

SUMMARY

The Church and the Byzantine State in the Justinian Age

The Emperor Flavius Petrus Sabbatius was one of the most important, most famous and, however paradoxical it may seem, the most mysterious personalities of the whole Byzantine history. The discoveries and, especially, the appreciations of his life, nature and achievements are often contradictory and could be the source of various fantasies. But, despite all this, The Byzantine Empire never had such an emperor with so great achievements and the name “the Great” was deservedly attributed to him.

The State and especially the Church benefited enormously from the impressive activity carried out by Justinian. Never did the Byzantine Empire know a greater ascent than that during its history.

From the political and administrative point of view, the Emperor managed to enhance the borders of the Empire by reconquering Africa, Italy and Spain and turning the Mediterranean Sea into a “Roman lake” again. He kept the peace at the frontiers especially with the Persians and rebuilt and strengthened fortresses inclusively the lands through which the old Danubius river flew. Thus he proved that he concerned himself with any part of the Empire even if it was not so close to Constantinople. His administrative policy was mainly based on his legislative paper included in Corpus Juris Civilis, which dealt with an easier method of applying the laws of those times. Justinian’s legislative religious paper seems to have such a great importance for the analysis and understanding of the relationships between the Church and the State under his reign that, usually, it is considered to be the basis for the study of the whole religious policy. One can infer from its laws regarding religion, the general principles which establish the relationships between Basileia and Sacerdotium in the Byzantine Empire.

His religious policy focused on the defence and the development of the Orthodoxy through the laws which supported the right faith and through different

means of preaching it: writings, edicts, conferences, local synods or the convocation of the fifty Ecumenical Synod from Constantinople in 553. One of the ideals of his religious policy was his tireless attempt to reconcile the monophysites with the Orthodox people finding as a support the controversial formula of the Scythian monks: "One man from the Trinity was physically tortured", which he managed to diplomatically impose on the Roman popes who initially rejected it.

His philanthropic activity is also closely connected to his religious policy: the help he offered to the poor, the slaves, the prisoners, the building of some hospitals, asylums and orphanages, all these achievements generated both positive and negative reactions among researchers.

Removing through his edicts any kind of heresy from the territory of the Byzantine Empire, the emperor proved to be orthodox, worthy to be honoured in the religious calendar.

Justinian dedicated all his life to make one dream come true: One unique and great God, a unique and big empire, a unique and great sovereign. Although he could not fulfil his dream entirely, his deeds made the writer Agathias from Myra name him "the first of all who reigned over the Byzantine Empire and who proved to be a real Roman Emperor through actions not through words.

I. The beginning of the Justinian Age

The Justinian Age represents from the historical point of view a crucial moment marking the transition from the ancient times to the Middle Ages in the Mediterranean world. The period lasted approximately a century, from the moment of the young Justinian's arrival in Constantinople from Illyria, around 500, to the year 600 when the empire was about to undergo a period of instability.

Justinian wanted his reign to be characterized as a period of general improvement of a Roman inherited system of reigning. He believed that God had made him the custodian of an empire which was very old but in a total mess. Justinian intended to make the venerable glory of Rome flourish again and turn it into a Christian state reflecting the splendours of Heaven. All these efforts to create a Roman territory united by one single Christian faith under his authority touched the

lives of millions of people guiding the course of imperial policies which continued to influence Europe and the Near East for many years after his death.

