequent use of Greek words. But it is doubtful that Greek so acquired would have by itself enabled soldiers to understand the amount of Greek found in the plays, and impossible that whatever Greek veterans had acquired could have been passed on to family and friends. By themselves, the veterans cannot have formed a large enough segment of the audience to account for the Greek in Plautus' comedies.

It is another linguistic phenomenon found in Plautine Latin, called semantic calque, or simply calque, that points to an explanation. A semantic calque extends the semantic range of an indigenous word by analogy with a foreign word with wider references, but some common meaning. An example is Plautus' use of *ludus*, the Latin word for "entertainment" or "show," to mean "school," which is a calque taken from the Greek word for both "leisure" and "school"—*scholé*. The meanings of numerous Latin words were expanded by this type of borrowing, and many instances are found in the comedies of Plautus. Socio-linguistic research has shown that semantic calques are most frequent among bilingual populations, and of course, it is among such populations that the use of both native and foreign words commonly occur. And in fact there is considerable evidence for the existence of such a population in republican Rome.

On a conservative estimate, the number of Greeks enslaved by the Romans from 280 to 200 BC is between 90,000 and 100,000. Given the fact that a much higher proportion of enslaved Greeks, than of Gauls, Africans, Spaniards and other enslaved peoples, came from urban environments, it is a highly likely assumption that a higher proportion of Greek slaves were brought to the cities of Italy, and the greatest number to Rome. If as few of 20% of the 90,000 to 100,000 enslaved Greeks were brought to Rome, they would have constituted about 12% of the city's population circa 200 BC (estimated to be around 200,000 persons). Add to these free Greeks, who voluntarily immigrated to the boom city that was Rome at the time, and the number of Greek-speakers rises to about 15% of Rome's population, a figure that socio-linguistic studies of better documented populations show is well within the range necessary to have significantly affected the language habits of native Latin-speakers. In the decades after 200, the numbers of Greek slaves brought to Rome increased significantly.

From the mid-third century then, Rome possessed a significant Greek-speaking population. Many would have been slaves, but given the Roman practice of frequent manumission, considerable numbers of those who had been enslaved in earlier wars would be free. Working in Rome and perforce bilingual, they would be engaged in occupations—domestic service, commerce, and manufacturing among them—that made certain Greek words and phrases familiar to Latin speakers. Moreover, the continuing influx of Greek slaves would have sustained a core population of Greek speakers, and the process of monolingual Greek slaves becoming bilingual in Latin would have been repeated over and over, insuring that the sound of Greek continued to be heard, and to exert influence in the homes and streets of Rome.

In the conversations that took place in the streets, markets, and in some of the elite homes of ancient Rome, Greek and Latin were constantly being interspersed. Linguistically, the situation must have resembled that of the bustling immigrant neighborhoods of twentieth-century American cities. (Long ago, H. L. Mencken made the comparison between the linguistic effects of Greek on Latin, and the great and well documented influence of Yiddish on New York City English—according to the 1930 census, Yiddish was spoken by 20% of the city's population. The comparison is not so far-fetched, since the influence of Yiddish on the non-Jewish population of New York City was entirely oral, as it is written in Hebrew script.) But unlike modern cities, most of Rome in the time of Plautus was not segregated or 'zoned' into elite and non-elite neighborhoods, but rather displayed a pattern of spacial integration of commerce and politics, with large parts of the Roman Forum being fronted by both elite houses and shops. So language mixing in Rome was not confined to the non-elite population, as it usually is in modern western cities. Here was an atmosphere capable of fostering the

types of linguistic borrowing that can be observed in the works of Plautus and other early Latin authors, and which were no doubt common features of spoken Latin.

While neither the impact of Greek words and phrases familiar to Roman veterans, nor of upper-class knowledge of Greek language and culture, should be discounted, we miss a crucial element in the story of the “Hellenization” of republican Rome, if we pass over another group, whose numbers and ubiquity assure that they affected Roman society at every level. These were the humble or humbled people, who in slavery had lost everything—homeland, property and possessions, friends and family, name and identity (slavery has been aptly described as “social death” by Orlando Patterson). They had lost everything, that is, except their language and the cultural attitudes that it embodied, and it was with these that enslaved Greeks and their descendants transformed Rome. It was the relative openness of the Roman Republic to the influences of conquered peoples on the social, linguistic, and later, on the political level as well, that accounts for the extraordinary degree to which Romans became ‘Hellenized.’

The Republic’s Fall

The fall of the Roman Republic was a complex and much debated process, which can only be sketched in broad strokes here. The increased wealth and changing attitudes of the Roman elite, and the changing pattern of land use in Italy were certainly major factors in the process. But the fundamental cause of these and other phenomena that led to the Republic’s demise was the acquisition of an overseas empire. In a very real sense the Roman Republic became the victim of its own military success.

The conventional explanation for the Republic’s demise places emphasis on the Roman provincial system, an essential element of which was the presence of Roman

garrisons in overseas holdings. But this had serious consequences for the Roman army, which had begun as a peasant militia. So long as Rome had been conducting its campaigns in Italy, or its overseas campaigns were relatively short affairs, after which Roman soldiers soon returned home, there seemed to have been little trouble. But as the provincial system was extended during the second century, and Romans soldiers were asked to serve as garrisons, and were consequently away from Italy and their farms for years, a series of interlocking problems are said to have arisen. Because the fathers and sons of small property-holding families were compelled to be away from their land for extended periods of time, it became increasingly difficult for remaining family members—women and younger sons—to maintain productive farms. Add to this the growing pressure on peasants to sell Italian land to the wealthy, who had nowhere other than land to invest the great wealth they were amassing from empire. The consequent selling of small-holders' land led to fewer Roman citizens able to meet the property qualification for military service, which then forced Romans who could meet the qualification to serve in the army more often, and for longer periods. This, in turn, exacerbated the initial problem. The end result was serious difficulty in recruiting soldiers, as fewer and fewer citizens qualified to serve in the army, at the very time that the need for soldiers was growing, as Roman power continued to spread through the Mediterranean, and the growing number of provinces had to be held and defended.

Lowering of property qualification for military service if that is what was done, did not solve the recruitment problem, and the Gracchus brothers, Tiberius in 133, and Gaius in 123-2, attempted to enact legislation to redistribute public land from the wealthy to the landless, and thereby increase the numbers of Roman citizens who qualified for military service. Vehement conservative

opposition resulted in the murders of both Gracchi and in a permanent and increasingly violent split among the Roman elite. The final solution to the recruitment problem came in 107, when the general Gaius Marius accepted volunteers with no property for military service. But the incentive held out to landless soldiers was the promise of land after service. Again, distribution of land to the poor faced violent conservative senatorial opposition, and this time violence was overcome by the greater violence of the veterans. The end result was the semi-professional armies of the late Republic, made up of landless citizens whose loyalties were to military leaders who promised them land, rather than to a Republic controlled by conservative senators who sought to deny it to them. This situation wrested power from the Senate and bestowed it upon charismatic generals, answerable to no one but their soldiers, who inevitably began to act out of self-interest rather than on behalf of the collective good of the Roman state. Anarchy and civil war soon followed.

The Republic fell in continuing and destructive civil wars fought between military leaders—Marius and Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, Octavian and Marc Antony—, and financed first by looted provincials, then by the mass confiscation of Italian land. Civil war ended with the victory of Octavian in 31 BC. Three years later Octavian changed his name to Augustus, ostensibly restored the Republic, and established the veiled military autocracy known as the Principate.

Rome of the Caesars—Military affairs and empire

The Imperial period of Roman history runs from 27 BC to whenever it is thought the Roman Empire fell, conventionally around the middle of the fifth century AD. There was a serious political and economic crisis in the second half of third century AD, during which Rome temporarily lost control of substantial territories in both the

east and west. But the empire was saved, although the political structure of the Principate was lost, when the government and army were restructured by Diocletian and Constantine in the late third and early fourth centuries—in essence by making military autocracy more explicit, and increasing the size of the imperial army and bureaucracy.

From the time of Augustus, who died in AD 14, to the mid-third century, however, Rome was remarkably successful. There were few military setbacks, and occasional territorial expansion with new provinces in Britain, Dacia, and Mesopotamia, but in general peace prevailed and prosperity ensued. To accomplish this, the political and military power of the senatorial aristocracy had to be ended and transferred to the emperors. Augustus did this by creating a professional army that was loyal to him and his family. A fund was established with which the emperor provided land or money to Roman legionaries on their retirement. The enormous cost entailed was provided first by Augustus' own great wealth, then by the taxes he imposed—a 5% inheritance tax, and a 1% sales tax—on a Roman elite that had refused to tax itself. Augustus also created a new, standing, paid, professional Roman army, which comprised two distinct types of service. The first was that of legionaries recruited from Roman citizens. These soldiers served for twenty years, after which they received a grant of land or money from the government. The second type was made up of recruits from non-Roman citizens, who lived in the provinces of the Roman Empire—the great majority of the population of the Empire at this time. These 'auxiliary' soldiers served for twenty-five years, and on discharge received the Roman citizenship for themselves, their families, and their descendants. It is estimated that in AD 70 the Roman Empire was defended by about 300,000 men, some 150,000 Roman citizen legionaries, and an equal number of non-citizen auxiliaries, a remarkable small number for the empire's size. Most of

the soldiers were stationed in the border provinces.

The Roman attitude towards the soldiers who were defending the empire is instructive. The historian Tacitus, describing his father-in-law, Agricola's deployment of a Roman army in AD 82 at the battle of Mons Graupius in Scotland, states:

He drew up the battle line so that 8,000 auxiliary [non-Roman citizens] infantrymen made up the center, and 3,000 cavalry [also non-Roman citizens] held the flanks. The Roman legionaries were positioned in front of the walls of the Roman camp, since it would be an outstanding achievement to win a victory without the shedding of Roman blood.

The same tactic, with citizen legionaries held in reserve, while non-citizen auxiliaries do the fighting, is seen on the sculptured friezes of Trajan's Column in Rome, which depicts the Roman army fighting the Dacian Wars (AD 101-2, and 105-5), commanded by Trajan, the 'ideal commander.' Reticence about expending the lives of citizen soldiers was as much of a policy imperative to the Romans as it is to American administrations today.

The success of Roman arms in defending and maintaining the empire brought peace and great prosperity. New cities were founded in the western empire, and the wealth of the old cities of the east returned with the cessation of war. By modern standards most cities were small, having roughly between 3,000 and 30,000 inhabitants. Some cities, like Antioch and Ephesus however, had around 100,000 inhabitants. A very few, Carthage and Alexandria, were huge, with populations numbering about 600,000. Rome was a true megalopolis, with a population near one million. Cities were dominated by an urban elite, whose wealth came from huge holdings of land, and who employed a good deal of it to adorn the cities they lived in. So long as things were well run and taxes paid, the local elite retained considerable political autonomy.

Rome of the Caesars —Domestic affairs and empire

A principal trend in the relationship of periphery and center during the Roman Imperial period was the extension of Roman citizenship to the provinces. Initiated by Julius Caesar and Augustus with the establishment of numerous veteran colonies of Roman citizens throughout the empire, it was supplemented by the regular process of retired auxiliary soldiers and their families acquiring Roman citizenship, as well as by emperors granting citizenship to provincial communities, when it was determined they had become sufficiently prosperous and “Romanized.” A large majority of free provincials had already procured Roman citizenship, when, in AD 212, a decree of the emperor Caracalla—the *Constitutio Antoniniana*—granted it to virtually all free inhabitants of the empire. By then, the Roman Senate had for some time had a substantial number of the provincial members, and by the early second century, emperors also came from the provinces—Trajan and Hadrian from Roman Spain, Septimius Severus from Roman north Africa. Such ‘colonial elites’ should not, however, be thought of as native and un-Roman. Ronald Syme compared them to 18th century American colonists, who were Englishmen. Syme also commented that had the British been as open as the Romans had been, and accepted a Franklin or a Jefferson as a member of Parliament, or as Prime Minister, the American Revolution might never have happened.

Happily, in recent years the impact of post-colonial studies has shifted the emphasis of scholarship of the Roman Empire from consideration of how provincial peoples were “Romanized,” to the varieties of provincial adaptations—acceptance, rejection, and things in between—of Roman rule and culture, and how these in turn affected Rome. In the west, the Roman phenomena that provincials encountered were urbanization, the presence of Roman armies, taxation, and the use of Latin.

In the Greek east, taxation and armies were part of the package, but there, where urbanization was an old and native tradition, it was the Romans who, in great measure, adapted to what they encountered. Significantly, the official language of the Roman government in the east was Greek. The complexity of the relationship between Roman rulers and Greek provincials is nicely illustrated by the cultural and architectural adaptations Greeks made to the Roman spectacle of gladiatorial contests and wild-animal hunts as Katherine Welch has shown.

Gladiatorial contests and beast hunts were a distinctively Roman form of entertainment that spread through the empire as a function of "Romanization." As gladiatorial competitions were quintessentially Roman, so too were the buildings in which they were held, amphitheaters. The elliptical shape of the amphitheater originated in the temporary wooden structures erected in the Roman Forum, and amphitheaters were symbols of Rome, as they began to be built—primarily in association with settlement of Roman soldiers and veterans—first throughout Italy, then the Mediterranean. But while the spectacle of gladiators fighting and animals killed clearly became popular in many Greek cities, amphitheaters were very rare in the Greek east. They are found principally in cities that were either sites for colonies of Roman veterans, such as Corinth, or in cities with long-standing and close connection with Rome, such as Pergamon. For most Greeks, gladiatorial spectacles seemed to have been an acceptable form of response to Rome, but amphitheaters were not. Rather than imposing an alien architectural form on their cities, they preferred to modify a native one, the theater. In city after city the archaeological record shows traditional Greek theaters altered by the erection, between the orchestra and the first row of seating, of either a high parapet wall, or a parapet wall with a net installed on top,

the purpose of which was to prevent the starved animals in the arena from eating the most distinguished members of the audience.

But not all Greeks approved of the architectural changes made to theaters, buildings that had religious as well as public uses. Welch has pointed out that the modifications made in the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, for instance, elicited strong criticisms and cultural resistance, which was voiced by philosophers and rhetoricians—well-known public figures who acted as keepers of traditional values. One of many examples is found in the words of Dio Chrysostom, the famous orator active in the third quarter of the first century AD:

. . . in regard to gladiatorial shows the Athenians have so zealously emulated the Corinthians, or, rather, have so surpassed them and all others in their mad infatuation, that whereas the Corinthians watch these combats outside the city in a ravine, . . . , the Athenians look on this fine spectacle in their theater under the very walls of the Acropolis, in the place where they bring their Dionysus into the orchestra and stand him up, so that the very seats in which the priests must sit are sometimes spattered with blood.

The parallel to culturally conservative Islamic responses to aspects of modern western culture is worth considering.

The 'Fall' of The Roman Empire

The question of how, when, and even if, the Roman Empire fell is highly complex and controversial. Economic, social, and religious factors certainly played an important part, but the case can be made that military considerations were the prime and underlying factor. For 250 years Rome was able to defend its huge empire with an army of about 300, 000 men. The cost of maintaining that army was by

far the major expense of the Roman state, but the army's relatively modest size (in relation to that of the empire), and its relatively modest cost, permitted the central government to impose very modest taxation on the wealth of the empire's urban elite. This was possible because for most of its existence, the only major, organized power that bordered the Roman Empire was that of the Parthians of Iran, and the Parthian Empire was a loosely organized monarchy that followed a largely non-aggressive foreign policy.

In AD 226, Rome's luck ran out, when Parthian rule was overthrown and replaced by the Sassanid Persians, who were governed by a centralized and militarily aggressive monarchy. Three years later, in AD 230, a Sassanid army invaded a Roman province, and from then on Rome was simultaneously faced with a powerful and dangerous opponent in the east, and continuing and ever-growing movements of peoples from northern Europe into the Roman provinces along the Rhine and Danube borders (the latter had been occurring, off and on, since the 160s). For the first time the Roman Empire faced sustained military threats on two fronts. One remedy was to reorganize the government, and the defense of the empire was divided at various times between joint eastern and western rulers. But for the long run, the only effective way to meet the new military situation was by substantially increasing the size of the army. In the early fourth century, the army of Constantine comprised, on a low estimate 500,000, on a high one 730,000 men. Funds had to be found to pay for the increased number of soldiers, and in the Roman Empire the only section of society possessing that type of wealth was the urban elite. The delicate balance between taxation and the cost of foreign defense that the Roman government had been maintaining since the time of Augustus, and on which the economic and social structure of the city-based empire rested, had ended. The

expense was too great for the urban elite, and the political, economic and social maintenance that it had provided for cities declined drastically, as the wealthy moved out of cities and onto the rural estates from where their wealth had always been derived. All of this fundamentally altered the nature of the economy, society, and government of the Roman Empire. The changes, however, occurred over a considerable period of time and were by no means uniform across the empire. In the end, it was in the west that the Roman Empire ceased to be, while in the east it continued for another millennium as the Byzantine or Romaic Empire.

Since Gibbon, scholars have been debating, redefining, or denying the 'fall' of the Roman Empire. Recently, however, a new twist has been added by medievalists, abetted by certain archaeologists, who have argued that not only is the concept of a 'fall' based on the false premise that the Roman Empire was somehow superior to what followed, but that the significance of change itself in late Antiquity (roughly AD 300 to 500) has been greatly exaggerated, because in the long run, not much of real importance changed at all. The Roman Empire, it is claimed, was not what it has been cracked up to be. An essentially elite, urban affair, the Empire did not greatly affect, or matter much to the great rural majority of its population. Even in the Empire's urban centers, whatever the advantages or amenities an ancient Roman city might offer, were for the benefit and enjoyment of the very wealthy. Significant changes that did occur during the transition from late Antiquity to early Medieval Europe were few, and few would have cared about them.

The motivations for this minimalist view of the Roman Empire are in part ideological, a misdirected chronological effort to emphasize periphery over center, and in part political, as Brian Ward Perkins has suggested, a reflection of the interest of certain powers in the European Union to

elevate the history of the north by financing excavations meant to uncover ancient artifacts that are then alleged to be the equal of those found in Mediterranean nations. As an historical explanation, it does not fit well with the evidence. That in the west the impact of the Roman Empire was profound and extended well beyond the cities is demonstrated by the Latinate languages spoken in France, Spain, and Portugal. That the disappearance of urban amenities meant little to an ancient Roman city's non-elite population is unlikely. It is difficult to believe that the closing of a late antique Gallic city's last public bath would have gone unnoticed by citizens accustomed to frequenting it, or that a week or two after the closing, all of the city's residents would not have been able, if nothing else, to smell the change. The institution of the public bath is, in fact, a good gauge of the paths taken in east and west, for in the eastern, Greek areas of the Roman Empire public baths did not close down. Modern Turkish baths ("marble palaces of sherbet and sodomy," Byron called them) are archaeologically continuous with their Byzantine and Roman predecessors.

Reasons for the survival of the Roman Empire in the east are many—shorter borders to defend, a more centralized government, a more compact and efficient system of trade. But perhaps the core reason should be located elsewhere. The classical civilization of the ancient Greeks and Romans was defined by its cities. The form of economic, social, and political organization that was the ancient city had spread from east to west. It had been introduced to the western provinces by Romans, and before that into Italy by Greeks. Viewed in the *longue durée*, the end of the Roman Empire in west was the retreat of the idea of the city, the polis, to Greek east, where it had been born. ■

Chronology

- c. 1000BC Permanent settlement of area of Rome Begins
- 753 Traditional date for foundation of Rome
- c. 600-509 Under Etruscan rulers Rome establishes hegemony over Latins
- 509 Traditional date for end of Etruscan rule and establishment of the Republic
- c. 500-393 Invading peoples -Aequi and Volscii- attack Romans and Latins and are eventually repulsed.
- 392 Roman conquest of Etruscan city of Veii
- 387 Gallic sack of Rome
- 371 Beginning of construction of "Servian" Wall around Rome
- 343-41 First Samnite War
- 340-338 Latin War
- 338 Romans defeat Latin League and incorporate Latins into Roman State
- 326-304 Second Samnite War
- 298-290 Third Samnite War; Roman hegemony over Central Italy
- 281-72 War with Tarentum and Pyrrhus, Roman hegemony over South Italy.
- 264-41 First Punic - Carthaginian- War for control of Sicily
- 227 Western Sicily and Sardinia become first Roman provinces
- 218-201 Second Punic -Hannibalic- War
- 215-05 First Macedonian War
- 200-196 Second Macedonian War
- 192-89 War with Seleucid King Antiochus in Greece and Asia Minor
- 171-67 Third Macedonian War; victory of L. Aemilius Paullus and Macedonian Kingdom ended
- 155-33 Revolts of Lusitanians and Celtiberians in Spain
- 149-146 Third Punic War

- 149-148 Fourth Macedonian War - Revolt of Andriscus
- 146 Revolt of Achaea; destruction of Corinth and of Carthage
- 143-133 Numantine War in Spain
- 135-31 First Sicilian Slave Revolt
- 133 Reforming plebeian tribune Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus murdered
- 123-22 Reforms of plebeian tribune Gaius Sempronius Gracchus
- 121 Gaius Sempronius Gracchus and his followers killed
- 104-101 Second Sicilian Slave Revolt.
- 111-05 Jugurthine or Numidian War
- 102-101 Marius' defeat of German invaders in Narbonensis and North Italy
- 90-88 Social War between Rome and Italian Allies
- 89-85 First Mithradatic War in Asia Minor & Greece
- 87-81 Civil War between Marians and Sulla
- 83-82 Second Mithradatic War
- 74-64 Third Mithradatic War
- 73-71 Italian Slave Revolt of Spartacus
- 67 Pompey's victory over Cilician pirates
- 65-63 Pompey conquests and settlement of the East
- 58-51 Caesar's Conquest of Gaul
- 53 Parthians defeat Roman at Carrhae
- 49-46 Civil War between Caesar and Pompey
- 44 Assassination of Julius Caesar
- 43-42 Civil War between Brutus and Cassius vs. the First Triumvirate
- 36-31 Civil War between Octavian, Sextus Pompey, and Marc Antony
- 31 Battle of Actium; defeat of antonym and Cleopatra by Octavian (Augustus)
- 27 Establishment of Augustan Principate
- 20 Diplomatic Settlement with Parthia

- 16 BC-AD 6 Conquest of Danubian Provinces and Germany
- Ad 9 Revolt and loss of Province of Germania
- 40 Province of Mauretania established
- 43 Conquest of Britain and creation of province of Britain
- 59-60 Revolt in Britain
- 66-70 Jewish Revolt
- 68 Revolt against Nero and death of Nero
- 69 Civil War
- 81-87 Gnaeus Julius Agricola campaigns in Britain
- 83-89 Roman Wars along Rhine and Danube
- 101-102 Trajan's First Dacian War
- 105-06 Trajan's Second Dacian War: Province of Dacia created north of Danube
- 114-16 Parthian War, creation of provinces of Armenia and Mesopotamia
- 116-117 Abandonment of Trajan's eastern provinces by Hadrian
- 121-6/129-34 Hadrians' tours of the empire
- 132-34 Jewish Revolt
- 161-66 Parthian War
- 167-77 Marcomannic Wars along Danube frontier under Marcus Aurelius
- 193 Civil War
- 197-99 Parthian War of Septimius Severus; province of Mesopotamia created
- 212 Emperor M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus -Caracalla- extends Roman Citizenship
- 213 War with Alamanni on Upper Rhine
- 214 Parthian War
- 226 Overthrow of Parthian Empire and establishment of Sassanid Persian Empire
- 230-33 War with Persians

- 235-284 Period of political instability in Empire
- 250 Defeat and death of emperor Decius by Goths
- 258 Secession of Gaul and Britain from Empire
- 259 Defeat of Capture of Emperor Valerian by Persian King Shapur
- 258 De facto control of Eastern provinces by Kingdom of Palmyra
- 271 Province of Dacia abandoned by Emperor Aurelian
- 271 Building of Aurelian Walls around Rome
- 272 Aurelian defeats Palmyra and recovers eastern provinces
- 274 Aurelian recovers Gaul and Britain
- 284 Diocletian become Emperor; establishment of Dominate
- 293 Creation of Tetrarchy
- 306 Revolt of Constantine
- 312 Constantine captures Rome
- 324-337 Constantine becomes sole Emperor
- 330 Establishment of Constantinople as second Capitol
- 359-63 Persian War
- 378 Visigoths destroy Roman army and kill Emperor Valens at Adrianopolis
- 395 Division of Empire into eastern western parts
- 409 Spain invaded by Vandals and Alans
- 410 Visigoths sack Rome
- 415 Visigoths invade Spain
- 425 Vandals invade Africa
- 455 Vandals sack Rome
- 476 Odovacar King in Italy; last Lmperor of west, Romulus Augustus abdicates
- 488 Theodoric and Ostrogoths invade Italy
- 491 Clovis established power of Franks in Gaul
- 493 Theodoric defeats Odovacar
- 493-526 Theodoric and Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy
- 527-65 Justinian emperor of eastern empire

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The New Roman and Romaic Empire

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Mr. McDonnell has ended his fascinating paper on the Roman Empire with some well-judged comments on its fall. That we may reasonably speak of a fall or a series of falls, I have no doubt. It has nothing to do with our evaluation -moral, political, social or aesthetic- of the Roman Empire in comparison with what followed. When armies have successfully defended for centuries even distant boundaries, let alone their capital cities, for centuries and then are no longer able to prevent enemy armies from entering them, and when a series of rulers with an imperial ideology, an ancient history and a high settled culture are replaced by the chiefs of previously wandering ethnic groups who enjoy fully the perquisites of power but know very well these are not theirs by right of succession but rather by that of conquest then we may clearly speak of the "fall" of an empire without further ado. Whether we believe that there were many who gained from such a development, or possibly even preferred the more recent conquerors to their predecessors, is simply irrelevant.

To such an obvious sense of the word "fall", as representing a historical finality, we must add another, less obvious but in this instance very relevant sense. This is when we speak of a steep, sharp and sudden change for the worse, even if this occurs without any break in ideological or cultural continuity and without a final ending. "Decline" may at first seem to be a more appropriate word than "fall" for such a situation, and certainly this is so when the process is gradual and slow. It is hard to know which

word is more appropriate, however, when the breaks are sharp. The dominant pattern between 324 and 1453 is emphatically not that of a long, uninterrupted decline, with a few rays of sunlight every now and then piercing the gloom. The pattern is rather one of a few dramatic and decisive falls, followed by long periods of strenuous effort and gradual but healthy recovery never quite attaining the previous level, and then another sharp fall.

The incursions of Germanic and, later, Hunnic tribes that led to the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in the fifth century (symbolized chronologically by the defeat and death of Valens, Emperor in the East, at the battle of Adrianople in 378, the fall of Rome to the Visigoth Alaric in 410, its sack by the Vandals in 455 and the deposition of the last Roman Emperor in the West by Odoacer in 476) brought substantial dangers to the Empire as a whole and not just to its Western provinces. None of the successor states in the West, however, could aspire to be considered a world power. By contrast, the Empire, centered since Constantine (306-337) in what had originally been the Hellenic city-state called "Byzantium" on the Bosphorus in 330, retained precisely this prestige. The Empire's gradual but strong recovery during the fifth and early sixth century permitted Justinian (527-565) to regain North Africa in 533-534, and the Empire held this region for 160 years thereafter. Justinian was also able to reconquer the Italian peninsula between 536 and 553, admittedly with much greater difficulty - the last city fell only in 561 - and for a much shorter period, since the Lombards invaded in 568. He was able even to recover a sliver of Spain. Yet, though the Empire held all Italy for but a brief period, it remained an important territorial presence even in the north and centre of the peninsula until the middle of the eighth century, and in the south until the second half of the eleventh.

The most common title for the Roman Empire based on Constantinople has, since the mid-sixteenth century, been the "Byzantine Empire". The wry comment is sometimes made that the Byzantine Empire begins when the city of Byzantium cedes its place to Constantinople. This is doubly mistaken, however. Both before and after the great Muslim victories of the seventh century, the noun "Byzantium" was used of the capital and the adjective "Byzantine" of the capital's inhabitants. At no stage was "Byzantine" used to describe the Empire itself until a German scholar, Hieronymus Wolf, did so in 1557. It would thus be more accurate to say that the history of "the Byzantine Empire" began only after the Empire that the phrase is meant to describe had been brought to a violent end!

The concept of a "Byzantine Empire" was useful to earlier generations of Western Europeans when they wished to lay exclusive claim to the Roman heritage. It also became useful to much later generations of modern Greeks keen to emphasize an essentialist continuity of Greek history from antiquity onwards. This was easier to assert if the title of the period and the Empire was that of a Hellenic city-state. What may be useful however, is not for that reason accurate. Throughout its history, the Emperors in Constantinople and most of their subjects laid claim to a Roman inheritance: "Basileus kai Autokrator Romaion", or "King and Emperor of the Romans," was the title of the holders of the imperial office. What is also true is that from the reign of Heraklios (610-641), this proud title was proclaimed in Greek, henceforth the Empire's official language.

All this points to the need for a more subtle nomenclature for the long period from the fourth to the fifteenth century during which a Christian Empire was ruled from Constantinople. Such a nomenclature should respect the people who are the subject of our study. This, in my view, though admittedly not yet that of the large

majority of professional students of the period, requires that, in some shape or form, the word "Roman" should form part of its modern title.

There is a genuine and threefold difference between the Empire that emerges after the reign of Constantine and the earlier Roman Empire. Rome remains a capital, but it now acquires a permanent colleague and rival in what from the time of the Second Oecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 381, is described as "New Rome". Although Constantine had had no intention of diminishing the dominance of Latin, his city, itself a refoundation of a Hellenic city-state, lay in a Greek-speaking region, and as the provincial city elites collapsed in the West and declined in the East for the reasons Mr McDonnell outlines, an ever higher proportion of the bureaucracy necessary to man the huge imperial tax-extracting machine came from neighbouring Greek speaking areas.