We could not understand the historical importance of Justinian and especially in the history of the Church without regarding him as the first ideologist of the Christian Empire. During this period there was made the first synthesis of the Byzantine Christianity, which would influence the future course of Orthodoxy. Justinian made no distinction between the Roman political tradition and Christianity. As he considered himself a Roman emperor, he also called himself a Christian emperor. This conception had its origins in the indissoluble unity between empire and Christian religion. Under the influence of Christianity, the Empire underwent important changes: Justinian considered himself both the servant and the executor of God's will. The empire was placed under the sign of the Holy Cross and had the mission to spread Christianity among people. Being aware of the fact that the unity of the State is based on the faith unity of the Church, he regarded these two realities- The State and The Church- as the main co-ordinates of this reign. Justinian developed his religious policy on the principle of the harmony between the State and The Church. From this point of view, the two sources of power find their authority in God, which means that they cannot be in contradiction to each other. In this case, The Church was the soul and The State was body. Thus only the union between them could lead to a harmonious collaboration. The aim of the two institutions was definitely the same: the praise of God and the salvation of people. Only in such a spirit could the principle of harmony become reality as the emperor theologian shows: "There are two main gifts which God, in His love for people, bestows on us from His Kingdom: priesthood and kingly dignity. The former is in the service of God whereas the latter leads and guides all that is human; nevertheless, both of them come from the same spring and beautify people's life."(Novela VI). That is why the religious canons elaborated for the first four Ecumenical Synods became laws of the State as well.

The Justinian Age began with the reign of Justin I (518-527), Justinian's uncle. He was a peasant who came from the province Dardania to Constantinople to have a better life. Then as a result of the acclamations of the imperial guard, he became emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, after the death of Anastasius (518). As Napoleon put it that every soldier has the marshal's truncheon in this kitbag, any man in the Byzantine Empire could have the imperial scepter in his hands if the odds were not against him. Thus Justin had become emperor from a simple shepherd when

he was sixty-eight. He had an interesting personality with traits specific to an entire historical age. He remained simply illiterate as long as he lived. Without being able to learn, he drew the four letters from the official formula LEGI (“I have read”) to be applied to the emperor’s decrees. He was made a kind of pattern with these letters cut in wood on which his clumsy hand was guided by a secretary in order to obtain the emperor’s “signature”. All this can be true if we take into account the fact that Justin had not attended any school. On the contrary, he spent all his life either in camps, campaigns, fights or taking care of his sheep.

The main achievement of this reign was the renunciation of the acachian schism which lasted between the East and the West for 35 years. This schism has appeared as a result of the publication of the edict Henoticon-published by the emperor Zenon to put an end to the fend between the orthodox and the monophysits. But, in fact, this fend was much more intensified.

At the beginning of April 527, Justin fell seriously ill and that is why he made his nephew Justinian his associate and conferred the title of Augustus on him. In fact, it was his nephew who unofficially ruled over the empire for a long time as his uncle was extremely old. On the 1st of August 527, Justin died and named Justinian as his successor. Justinian ruled over the Byzantine Empire for 38 years and he was considered to be the most important representative of the Justinian dynasty which lasted for almost one century.

II.The Emperor Justinian – the man and the theologian

Justinian was born on May 11th 483 in a village called Tauresium lying around the region of the Skopje fortress from Dardania, between Illyric and Macedonia. According to one historian of that time, Procopie, we find out that he was a man of medium height, he used to spent very much time in the rooms of the imperial palace, he used to sleep very little and liked to involve himself in theological debates. He was also endowed with a great capacity of work and excellent organizational skills.

He had two targets in mind during his reign: the first one was the re-establishment and the continuation of the old imperial power of the Roman people and the second one was the unity between the Church and the State. The slogan of his

internal and external policy was: “One State, One Law, One Church”. In order to achieve his goal, he had to bring peace to Church. That is why, on the one hand he had to remove the acachian schism which had been lasting since 484 and which had brought off the relation between Constantinople and Rome and, on the other hand, he tried to find a solution to the monophysits’s problem. Moreover, it was his duty to defend the borders of the empire, especially the western part. He succeeded in doing that by defeating the Vandals and conquering Africa, the Ostrogoths and conquering Spain and the Franks thus conquering Gallia. Furthermore, he had to re-establish the trade relation of the empire using all the means he had at this disposal. In addition, he was supposed to develop such an administrative and legislative system that he could meet all needs and demands without altering the glorious Greek-Roman tradition and experience. Last but not least, it was his duty to improve the image of his empire with new and wonderful buildings to meet the needs of his subjects. All these things could become a reality only if, on the throne of the empire, there was a self-confident man with a strong will. In fact Justinian proved to be this kind of man capable of solving the problems and the needs of his time. He is the author of many writings, especially with theological contents. The teaching of these writings is identical with the first four Ecumenical Synods dealing with different themes: God-Father, God-Sun. God-The Holy Spirit, The Saint Virgin Mary, The Bible and The Saint Tradition.