Finally, and most important of all, though Constantine did not establish the Christian Church as the Empire's exclusive and official religion at any time after he entered Rome in 312 until his death (as Theodosius I (379-395) was to do), he not only ended its persecution but gave it his patronage, and also actively involved himself in matters of faith and internal church order. As the Roman imperium and the Christian faith melded together, there was an inevitable change in imperial ideology. The absolute domination of the Empire by the Emperor remained untouched; but the metaphysical basis of the Emperor's position was simultaneously weakened by the abandonment of imperial claims to divinity, and strengthened by the assertion of his status as the one transcendental God's regent on earth, whose very court was modeled on that of Heaven, to the point that courtiers might represent its attendant angels. This ideological change proved eminently effective. The respect for the centrality and absolutism

of the imperial position triumphantly survived the abandonment of pretensions to divinity. Particular Emperors were subject to the same dangers of overthrow as before. The institutional ideology, however, nourished now by a religion that since the strong shift to transcendentalism in the third century had become more credible than any individual ancient hero or god, proved so durable that it survived subsequent declines and falls to be resurrected in the forests of Muscovy, well beyond the furthest reach of any Roman legions. As early as 800 the same ideology had been appropriated by Charlemagne, a distant beneficiary of the Germanic rulers who had helped bring down Old Rome herself.

It is fitting, therefore, that we should mark the great changes brought about by Constantine with a new title for the Empire that emphasizes both continuity and innovation. The obvious title is "The New Roman Empire", as its capital, Constantinople, was so described from 381. Increasingly however, and earlier in cultural than in political affairs, the Greek language form of the word "Roman" becomes more appropriate than the Latin. From the early seventh century, the title "Romaic Empire" becomes more appropriate even in the political sphere, to reflect both the adoption of Greek as the Empire's official language and the truly dramatic changes that were then occurring, with the collapse of the unified ancient Mediterranean world and with the Empire's second and most crucial fall from the status of a world power than whom none was greater, to that of a great power but far inferior to the Caliphate. In spite of these changes, however ideology and religion remained unchanged.

Two other terms have sometimes been used instead of "New Roman Empire". One is "Eastern Roman Empire". This would be more appropriate for the period after 800 when there was, first temporarily and then more permanently, a Germanic Western Empire with which to

compare a Greek-speaking one based on Constantinople. In the fourth and fifth centuries, in fact, there was only one Empire even if two or more Emperors exercised power over different areas at the same time. The other term, "Late Roman Empire", introduces the note of an impending finality which was scarcely the perception of most imperial subjects in the East in the fifth or the early sixth centuries. For later centuries, a better candidate than either might be "Romania", which figures frequently as a title in our sources, were it not for the inevitable confusion with the modern state of that name, none of whose territory came under the rule of the Empire at any time.

The "New Roman Empire" displays certain cultural characteristics with which we can identify more easily than we can with those of classical antiquity, and yet others which make it seem even more remote. For the first time, the heritages of the ancient Hebrews, of the Hellenic city-states, and of Rome flowed together into one broad cultural stream. From now on we can speak of an European cultural tradition which combines these three elements, ever since its most powerful constituents. There have been readjustments, renewals and revolutions in plenty, but none have yet entirely excluded any of the three.

A second and related aspect of the fourth century which bringing us closer to it is that for the first time the Christian Church became an important actor on the social scene, which, in a variety of ways and forms, it remains today.

A third aspect, related to both the first two, is that for the first time we are dealing with actors who, in principle at least, share much of the background of moral values still current today. The ethical influence of Greek philosophy, Stoic, Epicurean and Neoplatonic, had indeed started this process earlier, but the fourth century marks a critical move towards the adoption of a moral outlook close to that of our own age. In this respect, the ancient Hellenes and Romans of the Republic seem far more distant, while being

evidently closer and more attractive where political ideals and even behaviour are concerned. By contrast, the Imperial ideology, so powerful then and for centuries thereafter, appears to us remote and even repellent, when not incomprehensible. Ancient Athens, Republican Rome, and even the Augustan Principate - though scarcely later manifestations of Imperial Rome - are by contrast institutions which we can aspire to understand, to engage with, and to compare with those we know today.

The New Roman Empire is not just a period in some respects more remote and in others closer to us than what had gone before. It was also one of the most seminal periods of world history, witnessing the elaboration of new and often revolutionary syntheses in architecture, in art, in law and in Christian theology. These, and the personalities who were responsible for them, (Constantine and Justinian, as Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Augustine of Hippo or Leo of Rome, as Anthemius of Tralles and the two Isidores of Miletus, the architects of Agia Sofia, as the monks Anthony and Pachomius, or as the poet deacon Romanos, the historian Prokopios, the philosopher John Philoponos or the law codifier Tribonian) have left their mark on later ages, at least in countries that consider themselves heirs either to the Christian or to an European tradition.

We can now turn to some of the questions asked of our speakers. The question as to the military basis for the creation and maintenance of empire can be seen to be inappropriate in so far as creation is concerned, because we are not speaking of the emergence of a new Empire *ab initio*, but of the displacement of its geographical focus and of its ideological renewal as a result of conversion to a transcendental religion. Nor was its economic basis new. This too was inherited, but with one major difference: that many cities were affected by the Empire's need to extract increasing revenues from its subjects in order to pay the

armies that defended its extended boundaries against the attacks both of barbarians and of its Sassanid rivals as a world power. The Empire in the East was still prosperous, however, and trade continued to flourish in a Mediterranean basin which, despite the threat from the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa, was still fundamentally united.

The loss of the West reduced the number of sensitive border regions, but even before its attempt to reconquer Italy, the New Roman Empire was left with several of these, including at least two extremely dangerous ones, those on the Danube and around the Euphrates. Critical for the Empire's survival was the fact that its Eastern provinces had been marked by a rather less unequal social stratification and had been the wealthier half of the Empire, featuring a far denser network of prosperous city-states untroubled by barbarian sacks. Critical too, and in particular to this comparative immunity from barbarian invasion, had been the existence of warlike groups within the Empire itself, groups which were better prepared than the Goths to work within the framework of Imperial universalism. Of these, the most important were the Isaurians from Anatolia, who in the fifth century helped rid the Empire of the threat of internal Germanic domination and provided it with the Emperor Zeno (474-491), before being in their turn put down by Zeno's successor, Anastasius I (491-518).

To the third question concerning the cultural, religious and ideological basis for each empire, my reply is more complex than at first appears. I have already outlined the ideology of the New Roman Empire as an old ideology revised in the light of a newly adopted religion, and I have pointed out that the ideology thus revised enjoyed outstanding longevity. Its fundamental precondition was that it should provide eternal, though not necessarily continuous, victory. If you permanently ceased to be one of the Emperor's subjects due to his lasting defeat, the same

judgement of God you once believed had made the Emperor in Constantinople His representative on earth would now be quite consistently interpreted as validating some other power, and with it some other ideology or religion, to be God's will for the temporal world. In short, the ideology was persuasive to the degree the Empire proved successful in practice. Wherever it had proven itself consistently successful over many generations, however, loyalties could and did become so entrenched that they survived long periods of defeat and even absence. For centuries after the Islamic conquest, Orthodox Christians in the Near East were called "Melkites", which means "the King's men".

It is also evident that the ideological system needed the support not just of the imperial ideology, but of the Christian faith. Yet this symbiotic relationship created some dangers for both. It made it far more difficult for Orthodox Christianity to triumph within any other world power. Sassanid Persia, rather like Tokugawa Japan in the seventeenth century, could, depending on the view of a particular ruler, see the presence of Christians as a dangerous threat and engage in serious persecution. After all, even lands where New Rome exercised hegemony rather than direct administrative power often preferred to retain their religious distinctiveness as a defence against full integration into the imperial system. Armenia, and, for a period, Georgia, are examples. Visigothic Spain developed doctrinal differences from Constantinopolitan Orthodoxy that were to be transmitted to Charlemagne's Franks and lead to the later Schism between Eastern and Western Christendom.

Unlike the Tokugawa, however, the Sassanids did not finally decree the total elimination of Christianity within their dominions. Fifth-century Persians were, it seems, more used than seventeenth century Japanese to religious differentiation. They were also assisted in the exercise of

toleration by the emergence and success in their region of a form of Christianity that was dogmatically opposed to that established in the Empire. This resulted from the Council of Ephesus in 431, when the majority of Christians within the Sassanid realm, unlike those within the New Roman Empire, followed the Christology of the condemned Nestorius and the then as yet uncondemned Theodore of Mopsuestia.

Constantine had consciously chosen to work with a Church and a theological system no Emperor could entirely control. He presided at the Council of Nicaea in 325, yet he presided not in order to command, but to persuade. It was not only the conciliar tradition of the Church, which went back to the Apostolic Age, that survived Imperial adoption of Christianity. Now that the end of persecution had reduced the frequency of martyrdom, the fundamental message of the Christian faith the call to every human being to turn towards God and to see God also in other human beings, encouraged the phenomenon of the saint or holy man, who surpassed his fellows in prayer, in commitment and in asceticism. Examples of saintliness, just as of martyrdom, could come from any social class, linguistic group or region, however remote or humble. These might and did serve as a focus for local and even ethnic cohesion. The strong universalist and egalitarian emphases of the Christian faith in its early centuries thus in practice encouraged linguistic and geographic particularisms. Given the preexisting tensions between some of the Empire's major cities and provinces, it was almost inevitable that some such particularisms would become associated with ecclesiastical or dogmatic divergence.

Although no such group appears to have challenged the Empire's central ideology while the Empire enjoyed success, an Emperor in New Rome could never be satisfied while the ideology of a religiously united Empire was

contradicted by evident disagreement on significant matters of faith. Emperors tried all three available formulas: an eirenic theological accommodation, a pragmatic agreement not to agree, and persecution. None of these brought a solution to the dispute concerning the nature of Christ which had predated the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and which has continued ever since. Nor did the dispute of itself bring down the Empire. So long as the empire was dominant, the contending parties continued to hope that Imperial patronage would ultimately enable them to prevail.

Furthermore, although the imperial ideology implied, indeed required, an integrated Christian Church, none in the East thought it acceptable to encourage the imposition of a single linguistic culture under a Church centralized around one episcopal See. The traditions of the Early Church, with its multiple centers of authority, were very much alive in the East and made such a proposition inconceivable. There was thus a growth of regional differentiation, particularly Syriac and Coptic, under the New Roman, and increasingly Christian, Empire. Political absolutism proved no obstacle to increased cultural diversity.

The three centuries of the New Roman Empire, or, if you look at it from a cultural point of view, the early centuries of the Romaic Empire, were most creative. They were so despite the constant military conflicts with barbarians or Sassanians on its frontiers, despite the onerous pressure of the tax collector engaged in raising adequate revenue to pay both the armies that defended those frontiers and the civilian bureaucracy, despite the consequent gradual decline of many cities, despite the inevitable injustices flowing from a centralized and absolutist regime which, however well integrated into a complex and well articulated legal and administrative system, was in the last resort subject to no other checks and

balances than those created by the danger of revolt on the one side and by a Christian ethos on the other. This Empire's legacy to all succeeding generations is the central statements of Christian theology, including ascetic theology, an architecture and art of immense power and depth, and the articulation of the system of Roman law. The three centuries the New Roman Empire lasted may seem a short period compared with the over one thousand one hundred years there was a Christian Imperial capital in Constantinople, but they were not much shorter than the full period of the British Empire or of the Roman Empire between Augustus and Constantine.

This Empire fell in the seventh century. More accurately, it fell and yet survived, retaining the same religion and ideology, but having lost its earlier position as a world power. (It had never of course been a "world power" in the sense of the US today, that is, of being able to intervene militarily where it pleased, even if at heavy cost. Of course, there could never be a "world power" in this sense in a century earlier than the nineteenth. "World power" in respect of the ancient world means that it had but two or three equals and, above all, no clear superiors in the then known constellation of European and Asian Empires.) The crisis of the seventh century changed this situation. The Romaic Empire became clearly inferior to the Islamic Caliphate. Nevertheless, it remained a great power, the crucial military contestant of the Caliphate's invincibility.

It is hard to know whether to be more surprised by the speed and degree of the collapse, or impressed by the near-miracle of the Empire's ultimate survival as a considerable and respected force. The attackers held the conviction that the extraordinary success of the Islamic armies in their first century, and indeed for another century thereafter, was the will of Allah; the opponents, that the repeated successful defence of Constantinople was a result

of God's intervention. Might one, in more contemporary language, assert that a powerful religious and ideological superstructure proved capable of saving a collapsing infrastructure? The first need in order to test such a thesis is to examine precisely these military, economic and social infrastructures, so as to approach an understanding of the likely reasons both for the Empire's fall and for its survival, and perhaps then to suggest some points at which conventional explanations are not fully adequate to explain events as they unfolded.

It is widely agreed that Justinian's (527-565) wars of reconquest, chiefly that in Italy, added a sizeable financial burden on the imperial treasury, while simultaneously necessitating the defence of yet another frontier. That frontier became even longer once Italy had been divided between Imperial and Lombard territories after the Lombard invasion of Italy in 568. It is impossible to disagree with this analysis. The remarkable ease of the previous reconquest of North Africa in 533-534 concealed this error of judgment from Justinian. It was not a total error of judgment, however. A strong presence in the West, especially Italy, was important to an Empire that bore the name and upheld the ideology of imperial Rome. It would, if successful, also prevent the Papacy from adding political independence, and later perhaps political opposition, to the hierarchical and dogmatic tensions that were inevitable from time to time and, more immediately, would discourage Germanic Kingdoms from using religious or ideological opposition to legitimate not only effective independence, but aggression. The effect of such developments, if and when they actually occurred, would clearly be to add legitimacy to any challenge to the Empire's territories by way of a prior challenge to its ideological and religious claims. The reconquest of Italy then, although an additional economic strain, represented a potentially

valuable long-term political investment. No one can prove whether, on its own, it would have led to the Empire's subsequent fall, but, as will be seen from what follows, I do not consider such a hypothesis likely. Much greater burdens brought it to its knees, yet even these proved incapable of breaking it.

All explanatory theories for the seventh century disaster accept that the superhuman efforts made by Herarclius (610-641), his army and his people to defeat the Avars and Persians in the wars that began in 602 and lasted until 628 exhausted the Empire and explain the ease of the early Arab advance and the decision taken soon after their triumph at Yarmuk (in 636) to withdraw the Imperial armies to Anatolia. This decision must have been one of the hardest any Emperor has had to take at any time, yet at the cost of surrendering the Empire's wealthiest provinces in the Near East and subsequently Egypt, it almost certainly saved its central core.

This view would be widely accepted. It is the causes of the military revolt and popular discontent that led to the murder of Maurice and elevation of Phocas in 602 that raise more debatable issues. Let us start from the undoubted fact that the then Persian Emperor, Chosroes II, had been obligated to Maurice (582-602) for his own throne in 590-591 and had thus agreed to bring to an end the most recent and lengthy war between the two Empires. Phocas' usurpation, with its ugly attendant violence, gave the Persian the pretext and the opportunity to invade.

It has been argued that the causes of the collapse in 601-602 were short term only. The extraordinarily successful campaigns of the Emperor Maurice against the Avars and Slavs after the peace with Persia would then be viewed as having been derailed by an unpredictable military mutiny against the prospect of spending a whole winter on the other side of the Danube at the end of 601. Maurice's overthrow and death led directly to the Persian

invasion and a war in which the Empire had to fight major enemies on two fronts at the same time. The Avars led Slavs over the Danube border simultaneously with the collapse of the Empire's position in the East.

I find it more persuasive to argue that a necessary precondition for this sudden breakdown had been a serious long-term development, namely a rapid demographic decline resulting from the first arrival of the bubonic plague in 541/42 followed by its frequent reappearance thereafter - affecting Constantinople again it seems in 555-556; in 558; in 560-561; in 573-574; in 585-586; in 591-592; in 598-599; in 608-609 and in 618, to mention likely instances before the Arab invasions. The later outbreaks, unlike the extremely severe first one, described by Prokopios, when several thousands of people might die every day, will have disproportionately affected children lacking the immunity already painfully acquired by many of their elders, and would thus have accentuated demographic decline out of proportion to the number of lives lost in each later outbreak.

Bubonic plague - which in this instance appears to have spread from one Mediterranean port to another, starting in Alexandria and not, as in the fourteenth century, initially along routes traversing the steppes- would have hit hardest at populations huddled together in packed urban centers, next hardest at the populations of settled lowland villages, less perhaps at mountain dwellers, and less still, among nomad populations or other groups regularly on the move. Thus whatever decline of population occurred within the Empire was not matched by an equivalent decline in numbers among the barbarian tribes outside. Consequently, their pressure on the frontiers would grow not just as there was pressure on them from other tribes to their north and east, but because they could see there were always attractive and now underpopulated areas available to seize. Meanwhile, the Empire found its base of fighting

manpower reduced in the same proportion as its base of productive manpower on which taxation might be levied. The relative balance of demographic strength had been dramatically altered, and with it the balance of military and economic power also.

It is always difficult to establish whether any particular long-range explanation holds when the length of time involved makes it hard to follow a causal connection. In this instance the New Roman Empire not only survived for 60 years after the first outbreak of the plague, but continued to prove reasonably successful in military campaigns.

On balance, however, I believe that a substantial decline of population over this lengthy period probably was a precondition for the mutiny beyond the Danube in 601 and for the virulent hatred the people of Constantinople felt towards the end of his reign for the Emperor Maurice (582-602) and his family. Economic theory may help explain the reasons, provided we remember that even today knowledge of economic theory does not always lead to economically rational behavior. We can scarcely expect such rationality in the economically far less literate sixth century.

The economy of the late antique world was certainly not static. Nor was it purposefully oriented towards technological development and growth, as are those of the modern western world. A substantial decline in population, accentuated by repeated outbreaks of the plague affecting most harshly those before or at the age of reproduction, would have had several results. First, it would have benefited surviving free farmers to the degree there had earlier been a shortage of land or a surplus of farmers. Productivity per active farmer would increase, and so, with increased production, would these farmers' economic welfare. Second, it would have made labour scarcer and thus, at least in those sectors of the economy that were

not closely controlled by the state, pushed up its cost, a tendency already evident under Justinian. Third, it would in both these ways have made a soldier's career somewhat less attractive compared with others. Fourth, worst affected by such a development would be the biggest single employer of labour, namely the state, which would have faced pressure to increase soldiers' remuneration both because the pool of young men from which it could recruit soldiers was reduced and because other alternatives available to these young men would now be better. Yet at precisely this moment of increased pressure on state resources, the tax base would have been considerably reduced as a result of the overall decline of population. Fifth, a substantial decline in population would have led to an overall decline of the total size of the economy and hence of trade even if without any diminution of the already existing stock of buildings, of currency, or of other treasure. Cities with a sharply reduced economy might well be unable to maintain public buildings and facilities and would find almost insurmountable difficulties in replacing them after some natural disaster such as an earthquake. With these exceptions, however, we look in vain in the archaeological record for signs of diminished wealth as opposed to diminished population until such time as a particular city fell to an invader. The reason is that society's stock of inherited wealth would not have diminished, but would have been redistributed to the benefit of those who had not perished, especially to a considerable number of individuals and families who would have substantially increased their wealth both in absolute and in relative terms. If anything, we would expect those who survived among the free poor to be, comparatively speaking, the major economic beneficiaries of this series of human disasters.

As economists sadistically delight in telling their clients, there is no such thing as a free lunch. As already

stated, a sharp decline in population and a resulting decline in trade and the overall size of the economy entail a reduced tax base. The theoretical possibility of accepting a reduction in overall tax receipts and of reducing the overall cost of the central administration would have faced the self-interested resistance of those who formed that very administration. It would also face the practical objection that by far the largest expenditure of the Imperial Treasury was for the armed forces. How could these be safely reduced when the very decline in population that reduced the Empire's recruitment and tax-base also increased the temptation for nomadic tribes outside the Empire to move into the underpopulated expanses within? It is not difficult to see that such a course of action would lead to a barbarian breakthrough on the frontiers. The alternative was to raise as nearly as possible the same total amount in taxes as before, but to limit increases in expenditure on the military to the degree possible. This would imply increasing tax as a proportion of each household's income, to the likely accompaniment of increasingly serious popular discontent, and simultaneously limiting payments to the army, to the likely accompaniment of increasingly serious military discontent also.

We may conclude that over the relevant sixty-year period the reduction in total tax extracted from the Empire's subjects was not enough in relation to overall expenditure to avoid a serious increase in the tax burden. We know that the first plague of 541-542 led to rises in wages and prices which Justinian attempted to prohibit. We know that Justinian was criticized by his successor, Justin II (566-578), for having permitted a dangerous decline in the army's overall size. He reversed this policy, but also attempted to reduce expenditure by reducing subventions to foreign powers, thereby incurring the cost of increased hostilities. We know of substantial remissions of tax made by his successor, Tiberius (578-582), and finally of attempts

to reduce the cost of the army through adjustments in or reductions to military pay under Maurice (582-602). All of these suggest the dilemmas I have outlined were not just theoretical. Unquestionably, any unnecessary war, as with the Sassanians in the East, added to the strain. Not all wars were unnecessary, however. Both the prestige and the wealth of the Empire depended either on not allowing "barbarian tribes" to break through the frontiers, or on settling them within those boundaries under Imperial authority in the hope they would gradually develop loyalty to the Empire. The length of time required to develop assured loyalty, however, always put a limit on this process, and to the degree it was resorted to, the maintenance of an effective frontier until such loyalty had been secured became even more critical.

It was perhaps impossible for the Empire to find an effective method of response to barbarian pressure in a period of marked demographic decline. To reduce taxation would affect the army's size or pay. To increase the number of soldiers without reducing their pay would mean actually increasing taxation at a time when such taxation was already falling on fewer heads. To increase numbers but reduce their levels of pay would increase the risk of military revolt. The crisis seems to have struck in its fullest form in the 580s when the Empire had to fight on two fronts. After a successful peace with the Persians in 591, the Emperor Maurice responded with his great effort to hold the Avars and Slavs at bay. As always in times of military crisis, the needs of the armed forces would have taken priority, placing increasingly intolerable strain on the taxpayer, but unlike in modern democracies, the victims had no recourse to the ballot box. Furthermore, as the pool of manpower available for recruitment grew smaller and soldiers on active service were more intensively employed but not better paid, the strain on them would be growing also. Thus, for soldiers and tax payers alike, there would

probably come a moment when the proverbial feather would break the long-suffering camel's back.

The nature of the breakdown that occurred in 601-602 seems to chime with such an analysis. An army inured to hardship could suddenly take no more and revolted, giving an opportunity to a population reeling under high taxation to express rabid and murderous hatred, not against an incompetent leader, but against one of the ablest and most successful generals the Empire was ever to know. We may conclude that not just a necessary condition but the major impelling force toward these tragic events had been the steep demographic decline brought on by the bubonic plague, or rather by a series of outbreaks of this pestilence.

Could the people who revolted in such a manner be the same as those who fought off the joint Avar and Persian siege of 625-626? Yes indeed, nor is this too difficult to understand. When a war is on a remote frontier, the taxation to fight it may easily be felt to be intolerable because it does not immediately relate to personal danger. When enemies have broken through on all sides, the wealthiest provinces have been occupied, and there is an immediate prospect of the loss of one's own home or even life, the response is likely to be very different. With a ship in imminent danger, the most precious of cargoes may be thrown overboard without any objection when in less pressing circumstances, such a course of action would be totally unacceptable. It became possible for Heraclius to demand even the melting down of Church treasure, which must have represented a substantial segment of the Empire's wealth.

What at first appears to be the inexplicably high morale of the population of Constantinople in a time of defeat can be explained as stemming from a strong, assured and proud identity faced with imminent and extreme danger, what in Britain is called "the Dunkirk spirit". Such a spirit must form a substantial part of the reason why the

Empire survived both in 626 and after 636. Heraclius did not even have to be present himself during the siege of 626. He was more effectively employed in turning the tide against the Persians in the East by using the Empire's liquid resources to recruit Turkic nomads from the steppes.

Success against the Persians was dramatic. Now, however, the Romaic Empire had no further financial reserves to fall back upon. All might have been well had that success remained unchallenged for a considerable period. Instead, within less than a decade of the decisive victory against the Persians at Nineveh in 627 and the triumphal re-entry into Jerusalem in 630, the Arab nomads made their challenge. It becomes entirely comprehensible why, financial resources now being exhausted, the armies previously deployed on the Armenian and Eastern fronts were withdrawn from the East to Anatolia after Yarmuk. Indeed, only one attempt was made to reconquer Egypt, in 645-646, although this was the wealthiest province and the capital's traditional breadbasket. One consequence of Heraclius' early withdrawal was that the taxes of the wealthiest regions of the Empire were lost to the Empire. The Caliphate gained them without a prolonged fight, thus maintaining their prosperity while leaving Arab forces undiminished and with unimpaired capacity for further conquests. Heraclius was certainly able to calculate the serious financial and hence political consequences of such a withdrawal. He rightly judged, despite these disadvantages, that what needed to be preserved at all costs during a period of demographic decline was the Empire's organized military manpower. This he achieved, providing one of the main conditions necessary for the Empire's survival.

If it seems remarkable that the Romaic Empire survived the attack of Avars, Slavs and Persians in the 610s and 620s, it appears miraculous that it held off the much greater (when united) power of the Arabs for a very much longer

period of two full centuries. During this period, the Caliphate was the dominant world power up to the borders of T'ang China, while its warriors were inspired by a religion that notably and clearly approved of combat for the faith rather than oscillating between discouraging, merely permitting and, finally, encouraging it in the service of a divinely legitimated Empire. If in a society of nomadic warriors internal divisions were endemic, these could to some degree be overcome by the religious sanctioning of a sharp division of the world into a house of Islam and a house of war, where conquest was divinely mandated, and death in battle was not merely a form of heroism, but of martyrdom, while the fruits of conquest were the warrior's just reward.

The memory of victory over the Persians in the 620s will have been one important factor in encouraging the Romaic people to continue resistance to the Arabs as the dark days of the 640s were followed by the even darker days of the early 650s and, after a five-year interlude due to the first Islamic Civil War, of the 660s right up to the Romaic defensive triumph in resisting the second great siege of Constantinople in 674-678. The memory of 626 will have reminded them that even after catastrophe, victory was always possible. The combination of besieged desperation and of popular religious fervour on the Romaic side must represent an important part of the explanation for the Empire's survival given the otherwise unfavourable odds. One of the most formidable ethics of conquest history has known was met by one of its most determined morales of defence.

No people can survive on morale alone. As important, were the superb fifth century defensive city walls of Constantinople built under Theodosius II (408-450) in 412, a period when the New Roman Empire had good cause to fear the Goths, repaired in 447 when it had

good cause to fear the Huns. Armies with a recent nomadic background were not the best prepared to triumph in such encounters, especially when reaching these walls by sea was further discouraged by the new technology of Greek fire. The Romaic Empire was at its strongest on the defensive because its most relevant asset had been forged during its period as a world power even then more accustomed to a posture of defense than of attack.

A third critical factor was that the Empire's financial resources, although drastically reduced, were concentrated in the hands of the imperial office, or in modern terms, of the state. As population, the economy, and urban life rapidly declined, together with the disruption of commerce and agriculture under the impact of the constant destructive incursions of the Islamic holy war, a man's prospects of status and wealth came to depend overwhelmingly on the traditionally well-organized military and civil services. In this sense, surely, the strength of the superstructure succeeded in carrying the comparative weakness of the infrastructure with its dramatically reduced tax-base. The cohesion of this superstructure was further strengthened by the decision of successive Emperors, based on the precedent set by Maurice in Africa and Italy, to combine civil with military administration in what were known as the system of "themes." They were originally army units whose title was transferred to a new system of provincial governance oriented to the pressing need for military defence. Furthermore, over time, the disadvantage of depopulation was turned to advantage, as soldiers' families could earn part of their living from the land. In short, the Empire survived - as Britain did in two World Wars during the twentieth century - partly because it drew on the resources it had acquired as a world power, first its liquid wealth, then its powerful organization and finally its physical assets and technological advantages. It also owed its survival to wise political leadership and its people's

morale, rooted in imperial ideology and religious faith, making them capable of ignoring realities - and thereby of creating them.

From the 630s, the Romaic Empire was no longer a world power. Its earlier incomparable financial strength had gone forever. Yet its defensive assets and state organization, tied to a long tradition of subtle and effective diplomacy, remained intact and these permitted the very gradual recovery that followed during the long period from the eighth to the eleventh century. This recovery was both economic and military.

The Romaic Empire did not of course survive as a junior great power only because of these assets and its people's morale. The outcome of any contest is determined by the sum of the relative strengths and weaknesses of both parties, not just of the one. The immense force of the Arab impetus played itself out after the fall of the Sassanian capital, Ctesiphon in Mesopotamia, in the conquest of Iran, and in areas further to its East while, in the West, Arab armies quite naturally followed the path of least resistance, easily conquering North Africa in the 690s and then Visigothic Spain in the early eighth century.

Even after the Ummayyads established their rule in Damascus in 661, Constantinople was 1200 kilometers distant. These kilometers would be fiercely contested by a great power whose military forces were well organized and known to remain intact. The Ummayyads twice took on the challenge, once in 674-678 and once in 717-718. On both occasions, they looked likely to succeed, but on both occasions they ultimately failed. At such moments of crisis, it was the strength of the Romaic Empire and her people as already described, that provide the explanation.

More usually, however, the Ummayyads and even more the Abbasid Caliphs preferred the annual probing and plundering raid to an attempt at a knockout blow. Furthermore, they did not lack for other challenges, external

or internal. Some of these external challenges were the consequences of Romaic diplomacy, in particular the alliance with the Turkic Khazars north of the Caspian who, in their majority, at some stage converted to Judaism and proved one of the Caliphate's most effective opponents into the ninth century. Leo III (717-741), the Emperor who successfully resisted the siege of 717-718, even saw his son, Constantine V (741-775) married to a Khazar princess. Thus Constantine V's son, Leo IV (775-780) was half Turkic.

As to the internal challenges, these were even more severe, given the fierce strife that often erupted in the Islamic world and the Caliph's problems in controlling vast dominions. The Romaic Empire enjoyed several respites as a result, most dramatically during the bloody destruction of the Ummayyads by the Abbasids in the mid eighth century. The difference in relative strengths, however, is well illustrated by the fact that at a time of Romaic weakness in the 820s, both Crete and Sicily were successfully invaded by Muslim forces without Abbasid backing. Both losses were painful. It took almost 140 years for that of Crete to be reversed, while not more than a small segment of Sicily was ever regained. And in 838, Amorium, the home city of the Romaic ruling dynasty, fell to Arab attack.