Justinian was supported in all his administrative activities by his wife Theodora. Before coming empress, Theodora had a bad popularity because of her naked presence on the Circus stage. Her life completely changed after she stayed in Alexandria for several months.

After returning to Constantinople, he became Justinian’s wife and saved the throne owing to the strength of her character. On June 29th 548, Theodora died of cancer and Justinian mourned for her loss for a long period of time.

III. The Emperor Justinian, the defender of the chalcedonian Orthodoxy against monophysism

The 4th century, with the first two Ecumenical Synods from Niceea (325) and Constantinople established the trinitary terminology with the orthodox teaching about the Holy Trinity. The 5th century brought the Christological controversies:

nestorianism and monophysism, highly debated at Synods III and IV from Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

Having in mind his slogan “One State, One Law, One Church”, Justinian considered that it was his duty to bring back the old orthodox faith to the Empire he was ruling. He thought himself the right man whose mission was to re-establish the rules of Orthodoxy and that is why he openly expressed his ill feelings towards the Heretius whom he hated with all his heart. Under his command, the Heretius did not have the right to be citizens of the Empire and were regarded as outcasts. Their wealth was confiscated to the benefit of the Orthodox Church and they were left in poverty as they did not want to admit the true faith. The heretics did not have the permission to enroll in the army as any soldier had to prove he was orthodox. Moreover, they were not allowed to be witnesses in a trial but for their fellow heretics and not for the orthodox. In general, according to Justinian’s laws, the heretics were considered to be outcast of the society with no rights or privileges. The emperor was about to close down their school from Athens in 529. He also expressed his wish that the orthodox should enjoy more privileges than those who estranged themselves from the real Church.

The monophysis heresy claimed that the human nature of the Saviour (Messiah) was absorbed by the divine nature, thus losing its proper features and keeping only the “seen” aspect disappearing and melting into the divine nature. So, our Saviour had only one nature-the divine one. This theory is based on the idea that there was no nature without a person in flesh and blood. Being condemned at the Ecumenical Synod IV, the monophysits rose against the emperor’s decisions and their actions led to disputes and chaos in the entire Byzantine Empire.

For the Orthodox Church, the most serious consequence was the following: because of their theory referring to the Person of Jesus Christ, divine or human, monophysism was developed under different forms and names throughout the entire 5th and 6th century and this fact led to the appearance of monophysit churches which still exist nowadays: The Egyptian Church, the Syro-Jacobian Church.

Under Justinian, the most famous theologian was Sever de Antiohia who brought the greatest contribution to the spreading of monophysism among the Syrians. He put the theological basis and established the rules of the monophysit Church. Although he was aware of the existence of the human nature of Jesus Christ, which he called “essence”, he made the impression that he completely denied it: Sever

underlined almost all the time the existence of the two natures but only in the act of the union ignoring the fact that this act was and is prolonged continually. The root of Sever's Christological errors is the identification of the concept "physis" with "ipostasis". Despite the fact that Sever admitted the duality of the natures before and during the union, he avoided admitting it afterwards for fear that it might touch the duality of people. That is why severianism is a moderate monophysism.

The man who combated Sever's theory was the theologian Leontiu from the Byzantine Empire, who powerfully influenced the emperor as to theological problems. He was the only one who could rise against Sever's Christology and combat it through the quality and the depth of his ideas. Nature shows the idea of "to be" whereas ipostasis shows the idea of being inside oneself. There is a connection between nature and ipostasis: nature refers to the idea of existence itself as well. Nature shows species, ipostasis shows the individual. The former denotes the character of the universal world, the latter separates the peculiar from the common. To better explain this, Leontiu introduces the concept of enipostasis. Jesus's human nature is not anipostasis because it exists but it does not have ipostasis because it does not exist for itself. It is rather anipostasis because it exists in the Logos it belongs to and which gives him the power to exist.