From the middle of the ninth century, the growing internal weaknesses of the vast Abbasid Caliphate led to a readjustment of relative power, initially more the consequence of Caliphal weakness than of Romaic strength. In the tenth century, despite wars with the Bulgar kingdom, which had established itself in the seventh century, the Romaic recovery became impressive in its own right. By the end of the first quarter of the eleventh century, with victories against Muslim powers to the East and the conquest of the Bulgarian kingdom, the Empire's rule stretched once more from the Danube to a section of the Upper Euphrates. The Romaic Empire would never again be more than one great power among approximate

equals in the Islamic and Christian worlds. Nevertheless, in the last years of Basil II (976-1025), no other ruler enjoyed greater power or prestige.

Well before military and political revival were assured, the Romaic world displayed its cultural creativity, and this in three very different ways. The first was the reappropriation and revival of the classical Hellenic heritage. This is noticeable from early in the ninth century after two centuries of almost constant crisis during which secular learning had become a luxury as it had not in areas easily conquered by the Arabs. This was a crucial development. Although medieval Western Europe's first acquaintance with some ancient Greek philosophical texts depended on translations from the Arabic by Spanish Jews in the eleventh century, the wider range of Hellenic literature, history and philosophy only became available to them directly from the Greek, and then only from the fourteenth century when Western Europeans had become ready to accept it, 500 years after the revival of classical learning in Constantinople

Although this reappropriation was in itself a sign of creativity and although it was responsible for saving many classical texts that would not otherwise have survived and for reestablishing a fine tradition of historiography, it did not extend to embracing the practice of cultural innovation, so central to the development of the Hellenic tradition in the ancient world. A hierarchical society of civil servants and bishops could and did allow itself to be deeply impregnated by Hellenic literature in its multifarious forms, but it maintained this more as a prestige feature in court and civil society and culture than as a primary driving force in society. Where art was concerned the situation was different. The classical tradition proved a living force both of attraction and repulsion, resulting in a most creative artistic dialectic over six full centuries.

A second way in which the reviving Romaic Empire creatively reaffirmed its traditions was the mid-ninth

century Moravian mission of Constantine/Cyril and Methodios. This initial "failure" turned over the centuries into a resounding success, with the ultimate conversion of the larger part of the Slav-speaking world. From its inception, it proved necessary to resist Frankish missionaries to Moravia, who insisted on the theory of three sacred languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. It is hard now that the Roman Catholic Church has - if only within the last half century - accepted that worship should be in the language of the people, to appreciate how unusual this attitude was at the time. Judaism, Islam and Hinduism alike based themselves on a single sacred language. Western Christianity was comparatively - if unavoidably - liberal in accepting three. South Asian Buddhism seems also to have used one language, but the attitude of North Asian Buddhism provides the one partial parallel to Eastern Christianity, in the use of Chinese and Japanese.

I do not know how this came about. What is certain is that in Eastern Christianity it was a considered position, accepted not just by its beneficiaries, but by those who sent out the missions. Once again, imperial absolutism was combined with cultural pluralism, but this time with a significant difference and limitation. Cultural pluralism was now for export only, accepted outside the Empire, while the Empire itself was overwhelmingly Greek in language, as well as self-consciously Orthodox in religion. Iberians, whether Armenians or Georgians, played a most important role as Emperors or Imperial servants until the end of the eleventh century, but no one doubted the Romaic Empire was intentionally in cultural terms neither universal nor Roman, but rather specifically Greek, even if self-description as "Hellenes" is first met only in the twelfth century. In this way, paradoxically, and most certainly without so intending, the Romaic Empire helped create the precedent for culturally and linguistically based states outside its dominions. This was contrary to its own political

ideology but premonitory both of medieval developments in the Balkans and the later linguistically based states across Europe as a whole.

The generation that sent out Constantine/Cyril and Methodios had fresh in its memory the controversy over the veneration of icons. The first iconoclasm lasted from (probably) 730 to 787, and the second from 813 to 843. The ebb and flow of this controversy was influenced to a large extent by political developments, but also raised core issues of Christian faith. We can appreciate this simply by reflecting on the argument developed by St John of Damascus insisting on the centrality of matter for a Christian. Even if the Christological arguments for and against the veneration of icons had never been raised, this would have been sufficient to establish the crucial nature of the doctrine in marrying a transcendental theology to intense involvement with the material world. The conclusion of the controversy, with the acceptance of the veneration of icons, set the Eastern Christian pattern for religious art thereafter. This was the third area of creativity, none the less significant for being associated more with the anonymous master than the eponymous literary elite.

This period of revival depended entirely on *internal* developments where culture was concerned initially on *external* developments, chiefly the increasing weakness of the Abbasids, where politics was concerned. Gradually, it came also to reflect the growing economic, financial and military strength of the Romaic Empire itself. Throughout the course of this long, slow, upward impetus lasting about two centuries, the ideology of universal Empire, the principle of Imperial absolutism, and the associated practice of palace intrigues and coups did not change. In respect of the economic and social infrastructure of the Empire, however, there was a substantive change. The ancient world had been based on the communal life of cities, within which the family had been an important element. When cities, apart from the capital itself, became so much

less important in the crisis of the seventh and eighth centuries, the imperial hierarchy and army provided the chief social basis of the Empire. At this time, the empire came its closest ever to resembling its nomadic enemy, save for the existence of the Church. This was the point at which it was also most effective as a defensive military machine. Over time, however, the settled nature of the state so different from the *perpetuum mobile* of the nomadic horde, combined with the high status ascribed to marriage by Christianity, to establish the family as the central institution, and paradoxically but not illogically, particularly so where families with a tradition of service in the military and consequently substantial holdings of land, were concerned. Increasingly in the Romanic Empire, the building blocks of society even inside Constantinople, with its overpowering imperial ideology, but even more outside it, were the family and the religious community. Such elements in the social structure are far less dependent on the support of the state for their survival, as later events were to demonstrate. Given the absence of the city-state environment of antiquity and the greater economic affluence resulting from the economic upswing over more than two centuries, given too the increasing intellectual admiration for the individualist Hellenic tradition, these were elements that might and did prove dangerous to the cohesion of the state.

At the height of the period of relative Imperial strength in the tenth and eleventh centuries, it was easy to become arrogant in the assertion and exercise of Imperial power. In reality, however, the Empire was but one of many great powers, culturally and economically but not militarily far in advance of its western neighbors. It was ever afraid of the military potential of the nomadic horde on the steppes, one of the most effective concentrations of military power to have been developed in the history of the human species before the Technological Revolution. In respect of such

nomadic movements, the Empire needed always to possess ample financial reserves so as to deflect nomadic groups against its enemies rather than face invasion itself. It also had to maintain the ability rapidly to raise substantial military forces to hold off any invasion should diplomacy fail.

Its great relative prosperity and meticulously organized bureaucracy permitted it both to recruit mercenaries and to pay off nomads and other foreign powers. Prosperity also brought three further substantive dangers to be added to the strategic vulnerability which flowed from the Roman Empire's many open sea and land frontiers. First, the regular display of economic and financial strength positively excited the envy and avarice of neighbors, near and far. Second, the increased power and landed wealth of great families simultaneously impinged on the cohesion of the administration and reduced the number of free soldiers. Economic advance usually leads to social differentiation, but wide social differentiation is not necessarily a society's healthiest characteristic especially when, in response to a pressing threat, it is social cohesion that is most required. Third, it was the Christian state geographically most exposed to attack in any holy war to the west of the Islamic world, so now there was the danger that some nomadic power might adopt Islam and marry its preexisting land lust and military effectiveness to a religious legitimation for sustained aggression. This is precisely what occurred first in the later eleventh century, with the initial irruption of the Seljuk Turks into Anatolia, and then again in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, when the emergent Ottoman state on the border between the Muslim and Christian worlds in northwestern Anatolia created a powerful mixture of pragmatism, the nomadic urge to expand, and the ghazi tradition of fighters for the faith.

I have emphasized that any military conflict is decided by the balance of the two parties' respective strengths and weaknesses. The Seljuk incursion into the Islamic and

Romaic worlds in the second half of the eleventh century found the Islamic world divided and the Romaic world economically strong although weakened by fifty years of political instability after the death of Basil II, much of it reflecting competition between powerful elite families. Once the Battle of Manzikert (1071) opened the road into Anatolia, nomadic power established itself not in comparatively distant Syria, but in Ikonium/Konya, on the Anatolian Plateau, and in a geographical environment favourable to nomadic life. This encouraged Turkmen tribes to establish themselves in the region and to continue harrying and destroying settled Romaic communities until their hard-won prosperity was no more. Indeed, after the Empire's third fall in the decades after Manzikert, the Romaic Empire again faced its imminent demise. In fact, the Empire escaped to sustain its status as a prosperous great power for another full century under the rule of the Comnene dynasty, but it was never again to hold the whole of Anatolia. Nor was this achieved without a major effort involving the entry of Western Christian powers into the region, initially as a balance to the Muslim Seljuks.

Religious and political developments in the West made this as dangerous as it was necessary. In themselves, cultural differences and ecclesiastical tension were nothing new. The Frankish Empire under Charlemagne had already created the basis for a theological opposition to Constantinople, based on the addition of the "Filioque" to the Creed. The Papacy had not adopted this controversial innovation and had indeed joined in opposing it at the Council of Constantinople in 879. Another period of German Imperial dominance in Rome in the early eleventh century changed the situation. The experience of the ninth century had taught the Romaic leaders of that time the importance of triangular diplomacy between Rome, Constantinople and the Frankish court, and for a long period thereafter Italy was not deprived of attention,

particularly in its defence against Islamic attack. In the later decades of the tenth century, however, under Emperors who were oriented towards military expansion either towards the east or the north, the importance of developments in the West was less consistently appreciated. From the end of the tenth century, growing German Imperial power was one dangerous factor in Italy. Very soon thereafter, an assertive Papacy and the presence of aggressive Norman adventurers became others. The eleventh century thus saw the final extinction of the Romaic presence in Italy, and simultaneously the consolidation, in the Western Empire, in the Papacy, and in Western Europe as a whole, of a conviction of religious superiority. Given the feudal and military ideology of Western Christendom, it was but a few steps to making the Romaic Empire, with its incomparable prosperity, simultaneously a religious enemy and a most desirable prize. Being adventurers, the Normans were the first whose actions were consistent with their sentiments. Soon after the capture of Bari in 1071, they were leading expeditions across the Adriatic. Other Western Europeans took far longer to follow in their wake.

The First Crusade, launched by Pope Urban in 1095 in response to Seljuk conquests and probably in response to their acute pressure on the Romaic Empire, was the catalyst that brought together two major threats. In response to the Seljuk thrusts towards the Holy Land as well as Anatolia, the Papacy called the feudal nobility of Western Europe to take up the Cross. When, after indescribable massacres of German Jews, the Crusaders reached Constantinople on their bloodstained path towards the Holy Land, the Emperor Alexios Comnenos (1081-1118) used them to help push back the Seljuks in occupied Anatolia. It was the first of a long series of experiences, some positive, but rather more negative on both sides, that brought Romioi and Crusaders geographically close but thrust them

existentially apart. On many occasions, with marriages and political alliances, economic collaboration, courtly interchange and shared sites of pilgrimage, it seemed as if the experience might on balance prove positive. The forces that drove the two parties apart, however, the legitimization of opposition based on religious difference and the desire for financial gain at the Empire's expense, ultimately proved the stronger.

The Romioi found the Crusaders uncultured and uncouth; the Crusaders found the Romioi duplicitous and unwarlike. Both had a point. The twelfth century Jewish traveller, Benjamin, from Tudela in Spain, commented that the Empire hired warriors from all the nations to fight with the Turks since the people themselves were not warlike. If a Jewish traveller, who came from what was scarcely in his time a warrior nation, could express some scorn for men who seemed to him as women with no strength to fight, one can imagine the feelings of Western knights with their feudal warrior ethos.

Romaic Emperors faced a triple dilemma. If a broad native warrior aristocracy were encouraged, this held clear dangers for the cohesion of the state. These dangers were well illustrated in the second half of the tenth century until Basil II reestablished firm central control by calling on Vladimir of Moscow to send Rus warriors to help him put down leading families of the warrior aristocracy. If, on the other hand, such a warrior aristocracy were not encouraged, the Empire must still be able to mobilize adequate and united military forces under the highest class of military leadership. Otherwise, the dangers from external attack, whether of Islamized nomads or Western knights, were overwhelming, as had been clearly proven in the later eleventh century when Seljuks and Normans had been advancing almost simultaneously. Perhaps, the solution lay in combining a ruling dynasty of acknowledged military excellence with a reliance on mercenaries in order

to avoid any internal challenge to that dynasty's position. This required the combination of a continually strong financial base and, above all, family cohesion among the ruling elite.

The Comnenes operated on precisely this basis. Because of their own military involvement combined with almost exclusive dependence on their wider family to fill the senior posts within the Empire; and because the Empire's wealth permitted them to recruit mercenaries and impress the outside world, the Comnenes enabled the Empire to enjoy one last brilliant century (1081-1180) as a great power, an equal to their neighbours in the West and East alike.

Family solidarity is, however, a commodity with a fixed shelf life. It rarely outlasts three generations, after which it becomes increasingly difficult for what was once one family to retain its original sense of unity. Periods of internal turbulence in the struggle for power are endemic to any imperial absolutist system. In a tenth century period of turmoil, the Empire's relative strength meant that external disaster could be avoided, but even so Basil II had needed the assistance of the recently converted Rus. In the eleventh century, both Islamized nomads and Western adventurers had broken through the Imperial frontiers, an irremediable loss from which there was a gradual but strong recovery, dependant partly on determined and able leadership, partly on continuing economic and financial superiority, and partly on a constant diplomatic interchange with the Westerners coming East. In the next period of turmoil at the end of the twelfth century, there was to be no escape. Facing discontent among its Slav Christian subjects and hostility from powers both to the East and West that combined envy, a sense of military superiority, and religious legitimation for aggression, the Romaic Empire was first radically diminished as Bulgarian and Serbian kingdoms broke away, and then dismembered

at the hands of Western Europeans, never again to attain the status of a great power that it had enjoyed for fully five and a half centuries after the Arab invasions.

Soon we shall be commemorating the 800th anniversary of the first fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Fourth Crusade in April 1204. This, the conclusion of the Empire's fourth fall, was well prepared both by the merits of the Empire, as a society far more civilian, far more civil, and far more prosperous than its Christian neighbors, and by its defects, as a polity with an universalist Imperial ideology and a particularist family structure and as a population disengaged from the regrettable but necessary business of war. More even than these, it was the result of the religious legitimization of aggression against the Empire initially in Islam and now in Western Christendom also. The early Islamic model under which territorial aggression and acquisition were validated by struggle for the faith had now been successfully imitated by the Crusaders. It was an appropriate symbolism that the fall of 1204 had been preceded by an episode in which Crusaders had attacked and destroyed Constantinople's mosque, defended by the local population.

The Romaic elite had enough resilience after the disaster of 1204 to create three Romaic successor states, all laying claim to the heritage of Empire, but none amounted more than a regional power in political reality. That based in Nicaea under the Lascarids proved the most successful, enabling Constantinople to be recaptured in 1261 under Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282). This event actually sharpened the Romaic dilemma by whetting Western appetite for revenge. It is an interesting commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of Michael VIII's statecraft that through diplomatic finesse and financial clout he was able to ward off the danger of an imminent French invasion by collaborating with the Kingdom of Aragon in encouraging the Sicilian Vespers in 1282, but that he proved unable to

hold the affection of his subjects or successfully administer the Anatolian hinterland so as to prevent the breakthrough by the Turkish beyliks, successor states to the Seljuks. This became a grim reality soon after his death as various powers, more particularly the Ottomans, conquered the remainder of Anatolia in the last decades of the thirteenth and first decades of the fourteenth century. This series of decisive defeats marked an end to the general recovery that had begun immediately after 1204, but did not extinguish all Romaic hope for the future since Constantinople continued to make advances against the Crusader successor states in the West.

The Empire was now so weak in relation to its rivals -not just to the East and West, but also to the North where both the Serbian and Bulgarian kingdoms were strong - that its prospects for long-term survival were poor indeed. A continued revival would have required an ongoing combination of outstanding military leadership, collective discipline, economic strength, and diplomatic subtlety that would be rare in any state at any time. Only diplomatic subtlety never failed. The hopes still cherished by Romioi in the first half of the fourteenth century proved vain mainly because of internal dissension, marked by civil wars that divided the ruling elite, more particularly that of 1342 to 1354, which was also associated with severe social tensions. The final blow was once again delivered by demographic disaster with the return of the bubonic plague - after an absence of six centuries - in 1347-1349. The Ottomans crossed to Europe in 1354 and rapidly reduced the Empire from the status of a regional to that of a minor power living on the prestige of its title and its ancestors. From 1372 until 1394, and again after 1424, the Empire was a vassal of the Ottoman Sultans. It was a chance of historical circumstance, though a most fortunate one from the point of view of Western culture, that after the last sharp fall in the mid-fourteenth century, the Romaic

Empire survived for a century, with Constantinople succumbing only in 1453, Mistra in 1460, and distant Trebizond in 1461.

This last period of terminal decline to a final fall cannot but be assessed negatively if our concern is with the concept of Empire itself. Yet reflection on the final fall of this long lived Empire can also perform the valuable service of allowing us to put the theme of empire in proper proportion within the historical record. For in the long view, no Empire has proven permanent, and the question of what values it represented and transmitted is even more crucial than the question of how it arose, how it maintained itself through the centuries of its existence, and how it fell.

This point can best be made by referring to a much later remark by Tsar Peter the Great, who scornfully pointed to the Greek Empire as an object lesson in the consequences of civil disobedience and the neglect of war. The truth behind this remark is that Russia inherited Romaic imperial ideology but took it to its logical conclusion. From their beginnings, the Rus were faced with the hostility of the steppe nomads on their vital route to the south. These were their opponents as their power rose. These in the form of the Mongols were their destroyers and occupiers from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth. These were their most persistent enemies as they created a centralized Empire. Without forgetting the political admiration some Russians expressed for the Ottoman Empire at its height, or the influence of Western doctrines of royal absolutism, one can suggest that it was chiefly by marrying an ideology derived from the Romaic Empire with the steppe nomad traditions of a society totally and necessarily committed to the pursuit of military supremacy that the Russian state and people became capable of putting down the steppe nomad threat to settled societies for ever, an achievement that had signally escaped the Romaic Empire.

This Russian achievement, like all such achievements, came at a great cost. The colossal effort involved, one that spanned several centuries, molded Russian society's political reflexes in a manner evident even today. Let us end by examining where, if anywhere, the Romioi, whose Empire failed a similar challenge, after having held back the first great nomadic incursion from the Arab world, may have contributed despite their failure. This is one of several questions we are asked to answer: what was the effect of each of the Empires we are considering today, particularly on modern Greece?

I believe we can without exaggeration, and without forgetting the substantial later influence of the Ottoman and Venetian Empires, not to mention the Russian, French and British, on modern Greece- catch in the later Romaic Empire many of the elements that inform modern Greek experience. Let us begin with admiration for the Hellenic tradition - clearly a feature of the Lascarid and Palaiologan periods, at least among the intellectual elite. This admiration, fed by the experience of subjection for centuries and, of course, by developments in Western Europe, created the basis for modern Hellenism, openly based on admiration for antiquity and in particular for its democratic political experiment.

Equally, the individualism and attachment to family so clearly displayed by medieval Romioi, an individualism that sat uneasily with Empire, as Peter the Great perceptively commented, is a feature that connects this period with Modern Greece. The exploitation of the state and its subjects for individual and family gain, the difficulty in collaborating in a common cause except at moments of supreme crisis, (sometimes not even then), and the willingness to emigrate and seek one's fortunes elsewhere - no one can say that these characteristics of the Romaic Empire's people during its final centuries of decline have not also marked Hellenes of recent generations.

Finally, there is the strength of the liturgical, theological, and existential tradition of Orthodoxy which remains another distinctive mark of a considerable section of modern Greek society, at least compared with most other countries in Europe today. It is perhaps time, although it will remain difficult for many, to appreciate that this represents neither a chance phenomenon nor regrettable backwardness. Only through direct experience of the varied liturgical traditions of Christianity can one perhaps come to understand that a distinctive ethos emerges from, and in, Eastern Christian worship. This depends neither on individual states of feeling nor on group emotion, but rather on a prayerful openness to God by the worshipping community that trusts in and relies on Him to make the Church an experience of unity between God and man, as also among all human beings. This ethos of worship is directly connected with the humane, personalist ethos of many Orthodox Christians, among them Greeks in particular, because every person is potentially related to this unity, whether currently participating in the liturgy of communion with God or absent from it. Here liturgy, theology, and existential stance come together to express an attitude to life which is different from that of many other groups of Christians and remains as challenging to those outside as it is fundamental for those within.

In one sense, what is important with any Empire is to establish the causes for its creation, maintenance and loss of power. Quite as significant, however, is to identify its influence after it is gone, and perhaps most important of all, to ask what values it bore irrespective of any later influence it may or may not have exercised. Hence, throughout a paper centred on politics, I have tried also to emphasize the cultural achievements of the Romaic Empire. A few more words need to be said about culture in the latest phase of political decline. It is at this point in the Empire's history that the discrepancy between cultural achievement and political failure is greatest.

Although the Romaic Empire signally failed to create a political Commonwealth of peoples in Eastern Europe, a cultural and a religious Commonwealth did emerge. One of its elements was the monastic tradition, particularly within the hesychast movement of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Another was the personalist ethos to which I have already referred. This remained a common element in Eastern Christian societies into the nineteenth century where it appears in such central literary figures as Doestoevsky and Papadiamantis. At the same time, the art of the fresco and of the icon attained a height seldom matched. This achievement has been obscured by the confusion of aesthetic quality with technical "progress" by many art scholars. Mosaic and, chiefly, fresco cycles at Sopocani, in Ochrid, in Thessaloniki, on Athos, in Constantinople, in Rila, at Mystra and Trebizond - or later in Novgorod and Moscow - should not be considered more or less valuable depending on whether they were painted a decade before or after Giotto's Arena Chapel at Padua, but rather should be judged by the religious and aesthetic response they elicit from those who face them. Responses will vary, as they will to the works of any great artist: yet many now acknowledge these works as among the very greatest the world has known.

The Romaic Empire was the creator of one of the world's greatest artistic traditions, the transmitter of classical learning to Western Europe, which it thus helped transform, and the host to one of the most subtle and profound spiritual traditions of humanity. In the last resort, the long survival of an Imperial ideology and grandeur, the determined defence of a great capital city against numerous aggressors, and the gradual decline of Imperial power may seem of but secondary significance compared with achievements such as these. ■

Chronology

- 303 Diocletian and Galerius begin general persecution of Christian Church; an exception are the Gallic provinces under Constantius, the father of Constantine.
- 306 Constantius dies. Constantine proclaimed by his troops.
- 311 Galerius' edict ends persecution in the East.
- 312 Constantine defeats Maxentius at Milvian bridge, enters Rome as sole Emperor in the West.
- 313 Edict of Milan introduces religious toleration.
- 324 Constantine defeats Licinius at Chrysopolis to become sole Emperor. Foundation of Constantinople.
- 325 First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea.
- 330 Constantinople inaugurated as capital.
- 337 Baptism and death of Constantine.
- 361 Julian ("The Apostate") becomes emperor and attempts to re-establish paganism
- 363 Julian dies in invasion of Persia, which gains Nisibis and Armenia.
- 376 Valens, Emperor in the East, allows Visigoths to settle within the empire.
- 378 The Visigoths defeat the Roman army at Adrianople. Death of Valens.
- 381 Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople proclaims Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Constantinople is described as the "New Rome".
- 391 Theodosius Issues edicts against paganism; all sacrifice prohibited and temples closed.
- 394 Usurper Eugenius defeated.
- 395 On Theodosius death the Roman Empire is divided into West and East, with Milan and Constantinople as imperial seats.

- 402 Western Roman capital moved from Milan to Ravenna.
- 410 The Visigoth leader Alaric sacks Rome.
- 412 Theodosian walls of Constantinople built.
- 425 Emperor Theodosius II in Constantinople installs Valentinian III as Emperor in the West.
- 427 Genseric's Vandals cross the straits of Gibraltar into Africa.
- 431 Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus. "Nestorian" Church in Persian realm does not accept its decisions
- 439 Vandals capture Carthage.
- 441-447 Victories of Attila in the Balkans.
- 450 Theodosius II dies, succeeded by Marcian, the first Roman Emperor to be crowned by the Patriarch of Constantinople.
- 451 Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon. Aetius defeats the Huns at Chalons in Gaul.
- 452 The Huns invade Italy.
- 453 Death of Attila.
- 455 The Vandals sack Rome.
- 468 Failure of expedition against Vandals mounted from Constantinople.
- 476 Odoacer, a German leader of foreign soldiers in the Roman army, deposes the western Roman Emperor, terminating the line of Roman Emperors in the West.
- 488 Emperor Zeno of Isaurian origin sends Theodoric's Ostrogoths (settled on Danube in Pannonia) to conquer Italy.
- 492-497 Isaurian revolt in Asian Minor.
- 527 Accession of Justinian.
- 529 Justinian shuts down Plato's Academy and requires baptism of pagans; discriminatory legal measures taken against Jews, Samaritans and Christian heretics. Justinianic Code published.
- 532 The Nika riot leads to destruction of much of Constantinople and the project of building a new Agia Sophia.

- 533 Justinian's Digest and Institutes are published. Justinian's general Belisarius destroys the Vandal kingdom and reconquers northern Africa.
- 536 Belisarius reconquers Rome from the Ostrogoths
- 537 Justinian inaugurates the church of Agia Sophia in Constantinople.
- 540 Justinian's general Belisarius takes Ravenna from the Ostrogoths, thus completing the initial reconquest of Italy for the Empire. Persians break peace and sack Antioch.
- 541-542 First appearance of the bubonic plague which spreads from Egypt to decimate the Empire.
- 546 Visigoth rebels led by Totila sack Rome.
- 551 Imperial troops reconquer Rome.
- 552 Nestorian monks smuggle silkworm eggs from China to Byzantium.
- 553-554 Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople.
- 554 Spanish Visigoths accept the Emperor's sovereignty over Spain. The Empire reorganizes Italy as an imperial province.
- 559 Kitrigurs invade Thrace.
- 562 Peace with Persia.
- 567 Death of Justinian.
- 568 Lombards invade northern Italy.
- 572 War with Persia.
- 577 Balkans invaded by Slavs and Avars.
- 587 Slav penetration into Peloponnese.
- 590 Chosroes II flees to Romans and is restored to Sassanid throne with the help of Emperor Maurice. Peace with Persia.
- 602 Murder of Emperor Maurice and accession of Phocas. Chosroes II attacks the Romanic Empire.
- 610 Revolt in Carthage and accession of Heraclius.
- 613 Persians capture Damascus and Antioch.
- 614 Persian sack of Jerusalem. Capture of True Cross.

- 615 Persian occupation of Chalcedon. Sassanid armies overrun Anatolia.
- 616 Persian invasion of Egypt.
- 618-619 Persian conquest of Egypt.
- 622 Heraclius launches counteroffensive against Persia in Anatolia.
- 626 Avar-Persian siege of Constantinople.
- 627 Battle of Nineveh; destruction of Persian army.
- 628 Fall of Ctesiphon; overthrow of Chosroes II. Heraclius imposes peace on Persia.
- 630 Heraclius and True Cross received in Jerusalem.
- 636 Battle of Yarmuk. Arab conquest of Syria.
- 637 Battle of Qadisiya. Collapse of Sassanid Persian Empire.
- 637-642 Arab conquest of Iraq, Armenia, and Iran.
- 638 Fall of Jerusalem to the Arabs. Publication of Ecthesis, a proclamation of Monothelete Doctrine.
- 640 Arab conquest of Egypt.
- 641 Death of Heraclius. Surrender of Alexandria and Egypt to Arabs.
- 645-646 Romaic reoccupation of Alexandria.
- 647 Arab invasion of Asia Minor.
- 649 Pope Martin I condemns Monothelete doctrine. Arabs sack Cyprus. Arab naval offensive against Romaic Empire
- 653 Arrest and deposition of Pope Martin I.
- 654 Arab sack of Rhodes.
- 655 Battle of Attaleia ("Battle of the Masts"). Defeat of Imperial Navy and flight of Constans II.
- 656 Outbreak of Islamic civil war; Muawiya and Constans II sign a truce.
- 661 Establishment of Umayyad Caliphate; capital Damascus.
- 663-668 Constans II at Syracuse reorganizes Romaic West.

- 674-678 First Arab siege of Constantinople.
- 680 Bulgars cross Danube and establish Bulgar Khanate.
- 681 Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople. Condemnation of Monenergian and Monothelete Doctrines
- 698 Fall of Carthage to the Arabs.
- 700 Arab invasion of Armenia.
- 711 Battle of Wadi Bakkah; Arab conquest of Spain.
- 716-717 Arabs invade Asia Minor.
- 717-718 Second Arab siege of Constantinople, repelled by Leo III.
- 727 Revolt in Greece. Arab siege of Nicaea.
- 726 or 730 Publication of First Iconoclastic Edict.
- 731 Pope Gregory III condemns Iconoclasm.
- 740 Battle of Acroinimum; important Imperial victory over Umayyad armies in Asia Minor. Disastrous earthquake in Constantinople.
- 747-750 Abbasids overthrow Ummayyads.
- 747 Campaign of Constantine V on Upper Euphrates and Armenia. Last plague in series that commenced in 541-542.
- 751 Fall of Ravenna to Lombards. Battle of Talas; Arab victory over armies of Tang China
- 754 Iconoclastic Council of Hierieia.
- Pope Stephen II crowns Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, creating alliance between Papacy and Frankish Kingdom.
- 756 Donation of Pepin creation of Papal States.
- Creation of Umayyad Emirate in Spain.
- 762 Foundation of Baghdad as Abbasid capital.
- 763 Battle of Anchilao; victory of Constantine V over Bulgars.
- 781 Arab invasion of Asia Minor.
- 787 Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea; restoration of icons under Empress Irena

- 792 Invasion of Anatolia by Caliph Harun ar-Raschid.
- 800 Coronation of Charlemagne as Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III.
Establishment of Western Empire.
- 805 Imperial control over Peloponnese restored.
- 811 Battle of Pliska; slaughter of Nicephorus I and the Romaic army by Bulgars.
- 813 Battle of Versinica; destruction of Romaic army by the Bulgarian near Adrianople.
- 814 Romaic-Bulgar Treaty marks off the "Great Fence of Bulgaria".
- 815 Publication of Second Edict of Iconoclasm. Second Iconoclastic Period.
- 821-824 Revolt of Thomas the Slav.
- 826 Arab conquest of Crete. Arab conquest of Sicily begins.
- 838 Invasion of Caliph Al-Mutasim. Battle of Dazimon and capture of Amorium.
- 843 Synod of Constantinople. Restoration of Icons.
- 863 Beginning of mission of Cyril and Methodios to Moravia.
- 864 Conversion of Bulgarians under Tsar Boris.
- 878 Arabs take Syracuse.
- 879 Council in Constantinople, attended by legates from Rome, agrees there should be no addition to the Creed (issue of the "filioque").
- 896 Symeon of Bulgaria defeats the Romaic army for the first time.
- 904 Sack of Thessaloniki by Arabs from Crete.
- 911-912 Attempt to recover Crete fails.
- 913 Symeon of Bulgaria appears before Constantinople.
- 922 Symeon defeats the Romaic army for the fourth and last time.
- 923-944 Successful campaigns against Arabs.
- 941 Russian expedition against Constantinople.
- 961 Crete re-conquered by Nicephorus Phocas.