Justinian tried to make the monophysites come back to real faith through a Conference he held between 532-533 and Synod from Constantinople from 536. Unfortunately, both attempts failed. Deeply hurt by these failures, Justinian gave an edict on 6th August 536, which condemned the monophysites and their leader, Sever from Antiochia was exiled.

Beside the disputes between the monophysites and the orthodox, there was discussed the matter of the Three Chapters- the three anathemas given by the emperor Justinian on the accession of Synod 5 against:

1. The person and writings of Theodoret de Mopsuestia
2. The writings of Theodoret de Cyr against Nestorius and the Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Ecumenical Synod III from Ephesus.
3. The letter of Ibas de Edessa to Maris the Persian.

Theodor de Mopsuestia belonged to the antiochian school, former disciple of Diodor of Tars, colleague of Joan Golden Mouth and teacher of Nestorius. He was a man of culture and the creator of nestorianism, even more radical than Nestorius. As he died before the Nestorian crisis (428), the Ecumenical Synod III did not take into

account his writings which could be translated into Persian, Syrian or Armenian. Although denounced by Rabuna, bishop of Edessa and condemned by the Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Theodor's errors were not condemned by The Ecumenical Synod IV on the grounds that their author was no more alive.

The core of nestorianism was the distinction between the two natures of own Saviour. Theodor de Mopsuestia claimed that God is one who worked wonders and the other one is Christ who suffered. The two co-exist but it is not one and the same Jesus Christ. He distinguished Jesus Christ- crucified from God, our father. As a result, there occurred a material division into two entities. If God- the world is one person and the other one is Jesus Christ, it will mean that one of them is the Saviour and the other one is the saved.. Thus the salvation of Jesus Christ was denied. How can one save others if he himself is saved by another one? The Nestorians used the term "nature", synonym to "person" and they understood through two natures, two persons or ipostasis. Teodoret, bishop of Cyr from 423 until his death in 457, a very learned man, famous preacher, friend and defender of Nestorie until the Synod from Chalcedon, did not have such a serious record as Theodor de Mopsuestia who was his teacher. His greatest fault was to accuse Cyril of Alexandria too much of mixing up the two natures of Our Saviour, of excommunicating him from the Synod from Ephesus in 431. He also refused to anathematize Nestorie until the Synod from Chalcedon where he achieved this goal and where he was proclaimed "orthodox teacher". In fact, Justinian and Synod V did not intend to condemn the person or Teodoret's writings but only those which were against the Saint Cyril and the Synod III and which pronounced themselves in favour of Nestorie. Teodoret's Christology was mostly the Christology of Theodoret de Mopsuestia and Nestorie, until the Synod from Chalcedon. After that, it became orthodox. Ibas, bishop of Edesa was Nestorian from the beginning.

Theodoret's Christology was mainly the Christology of Theodoret of Mopsuestia and that of Nestorius, until the Council of Chalcedon. Then it became Orthodox.

Ibas, bishop of Edessa, was Nestorian since the beginning. After the first Council of Ephesus he sent a letter to the bishop Mari of Ardashir, letter in which he was criticizing, in a severe manner, both Saint Cyril and that Council and in which he also made some heretical doctrinary statements. Ibas was inquired by a Council held in Tyre by the bishops Photius of Tyre and Eustatius of Berit, where he insisted that

the letter to Maris was not his and that, after the union of St. Cyril with the Orientals, in 433 he stopped criticizing them. Being asked to anathematize Nestorius' name, his teachings and those who protected him and also to approve of the Council of Ephesus, things that he had mentioned in the letter, Ibas refused and so he was removed from his position.