- 965 Conquest of Tarsus; annexation of Cyprus.
- 968 Nicephorus II Phocas defeats the Arabs in Syria.
- 969 Nicephorus II Phocas is assassinated by John Tzimiskes.
- 971 John I Tzimiskes annexes Eastern Bulgaria.
- 975 John I Tzimiskes invades Palestine.
- 988 Grand Prince Vladimir adopts Eastern Christianity as the official state religion of Russia.
- 997 Samuel of Bulgaria devastates Greece. Conversion of the Magyars to Latin Christianity.
- 1000 Annexation of the Georgian principality of Tao.
- 1009 Death of last Pope in Rome recognized as Orthodox since Constantinople as subsequently "Filioque" is added to the Roman Creed.
- 1018 Basil II completes annexation of Bulgaria.
- 1022 Annexation of Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan.
- 1038 Attempt at reconquest of Sicily begins.
- 1044-1045 Annexation of the Kingdom of Ani.
- 1054 The Patriarch of Constantinople and a legate of the Pope in Rome exchange excommunications.
- 1064 The Seljuk Turks conquer Armenia.
- 1071 Romanus IV Diogenes is defeated by the Seljuks at Manzikert. Collapse of Romanic rule in Anatolia. Fall of Bari to Normans under Robert Guiscard.
- 1082 Normans take North-west Greece. Grant of trading concessions to Venice.
- 1097 Passage of First Crusade through Constantinople and Anatolia.
- 1099 The First Crusade captures Jerusalem.
- 1108 Alexios I Comninos defeats Bohemond.
- 1122-1126 War with Venice.
- 1137 John II Comninos annexes Antioch.
- 1147-1149 Second Crusade.

- 1152-1154 War with Hungary.
- 1176 Manuel I Comninos defeated by the Seljuks at Myriokephalon.
- 1180 Foundation of Serbian monarchy by Stephen Nemanja.
- 1182 Massacre of Latins in Constantinople.
- 1185 Thessaloniki captured by Normans.
- 1186 Bulgaria becomes independent kingdom.
- 1187 Saladin captures Jerusalem from Crusaders.
- 1189-1192 Third Crusade. Richard I of England occupies Cyprus.
- 1204 Fourth Crusade. The Crusaders sack Constantinople and set up a Latin kingdom, led by Baldwin I of Flanders, while Venice acquires extensive territories in the Mediterranean.
- 1204 Theodore I Lascaris, son-in-law of Alexius III, flees from Constantinople to Nicaea (Bithynia), where he founds an empire. Alexius Comninos founds the Empire of Trebizond.
- Nicaean Emperor John III Vatatzes takes Thessaloniki.
- 1261 Constantinople is regained by the Nicaean Emperor Michael VIII Paleologus.
- 1269 Annexation of Mistra
- 1274 Council of Lyons. Michael VIII Paleologos submits to Rome.
- 1281 Sicilian Vespers prevent French expedition against Empire.
- 1282 Serbian conquest of Skopje.
- 1291 Moslems expel Crusaders from Palestine.
- 1302 Victory of Ottomans at Bapheon.
- 1326 Ottoman capture of Prusa, which becomes their capital.
- 1331 Ottoman capture of Nicaea.
- 1337 Ottoman capture of Nicomedia.
- 1341-1354 Civil war among Romaic leaders.
- 1345 First Ottoman raid in Europe, as allies of John VI Kantakuzenos who gave his daughter Theodora in marriage to Orhan. Serbia under Stephen Dusan annexes Macedonia.

- 1347 The plague (Black Death) strikes Constantinople and decimates the city's population.
- 1348 Serbia annexes Thessaly and Epirus.
- 1351 Synod at Constantinople approves Hesychast doctrine on essence and energies of God.
- 1354 Gallipoli captured by Ottomans. Beginning of Ottoman advance into Thrace.
- 1369 Ottoman capture of Adrianople, which becomes their capital. John V submits to Rome.
- 1371 Romaic Empire becomes tributary to Ottomans.
- 1376-1379 Civil war.
- 1387 Thessaloniki taken by the Ottomans for the first time.
- 1393 Turks conquer Thessaly and Bulgaria.
- 1394 Manuel II renounces vassalage to Ottomans.
- 1396 Battle of Nicopolis. Bayezid I of the Ottomans defeats a Crusader army led by Sigismund of Luxemburg, King of Hungary.
- 1397-1402 Siege of Constantinople by Bayezid I.
- 1399-1403 Manuel II tours Europe.
- 1402 Battle of Ankara. Bayezid I defeated and taken prisoner by Timur Lenk. Romaic Empire recovers substantial territory.
- 1422 Constantinople besieged by the Ottomans.
- 1424 Romaic Empire once again becomes tributary to Ottomans.
- 1430 Final capture of Thessaloniki.
- 1438-1439 Council of Ferrara-Florence. Union of Churches accepted by Emperor and Patriarch but not by people.
- 1444 Crusade defeated at Varna.
- 1453 Capture of Constantinople ends Romaic Empire.
- 1460 Conquest of Duchy of Athens and of Romaic Despotate of Mistra.
- 1461 Capture of Trebizond ends last Romaic state.

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“The Most Powerful” Empire: Ottoman Flexibility and Military Might

Gábor Ágoston

By the early sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire had emerged as a major military power that controlled the Balkans, Asia Minor, the Black Sea littoral, the Eastern Mediterranean, and most of the Middle East. Although modern sociologists do not consider the Ottoman Empire a world power, for it did not possess the “minimal threshold criteria for global and world power” - most importantly, it was not a seaborne empire because its navy did not “demonstrate ocean-going activity”¹-, for contemporary Europeans it seemed “the most powerful” empire.² In the sixteenth century it was considered the most formidable of all empires Western Christianity faced on its own territory. It held this image by virtue of its geopolitical situation, its enormous territory and population, its wealth of economic resources, and a central and provincial administration that was capable of mobilizing these resources to serve the goals of the state. The efficient use of resources formed the base of the Ottoman army which was considered to be the best and most efficient military known to contemporaneous Europeans. These Europeans admired the “*vastissimo imperio dei Turchi*,” the territorial immensity, the wealth and power of the Sultan, who, in the words of one Venetian ambassador, “is the most powerful.” For the Venetians, for whom “the center of gravity of the political world” still lay in the Mediterranean, the Ottoman Empire was a world power.³

The Hasburgs were the Ottomans’ main antagonist in Central Europe after the fall of Hungary in

1526, but Ferdinand had only limited resources at his disposal even after 1558. Compared to the Ottomans' immediate neighbors the empire's territorial immensity and wealth was even more obvious. In the sixteenth century, only the vast empire of the Habsburgs possessed human and economic resources comparable to that of the Ottomans. However, whereas the Sultan's realm can be considered a "continuous empire" which was territorially contiguous, the Habsburg realms were a "discontinuous empire"⁴ with territories loosely arranged and scattered all over Europe and overseas. Due to the multiple foreign policy commitments of the Habsburgs, only part of the available resources could be used against the Ottomans. For Emperor Charles V (r. 1519-58), the rivalry with France over the domination in Europe had an absolute priority; then came the conflict with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, whereas the Ottoman advance in Central Europe was only the third foreign policy concern.⁵ Consequently, imperial resources were only partly committed to this latter front. This situation changed somewhat after the middle of the sixteenth century. The Augsburg peace treaty in 1555 signaled the end of Charles V's search for a universal monarchy and the defeat of his religious policy. Following the 1555 religious compromise between the Catholic Habsburgs and the Protestant princes of the Holy Roman Empire, and the abdication of Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor in 1556 the "Turkish question" became the major policy agenda for Ferdinand I, who succeeded his brother on the imperial throne in 1558, when the electors of the Empire finally accepted Charles V's unilateral abdication of 1556.⁶

Ferdinand, the Ottomans' main antagonist in Central Europe after the fall of Hungary in 1526, however, had only limited resources at his disposal even after 1558. In the words of one scholar, Ferdinand's Central European monarchy was "not a 'state' but a mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements."⁷

Although geographically contiguous, the Austrian Habsburgs lands were much smaller than the Sultan's realm. Even in the seventeenth century, territories under direct rule of the Austrian Habsburgs in Europe did not exceed 340,000 square kilometers. Counting the territories of some 160,000 square kilometers re-conquered from the Ottomans at the end of the century in Hungary (Ottoman Hungary and the Ottoman vassal principality of Transylvania), and adding to that the territories of the Holy Roman Empire (estimated at 500,000 square kilometers), the geographical extension of the Austrian Habsburgs reached only about one million square kilometers. In contrast, after Sultan Selim I's (r. 1512-20) conquests in Iran, Syria, Egypt and Arabia, the Sultans ruled over an immense territory of 1.5 million square kilometers. Süleyman I (r. 1520-66) conquered further territories in the East and in Hungary, and by the end of the sixteenth century the territory of the Empire had grown to 2.3-2.5 million square kilometers.⁸

Furthermore, the Habsburg Empire never enjoyed the sort of "ecological complementarity" and self-sufficiency in raw materials and human resources the Ottoman Empire did.⁹ Unlike their Spanish and the Austrian Habsburg adversaries, the Ottomans possessed ample deposits of saltpeter, sulfur, copper and iron ore, the most important strategic raw materials that were necessary for the production of ammunition and weaponry. Thanks to these deposits as well as to the numerous war industry plants and the various financial and organizational means the Istanbul government created to ensure the steady supply of weaponry and ammunition, the Ottomans were self-sufficient in the production of military hardware well into the eighteenth century. Until about the late seventeenth century Ottoman stockpiles greatly outnumbered the weaponry and gunpowder supplies of their Hungarian and Habsburg adversaries.¹⁰

The population of Ferdinand I's Central European realms around 1550 is estimated to have been about 6.6 million. The number of inhabitants of the same lands might have risen to 7.1-7.9 million by the beginning of the seventeenth century. This means that only by including the some 16 million inhabitants of the Holy Roman Empire, can one arrive at a population comparable to that calculated for the Ottoman Empire. On the basis of available tax registers it is estimated that in the 1520s the Ottoman Empire had a population of 12-13 million, reaching some 25-26 million by the seventeenth century as a consequence of territorial expansion and population increase.¹¹

As for the wealth of the two empires: in the fifteenth century, according to Venetian reports, the annual income of the Sultans was around 2.5-3 million gold ducats, without *timar*-revenues, that is, without military fiefs distributed to soldiers and bureaucrats in lieu of salary. The earliest known Ottoman treasury balance-sheet records, for the financial year of 1527/28, five million Venetian ducat for the central treasury in cash and 3.6 million for military fiefs.¹² By contrast, Ferdinand's ordinary revenues reached only about 740,000 Venetian ducat (one million Rhenish florin) and most of it was spent on the anti-Ottoman defense system in Hungary. Due to large military and court expenditure, Ferdinand faced permanent deficits and had to rely on contributions of his different kingdoms and lands.¹³ Although deficits were not unheard of the Ottoman Empire either, most of the available balance sheets of the Ottoman treasury show surpluses under Süleyman.¹⁴

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European observers of the Ottomans stressed the territorial vastness and wealth of the Sultans' realm, as well as the sheer size of its population, which was the basis of the massive Ottoman military. The Venetian ambassadors concurred that the

Empire's strength and security depended "more than anything else on the large numbers of land and sea forces which the Turks keep continually under arms."¹⁵ Even after the disastrous defeat of the Ottoman navy at Lepanto in 1571, another Venetian ambassador found that the Sultan's navy was "terrifying" and able "to torment all of Christendom."¹⁶

The swift Ottoman expansion, Istanbul's success in integrating conquered territories and populations into the Ottoman system, the Empire's military strength from the fifteenth through the late seventeenth century and the survival of the Ottoman Empire over a long historical period raise numerous questions to which there are as yet few universally accepted answers. The following approach that emphasizes Ottoman pragmatism and flexibility is only one of many possible answers. However, according to this author Ottoman pragmatism proved to be crucial for the continuous adjustment of Ottoman institutions and techniques of governance that were largely responsible for successfully administering the multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire of the House of Osman.

Geopolitics and the early Ottomans

The ancestors of Osman (c.1299-1324), the eponymous founder of the Ottoman (*Osmali*) dynasty, arrived in north-western Anatolia and settled in the former Byzantine province of Bithynia shortly before 1300. It is usually assumed that they were part of the last wave of the great migration of Turcoman peoples from Central Asia to Anatolia, caused by the Mongol invasion of the middle decades of the thirteenth century. However, a recent hypothesis suggests that the early Ottoman "nucleus" in north-west Anatolia may have been formed by initially non-Muslim Turko-Mongol warriors from the western Pontic steppe, the lands between the Dnieper and the Danube.¹⁷ Whatever may have been the case, by 1300 the

Byzantine Emperor of Constantinople had long lost his control over much of eastern and central Asia Minor. Following the victory of the Great Seljuks over the Byzantine army in 1071, a branch of the Great Seljuks — known later as the Seljuks of Rum— established its rule in eastern and central Anatolia. Under the Rum Seljuks, whose state is also referred to as the Sultanate of Konya after the capital city, large numbers of semi-nomadic Turks arrived from Transoxania into eastern and central Anatolia, whose upland pasture lands and warm coastlands offered ideal conditions for the pastoralists' way of life.

Conversion to Islam, the religion of the winning party, seems to have been widespread from the eleventh century onward. Despite conversion and the Turkification of the Anatolian population (with or without conversion), Greeks and Armenians still lived in large numbers in Asia Minor, especially in the towns. Relations between Greeks and Turks were much closer and inter-marriages more common than usually assumed. Greeks worked in the Seljuk administration in high offices, Turkish troops were often hired by the Byzantine Emperors, and fleeing Turkish rulers sought refuge in Byzantium more often than among their Muslim brethren in Syria, Mesopotamia and Iran.¹⁸

By the time the Ottomans settled in the Sakarya valley in the vicinity of the shrinking Byzantine Empire, the population of western Asia Minor had also largely been Muslim and Turkish. The influx of Turkish semi-nomadic peoples or Turcomans into western Anatolia is closely related to the Mongol invasion of the Middle East in the 1240s and 1250s. A western army of the Mongols invaded and defeated the Rum Seljuks in 1243 at Kösedag, some 80 km north-east of Sivas. In 1258, the great khan's brother Hülegü conquered and sacked Baghdad, ending the rule of the Abbasid Caliphs (749-1258). The Rum Seljuks soon became the vassals of the Il-Khans ("obedient khans"), the descendents of Hülegü who established their own empire,

independent of the great khans of the Golden Horde, in the vast area from Afghanistan to present-day Turkey. As the Mongols occupied more and more grasslands for their horses in Asia Minor, the Turcomans moved further to western Anatolia and settled in the Seljuk-Byzantine frontier. By the last decades of the thirteenth century the Il-Khans and their Seljuk vassals lost control over much of Anatolia. In the ensuing power vacuum, a number of local Turkish lords managed to establish themselves as rulers of small Turkish principalities (*beyliks* or emirates). The Ottomans, who were only one among the numerous Muslim Turkish principalities, settled in north-western Anatolia, in the former Byzantine province of Bithynia.¹⁹

It was a fortunate location for many reasons. In 1261, the Byzantines recaptured Constantinople from the Latins, who had conquered the city in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, established a Latin Empire in Constantinople (1204-1261), divided the former Byzantine territories in the Balkans and the Aegean among themselves and forced the Byzantine Emperors into exile at Nicaea (Izник). From 1261 onwards, the Byzantines were largely preoccupied with policies aiming at regaining their control in the Balkans, and, in the words of the contemporary Byzantine chronicler Pachymeres (writing c 1310), “the defences of the eastern territory were weakened, whilst the Persians (Turks) were emboldened to invade lands which had no means of driving them off.”²⁰ Owing to their location, the Ottomans were best positioned to conquer the eastern territories of the Byzantine Empire. However, the situation was more complex and to view the history of the north-western Anatolian frontier solely as a clash between Cross (Byzantium) and Crescent (invading Muslim Turks) would be mistaken. The shift in Byzantine policy also offered new opportunities for the Turkish principalities in western Anatolia, for the Byzantines needed allies and mercenaries. The Ottomans, who were perhaps the least

significant among the Turkish emirates and thus posed the least threat to Byzantine authority around 1300, seemed to be perfect candidates for the job.

Holy warriors or pragmatic rulers?

Fifteenth-century Ottoman chroniclers portray Osman and the early Ottomans as gazis. Following Paul Wittek's seminal *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (1938), generations of students of the Ottoman Empire interpreted the word *gaza* as "Holy War against the infidels," and *gazi* as "Muslim march-warriors" who fought against their Christian neighbors. However, these explanations of *gaza* and *gazi*, along with Wittek's version of the rise of the Ottomans, based on his "*gazi thesis*," have long been questioned.²¹

Recent research has demonstrated how fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman chroniclers, writing to their contemporaneous Muslim audience, distorted early Ottoman realities by projecting back their interpretation of *gaza* and *gazi*. It seems that in the fifteenth century there were two different views of *gaza*: one of the early epics and *menakibs*, that is, popular stories of saint-heroes, and another one which defined and explained *gaza* according to the canonical texts of the shari'a or Islamic law. The first view was promoted by such fifteenth-century chroniclers as Asikpasazade (1484) and Oruç (c. 1500), who lived among the frontier warriors/raiders (*aktıncı*) of Ottoman Europe (Rumeli). In their chronicles the early Ottoman Sultans are presented as *gazi*-heroes, an image that "conformed to popular ideals of heroism, holy war and piety." However, in these works the Arabic *gaza* (holy war) and the Turkish *akin* (raid, without any religious connotation) appear as interchangeable terms, which not only reflected realities along the Empire's fifteenth-century European frontiers, but is also closer to the nature of the early Ottoman military ventures. The first representative of the second

interpretation of *gaza* is Ahmedi, who in his *History of the Ottoman Rulers* (1390) transformed the early raiders (*aktıncı*) into holy warriors (*gazis*), deploring all those who pursue *gaza* for booty. It seems that Wittek's reading of *gaza* is that of Ahmedi's "learned view," which by the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) had become the official version of the early Ottoman raids and campaigns.²²

On the basis of near-contemporary Ottoman, Byzantine and western European sources, recent scholarship has shown that many of the early *gazas* of the Ottomans were in fact predatory raids, directed against both Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors. In these raids Muslims and Christians often joined forces and shared in the booty. Indeed, the history of conflicts in western Anatolia and the Balkans in the early decades of the fourteenth century offers numerous examples for temporary alliances and joint military undertakings between Muslims Turkish *beyliks* (Aydın, Karasi, Saruhan, Ottoman etc.) and Christians (Catalans, Byzantines and Genoese). Catalan mercenaries, who originally arrived into Asia Minor to fight against various Turkish forces, who habitually raided the Byzantine frontier, fought both against and alongside the Turks between 1303 and 1307. In fact it was in 1305 that the Turks from Asia Minor first crossed to Europe as auxiliaries of the Catalans: some eight hundred horsemen and two thousand foot soldiers participated in the enterprise. The Turks fought for booty, giving only one fifth of it to the Catalans, a practice which was not only in accordance with Islamic law but was also customary in Byzantium. These Turks came from the principality of Aydın, but were joined by many Greeks from Asia Minor, among whom "an anti-Constantinopolitan ideology prevailed." Conflicts between Turks and Christians (Catalans, Serbs and Byzantines) in the following years evolved not because of the spirit of the "holy war," rather over the vicissitudes of such delicate alliances (desertion of the Turks, attempts to

settle the Turks as “reservists,” unfulfilled promises regarding spoils etc.).²³ During the Byzantine civil war of the 1340s, John VI Kantakouzenos allied with Osman’s son Orhan against John V Palaiologos, and in 1347 became co-emperor with Ottoman help. In 1352, during the war between Venice and Genoa, the Genoese of Pera sought the assistance of the Ottomans: they concluded a treaty with Orhan, recruited Ottoman troops, bought provisions from the Ottomans, and sheltered in Ottoman ports.²⁴

This is not to say that the spirit of the *gaza* was not an important factor in the early Turkish (Karasi, Ottoman etc.) campaigns against the Byzantines and later against the Serbs and Bulgarians. The Turks of western Anatolia went willingly to war against their Christian enemies, and they were seeking booty and glory alike. A fourteenth-century text on the meaning and ways of *gaza* (*Hikayet-i Gazi*), most likely composed in the Karasi *beylik*, demonstrates that the spirit of the holy war was very much alive in the Turco-Byzantine frontier.²⁵ Situated in the vicinity of Byzantium, the Ottomans were ideally positioned to wage war against the “infidel,” and the Ottoman *beylik* served as a magnet for the mighty warriors of the neighboring Turco-Muslim emirates. However, the nature of these early raids and campaigns was more complex and the ideology of the *gaza* was just one factor, and, judging from the many military undertakings launched jointly by Christians and Muslims, not always the most important one.

Furthermore, the fourteenth century also witnessed Ottoman campaigns against fellow Turks and Muslims and the subjugation and annexation of the neighboring Turkish emirates (Karasi, Saruhan, Germiyan and Hamid) by the Ottomans. In accordance with their portrayal of the early Ottomans as *gazi*-warriors, fifteenth-century Ottoman chroniclers often ignored these conflicts (along with the Ottomans’ alliances with Christians), claiming that the Ottomans acquired the *beyliks*’ territories via peaceful

means (purchase and/or marriage). When they did mention the wars between the Ottomans and their Turkish neighbors, Ottoman chroniclers tried to legitimize them by claiming that the Ottomans acted either in self defense or were forced to fight because the Turkish *beyliks'* hostile policies (often in alliance with the infidels) hindered the Ottomans' *gaza* against the infidels.²⁶

To be sure, Ottoman policy was not solely based on sheer military force. Until about the 1450s, interdynastic marriages remained an important political means to subjugate (and eventually annex) both Christian and Muslim neighboring polities. Through marriage alliances, concluded with the Byzantine, Serbian and Bulgarian royal houses as well as with the Anatolian Muslim principalities of Germiyan, Isfendiyaroglu, Aydin, Saruhan, Çandar, Karaman and Dulkadtr, the Ottomans not only acquired further territories, but the fathers and brothers of the brides became vassals of the Ottomans, who paid tribute and provided troops.²⁷

While superficially Islamized Turks comprised the largest group among the followers of Osman, the early Ottoman society was complex and included members of numerous religions and ethnicities. Members of various Islamic sects, Orthodox Christians, Islamized and/or Turkified Greeks, Armenians and Jews lived and fought alongside the Turks. The Turks of Anatolia were under the influence of dervishes and their spiritual leaders whose understanding and practice of Islam can be described by words of syncretism and mysticism rather than by Islamic orthodoxy. The early gazis were anything but orthodox Muslims. In fact, Orthodox Muslims were in minority. A recent study has suggested that the leaders of the Ottoman raiding forces (*akıncı*) were often newly converted Muslims of Christian origin, like Evrenos Bey, "companion" of the early Ottoman rulers and famous marcher lord (*uc beyleri*), whose descendants, the Evrenosogullari, represent one of

the best-known families of fifteenth-century Ottoman warrior nobility.²⁸

The early Ottoman rulers were *primi inter pares*, the first *beys* among equal *beys*, which is reflected in the titles they and the leaders of the warrior nobility used. Some of the early leaders of the raiders used (and were given by the Ottomans) titles seen in the sources in connection with Osman and his successors. Similarly, many of these titles were also used by other Turkish *beys* in Anatolia. Moreover, the flattering titles (often given by the Mongol Il-Khans to the Turkish *beys*) such as *gazi* and *mucahid* (warrior for the faith) do not necessarily convey sovereignty and do not indicate the *gazi-warrior* nature of the *beys* and their polities.²⁹

The Ottoman rulers' power depended on the success of military campaigns, and thus personal qualities of the first *beys* mattered a lot. The first ten rulers of the Ottomans proved to be able military leaders and good administrators. Murad I (r. 1362-89) executed his brothers, and by doing so he introduced the cruel yet efficient system of succession that strengthened the position of the ruler by eliminating all potential pretenders to the throne.³⁰

The Ottoman government in the fifteenth century was careful to take account of local balances of power and attempted of winning over local secular and religious leaders. The Sultans of the fifteenth century tried to integrate cooperative groups and individuals belonging to the previous social elites into their system. The Ottoman army, its modes of recruitment and remuneration proved to be an especially important means to incorporate large segments of the conquered societies into the Ottoman military-administrative system. Through the *devsirme* or child levy system thousands of Balkan Christians found their way into the Ottoman military, while others were incorporated into the Ottoman ruling strata as members of the *timar*-holding provincial cavalry and military auxiliaries (*martaloses*, *voynuks*, *köprücüs*, *derbentçis*).

Building an army and integrating the conquered peoples

As elsewhere in Euro-Asia, military preparedness and prowess were crucial for empire-building in Asia Minor and the Balkans too. In the early years of the Ottoman state, the main constituent elements of the Ottoman army were: the ruler's military entourage or guard; the cavalry troops of Turcoman tribes which had joined forces with the Ottomans; and those peasants who had been called up as soldiers for military campaigns. The members of the military entourage (*kul and nöker*) were the forerunners of the Sultans' salaried troops that by the fifteenth century had become the pillar of the Ottoman military organization. The troops of the Turcoman tribes that were in alliance with the Ottomans received a share of military booty and were granted the right to settle on conquered lands. In return, they had to provide men-at-arms in proportion to the amount of benefice in their possession. Later they became the *timar*-holding *sipahis* or provincial cavalry, whose remuneration was secured through military fiefs (*timar*).

Similarly to the Seljuk *iqta* and the Byzantine *pronoia*, the main function of the Ottoman *timars* was to pay the troops and bureaucracy. Ottoman *timariots* or military fief-holders served as provincial cavalry and local administrators thus playing a crucial role in establishing and maintaining law and order in the provinces. The military fiefs were also used by the Ottomans to reward and to incorporate the conquered peoples into the military-bureaucratic system of the Empire. Ottoman cadastral surveys from the fifteenth-century Balkans recorded large numbers of Christian *timariots* who, by accepting the new order and by performing military and bureaucratic services for the Ottoman state, managed to preserve, at least partly, their former *pronoias* (military fiefs) and *bashtinas* (small hereditary possessions) as well as their privileged status within the society.³¹ Many of these Balkan Christian

timariots and their sons were called *voynuks* (Slavic for fighting man or soldier). These *voynuks* were former members of the pre-Ottoman minor nobility who retained part of their *bashtinas* as *timars* in lieu of military service. Established perhaps in the 1370s or 1380s, *voynuks* were to be found in significant numbers in Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Thessaly and Albania. In addition, large numbers of Christian nomads in the Balkans, called *Vlachs*, were also incorporated into the ranks of the *voynuks*.³²

Since the salaried troops of *kuls* and the *timar*-holding cavalry proved too few in number to fulfill the needs of a growing state, young volunteer peasant boys were taken on. These youths later formed the infantry *yaya* (foot soldier) and cavalry *müselleme* ("exempt from taxes") units. While during the campaigns they were paid by the ruler, at the conclusion of the campaign season they returned to their villages. The numerous campaigns and predatory raids soon required that this third component of the early Ottoman army be made permanent: the voluntary nature of the force was therefore abandoned and compulsory enlistment was introduced during the military campaigns.