In the Council of Chalcedon he asked that his situation should be reconsidered, denying once again having written that Letter. The Council asked Ibas to declare against the content of the letter, which he did and so he assumed the Orthodox faith and the 3rd Ecumenical Council of Ephesus. By his act he also accepted Saint Cyril and anathematized Nestorius' name and his heretical teachings.

The greatest fault of the Letter to Maris of Ardashir was that of protecting Theodoret of Mopsuestia and Nestorius together with their teachings, of assuming those teachings and of making blasphemous statements about St. Cyril and the 4th Ecumenical Council. All these would trigger his condemnation at the 5th Ecumenical Council, as seen further on.

Considering The Three Chapters issue as an obstacle in achieving his goal of getting the Monophysites to embrace the right faith, Justinian condemned that issue by a first edict in 544. In Leontius of Byzantium theory, that condemnation was trying to make the anti – Chalcedonians accept the Council of Chalcedon. By all those Justinian was trying to reunite the Church and also to free the empire of heretic theories. All the bishops were urged to sign the edict or else they were in danger of losing their position and being sent to exile. The Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem hardly accepted that edict. The Western and African Churches, through bishop Ferrandus, were against signing that edict, invoking the following: the personal opinions of the emperor could not become laws by being signed by the four Patriarchates and also that dead people could not be condemned but only their teachings.

Justinian called Pope Vigilius to Constantinople in an attempt to convince him to disapprove of The Three Chapters. At first, in 546, the pope rejected the edict, but later on, forced by the emperor, he published a document – *Judicatum*—through which he was disapproving of The Three Chapters, hence making angry the Western and the African Churches.

In 551 Justinian published a second edict against The Three Chapters – *Confessio Rectae fidei Justiniani imperatoris adversus Tria Capitula* – but once again

he didn't get any support from the Western and African Churches. That confession of the emperor was also containing 14 anathemas which were approved shortly after, during the 5th Ecumenical Council.

The events described above showed Justinian that he could not condemn The Three Chapters with the 2 imperial edicts from 544 and 551 even if they were signed by the representatives of the Pentarchy. The publishing of Vigilius' *Judicatum*, on 12th April 548 not only didn't bring victory for the imperial decree but it brought the schism between the Western and the Eastern Churches. But Justinian insisted that The Three Chapters included errors that should have been condemned. That was why he decided to solve those problems in an Ecumenical Council.

The Council started on 5th of May 553 in Constantinople in the St. Sophia Church' Secretarium in the absence of the pope. 153 bishops participated in the Council, only 8 of them being Latin. In the end 160 signed. Vigilius didn't want to be a part of that, invoking sickness. The honorary presidency of the council was entrusted with Eutychius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Actually all four patriarchs were responsible for ruling the council works. During those works, pope Vigilius created a document – *Constitutum* – in which he condemned only the teachings of Theodoret of Mopsuestia, which he considered to be heretic. He didn't mention anything about Theodoret of Cyrus or Ibas of Edessa. By this *Constitutum* the pope was trying to find a way to assess on the council and thus to avoid a schism between the Western and the Eastern Churches. Vigilius invoked his authority as a pope, having a strong position and trying to impose his decision to the whole Church. The pope's document was not accepted and the council accused him of being a Nestorian heretic also excommunicating him until he would have adjusted his behavior. By the emperor's orders he was exiled on an island in the Marmara Sea.

During the 8th and last session of the council they condemned The Three Chapters and also those who protected or were trying to protect Theodoret of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa.

Pope Vigilius did not insist on the decision he had made public in *Constitutum*, and, in December 553 he sent a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, Eutychius, in which he admitted his error and condemned The Three Chapters, simultaneously assuming the decisions of the 5th Ecumenical Council. He was permitted to return to Rome but he never did as he died on the way back, in Siracuse, Sicily, on 7th July 555. His successor, the deacon Pelagius, even if at first

was against the condemning of The Three Chapter, changed his position when he got the proposal to become pope. At that moment he condemned The Three Chapters and promised to do everything in his power to make his subjects do the same.

IV. The emperor Justinian and the Origenism

Even if he succeeded with the Three Chapters issue, Justinian's dream to see the monophysites and the orthodoxies united in the same faith never came true. And he also got involved in another controversy: the one against Origen. Pulled in the middle of those talks, Justinian considered the great Alexandrian to be a heretic, condemning him by a decree in 543 and then at the 5th Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 553. Until that moment Origen had divided the theological world in 2: those who considered him to be a guiding light in the theological mysteries and those who thought of him to be nothing more than a heretic.

Acclaimed by some as the most intense light of the Church after the Great Apostles, seen by others as the father of all heretics he saw the world divided: one part with him, the other against him. In those 2 parts, almost in equal number we could find heretics and the Saint Fathers of the Church so if we were to count the votes it would be undecided. The famous Alexandrian teacher belongs to that gallery of extraordinary men that are so rich in spirit and manifestations that they cannot be depicted in their true colors.

The most accurate data about Origen we can find in Eusebius of Caesarea's Ecclesiastical History. Origen had spent his last 20 years in Caesarea, Palestine, where he founded a catechetical school similar to the one in Alexandria and he conducted his extraordinary teaching activity in the most fructuous years of his life. It is here, in this center built by Origen that probably Eusebius saw the day light, at about 10 years after the great man had passed away and he became bishop in 313 and inherited, together with father Pamphili, the whole library and also all the memories left behind by the Alexandrian.

Origen, called the Adamantios (Steel Man), was born around 185 in Alexandria, from a Christian family with 7 children. After his father Leonidas died, during the persecution under Septimius Severus, Origen became the head of the School of Alexandria, school that was preparing the masses to receive the baptism

from bishop Demetrius. Soon after, around 231, the bishop's admiration became envy so Origen got dismissed from priesthood and also lost the leadership of the famous school. Origen left for Caesarea, Palestine, where he founded a school similar to that of Alexandria to teach in for almost 20 years. If he managed to get away during the persecutions under Septimius Severus and Maximus Trachs, he hadn't managed to do the same during the persecution under the emperor Decius. Origen was imprisoned, tortured and in 254 he died in Tyre, Phoenicia, from all those wounds.

The work of Origen is huge, being considered the most prolific author in the history of Christianity, addressing all types of writings, especially biblical philology and exegesis. From the testimonies that got to us it seemed that there is no catalogue of Origen's works. From the almost 800 titles mentioned by Jerome in his XXXIII Epistle to Paula until the amount of 6000 that were mentioned by Eustatius there is none that could justify the difference.

We could categorize the works of Origen into 5 main groups: apologetic, biblical, dogmatic, practical and letters. The biblical works include: works of biblical criticism (first of all Hexapla) and exegetic works (sholii, omilies and comments).

Among the apologetic and polemic works we can find the most important work of Origen, Against Celsus, the most complete work of protecting Christianity against the attacks of the pagan Celsus.

From the assertive category we can mention the first form of the Christian faith "On first principles", in which he developed the idea of God, Logos, Holy Ghost, creation of the world, freedom and free will, the fight between good and evil and the triumph of good. These are the coronation of Origen's work.

Among the works with a practical content we want to mention "On Prayer" which deals with prayer in general, explains the "Lord's Prayer" and has remarks on the position, place, and attitude to be assumed during prayer.

A last group of works is formed of his letters from which only 2 have reached our days. A short letter to Gregory Thaumaturgus and the epistle to Sextus Julius Africanus.

During Justinian's reign, the place of Origenist quarrels were 2 monastic centers in Palestine: The Great Lavra, founded in 486 South-East from Jerusalem, near the Dead Sea and The New Lavra, founded around 505 – 507 by monks from the old lavra, who occupied the space of the biblical village of Tecoa, South of Bethlehem. The quarrels between the Origenist monks and non-Origenist ones made Justinian take

a stand and in 543 he asked Menas, the Patriarch of Constantinople to call for a synod and condemn the Origenist teachings.