In the second half of the fourteenth century under Murad I, numerous changes were made in the organization of the salaried troops. These changes did not, however, affect the *timar*-holding *sipahis*. The *müsellems* were slowly replaced by the palace horsemen, who were also called *sipahis*, and the *yayas*' place was taken by the *azabs* - a kind of peasant militia of originally unmarried (*azab*) lads serving as foot soldiers during the campaigns, as well as in fortresses and on ships - and by the Janissaries. The infantry *azabs* received their military kit from - and were sent to the campaigns by - a certain number of tax-paying *reaya* families. Their number must have increased rapidly: at the siege of Constantinople (1453) they numbered some twenty thousand. As a result, by the mid-fifteenth century the *yayas* and *müsellems*, along with the *voynuks*, gradually

became auxiliary forces, charged, respectively, with the restoration of military roads and bridges for the marching army, and, after the spread of cannons, with the transportation of ordnance.³³ It seems that while the müsellems were serving in both Anatolia and Rumeli, the yayas' task in Rumeli was carried out by the *yürüks*, nomadic Turks originally from Anatolia. Their resettlement from Anatolia into the Balkans was part of the Ottoman method of deportation (*sürgün*) which aimed at increasing the numbers of both the available Turkish fighters and of loyal subjects in the newly conquered peninsula.³⁴

The most significant change in the fourteenth-century Ottoman military organization was the establishment of the Janissary corps, the first standing army in Europe after that of the Roman Empire. The Janissaries (*yeni çeri* or the new army) were financed by the treasury and stood under the direct command of the Sultan. The Janissaries represented the corner-stone of the centralizing political technology of the Ottoman Sultans and provided the ruler with a permanent armed force well before similar standing armies were established in Western Europe.³⁵ Using the Janissaries and the salaried cavalymen of the Porte, the Sultans could claim a monopoly over organized violence, in sharp contrast to their European counterparts who had to rely upon and negotiate with local power-holders when they wanted to deploy armies that were operationally effective. It was especially true regarding the Austrian Habsburgs, the Ottomans' main adversary in Central Europe, who - following unsuccessful experiments under Maximilian I (r. 1493-1519) - possessed the first permanent troops of any importance during the Thirty Years' War (1618-48).³⁶

It was in the 1380s, that the periodical forced levy of Christian Children (*devsirme*) from among the Sultan's own subjects was introduced in order to ensure replacement of generations of Janissaries. Isidore Glabas, metropolitan of Thessaloniki (1380-1397) lamented the institution of child

levy in his sermon in 1395. An Italian source from 1397 stated that the Turks collected Children for their army once in 10-12 years (*decem vel duodecim annorum pueros ad militiam rapirunt*), which suggests that in the late 1390s the devsirime was a well-established practice, with at least a decade-old history.³⁷

Military slavery was a well-known practice in the Islamic world from the 830s, when the Abbasid Caliphs began to recruit Turkish-speaking mounted archers from Central Asia, predominantly as slave-soldiers (*ghulam*, *mamluk*). Though only a couple of thousand in number, due to their new military technique (mounted archery) and tactics (feigned retreat), to their skills in horsemanship and to the endurance of their “pony” horses, the Caliphs’ Turkish soldiers significantly enhanced the Muslim armies’ speed, maneuverability and firepower. Soon, most Muslim armies were dominated by Turkish soldiers.³⁸ However, the Ottoman “slave army” of the Janissaries differed from the slave soldiers of the Islamic heartlands in one important respect. Unlike the Abbasids or the Mamluks, who purchased their slave soldiers from outside the lands of Islam, the Ottoman Sultans collected their own Christian subjects, contradicting the *shari’a* or Islamic law.³⁹ However, it may well be the case that the devsirime originated in the Balkan frontiers, where Evrenos Bey and his frontier warriors, who apparently did not care too much about the *shari’a*, collected “booty fifth or tribute children” (*pencik oglani*) in central Macedonia in the 1380s or earlier. If this was indeed the case, the Ottoman Sultans only followed the practice of the frontier *beys*, by collecting children for their own service.⁴⁰

In addition, the *devsirime* proved to be an effective means of conversion: the tribute children were Islamized and incorporated into the Ottoman military, while other inhabitants of the Balkans, especially in Thrace and

Macedonia, converted voluntarily to Islam in order to avoid the child levy. Subsequently, they were trained for government service or became members of the salaried central corps of the Sultan. The regulations concerning the *devsirme* were extensive and circumspect with regard to the physical and mental conditions of the children, as well as their social status. According to *the Laws of the Janissaries (Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân)*, written by a former Jannissary in 1606, the officials charged with the collection of boys could not gather the only child of a family, for the head of the household needed his help with cultivating his land in order to pay his taxes to the *timar*-holding *sipahi*. Similarly, they were not supposed to collect the sons of the village headmen “as they belonged to the lower classes;” the children of shepherds and herdsmen “as they had been brought up in the mountains so they were uneducated;” the boys of craftsmen since they did not fulfill their pledge for soldier’s pay; and the married boys, because their “eyes had been opened, and those cannot become the kul (slave) of the Padishah (Sultan).” Likewise, excluded from the child-levy were the orphans, those who were not in perfect healthy condition (e.g., cross-eyed boys), those who spoke Turkish or were circumcised (for they could have been Turks and Muslims), those who were too tall or too short (they were considered stupid and trouble-makers, respectively), and those who had been to Istanbul (“for they did not have a sense of shame”). The Turks were excluded from the child levy in order to avoid the situation in which their relatives would demand tax exemptions. Certain ethnic groups, like the Hungarians and Croatians beyond Belgrade, or those who lived in the regions between Karaman and Erzurum were also excluded from the collection of *devsirme*. The Hungarians and Croatians were considered unreliable, while those belonging to the second group were suspicious because they lived among Georgians, Turcomans and Kurds.⁴¹

Regardless of what we think about the justification by which fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman officials excluded certain societal groups from the child-levy, the *kul-devsirme* system created the highest and most loyal pillars of support for the House of Osman. In periods of crisis, the slaves of the Sultan helped to prevent the break-up of the state. In addition, the *devsirme* proved to be an effective means of conversion: the tribute children were Islamized and incorporated into the Ottoman military, whereas the inhabitants of the Balkans, especially in Thrace and Macedonia, converted voluntarily to Islam in order to avoid the child levy.⁴²

Although the standing army was important, one must not forget that until the beginning of the sixteenth century the leading force of the Ottoman military was the freelance light cavalry, the *akincis*, the descendants of the early raiders who fought in return for their share of the war booty. Their number was around 50,000 under Mehmed II, while as late as 1521, when the size of the Janissary corps was less than 8,000, the *akincis* numbered 20,000. The predominance of the light cavalry remained a distinctive feature of the Ottoman military in the centuries to come, the proportion of the deployed cavalry to infantry being usually two to one, or even three to one during the campaigns of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴³

Available figures concerning the strength of the early Ottoman army are often contradictory, and thus reliable estimates with regard to both resource potentials and deployed troops are hard to come by. Despite the discrepancies present in the sources, it is obvious that until the end of the seventeenth century the Ottomans easily outnumbered their opponents in the Balkans and Central Europe, as well as in Asia Minor. It is probable that together with the *akincis*, auxiliary forces and the military contingents brought by Mehmed II's vassals, the Sultan's marching army in 1473 might have reached 70,000 to

80,000 men or more. The 1473 campaign against the Akkoyunlu Turcomans (1378-1508) -- the Ottomans' main rival in eastern Asia Minor before the emergence of the Safavids -- should be considered as an exceptionally important military enterprise, which saw unusually full mobilization of the deployable troops of the Empire.⁴⁴

However, it is safe to say that none of the Ottomans' neighbors was capable of mobilizing forces comparable to those of the Sultans'. Hungary's peacetime army strength under Mathias Hunyadi (r. 1458-90) hardly exceeded 12,000 men. The king managed to mobilize an army of 20,000 against the Ottomans in 1463, an exceptional force never really matched before or after 1463. Apart from manpower superiority, the Ottomans also outperformed their opponents in deploying weaponry.

Pragmatism and the diffusion of weapons technology

Following superficially understood Islamic doctrines, authors such as Kenneth M. Setton, Eric L. Jones and Paul Kennedy fault the "Moslem fanaticism," the "military despotism," which "militated against the borrowing of western techniques and against native inventiveness," and the "cultural and technological conservatism," for the failure of Islamic civilizations to keep pace with western military technology.⁴⁵ However, the Ottomans were far from being prisoners of the "extreme conservatism of Islam" - as suggested by the representatives of the Eurocentric secondary literature.⁴⁶ The pragmatism of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Ottoman rulers, the flexible understanding and practice of Islam among the leading elites of the expanding early Ottoman state, as well as the fact that of the four Sunni Islamic law schools the Ottomans followed the most tolerant one (*Hanafi*), made it easier to find the adequate means of governance and - if required - evaluate the ideology necessary to legitimize them. Continuous military conflict with Christian armies

and navies, as well as trade in weaponry facilitated the diffusion of western military technology and know-how.⁴⁷ When the availability of the new weapons technology coupled with mass-production capabilities of cannons and gunpowder and with superior Ottoman logistics, the Ottomans gained a clear firepower and military superiority over their European opponents.

For the Ottomans of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the adoption of European military technology did not constitute a problem. The knowledge of firearms in the 1380s and 1390s, and their more frequent use during the first half of the fifteenth century throughout the Euro-Asian theater of war indicate that guns made a quick career in non-western societies, a fact often overlooked in western narratives of the “gunpowder epic.” The Ottomans were already acquainted with gunpowder and firearms in the second half of the fourteenth century, and they used firearms during the siege of Constantinople between 1394 and 1402. The Sultans employed cannon-makers and artillerymen (*topçus*) to manufacture and operate cannons before 1400. An independent artillery unit was also formed around this time and soon became an important component of the Sultans’ standing army. Again, well before such artillery units were established in the armies of Western Europe.

Firearms in the Ottoman Empire gained tactical significance only in the 1440s, when the Ottomans fought several wars against the Hungarians. These wars were of crucial importance in diffusing European military technology and know-how to the Ottomans, because they forced the Ottomans to meet their opponents’ weaponry and tactics. It was during these wars that the Ottomans became acquainted with the “*Wagenburg*” or “wagon fortress” system, a defensive arrangement of “war wagons” chained together, wheel to wheel, and protected by heavy wooden shielding. Manned with crossbow-men and

hand-gunners, it protected against cavalry assault. Altogether, six hundred wagons, operated almost entirely by Czech mercenaries, were reported to have been employed by the Crusaders in Hunyadi's winter campaign of 1443-44 in the Balkans. An anonymous contemporary Ottoman chronicle indicates that by the end of the conflict the Ottomans knew how to besiege the tabur, that is, the Christian wagon camp, named so in Ottoman sources after the Hungarian *szekértábor* (wagon camp). In the battle of Varna (November 10, 1444), the Ottomans defeated the Crusaders' army and captured the Christian war wagons and weapons.⁴⁸ While the speed with which the Ottomans adapted their way of fighting to the tactic of their Christian adversaries is remarkable, it should not surprise us, for the Wagenburg tactic was not that dissimilar from the Turks' Central Asian fighting traditions. Moreover, the Turks of western Anatolia also used fortified camps in the fourteenth century. In 1313, for instance, a raiding Turkish party, using the carts that transported the booty, erected such a fortified camp against the Byzantines who had intercepted them.⁴⁹

It is possible that the Ottomans, like their Hungarian opponents, also used hand firearms on their wagons. Fifteenth-century Ottoman chroniclers mention *tüfenks* or handguns with regard to events that had taken place in 1421, 1430 and 1442-44. *Tüfenks* also appear in weapons registers in the newly conquered Balkan fortresses around the mid-fifteenth century. These weapons, however, are likely to have been of western origin, as were most of the soldiers who handled them.⁵⁰

As we have seen, the frequency of military conflicts in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean facilitated European-Ottoman military acculturation, which further strengthened the Empire's military capabilities. Besides direct conflicts, there were two other ways, published military treatises and experts, by which the Ottomans were

informed about the latest developments of the art of war in Europe. Although linguistic and cultural barriers significantly limited the extent to which the Ottomans could profit from the thriving European literature on war and military science, some of the best works written in Europe on the subject reached the Istanbul government. It is uncertain whether Roberto Valturio's (1413-1484) *De re militari* reached the Ottomans during the reign of Mehmed II - to whom it was originally sent by Sigismundo Malatesta of Rimini in 1461—, or only in the early sixteenth century. However, the Sultan managed to acquire other works. For instance, a copy of Ser Mariano di Giacomo Vanni's (1381- ca. 1458) *Tractatus* reached him before the siege of Constantinople. Pietro Sardi's *L'Artiglieria* (Venice, 1621), one of the most celebrated books on cannons and siege warfare in seventeenth-century Europe, was translated into Ottoman Turkish and was used by the Sultan's gunners.⁵¹ The only known Islamic treatise of importance on artillery, Captain Ibrahim b. Ahmad's (al-Ra'is Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Andalusi) *Manual de Artilleria*, was written in Tunis between 1630 and 1632 by an Andalusian sailor and master-gunner in the author's native Spanish, with Arabic script. Besides his experience, the author relied heavily on Louis Collado's *Plática Manual de Artillería* (1592, Italian original from 1586), the most famous European treatise on gunnery in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. In 1638, Captain Ibrahim found an able translator, the former interpreter of the Sultan of Morocco and a fellow Morisco, who, with his assistance, rendered the work into Arabic. Later, the translator's son made several copies of the Arabic work, one of which was dedicated and sent to the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-40).⁵²

While these and similar works may have played some role in the diffusion of European military technology to the Ottomans, the knowledge brought to Istanbul by European military experts was of more significance. There were many

ways by which European military experts ended up in the Ottoman Empire. Some - like Master Orban "a Hungarian by nationality," and possibly German by birth, whose cannons played an important role in the capture of Constantinople in 1453 — offered their services to the Sultan hoping for better salary and advancement in their social status. Others, like Jörg of Nürnberg, were captured in wars and raids and when the Ottomans discovered their skills they forced them to use those for the benefit and glory of the Sultans. Jörg was captured in 1460 in Bosnia and subsequently worked for twenty years for the Ottomans. Some military experts and craftsmen arrived to Istanbul through a state-organized mass resettlement policy (*sürgün*).⁵³

The employment of foreign military technicians and artisans was not unique to the Ottomans. It was a well-established practice all over Europe. Venice, the Ottomans' main adversary in the Mediterranean in the fifteenth century, also relied on foreign, mostly German, gunners. This had changed only in the mid-sixteenth century after the establishment of the *scuole de' bombardieri* or training schools for gunners. Spain, Istanbul's main rival in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, also lacked native experts and employed Italian, German and Flemish foundrymen. Employing foreign technicians from countries that were considered to be on the cutting edge of technology was the major means throughout Europe to acquire new technology. The Ottomans were very much part of this transfer of early modern weapons technology.

What made the Ottoman case unique, was that the Empire was ideally placed for technological diffusion. While miners from the mining centers of medieval Serbia, Bosnia, Greece and Asia Minor brought their knowledge of metallurgy into Istanbul, Muslim blacksmiths added their knowledge of metalworking techniques of the Islamic East that produced the world-renowned Damascus blades.

Istanbul, with its Turkish and Persian artisans and blacksmiths, Armenian and Greek miners and sappers, Bosnian, Serbian, Turkish, Italian, German, and later French, English and Dutch gun founders and engineers, as well as with its Venetian, Dalmatian and Greek shipwrights and sailors, proved to be an ideal environment for “technological dialogue.” All this was possible because of the pragmatism of the Ottoman elite and the flexibility of the Ottoman system. Acculturation played a considerable role in strengthening the Empire militarily.⁵⁴ Another feature that set the Ottoman Empire apart from the other Muslim empires, most notably from Mamluk Egypt and Safavid Persia, was that the Ottoman Sultans recognized the importance of the sea in the relatively early phase of their expansion. They not only managed to establish a strong navy by the late fifteenth century, but also knew how to use it for power projection.

Ottoman sea-power and military acculturation

The widespread image of the Turks as nomadic peoples in the generalist literature led to long-standing generalizations regarding the supposed negligence of the sea on the part of the Turkic peoples and their assumed inability to establish navies as means of power projection. However, recent research has shown that the Ottomans were quick to realize the importance of the navy. This recognition proved essential in the rise of the Ottoman Empire as a major regional power in the Euro-Asian sphere. It was especially true after their conquests in the Balkans, which made it imperative to secure the lines of communication between the Empire’s Asian and European parts.

According to a Venetian report, the Ottomans had their own fleet by 1374. Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) conquered the Turkish maritime principalities of Aydin and Mentese, and, relying on the expertise they provided, built his own fleet. It should be recalled that the Turcoman

maritime principalities had profited greatly from the know-how of the discharged Byzantine shipbuilders and sailors who found themselves unemployed in the aftermath of the reduction of the Byzantine navy by Andronicus II Palaiologos (r. 1282-1328) in 1285.⁵⁵ It is not a coincidence that the Turcoman emirates established naval bases at former Byzantine ports.⁵⁶

Ottoman naval activity did not cease after the disastrous Ottoman defeat at the battle of Ankara (1402) and the ensuing short fratricide (1402-13). Their fleet operated from Gallipoli, a former Byzantine maritime base, which the Ottomans conquered in 1354, and considered to be “the key to both East and West, the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea.”⁵⁷ By the 1430s the Ottomans kept a “good hundred fustas” (smaller oared warships, used by all the Mediterranean maritime nations) on the Danube below Belgrade which they used against Hungary.

Under Mehmed II and Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), the Ottomans acquired the common naval technology of the Mediterranean. Despite initial experiments in the late fifteenth century with round-ships, the long war galley remained the most important vessel on Mediterranean waters. Following their Venetian and Spanish Habsburg rivals, the Ottomans also adopted the galley as their principal vessel. In short, by the second half of the fifteenth century the Ottomans had established an effective navy which was the *sine qua non* of all later campaigns against Central Europe, as well as, as it turned out, against Byzantium.

The size of the Ottoman navy was already impressive in the latter part of the fifteenth century. The Ottomans employed some 200 ships, including 64 galleys, during their campaign against Belgrade in 1456,⁵⁸ while in 1470 against Negroponte they mobilized 280 galleys and *fustas*. During their operation against Caffa in 1475, which resulted in the conquest of the Crimea and the subjugation of the Crimean Khanate, the Ottomans employed some 380 boats, of which

120 were galleys.⁵⁹ By this time the Ottomans could operate two large armadas independently. In May 1480, an Ottoman fleet of 104 vessels (including 46 galleys) arrived at Rhodes under the command of Mesih Pasha, a member of the Byzantine Palaiologos family. At around the same time, another Ottoman armada of 28 galleys and 104 light galleys and transport vessels, under the command of Gedik Ahmed Pasha, left the Straits and landed at Otranto on July 28.⁶⁰

In the battles of Lepanto in 1499 and of Modon in 1500, the Ottoman fleets are said to have numbered 260 and 230 ships, respectively. Bayezid II had ships across the Empire (Galata, Gallipoli, Avlonya in the Adriatic, Volissa on the western side of Chios). At the beginning of the sixteenth century, apart from the Ottoman Empire, only Venice and the Knights of Rhodes possessed regular fleets in the Mediterranean. However, one should note that the bulk of the Ottoman navy consisted of lighter galleys that “could not stand in formal battle against the heavier, well-armed *galee sottile* of the Christian West.”⁶¹ Yet, Ottoman naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean helped to reduce piracy and to establish favorable conditions for maritime trade. At the same time, the Ottomans used their naval power to subjugate the Mamluk Kingdom even before they occupied Cairo. Indeed, the existence of a navy facilitated the Ottomans’ conquest of a vast area that extended from Syria through Egypt to Morocco; they were also able to expel the Portuguese from the Red Sea.⁶²

When in 1533 Sultan Süleyman appointed Hayreddin Barbarossa - the famous Barbary corsair and, since 1519, Ottoman governor (*beylerbeyi*) of Algiers —grand admiral (*kapudan pasa*) of the Ottoman navy, the Ottoman navy was considerably strengthened. With Hayreddin Pasha came galleys, experienced captains (*reis*) and seamen.⁶³ The Barbary corsairs remained unimportant sources of expertise

and manpower for the Ottomans. Since some seventy percent of the corsair captains and ship owners in Algiers were of Christian origin (mainly from Italy) as late as the early 1580s, they facilitated the diffusion of naval technology from the Christian Mediterranean to the Ottomans. The Turkish naval vocabulary of Italian and Greek origin, too, mirrors this “cultural unity” of the Mediterranean.⁶⁴

As in the Mediterranean, the Ottomans shared naval technology with their neighbors in the Balkans and the Black Sea littoral. Ottoman *saykas* were similar to the *chaikas* and *cajkas* used by the Balkan peoples and the Cossacks, as well as to the Hungarian *naszáds*. This is hardly surprising, for the shipbuilders came from the common pool of craftsmen. When, in 1521, the Ottomans conquered Belgrade, the center of the medieval Hungarian defense system and an important naval base, they found experienced shipbuilders in the region, who had until then built *naszáds* for the Hungarian kings. Many of them continued their craft in the service of the Ottomans, and according to Ottoman pay registers, the carpenters and caulkers serving in the Ottoman fortresses along the Danube in the 1560s and 1570 were still Christians.⁶⁵

By the sixteenth century the Ottomans learned from their neighbors and rivals how to deploy their navy efficiently enough to secure the maritime lines of communication. Although the radius of power projection was limited due to the limitations of the relatively short-range oared galley, by the late fifteenth century Ottoman naval supremacy was indisputable in the Black Sea and in the eastern Mediterranean, where the Ottomans replaced Venice as the dominant naval power. The Ottomans managed to establish a permanent navy as a policy instrument and as a means of power projection in an age when state-controlled navies were rare occurrences, and when navies of independent city states - supplied

mainly by groups with strong interest in maritime trade - were common both in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. If the Ottomans had become a dominant power in the Euro-Asian sphere by the sixteenth century, it was not least because they learned how to act as a land based and as a naval power at the same time.⁶⁶

Conclusion: Ruling a multi-ethnic empire

In conclusion we can reiterate the importance of flexibility and pragmatism. In the course of their expansion the Ottomans used various methods of conquest.⁶⁷

The army, itself the result of pragmatism and intense acculturation, played an important role not only in military conquests but also in integrating conquered elites and peoples into the Ottoman system. More important, the application of sheer military force was coupled with other means of subjugation. Of these, marriage alliances and various forms of vassalage were especially important. In the early centuries, the Ottomans showed remarkable flexibility regarding land-tenure, revenue collecting and administration. They used various forms of land tenure (prebends, private property, religious endowments) and revenue-collecting (*timar*-system; tax farms) that evolved and changed during time according to the needs of the Empire. They were quick to integrate the conquered lands into their administrative system. Although on the surface Ottoman administration of the various provinces seemed similar and homogenized, administrative practices showed significant variations from province to province and often incorporated local procedures. Such modifications were the results of careful bargaining with local, pre-Ottoman ruling elites. Whereas in the core provinces of the Empire direct Ottoman rule, along with the Ottoman land tenure, taxation, and institutions were successfully introduced, in the frontier provinces, the Istanbul government faced serious limitations. Here, Ottoman rule often meant

condominium and the survival of pre-Ottoman economic and social conditions, legal systems and culture.

In many places the old forms of property ownership were adopted and retained. The Empire accommodated the previous systems of agriculture and mining, as well as forms of taxation and coinage. Similarly, the continuation of pre-Ottoman local communal organizations, and the activity of *knezes* and *primikürs* and other leaders of local administration is well documented from Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. In the frontier provinces of Hungary and Georgia, Istanbul attempted to win over the members of the pre-Ottoman Christian elites. In Eastern Anatolia and in Hungary the Sultan accepted the *condominium*. In these provinces the Ottomans allowed the pre-Ottoman elites to collect taxes and administer justice. Although the local representatives of the central government, Ottoman *kadis* and *sipahis*, were present in the “regular provinces” (provinces where they introduced the *timar* system), when conducting daily business the Porte had to rely on village headmen, “elders” or “notables of the province” (*a’yan-i vilayet*), who were wealthier peasants generally chosen by their fellow-villagers from within the community. In Hungary they were called *bírós* (judge), in the Arab lands *ra’is al-fallahin* (head of the peasants) or *shaykh al-qarya* (elder of the village). In sixteenth-century Syria-Palestine the *ra’is al-fallahin* and the leaders of the Jewish community in Jerusalem (*shaykh al-yahud*), presumably all pre-Ottoman Mamluk institutions, were essential in arranging the day-to-day affairs of the local communities.⁶⁵

As a result of their flexibility and relative religious tolerance (or rather ignorance), the Ottomans usually managed to obtain co-operation from local elites. Where they needed more loyal subjects, the Ottomans did not refrain from Ottomanization and Islamization. One of the most important means of increasing the number of loyal

subjects was the state-initiated and state-administered forced re-settlement (*sürgün*) of entire Anatolian villages to the Balkans.

In the fifteenth century Ottoman rule usually brought economic prosperity to the conquered territories. The Balkan lands, formerly separated by the borders and customs of several smaller kingdoms, were incorporated into an Empire whose economy prospered and offered jobs, social mobility and ample markets for local products. The bewildering multitude of local customs duties, coinage and measurements were considerably reduced and replaced by regularized if not standardized taxes, customs, and monetary systems. Ottoman economic policy aimed at creating the “economy of plenty,” the uninterrupted supply of the capital city and of the army. Economic prosperity, military success, the opportunity of upward social mobility, the protection of the taxpaying *reaya*, and the relative religious tolerance of the Sultans in an age of the expulsion of the Jews and Marranos from Europe fostered voluntary conversion and the immigration of Jews and skilled Christian craftsmen, often labeled by contemporaneous European sources as renegades, into the Empire. Although non-Muslims were inferior, they were protected by law and did not perform military service. In return, they had to pay additional taxes, the most important of which was the *cizye*, which in this regard can be understood as an “exemption tax” from military service.

In the age of nation states, that is in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Ottoman Empire received a very bad press, largely due to its weakness and inefficiency, as well as because of the atrocities its administrators at the local levels committed against its subjects in the nineteenth century, when all the misdoings were used, often misinterpreted and exaggerated by the leaders of the respective national movements and the representatives of the Great Powers, who used such

occasions to further their own political agendas. However, one should differentiate between the various phases of Ottoman history. The early centuries of the Empire were different from that of the centuries of contraction and decay, and the Ottoman government showed notable flexibility in ruling over a heterogeneous population of the Ottoman realms. It was a multi-ethnic dynastic empire, and its records should be evaluated within this framework and should be compared to other dynastic empires of the age, which had similarly heterogeneous populations. Studying the Ottoman Empire from this angle, the historian will realize the strength, vitality, and dynamics of the Empire, all of which can be explained, at least partly, by the remarkable pragmatism and flexibility of the Empire's ruling elite. ■

Notes

¹ On this see, George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Seapower in Global Politics* (London, 1988), p. 44. Modelski maintains that "in the modern world system, world powers have been sea (or ocean) powers, exercising command of the sea" (p. 16.). He suggests "that a world power possesses at least 50 per cent and a great power possesses at least 5 per cent of the "world's military capabilities as reflected through military expenditures" (p. 42.). See also his *World Power Concentration* (Morristown, N.J., 1974). According to such criteria the Ottoman Empire cannot be considered a world power. He does not deny, however, that in the sixteenth century the Sultan's empire was "a leading Mediterranean naval power." (p. 43.)

² See the Venetian ambassadors' opinion in Lucette Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte*. Trans. Arthur Denner (Ithaca, 1987), pp. 24-25.

³ Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot*, pp. 24-29.

⁴ On these concepts see Alexander J. Motyl, *Imperial Ends: The Decay, Collapse, and Revival of Empires*. (New York, 2001), p. 4 and *passim*.

⁵ On Charles V's strategy see, James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge, 2002)

⁶ The division of the Habsburg Empire into a Central European and a Spanish empire, headed respectively by Charles V's brother and son, Emperor Ferdinand I (r. 1558-1564) and Philip II, king of Spain (r. 1556-1598), further divided and diminished the resources available for the fight against the Ottomans. In Philip II's strategy the Ottomans figured only as one of many policy concerns. On Philip II's policy concerns and strategy see Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven and London, 1998)

⁷ R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1979), cited also by Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618-1815*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 6.

⁸ Data regarding the territory and resources of the Ottoman Empire and that of the Habsburgs are summarized in Charles Issawi, "The Ottoman-Habsburg Balance of Forces," in Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar eds., *Süleyman the Second (sic) and his Time* (Istanbul, 1993), pp. 145-151, and Gábor Ágoston and Teréz Oborni, *A tizenhetedik század* (Budapest, 2001), pp. 9-23. On the Ottoman Empire's territories see Donald Edgar Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire from the Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, 1972), pp.134-135.

⁹ The Ottomans' ecological complementarity is emphasized by John McNeill in his "Ecology and Strategy in the Mediterranean: Points of Intersection" in John B. Hattendorf ed., *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean. Past, Present and Future*. London-Portland, Or.: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 376-377.

¹⁰ On this see Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 2005), especially chapters four through six.

¹¹ Kurt Klein, "Die Bevölkerung Österreichs vom Beginn des 16. Bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in Heimold Helczmanovszki ed., *Beträge zur Bevölkerungs-und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs* (Wien, 1973), pp. 47-111; Thomas Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht: Länder*

und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter. (Österreichische Geschichte, 1522-1699 Ed., by Herwig Wolfram) (Vienna, 2003), pp.13-24; Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 25-29.

¹² Inalcik and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 78-83.

¹³ Jean Bérenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1273-1700*. (London, 1994), p. 168. According to Professor Munro "from 1521 to 1540, the Venetian ducat was worth 80d groot Flemish and the Rhenish florin 59d groot Flemish, in the Habsburg Netherland." I thank Professor Munro for the above data. See also his "Money and Coinage: Western Europe", in Jonathan Dewald, et al., eds., *The Dictionary of Early Modern Europe, 1450 - 1789* (New York, 2004), Vol. 4, pp. 174-184. idem, "Money and Coinage in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe," <http://www.eh.net/coursesyllabi/syllabi/munro/MONEYLEC.htm>, accessed on November 1, 2004.

¹⁴ See Inalcik and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History*, pp.77-102. It was only from 1592 onward that the Ottoman treasury experienced continuous deficits. See, Sevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 131-148.

¹⁵ See Gianfrancesco Morosini's report or relazione from 1585 in James C. Davis, *Pursuit of Power: Venetian Ambassadors' reports on Spain, Turkey, and France in the Age of Philip II, 1560-1600* (New York, 1970.), pp. 130-131.

¹⁶ Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot*, p. 28.

¹⁷ This area was under the control of Nogai, the able commander of the Golden Horde who challenged the authority of the Horde's ruler, Toqta Khan (r. 1291-1312), but was defeated in 1299, which led to the displacement of his soldiers. On this and the hypothesis see Colin Heywood, "Filling the Black Hole: The Emergence of the Bithynian Atamanates, in Kemal *et al.* ed., *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization* (Anakra, 2000) vol. 1, pp. 107-115.

¹⁸ Regarding the Turkish (Seljuk and Ottoman) conquest of Asia Minor and the Islamization and Turkification of the Anatolian population see Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor*

and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1971), especially chapters 3 through 5. On the relations between Greeks and Turks in the pre-Ottoman period see Claude Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey: The Seljukid Sultanate of Rum: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century*. Translated and edited by P.M. Holt (London and New York, 2001), especially pp. 123-133.

¹⁹ Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, passim Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey*, pp. 173-233 and Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1481* (Istanbul, 1990), pp. 15-19;

²⁰ See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*. Trans. Joan Hussey (Oxford, 1968), pp. 414-492, quotation from p. 492.

²¹ Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1938). On Wittek see Colin Heywood, "A Subterranean History: Paul Wittek (1894-1978) and the Early Ottoman State," *Die Welt des Islams* 38 (1998), 386-405, reprinted in C. Heywood, *Writing Ottoman History* (Aldershot, 2002), article no. VII.

²² From the latest literature, see, e.g.: Colin Imber, "The Legend of Osman Gazi," in E. Zachariadou ed., *The Ottoman Emirate, 1300-1389*. (Rethymon, Crete, 1993), pp. 67-76; C. Imber, "Ideals and legitimation in early Ottoman history," in Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead eds., *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 140-144; C. Imber, "What does ghazi actually mean?" in «. Baltm and C. Imber eds., *The Balance of Truth: Essays in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Lewis* (Istanbul, 2000), pp. 165-178; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995); Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003), especially pp 45-54.