The emperor didn't stop there, he wrote the the Treaty against Origen's teachings in which he argued against the errors of the Alexandrian teacher by invoking quotes from the scriptures and the Saint fathers. That treaty had 3 parts:

1. The enumeration of Origen's errors;
2. Quotes from Origen's works to stress out his errors;
3. The 10 anathemas of the emperor against some errors of the Alexandrian teacher.

The author of the treaty was the emperor Justinian but of course with the help of theologians at his court for the scripture quotes. Among the Origenist errors condemned by the emperor we can enumerate: limitation of God's power, the subordinationist view, the plurality of worlds which triggered a repetitive embodiment of the Lord, the pre-existence of souls (theory borrowed from Plato's work Phaidon), errors that led to another serious error – the transmigration of the souls or reincarnation.

But the greatest error of Origen was the apokatastasis or restitution: the souls of those who had sinned on earth could be purified by fire, after death, from an inferior stage to a superior one until the final purification. A consequence of this teaching was that the joys of Heaven were not eternal and also the torments of Hell would come to an end when all the sinners would be rehabilitated. Justinian fought against Origen's apokatastasis because according to that theory all the acts of our Saviour, the Embodiment, the Crucifixion, the Death and the Resurrection would make no sense. We can find quotes from the Saint Fathers John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, Vassilis The Great, who spoke about the joys of Heaven and the torments of Hell. Sometimes Origen stated that he hadn't approve of that wrong theory, but his texts proved the opposite even if he presented the theory of Satan's redemption as a hypothesis not a dogma. The apokatastasis theory, the coronation of Origen's works, which was founded on the idea of pre –existence of souls, was the reason of the Alexandrian teacher's downfall. Being a threat to the Christian teaching foundation the Church condemned that wrong theory.

The Treaty against Origen is valuable for us for many reasons: it quoted from the original work of Peri Archon which are lost, it offered a complete list of Origen's errors and it was a document of Justinian's religious politics. The treaty is also

highlighted by the author's deep knowledge of the Origenist system, of the profane reflections systems – especially Stoic, Pythagorean and Platonic – that influenced Origen's system. It is also valuable because of the way in which it mastered the Christian theology in the middle of the 6th century and because of its precision and art used to find, define and fight Origen's errors.

Even if it was a fierce one, emperor Justinian's Treaty against Origen did not calm the spirits of Palestinian origenist monks. Even if the Treaty prohibited the existence and the activities of origenist monks, they continued to live in the New Lavra, shaking the entire empire.

In order to calm the spirits, Justinian demanded the bishops gathered in Constantinople for the 5th Ecumenical Council to approach the origenist problem. They gathered in a pre-synod in March-April 553 to condemn the errors of the Alexandrian teacher and to formulate 15 anathemas against him. Because that pre-synod was held shortly before the opening of the 5th Ecumenical Council and had same participants later on history made confusion between the two and it was thought that the 5th Ecumenical Council dealt with origenism. From the documents kept there is no evidence of that. Only in the 5th meeting Theodor Askidas made some notes about some condemnations against Origen. But that was not a discussion about Origenism but merely an innuendo about the Alexandrian priest. It was only during the 8th meeting that the heretics Arie, Nestorius, Apollinaris, Eutychius and Macedonius were condemned. Origen's name and his heretic teachings were mentioned among them. Therefore the 5th Ecumenical Council anathematized Origen and his followers in the context of the condemnation of other heretics, without discussing his particular case and by taking into consideration the imperial edict and the pre-synod from 553. By condemning Origen and Origenism they also condemned the Platonic and neo-platonic philosophy.

Origen was condemned in the pre-synod in March-April 553 both for putting an end to the disputes in the Palestinian convents and for the dogmatic importance of the ideas in the origenist system. Those errors of the Alexandrian father forced the 6th century theology to recap the Christian doctrine insisting on eschatology and anthropology, issues that hadn't been treated in the previous Ecumenical Councils.