²³ Nicolas Oikonomides, "The Turks in Europe (1305) and the Serbs in Asia Minor (1313)," in Zachariadou ed., *The Ottoman Emirate*, pp.159-163.

²⁴ See, for example, Anthony Luttrel, "Latin Responses to Ottoman Expansion Before 1389," in Zachariadou ed., *The Ottoman Emirate*, pp. 120-123. For the Turco-Genoese relations see also Kate Fleet, "The Treaty of 1387 between Murad I and the Genoese," *Bulletin of the*

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
(henceforth BSOAS) 56, 1 (1993), 21-23.

²⁵ Sinasi Tekin, "XIV yüzyılda yazılmış gazilik tarikast: Gaziligin yollari adli bir Eski Anadolu Türkçesi metni ve gaza/cihad kavramlari hakkında," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (1989), 139-204. cf also Zachariadou, "The Emirate of Karasi," p. 229.

²⁶ See Feridun Emecen, "Ottoman Policy of Conquest of the Turcoman Principalities of Western Anatolia with Special Reference to Sarukhan Beyligi," in Zachariadou ed., *The Ottoman Emirate*, pp. 35-40; Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "The Emirate of Karasi and that of the Ottomans: Two Rival States," *ibid.*, pp. 225-236; Imber, "Ideals and legitimation," p.

²⁷ For the Ottomans' marriage and reproductive policy see Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford, 1993), pp. 28-56. In 1346, Orhan (r. 1324-1362) married a Byzantine princess (Theodora) and his troops helped his father-in-law, John Kantakouzenos, to acquire the Byzantine throne. By the reign of Murad I (r. 1362-1389), marriage had become a means of subjugation. Some time after 1371, Murad I married the sister of the Bulgarian Tsar Shisman of Tarnovo, who became an Ottoman vassal. In the 1370s, Murad married his son, the future Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402), to the daughter of Yakub, the lord of the neighboring Turkish principality of Germiyan, and through this marriage the Ottomans acquired several Anatolian towns. In 1392, Bayezid I married the sister of Stephen Lazarevic of Serbia (who became a vassal too); in 1394, he married "the daughter of Countess of Salona, a Frankish principality to east of Athens," and half of that principality came with the bride. In 1423, Isfendiyaroglu, the defeated lord of Kastamonu in eastern Anatolia gave Murad II (r. 1421-51) his daughter and became the vassal of the Ottoman Sultan. In 1435, Murad II married Tsaritsa Mara, the daughter of the Serbian Despot George Brankovic. For these and other examples see Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650* (New York, 2002), pp. 88-95.

²⁸ Regarding Evrenos Bey's disputed (and possible Catalan or Greek) origin see, Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 57-59. The other example, Köse Mihal, is more problematic. Most historians accept the Ottoman tradition which claims that Mihal was a newly

converted Greek from Bithynia, and the founder of another famous fifteenth-century Ottoman warrior nobility (Mihalogullari). However, Colin Imber has suggested that Mihal was an "entirely fictitious" figure, invention of the Ottoman chroniclers, an opinion also shared by Clive Foss and Rudi Paul Lindner. See Imber, "The Legend of Osman Gazi," pp. 67-68; Rudi Paul Lindner, "Between Seljuks, Mongols and Ottomans," «içek ed., *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, p. 121. However, the question is more complex, and there are independent sources that suggest that Mihal could have been a real historical figure. On this see Orlin Sabev, "The Legend of Köse Mihal: Additional Notes," *Turcica* 34 (2002), 241-252.

²⁹ Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 57-59; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Analyse de la titulature d'Orhan sur deux inscriptions de Brousse," *Turcica* 34 (2002), 223-240.

³⁰ Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, pp. 97-98.

³¹ Halil Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954), 104-29; Inalcik, "Stefan Dusan'dan Osmanli İmparatorluguna: XV. Asirda Rumeli'de Hıristiyan Sipahiler ve Menseleri," in his, *Osmanli İmparatorlugu: Toplum ve Ekonomi Üzerinde Arşiv Çalışmaları, İncelemeler* (Istanbul, 1993), pp. 67-108.

³² Yavuz Ercan, *Osmanli İmparatorlugunda Bulgarlar ve Voynuklar* (Ankara, 1986); Olga Zirojevic, *Tursko vojno urednje u Srbiji (1459-1683)* (Belgrade, 1974), pp. 162-169.

³³ Halime Dogry, *Osmanli İmparatorlugunda Yaya-Müsellem-Tayci Teskilati: XV. ve XVI. Yüzyilda Sultanönü Sancagi* (Istanbul, 1990), pp. 2-13; For the early Ottoman army in general see Gyula Káldy-Nagy, "The First Centuries of the Ottoman Military Organization," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (henceforth AOH) 31, 2 (1977), 147-183.

³⁴ On this policy see Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," 122-129.

³⁵ This is not to say that European monarchs did not experiment with standing armies. In France, for example, Charles V (r. 1363-80) and later his grandson, Charles VII (r. 1423-61) both established standing armies. However, these attempts brought only limited and temporary success. Based on the provincial nobility, the loyalty of these armies was often questionable: they often lapsed after the death of the king and they had

to be supplemented by mercenaries. See James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 14-15.

³⁶ Although some 15,000 to 20,000 men (nine infantry and ten cavalry regiments) were kept together after the war, it is generally accepted that the Hasburgs established their standing army only under Leopold I (r. 1658-1705). See Jürg Zimmermann, *Militäeverwaltung und Heeresaufbildung in Österreich bis 1806. Handbuch zur deutschen Militärgeschichte, 1648-1939*. 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), vol. 3, pp. 45-51; Philipp Hoyos, "Die kaiserliche Armee 1548-1650," in *Der Dreissigjährige Krieg* (Vienna, 1976), pp. 169-232; John A. Mears, "The Thirty Years' War, the "General Crisis," and the Origins of a Standing Professional Army in the Habsburg Monarchy," *Central European History* 21, 2 (1988), 122-141.

³⁷ Speros Vryonis, "Isidore Glabas and the Turkish Devsirme," *Speculum* 31, 3 (1956), 433-443. From the latest literature see Vassilis Demetriades, "Some Thoughts on the Origins of the Dev'irme," in Zachariadou ed., *The Ottoman Emirate*, pp. 23-31, and the literature cited there. Quotation from p. 29.

³⁸ Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven and London, 1981)

³⁹ On which see Paul Wittek, "Devsirme and Shari'a," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 17, 2 (1955), 271-278.

⁴⁰ For this hypothesis see Demetriades, "Some Thoughts," pp. 29-31.

⁴¹ *A janicsàrok törvényei*. Trans. Pál Fodor (Budapest, 1989), pp. 6-7, Cf., also Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, pp.134-142; Mücteba ilgürel, "Yeniçeri" *Islam Ansiklopedisi* vol. 13, pp. 385-395.

⁴² Vryonis, "Isidore Glabas," 439.

⁴³ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare* (New Brunswick and New Jersey, 1999), p. 35.

⁴⁴ Inalcik and Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 88-89.

⁴⁵ Quotations are from Kenneth Meyer Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA, 1991), p. 100. (For its critique see, Rhoads Murphey's review in *Archivum Ottomanicum* 13 (1993-94), 371-383); E.L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments,*

Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia (Cambridge, 1987), p. 181; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, 1989).

⁴⁶ For a detailed treatment of the followings and the critique of Eurocentric and Orientalist views regarding Ottoman military capabilities and technology see Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*; and idem, "Early Modern Ottoman and European Gunpowder Technology" in Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Kostas Chatzis and Efthymios Nicolaidis eds., *Multicultural Science in the Ottoman Empire* (Turnhout, 2003), 13-27.

⁴⁷ Gábor Ágoston, "Merces Prohibitae: The Anglo-Ottoman Trade in War Materials and the Dependence Theory" in *Oriente Moderno* [Kate Fleet ed., *The Ottomans and the Sea*] 20 (81) n.s. 1 (2001), 177-192.

⁴⁸ Gábor Ágoston "Ottoman Artillery and European Military Technology in the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *AOH* 47 (1994), 15-48, especially 19-26; idem, "Behind the Turkish War Machine: Gunpowder, Technology and Munitions Industry in the Ottoman Empire, 1450-1700." Brett D. Steele and Tamera Dorland eds., *The Heirs of Archimedes: Science and the Art of War through the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass, 2005), pp. 101-133, especially pp. 103-106.

⁴⁹ Oikonomides, "The Turks in Europe," p. 164.

⁵⁰ By the middle of the sixteenth century Muslim arquebusiers (tüfençis) outnumbered their Christian colleagues in the Balkan and Hungarian fortresses. See Ágoston "Ottoman Artillery," 27.

⁵¹ Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, pp. 43, 127; Franz Babinger, "An Italian Map of the Balkans, Presumably Owned by Mehmed II," *Imago Mundi* 8, (1951), 8-15.

⁵² David James, "The Manual de Artilleria of al-Rai's Ibrahim Ahmad al-Andalisi with Particular Reference to Its Illustrations and Their Sources," *BSOAS* 41, 2 (1978), 237-257; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, *Büyük Cihandan Frenk Fodulluguna* (Istanbul, 1996), pp. 118-123.

⁵³ Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, pp.43-46.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 46-48.

⁵⁵ After the Byzantines dismantled the navy, the crews were employed by the Turks, Venetians and Genoese or joined the Aegean pirates. See,

Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A study in diplomatic and cultural relations* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 215-216; Mark C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204-1453* (Philadelphia, 1992), pp. 68-69.

⁵⁶ Halil Inalcik, "The Rise of the Turcoman Maritime Principalities in Anatolia, Byzantium, and the Crusades," in idem, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society*. Bloomington: Ind., 1993), p. 311.

⁵⁷ Kate Fleet, "Early Turkish Naval Activities," *Oriente Moderno* [The Ottomans and the Sea, Edited by Kate Fleet] XX (LXXXI) n.s. 1. (2001), p. 135.

⁵⁸ Gábor Ágoston, "La strada che conduceva a Nandorfehèrvàr (Belgrade): L'Ungheria, l'espansione ottomana nei Balcani e la vittoria di Nandorfehèrvàr" in Zsolt Visy ed., *La campana di mezzogiorno. Saggi per il Quinto Centenario della bolla papale* (Budapest, 2000), p. 239.

⁵⁹ Colin Heywood, "Notes on the Production of Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Cannon," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Islam and Science, Islamabad, 1-3 Muharrem, 1401 A.H. (10-12 November, 1980.)* Islamabad, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Science and Technology, 1981. 58-61. (reprinted in his *Writing Ottoman History*), p. 8.

⁶⁰ Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1481*, pp. 248-250.

⁶¹ John H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 169-170, 180.

⁶² Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (New York, 1994)

⁶³ On Hayreddin Pasha see Aldo Gallotta, "Khay al-Din Pasha, Barbarossa," *El* vol., IV, p. 1155.

⁶⁴ On this see Henry and René Kahane, and Andreas Tietze, *The Lingua Franca in the Levant: Turkish Nautical Terms of Italian and Greek Origin* (Urbana, 1958. Reprinted: Istanbul, 1988), *passim* and p. 20, regarding the origin of ship owners in Algiers.

⁶⁵ Zirojević, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-145. 202.

⁶⁶ On the importance and limitations of the Ottoman navy see Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*; John Francis Guilmartin, *Gunpowder*

and Galleys. Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge, 1974, revised edition Annapolis, MD, 2003); Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago, 1978)

⁶⁷ On this see, Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest,"

⁶⁸ On this see my "A Flexible Empire: Authority and its limits on the Ottoman Frontiers" *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9, 1-2 (Summer 2003), 15-31, and the literature cited here.

Chronology

1301 Victory of Osman over the Byzantines at Baphaeon

1326 Capture of Prusa/Bursa, which becomes Ottoman Capital

1331 Capture of Nicaea/Iznik

1337 Capture of Nicomedia/Izmit

1345/46 First Ottoman raid in Europe, as allies of the Byzantine emperor John VI Kantakouzenos who gave in return his daughter Theodora in marriage to Orhan.

1354 Kallipoli/Gallipoli captured by Orhan's eldest son, Süleyman. Beginning of Ottoman advance into Thrace.

1357 Death of Süleyman.

1369 Capture of Adrianople/Edirne, which becomes Ottoman Capital.

1371 Ottoman victory at Chirmen (on the Maritsa river) over the Serbs. Conquest of Macedonia and neighbouring areas: Romaic Empire becomes tributary to Ottomans.

1374 First reference of an Ottoman fleet, in a Venetian source

1385 Capture of Sofia

1389 First battle of Kosovo; the Ottomans defeat a Balkan coalition led by the Serbian prince Lazar; Serbia becomes tributary of the Ottoman state

1390 Capture of Philadelphia, last Romaic city in Asia Minor

- 1393 Capture of Trnovo, Bulgarian Capital
- 1394-1402 Siege of Constantinople
- 1396 Battle of Nicopolis/Nikopol; Bayezid I defeats a crusader army lead by Sigismund of Luxemburg, king of Hungary
- 1397-1399 Conquest of larger part of Asia Minor
- 1403 Battle of Ankara; Bayezid I defeated and taken prisoner by Timur Lenk; reestablishment of several Turkish principalities in Asia Minor; Romaic Empire ceases being tributary and recovers substantial territory.
- 1402-1413 Süleyman, Isa, Musa and Mehmet in war for throne; Mehmet I triumphs supported by the learned Emperor Manuel II (1391-1421) and by Serb princes.
- 1419-1420 Campaign on Lower Danube, Wallachia becomes tributary
- 1424 Romaic Empire once again becomes tributary to Ottomans
- 1430 Final capture of Thessaloniki/Salonika
- 1439 Attempt to annex Serbia
- 1443 Hungarian campaign into the Balkans leads to retreat from Serbia; successful Albanian rebellion lead by Skanderbeg (George Kastrioti)
- 1444 New Hungarian campaign into the Balkans, defeated at Varna
- 1448 Second battle of Kosovo; Ottoman victory over the Hungarian army led by János Hunyadi
- 1453 Capture of Constantinople/Istanbul ends Romaic Empire
- 1456 Ottoman defeat before Belgrade, against János Hunyadi; Moldavia becomes tributary
- 1459 Final annexation of Serbia
- 1460 Conquest of Duchy of Athens and of Romaic Despotate of Mistra
- 1461 Capture of Trebizond ends last Romaic state
- 1463 Conquest of most of Bosnia
- 1463-1479 Ottoman-Venetian war
- 1468 Annexation of Karaman (central Asia Minor)

- 1470 Capture of Negroponte (Chalkis) in Euboea from Venetians
- 1473 Ottoman victory over Uzun Hasan of the Akkoyunlu Turcomans; consolidation of Ottoman rule in Anatolia
- 1475 Battle of Vaslai against Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia (1457-1504) ends inconclusively. Beginning of campaign against Caffa; Ottomans capture Caffa and Tana/Azov; the Crimean Khan becomes the Sultan's vassal
- 1480 Control of most of Albania regained; assault on Otranto, Italy
- 1483 Conquest of Herzegovina
- 1484 Conquest of Chilia/Kilia and Cetatea Alba/Akkerman deprive Moldavia of access to Black Sea
- 1499-1503 Second Ottoman-Venetian War. Capture of Several Venetian strongholds in Greece and Albania including Lepanto (Nafpaktos)
- 1499-1540 Gradual conquest of Like and Dalmatia
- 1514 Battle of «ald?ran; Major victory over Safavid Persia; eastern Anatolia incorporated into the Empire
- 1516 Battle of Mardj Dabik; major Ottoman victory over the Mamluks. Conquest of Syria
- 1517 Conquest of Egypt and fall of Mamluk Dynasty; Sherif of Mecca submits to Sultan
- 1521 Capture of Belgrade
- 1522 Capture of Rhodes, end of the rule of Knights of St. John in Dodecanese
- 1526 Battle of Mohács; major victory over Hungary
- 1529 Beginning of Ottoman-Habsburg conflict in Hungary; first failed Ottoman siege of Vienna
- 1533 Hayreddin Barbarossa, governor of Algiers, appointed to command Ottoman navy
- 1537 First siege of Corfu/Kerkyra fails
- 1538 Successful Ottoman campaign in Moldavia, annexation of Bender

- 1541 Annexation of central Hungary (Buda province); Transylvania becomes a tributary principality
- 1551-1582 Annexation of Banat
- 1555 Ottoman-Persian peace at Amasya stabilizes the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire
- 1565 Siege at Malta defeated by Knights of St. John
- 1566 Annexation of Chios, taken from Genoese
- 1570-1571 Conquest of Cyprus from Venetians
- 1571 Defeat at hands of Holy League (Papacy, Spain, Venice) at Lepanto (Nafpaktos)
- 1578-1590 Exhaustive war with Persia. Conquest of several Persian provinces. Severe financial crisis and inflation
- 1593-1606 Long Hungarian war with the Holy League led by Austrian Habsburgs
- 1595 Rebellion of Romanian principalities
- 1603-1612 Renewed war with Persia ends in first major loss, that of conquests made in war of 1578-1590.
- 1606 Peace of Zsitvatorok with the Austrian Habsburgs allows retention of most of Hungary and Romanian Principalities
- 1620-1634 War with Poland-Lithuania for the control over Moldavia
- 1623-1639 War with Persia; after initial defeats against Abbas I, the expeditions of Murad IV and the peace treaty of Kasr-?irin (1639) restored the frontiers of 1555 and 1612
- 1645-1669 Exhausting war with Venice, conquest of Crete
- 1656 The Albanian Kôprülü Mehmed pasha is nominated grand vizier, and obtains full powers to govern the empire
- 1661 Kôprülüzade Fazil Ahmed pasha succeeds to his father as grand vizier (1661-1676)
- 1669 Siege of Candia ends with withdrawal of Venetian and European forces from Crete.
- 1672-1676 War with Poland-Lithuania ends in annexation of Podolia.

Maximum Ottoman expansion in Europe

1683 Second Ottoman siege of Vienna; the Ottomans are defeated by an Austrian-Polish army

1684 Formation of the Holy League (Austria, Poland-Lithuania, Venice, Papal State, and from 1686 Russia)

1687 Morosini, after capture of Morea, attacks and temporarily occupies Athens

1688 Austrian Habsburgs occupy Serbia, with Serbs revolting in their support

1690 Ottoman reconquest of Serbia and Belgrade from Austrians. First Great Serbian migration from Kosovo and Southern Serbia to Slavonia and Hungary

1697 Ottoman defeat in the battle of Zenta against the Austrians

1699 Peace of Karlowitz. Hungary, Slovenia and Transylvania ceded to Austrian Habsburgs but Serbia retained. Morea, Lika and lesser Dalmatian territories ceded to Venice. Podolia ceded to Poland. Azov ceded to Russia

1711 Victory in war against Russia. Recovery of Azov

1714-1718 War against Venice; recovery of Morea

1716 Second siege of Corfu/Kerkyra fails

1716-1718 War with Austria; Ottoman defeat sealed by the peace treaty of Passarowitz. Loss of Banat, Northern Serbia and western Wallachia

1730-1736 War with Persia

1736-1739 War with Russia and Austria ended through the peace treaty of Belgrade. Recovery of northern Serbia, Wallachia

1743-1746 War with Persia

1768-1774 Ottoman-Russian war; the Russian armies occupy Crimea, Moldavia and Wallachia; a Russian fleet defeats the Ottomans in the Aegean and fosters rebellions in Greece and in the Levant

1774 Peace treaty of Küçük Kajnarca; Russia reinforces its positions on the northern shores of the Black Sea and becomes protector of the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire

1783 Russian annexation of the Crimea

1787-1792 War with Russia and Austria; severe Ottoman defeats; Northwest Moldavia ceded to Austria. The French revolution and the Polish problem save the Ottoman Empire from further territorial losses

1798-1799 French campaign to Egypt and Syria

1791 Peace of Zistowy with Austria

1792 Peace of Jassy with Russia

1804 First Serbian revolt under Petrovic Karadjorde

1807 Revolt of Janissaries and deposition of Sultan Selim III

1814 Second Serbian revolt under Milos Obrenovic

1821 Greek war of independence begins

1826 Suppression of the Janissaries

1827 Defeat by British, French and Russian fleets at Navarino

1828 Russo-Turkish war

1829 Treaty of Andrianople: Russia takes control of Danube Delta

1830 Treaty of London: Greek Independence

The British Empire

Geoffrey Treasure

"*England without an Empire. Can you conceive it?*"
(Joseph Chamberlain)

Shades of Gibbon! What could he have made of this great theme; *Decline and Fall* - or, to fit my brief; *Rise and Decline*. How would a modern Gibbon, giving half a lifetime to it, have dealt with the British Empire? So complex, so significant in the history of the world ? so tremendous in range and aspiration, so elusive, defying definition, embodying so many certainties, beset by so many doubts, so much loved, so much resented, growing unevenly, as much by chance, by opportunism, as by policy, to a quarter of the world's land surface, a fifth of its population. Even to start to take its measure would take a week, not an hour. Twice since I was honored by being asked to talk about this vast subject I have scrambled my notes to start again. Daunted of course. Humbled? I should hope so. My special studies have been in the history of Europe, in France in particular, and the seventeenth century. Does that suggest at least the possibility of an objective view? Family tradition and sentiment suggest otherwise, drawing me specially to India: tales of great uncles, my great aunt's medal, the coveted *Kaiser-i-hind*, for fifty years service to the education of Hindu girls: it is on my desk as I write. Can I then be objective? I will try ? at least to provoke some thoughts, to prompt questions. And from where we are at Georgetown (George II, I fancy), and so near the living heart of a successor empire, an informal empire indeed, but huge in influence and military might, I hope that the thoughts will have resonance ? and the questions too.

First, like one-time settlers here, to lay down a foundation, make a clearance, draw some lines. Let us take a 400-year span. In 1588 England's defeat of the Spanish Armada advertised the potential of sea power, beside the danger of its not being maintained: by then the first Virginian settlement had failed. A hundred years later, the Glorious Revolution and accession of Dutch William III introduced an era of Continental wars and, by extension from the strategic and commercial interests of the main contending powers, an ever-widening theatre of operations. By then English settlement in North America had grown from the original nuclei, the Chesapeake colonies of Virginia and Maryland, and the New England settlements; New York had been taken from the Dutch, Pennsylvania had been founded, and settlers had moved into what would be North and South Carolina. In the West Indies Barbados, the Leeward Islands and Jamaica produced wealth from plantations and slave labor. Long before William Pitt¹ conceived the policy of "winning Canada on the banks of the Elbe" war against France was bringing home to British statesmen the opportunities afforded by the aggressive use of naval power. In 1704, it had already, if accidentally, yielded Gibraltar. Blockading French invasion fleets before Admiral Hawke's decisive victory at Quiberon Bay (1759), under Saunders supporting the amphibious operation that was to lead to the fall of Quebec, and under Watson, patrolling during Clive's operations in Bengal, the navy was the prime agent in the expansion of empire. The Plassey effect, as it might be called, the spectacular increase in the East India Company's stake in India, with subsequent territorial gains and deals, brought new urgency to questions of responsibility and control. It was the birth, indeed, of the great Imperial Question, the great *why* (as Carlyle might have put it), and *how?* - and *for whom?* From La Hogue² to Trafalgar the navy would be at the heart of argument about empire ? providing its opportunities and

its essential support. (It is only in that light that one can realize the terrible shock of the sinking of the battleships Prince of Wales and Repulse, in December 1941, and subsequent loss of Singapore. (To one small boy, striking the great battleships off his wall chart of naval silhouettes, it seemed that one more certainty had gone from life.)

The map of the world on classroom wall still showed plenty of red. It was still the assumption, something one hardly needed to be taught, that the empire stretched across the world - and that, one knew, was a good thing. Britain - and the world - were the better for it. How very different the map - and the assumptions ? when, towards the other end of our 400 years, in 1982, the British mounted an amphibious operation to recover the Falkland Islands. Did "Rule Britannia" actually mean something once more? Some were proud, some uneasy, some saw the defense of right; others an irresponsible gamble. It was a bizarre footnote to the volume of Empire, small in scope, rich in symbolism. Someone might choose the cession of Hong Kong as a footnote to Empire. But that was a planned hand-over, fulfillment of a pledge. The recapture of the Falklands was a venture, a hearkening back to glory days. Sir Garnet Wolseley,³ Lord Roberts of Kandahar,⁴ Kipling's *Soldiers Three*⁵ ? they would have understood what the task force was about. There was considerable military and political risk, a sober, brave and principled taking of moral responsibility. It did not mean greatness. But in strong leadership and punitive action it reminded some of what it had meant to be a great power.

So much for the frame. Now for the picture. I invite you to look at some scenes and individuals, some snapshots as it were. Young Robert Clive,⁶ tearaway lad from Shropshire, writer (a glorified clerk), depressed in the sweltering heat of the Madras office of the East India Company. There is a pistol in front of him: is life worth living? And we may ponder: what if the future victor of

Arcot and Plassey, chief founder of the *Raj*, had succeeded in killing himself? Next, a dark night on the Saint Lawrence River, assault boats with muffled oars. Wolfe⁷ leads British troops, Highlanders foremost, up the steep heights of Abraham. And if a sentry had heard them? If that risky attack had failed? If Wolfe had died, not at Quebec in glory, but at home in ridicule and disgrace? How different, in either case, the history of Empire, perhaps the world, would have been.

Next: to another imperial scene - or post-imperial. A paunchy former emperor paces up and down on the little island of Saint Helena, a conveniently remote British colony for his safe exile. He had once ruled most of Europe. Did he now ponder the downfall of his kind of empire, French, held by the power of the sword - lost by that same power, and by sea-power and commercial vitality?

From there take a kangaroo leap. Charles Sturt, weak with scurvy, stands by Cooper's Creek in the heart of Australia. The spirit of adventure has driven that son of Harrow to cross deserts, dig caves for shelter from the torrid sun. Huge spaces are now opening to enterprising Britons to explore and farm. Some will be convicts or their descendants. But now men like Trollope,⁸ quintessential Englishman, will be sending their sons here: gentlemen squatters, younger sons in the main, seeking the land they could not have at home. (One could write a story of Empire from the careers of such public schoolboys, venturing, exploring, soldiering ? as you can read it in the memorials round school chapels. You will find them everywhere. It was James Bruce,⁹ another Harrovian, who had been among the first to venture far into Central Africa in the ever-tantalizing pursuit of the source of the Nile). Bruce was a Scotsman, which prompts another reflection: on the value of the Act of Union of 1707, which enlarged the nation, and the field of opportunity open to that hardy race. To Canada went many of them, the poorest, some,

alas, victims of clearances by their own lairds.

So to another scene; the Rocky mountains and navvies blasting their way through to the west coast, to meet those coming the other way and complete the Canadian Pacific Railway: vast opportunities open up for farmers, diggers and speculators from the old world. Without that railway the Confederation of Canada, in 1867, would not have happened, since British Columbia made its building a condition of joining. Now there we should recall the visit of Lord Durham,¹⁰ "Radical Jack", in 1838. His report anticipated the eventual grant of responsible self-government. It began the process that culminated in Dominion status for the colonies of British settlement. The British had learned, you may say, from their earlier American experience. Yes - and I would add that Durham stood in the tradition of Chatham and Burke,¹¹ the generous and imaginative concept of Imperial authority which would not always prevail ? but remain a vital element to the end.

Now back to India, and to fiction, to borrow a scene from Kipling's great story, *The Bridge Builders*. The managing engineer watches the swollen river overcome his audacious, almost completed construction. Nineteenth century science and organisation against Mother Ganges, nature Indian-fashion, and superstition. Much of the Imperial ethos, and endeavor, is in that story; also the mystery, that which the British, for all their expertise, for all their keenness, could never quite get hold of. Was it that which gave many of them the sense that they were temporary-Guardians, in Plato's sense, not masters; there but for a season: "there to protect the poor" said Queen Victoria. A different note, perhaps more realistic, is struck by Lord Bryce,¹² "Whatever is done for the people, nothing is done by the people. India is a gigantic machine for

managing the entire public business of the inhabitants... without their leave and without their help.”

For some the spirit of mastery was pre-eminent. It was roused, most notably, by Africa, with its contrasts between primitive peoples and potential wealth, and it was sharpened by international rivalry for desirable lands - the “Scramble for Africa.” So it belongs essentially to the late phase in the Imperial story, which some, looking to define Imperial attributes and attitudes, take back to the years after the Indian Mutiny, but which I intend to center on the celebration of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1897. It was around then that most people subscribed, for the first time, to the idea of Empire as a pre-eminent presence in British life - the people’s Empire so brilliantly celebrated in the Jubilee procession. It was then too that intellectuals and politicians confronted, with a sense of urgency, the immense untidiness and disjointedness of an empire where every part required different treatment, and yet, through greater unity, could be a greater instrument for good - and also, some would add, without seeing any inconsistency - of profit to the mother country. One such man was Cecil Rhodes.¹³ So see the young Rhodes standing above Deep Pit and its ant-swarms of black laborers, planning his next coup in the diamond fields of the Transvaal that were to create an early fortune, enable him to go to Oxford - where he would produce a handful of diamonds to impress fellow undergraduates - and plan for a greater empire.

“Rhodes, Railroads and Imperial Expansion” was the device on the first passenger train on the Kenya-Uganda railway. His Chartered Company was for dividends rather than high political or philanthropic aims. Here was no nonsense muscular, rough, self-sufficient settlement: imperialism reduced to dividends. (And where it all started, you might say, with the Levant, East India and Gambia companies. But then you should recall Puritan New England and the very different spirit of the early colonies

of religious conviction.) Now you will find the crudest of contrasts. "I wad hae ye know, Mr Rhodes, that I dina come here for posterity" said the Scotsman. At home there was righteous disapproval. "Why the whole thing is tainted with the spirit of the taint of gold," said Morley.¹⁴ And later, J.A. Hobson¹⁵ would see the whole Imperial movement as a British sales device, a product of the last phase of the Industrial Revolution when, after railway building, there was surplus capital: "Great Britain is a very small island. Great Britain's position depends on her trade and if we do not open up the dependencies of the world at present devoted to barbarism we shall shut out the world's trade...Your trade is the world, your life is the world, the expansion and retention of the world."

Oxford, you will know, would benefit from the adventurer's testamentary munificence - and the countries which sent it Rhodes scholars. Did you know that an earlier will had provided for a secret society whose role was to promote the ideals of the British Empire throughout the world- Compared to that his vision of a British Africa, at least a British spinal cord in the shape of the Cape to Cairo railway, was comparatively modest.

Another "spinal cord" - it was Bismarck's phrase - was the Suez Canal. Here see Lionel Rothschild, invited to provide the loan to buy a controlling share in the Canal which transformed communications with India. So what was the security? "The British government." "You may have it."¹⁶ It was, of all the improvisations and coups that enlarged the Empire, the most dramatic. It also meant that Egypt and the Sudan would become central British concerns, would lead to further expansion, and cost. And Egypt, under Lord Cromer,¹⁷ would be the theatre for a remarkable, if self-righteously despotic, experiment in trustee rule. Where nationalist aspiration met religious fanaticism there was always a threat. The Kalifa's fierce warriors would not, in the end, prevail against the

disciplined British riflemen, and the Maxim gun. At Omdurman, where Churchill charged with the Lancers, there were 48 British casualties, 11, 000 dervishes.¹⁸ The formidably efficient Kitchener¹⁹ became an emblem of Imperial strength. Hilaire Belloc put it pithily, "Whatever happens we have got / the Maxim gun - and they have not." Afghanistan was another matter. They had mountains.

So to an earlier scene, 1842, a lone man, Surgeon Brydon, slumped over his horse, riding towards a frontier fort, the Union Jack flying above Jalalabad: sole survivor of the greatest disaster to Imperial arms: the enforced retreat of an ill-judged occupation force,²⁰ an Afghan massacre, the loss of a whole expeditionary force. Along with Rorke's Drift,²¹ it would be the most celebrated of all the paintings of Lady Butler, general's wife, specialist in military epics and in the triumph of resolute men over impossible odds that did so much to stiffen the sinews of Empire. "Give me back my legions", the Governor-general Auckland might have said - and of course, he would know his Augustan source.²² Educated men might not always see themselves as heirs to Rome - some Imperialists did - but they were steeped in its stories, susceptible to its values. They would know Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, with their tales of heroism and republican virtue. They could readily identify with Cicero denouncing the misgovernment of Verres, the plotting of Catiline. They would understand Rome's concern for the security of frontiers. None was more insecure than the North-West frontier of India.

To the chronic anxiety about what the French were up to generally, so long a part of the national psyche, there was added, in the later nineteenth century years, a better founded suspicion of Russian intentions in Asia. Imperialism, even in its outwardly most confident phase, was not proof against nightmares. The strident notes that would sound so embarrassing to later generation suggest the underlying anxieties. Most no doubt, slept easily, confident

in the strength of the British army. If so, they were rudely wakened by its experience in the Boer War, a critical moment in the Empire story. Before, it had been generally assumed that, if there was a reverse, there would be swift, deadly reprisal. Isandlwana, "the washing of spears" was followed by Ulundi, and the subjugation of the fearsome Zulus.²³ But the Boer War saw a large part of the British army checked, even humiliated, by men fighting for their land, in irregular formations, but with accurate rifles. European powers took note. The British took steps to reform the army. An age of uncertainty had set in. Uncertainty too for some of their educated native subjects.

One such, a young lawyer, Indian but living in South Africa, served in the Boer War as a medical orderly. He later recalled lifting a dying subaltern on to a stretcher. One of history's ironies - for it was Lieutenant Roberts, son of "Bobs",²⁴ archetypal soldier of Empire, forty years in India, hero of the great mountain march from Kabul to Kandahar which had saved his force and secured the North-West frontier from the lawless tribes. He too wrote his memoirs: that they ran to forty editions suggests the hunger of the British reader for stories of empire. That reader now started young and learned his history from the gripping yarns of G.A. Henty,²⁵ and his compelling formula: a little history as frame for a series of adventures featuring a hero who made good, and could, of course, be he young Carthaginian or British Midshipman, be relied on to display grit, the British schoolboy's sense of fair play, and a truly imperial capacity for coming out on top. Imperial history, indeed interest in history, came to one such reader through *Under Drake's Flag*, *The Tiger of Mysore*, *With Clive in India* among numerous others - and he now has the chance to express his debt. Henty's books - one might add, for older readers, the novels of Maud Diver²⁶ - surely did as much as those of Kipling to influence the mind of Imperialist Britain.

The young Gandhi²⁷ took to politics by way of the grievances of the Indian community. He then believed that "British rule was on the whole beneficial to the ruled." The older man would lead a different kind of operation, the great salt march and a new kind of resistance, *satyagraha*, truth force. Still Anglophile - "I should love to be an equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows" - his favorite poem was "*If*". Indeed he was wonderfully inconsistent: ascetic and gentle; also devious and sly. Churchill's "mad fakir" could appear to exasperated officials to be a hypocrite - in the Second World War even a traitor. Even to those most sympathetic he was an enigma. "The unknown looked at us through his eyes" wrote Nehru.²⁸ One viceroy at least recognized his spirituality. Grotesquely misrepresented in Attenborough's film *Gandhi*, the real Lord Halifax (then Irwin), devout Anglo-Catholic, had long talks with him about religion. It is not wholly paradoxical to see *Gandhi* as a fine flower of the *Raj*, one of whom it could be proud; one who helped ensure that the best of British rule would survive. That India is today a democracy under the rule of law may be not a little due to the fact that there were always some who could give the *Raj* a human face, so that it did not rest solely on material achievement - but had qualities which, even by a *Gandhi*, could be loved and emulated.

In a longer paper I could present evidence from every part of Empire to support that view. Suffice it that Indian historians, a generation or two removed from the nationalist fervor of mid-century, can now accept it. They look back to a general peace following the disintegration of the Mogul empire, and to a firm, if overbearing, rule; to the rule of law and honest administration; to engineering works, sometimes spectacular, always useful; not least, to a deliberate process of preparation for self-government. The pity was that such benefits were obscured, in the latter

years of the *Raj*, by hardening social attitudes.

That takes us to one of those scenes of horror that so unfortunately darkened the idea of the Indian for a susceptible British public: women and children massacred by mutinous sepoy at Cawnpore.²⁹ And here see the colonel's wife, post-Mutiny, tight-lipped, alongside the parade of British and Indian troops and the guns that are to blow mutineers to bits - a fitting death, men thought, and a lesson in loyalty. For it was the disloyalty that rankled and puzzled that stern, upright generation, some Bible Christians, like the Lawrence brothers;³⁰ staunch for firm and honest government. This is John to a gathering of Sikhs, "If you have any grievance, tell me and I will try to remove it...If you excite rebellion, as I live, I shall surely punish." The very cadences are those of an Old Testament prophet. Many decades on E.M. Forster³¹ would record, in a way that can be verified by much experience, the separateness of bungalow lines and military cantonments, the mutual unease, and suspicion, between Indians and the British community. It was easiest within the Indian army with its bonds of discipline and mutual respect between mostly British officers and native soldiers.

By the wartime years that are Paul Scott's subject in the *Raj Quartet*,³² with an enemy at the northern gate and civil disobedience erupting periodically in acts of terrorism, the sense of isolation in the British communities could be intense. The "Guardians" have become an occupying power. The end is nigh. Was it all just to come down to policing- One is struck still by the competence, the effort to be fair, to avoid bloodshed. That is why Amritsar, in 1919, had been so appalling, the incident that entered the political consciousness of Indians, like the Boston massacre for Americans, Peterloo for Britons, Sharpeville for South Africans. Every nation seems to have one. Not that I wish to reduce the enormity. Volley after volley was fired by General Dyer's Gurkhas (they usually had better work to

do) when only a few might have been enough to dispel a threatening crowd. After weeks of serious disorder calm was indeed imposed, but at a price; some 400 mostly unarmed men, women and children, and a legend of brutality that served Congress just as well as if it had been generally true. Nationalists were helped of course by the widespread support, at home, for General Dyer and by apologists claiming that civil war was averted. It may be fruitless to speculate why a senior officer should so have lost his nerve - or judgment. Comparable examples in Ireland remind us that it is hard for those outside the situation to gauge the stress engendered out of weeks of confrontation with hostile mobs. It is possible, however, that a previous outrage inflicted on an elderly missionary lady had given temper an ugly edge. The British tended to see something especially foul in any assault by a native on a white woman. Chivalry, tinged with racism - it is a theme picked up by both Forster and Scott. It may be helpful as corrective to read Kipling's witty portraits of white women.³³ Mrs. Hawksbee could look after herself. The *memsahib* could be formidably tough. See the memorable Miss Martin - Kipling's "William the Conqueror" - dealing imperturbably with the victims of famine: "Twice she had been nearly drowned while fording a river on horseback; once run away with on a camel; had seen justice administered, with long sticks, in the open under trees; could speak Urdu, even rough Punjabi, had been through a bad cholera year, seeing sights unfit to be told...she who never set foot on ground if a horse were within hail...who could act in amateur theatricals, play on the banjo, rule eight servants and two horses...and look men slowly and deliberately between the eyes."

I thought it was about time that the women got a look in. Daughters of the *Raj* have not always had a good press. "It was the women who lost us India" old India hands would sometimes say. Unfair on all counts - for some "broke

bounds” to gain a sympathetic understanding of the people around them, many evoked deep loyalty in their servants, and most were anyway only conforming to the standards of the masculine world of Empire. Consider the conditions, the loneliness of many, the homesickness, the pain of separation from children, and those forlorn children of the *Raj* (Kipling was one) sent home, in early childhood, to foster parents, then to boarding schools. Drawing from the cult of manliness characteristic of the public schools - and contributing to it - the Empire expected duty before all. The servants must see no trembling or faltering. And mainly this was a man’s empire.

Women played a small part in the lives - the sagas, of the two familiar characters I must now remind you of: for Mrs. Livingstone, a subordinate, childbearing role. And there was no Mrs. Gordon. If you think me too partial to familiar scenes, I plead that, like others, they are here to make a point. John Rowlands,³⁴ born in a Welsh workhouse, adopted son of Mr. Stanley of New Orleans, cotton broker, fought on both sides of the Civil War, then roamed round the world for the *New York Herald*. His scoop was to find Dr. Livingstone. But he controlled his feelings, as not “to detract from the dignity of a white man” when he saw the old frail, indomitable explorer missionary. So came the immortal “Dr. Livingstone, I presume.” Love of God and his fellow men had drawn the self-taught lad from Lanarkshire to train in medicine, then to join the Church Missionary Society, to take the gospel, and medicine to Africans, tackle Arab slave traders, and seek the source of Nile and Congo. In that he failed and it would be left to Stanley and sensational journeys past every kind of African peril: cataracts, cannibal attacks, portage through snake-infested forests, battles with savages in war canoes, starvation, sickness, always the beat of the war drums in the forest, sometimes affray and slaughter. Dr. Livingston’s career had been only a little less spectacular. His quinine

made possible co-existence with malaria. His eloquence captivated audiences. Soon the Universities Mission to Central Africa was founded. Others would follow selflessly, adding a further dimension to the already powerful missionary drive which was a vital force in Empire. Sometimes there was pathos in the attempt. Do you remember Robert Morley's stout missionary in *African Queen*? There was a narrowly exclusive conviction of right in the Protestant message of salvation, in the Catholic vision of a universal church. But there was grace - and love: Livingstone and those who followed him did not regard Africans as genetically inferior but as fallen people whom he could bring up to the level of Christian civilization. Livingstone would be buried in Westminster abbey, the central shrine of Empire. He was a national icon. Nations have had worse.

Another was Charles Gordon.³⁵ Another individualist, headstrong, narrow - eccentric but brave. He was one of those regular soldiers, sappers often, who looked for action and secured distant postings, if necessary with foreign armies. He experienced conversion after a wild youth and regarded his life as a journey guided by God. From the Crimea it took him to a border commission in Bessarabia, then to command in Mauritius, to Cape colony; thence to China when he volunteered to join the expedition to force the Manchu Emperor to ratify the treaty of Tientsin opening up the Yangste river to European trade. He directed the burning of the Imperial Summer Palace - the British were not at their best dealing with China, taking too little note of their rich, distinctive culture. Palmerston³⁶ epitomized the two sides: the brash politician, careless of morality when furthering the interest of Indian trade; the lofty statesman when defending Don Pacifico, Portuguese Jew, born in Gibraltar (therefore British citizen) and specifically his action in sending the fleet to Athens with threat of bombardment: and all on the principle, *Civis*

Romanus sum. He stood by principle, he observed the facts, he flexed his muscles - and all with a panache that anticipated the tone of high Imperialist rhetoric. Now he changed his Chinese policy, supported the Emperor against his Taiping rebels. Gordon trained a motley force into fighting efficiency, crushed the rebels and was awarded the Order of the Yellow Jacket, with the right to wear the peacock feather of a mandarin. Such exotic possibilities enhanced the appeal of empire. A certain *kudos* came to sober governors from the color and pageantry of those they ruled, and millions at home responded to its glamour.

"Chinese Gordon" was then appointed by the Khedive of Egypt to be his governor of the Sudan. From that post, his furious efforts to suppress the slave trade, and his reputation for strict rule, came Gladstone's¹⁷ commission in 1884, to enforce the evacuation of the Sudan, threatened by the supporters of the Mahdi. He arrived, against orders he stayed, and was besieged, at Khartoum. There, the slow moving relief, belatedly ordered by Gladstone, came a day too late to save him and his garrison. He met death by thrust of spear. Imperialism was now entering its late, celebratory, romantic, and most purposeful stage. Most British children went to school; soon a new kind of newspaper would arouse public interest in daring deeds in distant lands. The death of Gordon had everything to appeal. It was the most striking of Imperial images, reproduced in a million homes. Christian hero, fanatical, bloodthirsty savages - and a political warning as G.O.M., "Grand Old Man", became M.O.G., "Murderer of Gordon." No politician could afford now to ignore the interaction between Imperial and domestic issues, nor the positive messages: "Your empire is an instrument for good. Defend it, take more if opportunity afford. Above all: *Be prepared.*" It was to be the motto of Baden-Powell's scouts.¹⁸ He, incidentally was relieved, at Mafeking, - and the people rejoiced, "Mafficked", wildly. But that is another story.

Now allow me two gentler scenes to lighten the view. Corfu - of all places - to illustrate the accidental element in the growth of empire - and Mr. Gladstone arriving to consider its future. It had been acquired, along with other Ionian islands in 1815 by the treaty of Paris, and offered officials and soldiers an especially agreeable posting. The British were expected to set up "a free and independent state." In fact they were amiably despotic. As one early official observed, speaking for a whole generation: "we had not fought Revolutionary France merely to encourage the same wild and speculative doctrines elsewhere in the world." It has to be said that reasonable national aspiration - and cultural preference - was to many sons and daughters of Empire "a wild and speculative doctrine." But as they built their roads, lighthouses, drains, and pipes for fresh water, released Jews from their Venetian-style ghettos, even allowed the Lion of St. Mark to share their coins with Britannia, they found it hard to comprehend, indeed mortifying, that "the Ionians should prefer to be united to poor, weak, and distracted Greece, to remaining under the protection of strong, wealthy and well-governed England." Of course Gladstone, ardent Hellenist, Homeric scholar, high churchman and sympathetic to the Orthodox Church, understood. Yet it was six years after his visit to the islands that the government ceded them. And then they looked for another Mediterranean base. *Pax Britannica* needed bases as well as ships. ("God give us bases to guard or beleaguer," wrote Bowen in the most famous of school songs, deftly moving from football field to empire). It was satisfactory when Disraeli returned from the Congress of Berlin with Cyprus in his portmanteau.³⁹ And at Corfu then (& still today) we find cricket. It is one of the greatest gifts of empire. When Pakistanis can play Indians at cricket is it not less likely that they will fight over Kashmir?

And last; a dusty plain in the Punjab. Horsemen galloping up and down, practising for the great annual

pig-sticking contest. It is a dangerous sport, only slightly less dangerous than soldiering on the North-West frontier. That was the *great game*. There it was said that the difference between a friendly tribesman and an unfriendly was that the former would shoot at you in the daytime - the latter by night.

“The empire is my country; England is my home” thus said Charles Grey,⁴⁰ a gentle & civilized man among the tough settlers of Rhodesia. Empire and home. His words introduce us to the two faces of empire: that of home and politics, principle and general policy, ranging from statements of intent to detailed proposals for improvement; and that of the man on the ground, coping with the challenges of survival and management. The latter was also often imbued with the spirit of service and the wish to better the lives of those under his charge. The political authorities in London would be swayed by wider considerations, relations with foreign powers, or the mood of the electors. So we come to the prime obstacle to balanced judgment. Only those who worked in some part of the world that had come by 1900 to be called British could record, with confidence, what for them it was really like. Only those few in, or near to government who had the chance and duty to view the empire as a whole were in a position to make broader judgments about its *raison d'être*, or its overall achievement.

The empire has always inspired eloquence, whether from a Clive or Warren Hastings⁴¹ defending their Indian record or a Burke or Sheridan⁴² attacking it, whether a Macaulay,⁴³ ever sonorous in judgment, or a Disraeli⁴⁴ in high romantic vein. From the first heady conquering days of the elder Pitt it was rarely, one sphere or another, far from the concerns of statesmen or absent from parliamentary debate. At the humdrum administrative level it was ever more amply recorded. Colonial officials, soldiers in colonial wars had their own tales to tell - and if they were

lucky, retired years to record them. Blackwoods Magazine⁴⁵ would be their resource. How much of empire lies within its covers. A few would become best sellers. Yeats Brown's *Tales of a Bengal Lancer*⁴⁶ - and *sui generis*, T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.⁴⁷ (What would he make of the Middle East today-) Distance might lend enchantment - but experience conveyed truths. It is what makes Philip Woodruff's⁴⁸ two volumes, *The Men Who Ruled India*, such a compelling account. It is out of that experience, testing my judgments by the verdicts of historians working in the field, that I am trying to distil something of the Imperial experience. There are several notable syntheses. (Denis Judd's⁴⁹ comes to mind) We now have a wonderful resource. A new standard, in range, comprehension, objectivity, has been set by the collective Oxford History in five volumes.⁵⁰ An immense work befitting a unique achievement.

First, its growth: "in a fit of absence of mind" wrote Seeley.⁵¹ True - there was not much *mind* in it, if by that one means a controlling policy or consistent purpose. So one may view the whole evolving process as a series of accidents, initiatives, opportunist thrusts, even reluctant interventions and annexations. One may look, in determinist mode, to underlying economic causes. There was a constant interaction, after 1815, between the acquisition and development of new lands, with new sources of raw materials and commodities, cotton, rubber, tin, coffee, tea, rice and palm oil, and the exploitation of new markets, and the export of specialist skills. To reduce the process to such simple terms is also to see how life could improve for the British at home, cheaper food, and some comforts for the majority; profitable investment for the few. It is also to see how questions of empire might impinge on politics. A foretaste of that had been the great debate over the East India Company, with its pursuit of profit through trade and tax, and its political interest at home, becoming a power so large that it could no longer be

independent of the state. The debate raised moral questions, as in the trial of Warren Hastings, that could reflect both liberal and humane principle, on the side of the accusers, and a notion of responsible government on the part of the accused.

Or one may look to political imperatives - temptations at least. Is there a discernible link between the loss of the American colonies and the conquest of much of India- Were the Wellesleys⁵² conquests the by - product of wars against France, a working out of the principle of "if we don't they will" which would influence attitudes during the "scramble for Africa" - and surfaces today in the debate about arms exports- Or did they stem from the vaulting ambition of the proconsul - the "glorious little man" - seizing his chances to make a name for himself? And were they, like Napier's⁵³ later conquest of Sind, justified by the perception of misgovernment as bad in itself, and dangerous to the Company's interests". There are no simple answers. But be it stressed that the forward policy of the first half of the century, most idiosyncratically expressed in the career of the extraordinary Raffles,⁵⁴ founder of Singapore, was inspired by the conviction that the conquering power brought priceless benefits. But what benefits: those of direct, or indirect rule- Those stemming from the idea, born (in racing terms) *out* of Whig principles, *by* evangelicalism, that in education, language, faith, indeed a whole culture, British was best: spelling in a word, enlightenment? Or those coming out of compromise and co-existence? The "leave well alone school" which, perforce, would prevail in Africa, would be easier to justify if its mineral riches had also been left well alone. But it is India that best exhibits the crucial divide, where princely rule was tolerated, invigilated, but with a lighter hand than was laid on the subjects directly ruled.

"Westerners" were grounded in Locke's idea of the rights of property (when in the right hands), of

constitutional safeguards for personal liberty against the despotic ruler, everything conveyed for them by the Rule of Law. The optimistic view of themselves as instruments of progress - witness Macaulay's great work, the codification of law (not for nothing was he the master-historian of the Whig school) - was reinforced by Benthamite utilitarianism:⁵⁵ to be useful, to work for the greatest good of the greatest number, was a noble work. It sustained Bentinck,⁵⁶ the aristocratic governor-general under whom *thuggee* was suppressed and *suttee* driven underground. It was further inspired by the religious conviction that there were souls to be saved - even where "thick darkness broodeth yet."⁵⁷ The opposing school of thought, sidelined until the mutiny which, they claimed, came from clumsy treatment of native religion and custom, harked back to earlier, more easy-going colonial ways, when single men took native mistresses. Their patron saint might have been the great Orientalist, Sir William Jones.⁵⁸ Learn about the natives - but trade and rule with respect for their ways. It has to be said that this suited shareholders in the Company who wanted trade but feared the commitments that came with territorial rule. Taking many forms, according to local situations and problems, these contrasting views were to remain throughout the history of empire, a deep divide, ultimately sapping confidence, always inhibiting initiative when the debate was taken up at home.

Thus lightly sketched, through representative characters and incidents, with the inevitable tensions and contradictions, this picture of Empire may convey, so far, more of confusion than of pattern - exactly what upset the ideologues of high imperialism, like Joseph Chamberlain⁵⁹ or John Seeley. Or, as R.L. Stevenson put it (I am in good company then): "A deuce of a want of light and grouping in it." I hope to shed more light by stressing some features, those which helped to build strongly, and those which left flaws and gaps to be exposed - hostages to fortune and to

the judgment of posterity. The “grouping” may prove elusive, for there were many different colonial regimes. Crown colonies, for example, ranged from Bermuda, with fully elected assembly, to Gibraltar, without legislature and ruled by the governor. Protectorates were run on the same lines as crown colonies, but inhabitants were not citizens. Rhodesia, North Borneo and Nigeria were ruled by Chartered Company under government authorization. No colony was exactly like any other. The variety reflects the way the empire had grown, by the chances of war, and individual enterprise: sometimes just the right man at the right time.

Individual enterprise: the words invite comparison with the French model of Imperialism. Colonies, in the vision of Richelieu and Louis XIV, were to be New France, overseas versions of home government. Intendant and governor presided over a regime of traders, planters and soldiers ruled in conformity with the rules of government at home. Emigration was encouraged, but under strict conditions. Protestants were debarred. If the French had emerged victorious from the colonial wars they might have gone on to create a mighty empire, for success breeds success. If it is hard for us to envisage such an outcome, it may be because we think of France as primarily a land power, the navy coming low in royal priorities. That is to forget the size and potential of the French navy after Colbert's⁶⁰ reforms, and the fact that, from Beachy Head to Trafalgar (1689-1805) it posed a constant threat to British sea power, and in one crucial period, that of the Revolt of the American Colonies, gained control of the seas. The Empire, we have seen, was sea power.

And it was a great deal else. Indeed it was practically everything that human society has to offer: idealism and cynicism; self-sacrifice and greed; conformity and eccentricity; militarism and civilian values. It was human nature writ large - very large.

“No Caesar or Charlemagne ever presided over a dominion so peculiar” thus Disraeli. “Its flag floats over many waters, it has provinces in every zone.” Clearly there was a rise. And a massive plateau, secure till 1945. There ensued a staged withdrawal. But is “decline” the appropriate word for it? There was a period when Britain, in terms of economic strength, in capacity to exert its will, was a great power. Today it is not. That is due mainly to the costly endeavors of two world wars - the last “great power” experience. Victory in the first of these led to yet further enlargement and responsibilities. Already, however, before 1914, the sheer size of the empire, and the long lead gained during the Industrial Revolution, with vast overseas investment (much of it outside the empire) were masking the facts of economic stagnation. It still represented a wide field of opportunity for exporters at home, but had only a declining proportion of the total volume of British foreign trade. And that trade, with the industries that supported it, was in relative decline, challenged by the spectacular growth in the U. S. and Germany. It was becoming plain to the far-sighted that the empire could become as much liability as asset. That lay behind the idea of Imperial Preference. Rejecting it before the Electorate was not so much turning their back on empire as expressing their preference for cheap food when they voted for Liberalism and Free Trade in 1906. But the effect was the same.

In any case the demise of Empire could not be delayed indefinitely. Dominions came of age and expected only nominal control. In emergencies they responded to the appeal of the mother country and contributed gloriously to ultimate victories: the first world war sustained empire for two more decades; the second could only be the prelude to retreat. The process started, as had been allowed for, with India, but led inexorably to further, some hasty, indeed premature, concessions, as politicians felt “the winds of

change”, it responded also to the verdict of Marxists and fellow-travelers that empire was doomed, and to the cloudy perception among *bien pensants* that it was in some way immoral.

Apart from the philosophical problems of defining such a concept as decline - why even the apparently self-evident case of later seventeenth century Spain is now subject to the most stringent revision - there are real difficulties in applying it here: first to concessions in the form of changed status - dominion - concurrent with enlargement in other spheres; then to the process of semi-voluntary and more or less planned retreats. No single verdict on the different ways by which Britain divested itself of colonies and ensured their membership of the Commonwealth can be other than futile when every case was different. That need not deter us from trying to get the measure of this Empire, to understand why, so soon after the trumpets had saluted the high noon, the mature empire, men were making ready to sound the Retreat. Before it fell, how did it stand? What was the nature of its authority?

Well before 1900 Britain was comfortably “settled in the habit of authority.” The tone of her dealings was that of command, not the yell of the barrack square but the quiet word that assumes obedience. It was assumed to be a natural authority, a birthright. The world measured longitude from Greenwich. Stamps bore the queen’s head but no national title; the head was enough. Victoria was the most famous person in the world. For subjects there was no option. As Disraeli would reflect the British were there and subjects had to recognize “the commanding spirit of these islands that had formed and fashioned in such a manner so great a portion of the world.”

Did that imply moral authority? It surely did not mean that they *had* to have more. Queen Victoria typically posed the sensible question; she did not see why “nobody was to have anything but ourselves.” There were wise heads, none

wiser in these matters than the queen. And there were those who were feeling their way to another future, an empire in which cooperation and common purpose were more satisfactory bonds than federal structures or closer constitutional ties. It is Lord Rosebery⁶¹ who is commonly credited with having first articulated the idea of Commonwealth, fittingly in Australia, when he declared: "the Empire is a commonwealth of nations." But hear Balfour,⁶² two years earlier, in 1882, rejecting a crudely materialist view of empire: "The sentiments with which an Englishman regards the English empire (*sic* - and he was a Scot!) are neither a small nor an ignoble part of the feelings which belong to him as a member of the commonwealth."

But for some, like Seeley, looking at "the mighty phenomenon of the diffusion of our race and expansion of our state", there were no misgivings, nor perceived need to steer a more moderate course. "The empire, properly unified, may become the central, or regulating state of the world." It had not always been so. To every step, by conquest or treaty, towards enlargement, there had been negative reactions - at home. Some did not see that the private profit of individuals or companies justified the commitment of Britain, the likely expense and the near certainty that a war would draw in British troops and resources. Financial prudence had buttressed Gladstone's moral revulsion. By his time however the balance of opinion was altering. Late Victorian Britain was beginning to relish the spirit, language and dress of war. One may speak for many in A. E. Housman's⁶³ gallery of Shropshire lads, abandoning plough, cart, and the pleasures of Ludlow fair, for glory and - in the scholar's bleak vision - a young death on some distant field:

"I listed at home for a lancer
Oh who would not sleep with the brave
I listed at home for a lancer

To ride on my horse to my grave
 And over the seas we were bidden
 A country to take or to keep
 And far with the brave I have ridden
 And now with the brave I shall sleep."

Of course there had always been gallant soldiers and sailors, performing feats of incredible daring. A few had caught the public imagination. Many had wept when Nelson died. There had been episodes, like the Crimean War, when the public became agitated because of apparent defects in the performance of the army. There had apparently been no shortage of young men, not all from the kingdom's Celtic fringe, though coming in the main from its less comfortable homes, who could say, with the Irishman: "all other pleasures pale before the intense, the maddening delight of leading men into the midst of an enemy." And was it not - as Sir Garnet Wolseley put it - "the first business of any ambitious young officer to get himself killed?"

It was - it had to be - a military empire. Of a regular army of around 200,000, 72,000, with 52 line battalions, were in India; another 32 were in colonial stations. Alongside the British there was an Indian army, voluntary, and mainly composed of northerners. Sikhs, Pathans and Punjabis, officered by British. The empire's spirit was not, however, truly militarist. Administrators brought with them the essentially civilian outlook that prevailed at home. Military terminology was indeed coming into vogue - witness the Lads' Brigade, Navy League, Church Army, Boys' Brigade, Salvation Army. But it had always been there in the metaphors of Saint Paul and the ideal of the Christian warrior. There could be no doubt, moreover, that the army obeyed the politicians. Lord Curzon⁶⁴ encountered the wrath of the army in India when he insisted on justice in the case of an Indian beaten up by two soldiers - and reinforced the lesson by the public disgrace of a famous

cavalry regiment. Imagine that happening in the Kaiser's Germany! It is that civilized assumption - in contrast to much of the European tradition, that distinguishes the Empire at its best (it was not always so) from the now rival Imperialist powers. That is why the Curragh Mutiny of 1914, revealing the depth of feeling about the Ulster question, with slogans like "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right", was so alarming. British officers did not wear uniforms off duty. Visitors to Berlin noted with distaste that Prussian officers did - and expected civilians to step off the pavement for them on the streets of Berlin.

Yet wars had to be fought: in China, in Afghanistan (twice), Persia, India itself against the Mutiny, Abyssinia, Egypt, the Sudan, Burma, Rhodesia, the Niger basin; against Ashanti and Zulus, Boers (twice), Maoris, Canadian rebels. In serious crises the army fought ferociously, to defend, and to recover lost ground, in what the men called "Butcher and Bolt" operations. The Mutiny and its aftermath was a classic time for heroism, and its heroes, like Sir Henry Havelock,⁶⁵ became household names. Spelling courage, endurance, and altruism it laid the foundations for a hero-culture that owed more to the notion of civilization, Christian and chivalrous, triumphing over barbarism, than to the solemn musings and improving message of Thomas Carlyle.⁶⁶ (Important though he was, as can be seen by his huge popularity, in fostering the notion of the hero). To walk round Harrow School chapel, with its monuments from every war (until the World War when a whole crypt was needed for the 660 names) is to take a walk around the world, a walk of pathos - and glory.

Glory: the word needs careful definition. It has an uncomfortable sound for us. Does it sound foreign, evoking the court of Louis XIV, and bombast? Or worse, to do with Fascism and its monuments, bogus Roman. It was to do with patriotism. Too often, no doubt it was Dr. Johnson's "last refuge of a scoundrel." How he would have chuckled over the fictional Flashman,⁶⁷ the bully, the rogue Rugbeian, anti-hero of many a colonial episode. Patriotism was also deeply Periclean,⁶⁸ with its pride in the good; and in the responsible duty of sustaining, and extending the good. It was imbued with the spirit of adventure, an extension of the spirit of public schools, those very un-gentle nurseries of gentlemen, wholly masculine places where devotion to sport went with the purest spirit of the amateur, where "duty was duty" and "fame the spur" to self-sacrificing endeavor. It seemed indeed to embody the idea of an ascending order of games, from cricket to polo, ever more testing till reaching to the supreme test, "the great game", where Afghanistan was the field, the warriors the fiercest - and how the frontier soldiers admired them! - and India the stake. See the values expressed in H.A. Vachell's novel, *The Hill*,⁶⁹ almost, it may seem to the point of caricature, with its hero dying gloriously on a blood-soaked hill - could it have been the dreadful Spion Kop? - thinking of another hill and of golden boyhood; and a headmaster preaching eloquently - one must hope not comfortably - on the special glory of dying young, unspotted by the world, the sacred sacrifice - as if preparing young hearts for the greater slaughter to come when:

"You would not tell with such high zest
to children ardent for some desperate glory
the old lie *dulce et decorum est*
pro patria mori."

If "desperate glory" was a theme of empire before 1914, sober realism was its keynote after 1918.

Implicit was the idea of service. It may now be deeply

unfashionable, deemed patronizing, but it was the same, undeniably, as that which led public schools to found "missions" and clubs for boys in city slums. We see the idea at its loftiest in the words of Lord Curzon, that driven man, so able, so privileged, so ambitious, but ever willing to work himself to the bone: "In the Empire we have found not merely the key to glory and wealth but the call to duty and means of service to mankind." Here was elevation indeed: special pleading - but not ignoble.

Of course, many were skeptical, or impervious. Among politicians, Gladstone may well have been more typical, dismissive of "false phantoms of glory", than Disraeli, who conjured out of India's Mogul past an Imperial title for his Queen. The notion of glory would surely have had short shrift in a concave of Forsytes where, more likely, the price of rubber or tea would be the concern of the canny investor. Galsworthy⁷⁰ struck chords with British readers because they recognized the type and the traits. But then Forsytes did not, in the main, go to the colonies, to fight to rule, even to trade or plant. Who did?

Not, on the whole, sprigs of the aristocracy. Some grandees might come late to the field to govern. Lord Curzon was only the grandest, at least in pretension, of a line of political appointments, a Lytton,⁷¹ a Minto,⁷² of men who had sufficient weight at home to carry authority above soldiers, civilians, and native princes abroad. He was unusual of course in bringing to the task a messianic zeal, sense of destiny, and vast knowledge from intensive travel, not merely of India but of surrounding lands. Mainly in its last hundred years, the empire was governed by men from the upper range of the middle classes. They came, younger sons most likely, from the England of Squire Dale and archdeacon Grantly,⁷³ for whom trade would not be fitting, to whom the word "gentleman" would not come amiss; from the Scotland of laird and minister, and - to recall their immense contribution - from the Irish families for whom

empire, in particular the Indian regiments, meant opportunity for adventure and a certain standing denied them in their own country. The further you go from the Metropolitan, the monied and sophisticated, to the fringes, to the Welsh and northern border countries, to Ireland or Scotland, the more you will find the servants of empire.

A typical recruit to the Indian Civil Service, which stood at the summit of aspiration, would have been educated at a public school, very likely one of those recently founded, in the case of Haileybury and I.S.C. (originally for the E. Ind. Coy) for the specific purpose of providing administrators for the empire. Coming probably from Oxford or Cambridge he would have passed a stiff series of examinations, from languages, to riding. Noel Annan⁷⁴ describes "The pious air of an educated upper middle class evangelical family...where Christianity flowed about them, and they bathed in it." It was a preparation for a career of public service, a life under judgment, a discipline probably reinforced by the earnest ethos of the public school. Even if he were not directly touched by the religious spirit of the age (that would be less likely towards the end of the century) we need not be surprised if the young "civilian" would see his work in missionary terms. In his mid-twenties he might find himself in charge of a district of several hundred square miles. There he exercised all the powers, legislative, executive and judicial - whose separation has been deemed so important for the preservation of freedom. His mission was to bring measurable improvement to the lives of the natives in his care. That spirit persisted into the twentieth century, proof against secular and skeptical currents then flowing so strongly and was particularly strong in the army. Here is Charles Chenevix-Trench⁷⁵ in the words of his son, "He was a romantic at heart and saw the British Empire as an instrument for the service of God, in which it was a privilege for him and his sons to serve." And hear the

colonel himself after the former colony of German East Africa passed into our stewardship after the 1914-18 war: "If we forget that our first duty is to Africans and try to run the place for our own benefit, we shall be in trouble."

For most of the men who ruled - and the word is as apposite for the district commissioner or collector as for the governor of a province - for such men at all levels, there was simply a job of work - and such work! From dawn to dusk, cutting through the bureaucracy which always threatened but could not thwart their initiatives, with long hours in the saddle, interpreting, mediating, pronouncing in Olympian style on the matters that counted with the people, land rights and crops, tax questions, family feuds, offering patronage in the growing number of lower posts open to natives - what toil, but what responsibility for a young man.

Nor was the picture wholly different on the fringe, in Burma, for example, "a sort of recess, a blind alley, a back reach" in the view of an India man,⁷⁶ where the hold was looser, where the chiefs had to be left alone, or, if too objectionable, suppressed; nor in African and Polynesian colonies for which the Colonial office, at first recruited those with less formal training, looking for rounded characters who might be expected to show initiative. They could not always be choosy. For who would willingly spend his life in the dripping heat and fever spots of West Africa- And what woman would happily marry him?

Among specialists, doctors, the clergy, police, agriculturists and forestry men, the engineers were pre-eminent, building barracks and forts, here laying out a new town for miners, there a military hospital; and above all they built the canals and railways. Some were civilians but it was on the military, the renowned "sappers" that the *Raj* relied to fulfill its stated purpose of improvement. Sometimes the improvement was spectacular. The canals,

dams and irrigation channels of the former desert lands of the Punjab created a fertile province and flourishing agriculture. Sometimes it was for purposes of war: "Whiz, whiz, all by steam. The armies of the English ride upon the vapors of boiling cauldrons and their houses are flaming coals," says the *pasha* in Kinglake's *Eothen*.⁷⁷ By 1900 it was indeed an empire of iron and steam. When so many benefits were of their nature impossible to quantify, and there was such a variety of gain and cost, I am content to leave that aspect of Empire to the economists. One of the imponderables in the Imperial balance sheet is the value to native societies of sound law and good order. Here we have seen, there were two distinct traditions. Sir William Jones was chief among those, especially in the pioneer days, who valued native culture, and were keen to incorporate or countenance indigenous systems of law. The no less tremendous name and authority of Macaulay stands behind those of the Whig school who held that the best thing that the British could do for India was to produce a code, based on British principles, and the use of English for all official business. Behind that view was, of course, the conviction of a superior culture and the duty of offering it to natives. In practice, even in India, officials had to work within the system they found, in the interest of that peace which was the paramount objective and condition of Imperial rule. Legal codes were above, but also intertwined with such variety in local customary or previous codes that only a native could interpret or understand. But all was underpinned by the incontrovertible fact that British officials were incorruptible. Bribery was hardly worth trying. Nothing did more to establish the moral authority of government or leave, after the end of empire, more respect for the British rule. The verse of Alfred Austin, the laughably inept Poet Laureate of late Victorian England, may have embarrassed the fastidious critic. But few would have demurred from his idea of the British tradition:

“Its conscience holds the world in sway
With blessing or with ban
Its freedom guards the Reign of Law
And majesty of man.”

The “Reign of Law” (though it may not have been recognizable in Kimberley or Geelong) and peace: *Pax Britannica*. Did the achievement match the rhetoric? In India the British could claim to have brought civil wars to an end, curbed the more irresponsible rulers left in independence, but with a British resident to advise, held the ring, just, between Hindu and Muslim, and abolished some particularly lethal practices, *thuggee* and *suttee*.⁷⁸ In Canada, they prevented breaches between French-speaking and British; the new Confederation was a notable early experiment, pointing the way to the Dominion status offered to the main colonies of British settlement. In the Malay Peninsular they brought peace between quarrelsome sultans; in Burma, with some caution in face of fearsome tribes, made life more secure for cowed people; in the Persian Gulf ended piracy. In Africa, following the indisputably important abolition of the trade, they ended slavery in British colonies, and eventually tackled the tough problem of Zanzibar, chief clearing house for African slaves destined for the markets of the Muslim world, making the sultan of Zanzibar abolish the legal status of slavery. In Australia they tried to protect aborigines, in New Zealand, belatedly, the Maoris; in South Africa they sought to mitigate some of the cruder aspects of Boer behavior towards natives. Even in Ireland, after 1798, they maintained a kind of peace, though predicated on the values of the Supremacy, and the special status of the predominantly Protestant north. “Too little, too late”, may be fair comment on reluctant reforms, and coercion may have seemed to nationalists as brutal as the outrages that provoked it. The end was messy, the partition of 1922 controversial, and it split the nationalist front. In the light

of the bloody civil war that ensued, the *Pax Hibernica*, flawed as it was, could evoke nostalgia.

In an Empire of special situations you will understand that I feel bound, if reluctantly, to mention the Irish problem, *sui generis* - and still with us. "Naught for your comfort" there - to borrow Trevor Huddleston's phrase about *apartheid*. In the same spirit one has to engage with the subject of race, as one meets it, in the realms where politicians indulged in theory, or ideologues ventured into politics - or on the cruder level of behavior on the ground. "This sort of creature has to be ruled so we rule him, for his good, and for our own." Witness Ronnie Heaslop under the ironic gaze of E.M. Forster, representative of many harassed magistrates and policemen. His confident statements belie the uneasiness of the later years of the *Raj*, when high resolve to bring the Indians into government sat uneasily with the conviction that the British knew best what was good for them. First he says: "We are out here to do justice and keep the peace." But then: "The educated Indian will be no good to us if there is a row, it's simply not worth conciliating them, that's why they don't matter." Or later "Here we are and we're going to stop, and the country's got to put up with us...O look here, what do you and Adela want me to do. Go against my class, go against all the people I respect and admire out here- Lose such power as I have for doing good in this country because my behavior isn't pleasant?" Then like a kind of Greek chorus, the group of ladies, explaining matters to a newcomer; and one lady (former nurse): "I came across them a great deal, so I know. I really do know the truth about Indians. A most unsuitable position for an Englishwoman. One's only hope was to hold sternly aloof." Of course such remarks make uneasy reading for us, though they should be judged in the context of the values of their times, whether expressed in grand pronouncements echoing the Old Testament, or those of neo-Darwinians, to whom science seemed to lend moral support

to “forward” and interventionist policies. Some would see the latter as offering convenient fig leaves for the hunting, procreative instincts of fallen man, colonial man.

But if it was convenient to assert the superiority of a branch of the human species, genus Anglo-Saxon, it was not without cost when it implied responsibility, the duty to protect and to improve. Take the Belgian Congo, the crude and ruthless exploitation of mineral resources, and the cruelty of Conrad's Kurtz, a symbolic figure, but also representative, in the *Heart of Darkness*;⁷⁹ then look at the humanitarian efforts of notable Englishmen to bring relief. Hear the high Imperial message of Joseph Chamberlain, that embodiment of the utilitarian spirit of the *fin de siècle*, for whom what was good for Birmingham must be good for the empire - nay the world. Humbug, one might say. But then see what it could mean on the ground in the work of one of the best of the Imperialists. Frederick Lugard, creator of modern Uganda, was a child of empire: born inside Fort St. George, Madras, where his father was a chaplain, he fought under Roberts in Afghanistan, with Wolseley in the Sudan, in Burma in a campaign to unseat king Thebaw. Seeking further adventure he enrolled in the service of the British East Africa Company, defeated slavers, ended wars between Muslims and Christians, made treaties with local chiefs and persuaded the British government to take responsibility for the whole country. Meanwhile, in his personal odyssey from Imperial mercenary to champion of Imperial trusteeship, allowing natives to develop within their own cultures, he was evolving a new theory of Imperial government: indirect rule. Realistic without being cynical, it did not abandon moral duty to market forces.

I could have chosen others. I am happy to leave you with Lugard, as an example among many, of what Imperialism could be on the ground. I think of my Oxford

contemporaries who trained for the Colonial service and went to Africa with a high sense of vocation and keen awareness of the practical problems they would face. No sense for them, in the mid-fifties, of a sinking ship! They went to do a job of work, and they would, I believe, be willing to be judged by what they achieved. They might also add that they did not have enough time. The politicians were in too much of a hurry. What, I wonder, would those young men of the Fifties make of the monument erected fifty years before in my own school chapel⁸⁰ to the sixteen boys who died in the Boer War - and which I offer (translated from the Latin) by way of postscript.

"Far from here lie those bones. Here the un-forgetting Severn follows with well-deserved praise the splendid glory of her children. Their love of their country sent them forth. They fought and fell as men. Those who ask other questions must learn from that Africa which is ours."

Africa nostra. "That won't do," you will say. But it did then, and for successive generations it meant the challenge of hard work for the good of the mother country and the benefit of the natives. With the advantage of hindsight we may question the criteria. There will always be room for debate about the overall achievement. But I believe that the best of those who worked in the field of empire - and they were many - would be content to be judged on the record. And that may be seen to be more admirable with every year that passes, with every indication of the troubles that can afflict a state.

Notes

I hope that these notes will aid students who may be unfamiliar with some of the topics and personalities in the paper - and encourage them to read further.

¹ William Pitt, 1st Earl Chatham (1708-68), statesman, visionary Imperialist, prime minister 1756-61 and 1766-68.

² The battle of La Hogue (1692) Admiral Russell's victory over the French under Tourville has been identified by historians as decisive for the future: British supremacy at sea and advantage in colonial struggles.

³ Sir Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913) was Queen Victoria's favorite soldier. 'Send for Sir Garnet' was the response to several colonial crises.

⁴ Hero of the 2nd Afghan war (1878), Earl Roberts of Kandahar (1832-1914), 'Bobs' to his men, was later a successful commander-in-chief of British forces in the Boer war. See also page 7.

⁵ Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) founded his literary reputation on the stories written in his early life in India. See also page 4 and note 33.

⁶ Robert, Lord Clive (1725-74) was twice Governor of Bengal and victor of Plassey (1757). His second Governorship (1765-67) marked the start of British administration in India.

⁷ General James Wolfe (1727-59) was Pitt's inspired appointment to the Canadian command.

⁸ Anthony Trollope (1815-82), novelist. See also page 21.

⁹ James Bruce (1730-94). His heroic journey (1768-70) led him to a false conclusion; the true source being a thousand miles away in Lake Victoria. How many buildings, towns, natural features have been named after 'The White Queen'.

¹⁰ John Lambton, 1st Earl of Durham (1795-1840). His ideas reflected the views of the philosophical radicals. But the report was essentially his own. It was most valuable that the question of Canada should be considered by a man tested in the domestic issues of political reform.

¹¹ Edmund Burke (1729-97), orator, politician and philosopher, distinguished between the rights of the American colonists, which he upheld, and the claims of French revolutionaries - which he saw as threatening to liberty and property.

¹² James Bryce (1838-1922) was a formidable authority, as historian and man of affairs, Chief Secretary for Ireland, then ambassador to the United States. He wrote that the whole course of legal reform in India in the 19th century had been arranged by two or three officials in Whitehall and two or three more in Calcutta.

¹³ Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902) founded and funded scholarships to promote the union of English-speaking peoples by giving potential leaders all over the world an Oxford education. See A. Roberts, Cecil Rhodes, Flawed Colossus (1987).

¹⁴ As Secretary of State for India (1905-10), John Morley (1838-1923), statesman and biographer (notably of Gladstone), took steps to make government more representative. He was a leading proponent of Home Rule for Ireland.

¹⁵ As in the highly influential *Imperialism; a Study* (1902), 3rd edition, chapters 2, 4, 6. Marx's analysis would have been the same as Hobson's!

¹⁶ Quoted in Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (1966), p. 583.

¹⁷ Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer (1841-1917), nick-named "Over-Baring", was first brought in, in 1877, to protect the Suez Canal. When he left, in 1907, after many reforms, Egyptian credit in the money markets ranked third to those of Britain and France. For his ideas see "The government of subject races", *Edinburgh Review* CCVII, 423 (1908). Also T. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (1988).

¹⁸ For episode see Churchill's own account of *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* (1990 edition), chapters 14, 15.

¹⁹ For whom Philip Magnus, *Kitchener* (1958). Belloc's lines are from *The Modern Traveller*.

²⁰ For this episode see S. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 2nd edition (1982), chapter 14.

²¹ At Rorke's Drift (January 1879) a tiny force held a laager against a host of Zulus and caused losses which compensated somewhat for the previous slaughter of their comrades at Isandhlwana.

²² The Emperor Augustus, in A.D. 9 after Publius Quintus Varus had lost his entire force, three legions, in the battle of the Teutoburg forest.

²³ The Boer War lasted from 1899 to 1902. It was prolonged for two years after the defeat of the main Boer forces by the guerilla tactics adopted by the Boer generals.

²⁴ Earl Roberts of Kandahar (1832-1902).

²⁵ George Alfred Henty (1832-1902) newspaper correspondent, author of numerous boys' books, editor of *The Union Jack*. The title speaks for the man - and his message.

²⁶ Maud Diver, doughty imperialist, took up her pen to defend the women of India against such caricatures as "The Snake Club" (the ladies' drawing room in the United Services Club at Simla). She defended Dyer's action at Amritsar in *Far to Seek* (1921).

²⁷ Mohandas Karamchand, Mahatma Gandhi, Hindu nationalist leader (1869-1948).

²⁸ Jawaharlal Pandit Nehru, a Brahmin and intellectual, educated at Harrow and Cambridge (He scored heavily when he described Amritsar as "bad form") became India's first prime minister in 1947.

²⁹ There is a vast literature on the Mutiny. For a revisionary resume of the events, colored for generations of Britons by atrocities, like the massacre at Cawnpore, see D.A. Washbrook "India 1818-1860", pp. 395-421, and for their significance see John M. Mackenzie, "Empire and Metropolitan Cultures" pp. 280-2: both in *Oxford History of the British Empire*, III (1999). Events look very different from Indian perspectives. Beyond dispute, however, the Mutiny was a defining moment and test of Empire.

³⁰ John Lawrence (1811-79) was governor of the Punjab which remained loyal during the Mutiny. He returned to India as viceroy, 1863-69. His equally famous soldier-brother, Henry, died in Lucknow during the mutiny.

³¹ As notably, and sympathetically, in *Passage to India* (1924).

³² Paul Scott's four novels (1966-75), starting with *The Jewel in the Crown* have won classic status for their depiction of the events and moods of the last years of the Raj.

³³ As in *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888). "William the Conqueror" is in *The Day's Work* (1898).

³⁴ Sir Henry Stanley (1841-94). Dr. David Livingstone (1813-73). For wider aspects of missionary work in Africa, see Andrew Porter "Trusteeship and Humanitarianism" in op. cit. *Oxford History*, vol. III, pp. 198-221.

- ³⁵ General Charles Gordon (1833-85): a recent life is by J. Pollock, *Gordon, The Man Behind the Legend* (1993).
- ³⁶ Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865) was in his second term as foreign secretary when this incident occurred, in 1850. In 1856, he was censured by Parliament for ordering the bombardment of Canton, after a pirate ship, registered as British in Hong Kong has been fired on by Chinese coastguards. "An insolent barbarian wielding authority at Canton has violated the British flag" was his comment.
- ³⁷ William Ewart Gladstone (1808-98), statesman and orator; four times prime minister.
- ³⁸ Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941) founded the Boy Scouts in 1908.
- ³⁹ In 1878, Cyprus was thought necessary to enhance control of the Suez Canal route and contain Russian expansion in Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean.
- ⁴⁰ For Charles, Lord Grey, later Governor-general of Canada, see James Morris, *Pax Britannica* (1968), pp. 95-6.
- ⁴¹ Warren Hastings (1732-1818) was Governor of Bengal (1773-84), impeached with less of law than of Whig eloquence and principle, and, after seven years, was acquitted on all charges.
- ⁴² R.B. Sheridan (1751-1816), playwright, Whig politician, histrionic orator.
- ⁴³ Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59), Whig politician and historian, master-minded westernizing policies for the instruction of Indians, and the great Penal Code.
- ⁴⁴ Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81), Conservative prime minister (1866-9 and 1874-80) conferred on the queen the title, Empress of India (1876).
- ⁴⁵ The staple material in Blackwoods, the much loved "maga", was tales from the colonies.
- ⁴⁶ By Francis Yeats Brown, 1930. A classic account of life in an Indian cavalry regiment.
- ⁴⁷ T.E. Lawrence's epic account of his experience of leading irregular warfare against the Turks in Arabia, 1915-18.
- ⁴⁸ Written under nom de plume "Woodruff" Philip Mason's account benefited from his personal experience as Indian civil servant.
- ⁴⁹ *Empire* (1996).

⁵⁰ Appearing 1997-2000. I, ed. N. Canny, Origins of Empire, II, ed. P.J. Marshall, The Eighteenth Century, III, ed. A. Porter, The Nineteenth Century, IV, ed. Judith Brown and Roger Louis, The Twentieth Century, V., ed. R. Winks, Historiography.

⁵¹ J.R.B. Seeley (1834-95), author of *The Expansion of England* (1883) and *The Growth of British Policy* (1895).

⁵² Richard, Marquis Wellesley, governor-general (1797-1805), with his soldier brother, Arthur, the future duke of Wellington, to win battles for him, pursued a forward policy, conquered Mysore and the Marathas, doubled the revenue of the East India Company and laid the firm foundation of British India.

⁵³ Sir Charles Napier (1782-1853).

⁵⁴ Sir Thomas Raffles (1781-1826). Nominally he acted under Lord Minto. His career illustrates the scope possible for servants of the Company. He later founded the Zoological Society.

⁵⁵ Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), prolific writer on Jurisprudence and Ethics "found the philosophy of law a chaos and left it a science" (J.S. Mill).

⁵⁶ Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839) was governor-general, 1833-35.

⁵⁷ A line from L. Hensley's much sung hymn, "Thy kingdom come O God." In the same spirit bishop Heber-Percy's "From Greenland's icy mountains" called men "to deliver their land from error's chain."

⁵⁸ Sir William Jones (1746-1794) gave most of his life to the study of India and its language. He pointed out the resemblance of Sanskrit to Latin and Greek.

⁵⁹ Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), Colonial Secretary 1895-1903, favored a "forward policy for Africa, and promoted schemes for tariff reform and Imperial Preference.

⁶⁰ Jean-Baptiste Colbert was Louis XIV's finance minister (1661-83) and planned ambitiously for a larger navy and for colonies - New France.

⁶¹ Lord Rosebery (1847-1929), Liberal prime minister, 1894-5.

⁶² A. J. Balfour (1848-1930) was Conservative prime minister, 1902-06.

⁶³ A.E. Housman, (1859-1936) classical scholar and poet. This is from *Last Poems* (1922).

⁶⁴ George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon, Viceroy, 1899-1905; Foreign Secretary, 1919-24.

- 65 Henry Havelock (1795-1857), distinguished soldier. Died just after the relief of Cawnpore. He had inspired its heroic defense.
- 66 Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Scotsman, historian, prophet, sage: influential in each role.
- 67 Flashman, first encountered in Tom Brown's Schooldays (Thomas Hughes, 1857), appears again in the novels of George Macdonald.
- 68 Pericles, 5th century Athenian statesman, died B.C. 429.
- 69 The Hill (1905) was reprinted fifteen times in the first three years.
- 70 John Galsworthy (1867-1933), novelist and dramatist. The Man of Property (1906) was first of a series, collectively called the Forsyte Saga. "To fight..." Until Jolly and Val Darty went off to the Boer War. Then they were acting out of Forsyte character!
- 71 Robert, 1st Earl of Lytton (1831-91) was viceroy of India, 1875-80.
- 72 Gilbert Eliot, Earl Minto (1847-1914), viceroy of India, 1905-10. Not to be confused with his forbear, governor-general, 1806-14. See note 53.
- 73 From Anthony Trollope's Barchester novels, starting with *The Warden* (1855).
- 74 As described in his life of Leslie Stephen, the spirit of service outlasted the quite frequent loss of religious faith.
- 75 Chenevix-Trench letters supplied by a descendant, Susan Wood.
- 76 Sir George Scott, quoted in James Morris, *Pax Britannica* (1968), p. 202.
- 77 Alexander Kinglake (1809-91). *Eothen* (1844) created a vogue for travelers' tales in romantic style, sustained specially by British interest in the east.
- 78 *Thuggee* was murder, carried out by *thug* bands for the goddess Kalih, who rewarded them with booty. It was an aberration from orthodox Hindu belief, but *suttee*, widow-burning was a central rite.
- 79 Joseph Conrad (1857), Polish seaman, noted English novelist. His tales evoke the rough fringes, and characters, of empire.
- 80 *Alma mater*: Shrewsbury School.

Chronology

- 1600 Elizabeth I issues a charter for the East India Company.
- 1606 The first permanent settlement on the American mainland at Jamestown.
- 1609-22. The plantation of Ulster and other parts of Ireland.
- 1612 The first trading station in India at Surat: to be followed by Madras and Bombay.
- 1624 The first English settlement in the West Indies: St Kitts, followed (1625) by Barbados.
- 1655 A settlement in Jamaica with Cromwell's blessing. (The first English imperialist-)
- 1690 An English settlement at Calcutta.
- 1698 Slave trade opened to private traders as Royal African Company's monopoly ends.
- 1707 The Union of England and Scotland.
- 1713 The peace of Utrecht. Britain gains Hudson Bay, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, Gibraltar, Minorca and St Kitts.
- 1732 Charter granted to Georgia completes the roll of pre-independence American colonies.
- 1757 Clive's victory at Plassey secures Bengal and paves way for expansion of British rule.
- 1759 Victories of Hawke and Boscawen show naval supremacy as key to world power.
- 1759-60 Wolfe takes Quebec and Amherst Montreal to complete British control of Canada.
- 1763 Peace of Paris. Britain gains Cape Breton, Florida, Senegal 'Ceded' West Indian isles.
- 1769 Cook charts coasts of New Zealand and Eastern Australia.
- 1774 First Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia.
- 1783 Peace of Versailles. Britain recognizes independence of the United States.
- 1784 Pitt's Act for Regulation of India. The state takes responsibility.

- 1786 British settle on Malay coast at Penang.
- 1788 The first convicts go to Botany Bay. Arthur Phillip founds Port Jackson (Sydney).
- 1791 The Canada Act establishes Upper and Lower Canada.
- 1799 The conquest of Mysore. (soon followed by the annexation of the Carnatic)
- 1801 The Irish Act of Union with Britain.
- 1805 The battle of Trafalgar. Nelson's victory is a decisive assertion of sea power.
- 1807 Britain abolishes the Slave Trade
- 1808 Sierra Leone becomes a British crown colony.
- 1815 The peace of Vienna concludes Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars: Britain gains Malta, the Ionian islands, Tobago, St Lucia, Guiana colonies, Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius.
- 1819 Raffles founds Singapore.
- 1826 Burma cedes Arakan to Britain
- 1829 Entire Australian continent declared British.
- 1833 The abolition of slavery.
- 1834 The Afrikaners' trek starts.
- 1837 The Aborigines Protection Society formed.
- 1839 East India Company seizes Aden. Proclamation of sovereignty over New Zealand.
- 1842 The British start to administer Hong Kong. Canada to be a United Province. .
- 1843 The annexation of Natal
- 1850 The end of convict transportation to Australia
- 1852 The annexation of Lower Burma
- 1856 The annexation of Oudh
- 1857 The Indian Rebellion ('Mutiny')
- 1867 Canada gains Dominion status.

- 1873 An Anglo-Zanzibar treaty ends the local slave trade.
- 1874 The annexation of Fiji.
- 1876 Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India.
- 1877 The annexation of Transvaal.
- 1878 Britain acquires Cyprus.
- 1879 Anglo-Zulu war. Defeat at Isandhlwana avenged by victory at Ulundi
- 1880 Protectorate over Cook Islands.
- 1882 Victory of Tel-el-Kebir. Occupation of Egypt.
- 1884 Protectorate over British New Guinea
- 1885 Formation of Indian National Congress.
- 1886 Annexation of Burma.
- 1887 Anglo-French condominium over New Hebrides.
- 1888 Sarawak, North Borneo, Brunei become British protectorate.
- 1892 Protectorate over Gilbert and Ellis Islands (followed by Solomon Islands)
- 1896 Federation of Malay States established.
- 1900 Protectorate over Northern Nigeria
- 1901 Federation of six colonies into Commonwealth of Australia
- 1907 Afghanistan comes under British Protectorate.
- 1910 Union of South Africa established.
- 1915 British conquest of Mesopotamia (Iraq).
- 1916 Easter Rebellion in Dublin. Recognition of Irish Free State and of Ulster.
- 1926 Imperial Conference defines Dominion status
- 1929 Promise of Dominion status for India
- 1947 Partition of India. India, Pakistan remain in Commonwealth (Pakistan a republic)
- 1957 Malayan federation set up
- 1957 Ghana gains independence and begins process within Africa completed by Rhodesia as Zimbabwe (1980).

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