Condemning Origen and his followers was particularly Justinian's act that brought to the Orthodox faith many services during his 28 years reign. Even if he didn't elaborate the Treaty on his own, the emperor part was extremely important

cause he knew how to join his theological gift with his political and administrative power.

Even if in some of his works Origen proved to be a genius we have to admit that his faults are obviously exposed by fragments of those works. Origen, who was not considered to be a heretic nor condemned for that during his life, became a heretic after his death. Heretics and his friends sometimes seriously forged his writings and the polemics, synods and time ruined his doctrinal system. The Origenist teachings, considered correct during his life slowly became heretic as the Church was clarifying and assessing its doctrine in precise formulas. Origen's contradictions are so numerous and obvious so we might say that his works give us enough elements to give us an anti-Origen.

After a period of 300 years during which his genius agitated the Church, the 15 anathemas of the pre-synod in 553 and the 11th anathema of the 5th Ecumenical Council would forever decide Origen's fate, burying him forever from the point of view of the Church. But in order to remain objective we have to say that the Church had used his teaching for a long period of time and in different periods it took advantage of the reflections and the knowledge of this remarkable person.

V. The political and administrative work of emperor Justinian

In art, Justinian's period is known as "the first golden age" because of the numerous buildings, from fortifications to building or reconstructing whole cities and churches.

The emperor established a whole network of cities and fortifications on the European, Asian and African parts of the empire. For example he rebuilt the cities of Daraa, Amida, Antioch, Theodosiopolis which were ruined in the wars against Chosroes as well as the cities of Thermopylae in Greece and Nicopolis on the Danube which were ruined by old age. Carthage, surrounded by new walls changed its name into Justiniana Secunda and the city of Bona in Northern Africa, rebuilt, got the name Theodorida. New fortresses were built at the emperor's orders in Asia, at Bythinia and Cappadocia. Along the Danube side they built fortifications against the raids of the Slavs in order to protect the empire boundaries.

But the architectural masterpiece during Justinian's reign was Saint Sophia (the divine wisdom) Cathedral or The Great Church built on the spot of a former basilica from Constantine's time. To achieve that great masterpiece the

emperor chose 2 talented architects, the geometer Anthemios of Tralles and the physicist Isidore of Miletus who coordinated the activity of more than 1000 people.

Justinian didn't build only churches and fortresses but also bridges , aqueducts, public baths and hospitals. He also restored the Imperial Palace and the Hippodrome. During Justinian's reign Constantinople became an artistic center taking over this part from cities like Antioch, Ephesus or Alexandria. The churches that the emperor build were a glorification of God's name and also a satisfaction of his pride. The mastery used for the creation of those masterpieces was put by Justinian in the service and use of Christianity.

Justinian ascended the throne both with the ideals of a Roman and of a Christian. Considering himself a descendant from the Roman Caesars he thought it was his destiny to restore the unity of the empire and to reestablish its boundaries from 1st and 2nd centuries. As a Christian emperor Justinian had the holy mission of spreading true faith among the infidels, no matter if they were heretics or pagans. This ideology made Justinian dream of conquering the whole known world.

The most important aspect of Justinian external politics was his effort to regain territories west of the Mediterranean Sea, territories that were occupied by barbarians. That effort was one of the main themes in Justinian's actions. There are 2 aspects that should be underlines in Justinian's efforts to regain territories. First there was the kind of state that Justinian was ruling and the perspective of his rule. It is easy to think of Justinian's state as The Eastern Roman Empire. The western part of the Mediterranean, the origin point of the Roman power lost for the empire and a group of barbarian kings taking over the Western Empire could make one think that the Roman Empire ceased to exist and that Byzantium was something completely different from the former Empire. Such a supposition was not shared by people in the 6th century and less by Justinian. For them, the fact that Rome as a city and geographical area was lost was totally irrelevant because the imperial tradition was still alive even if centered east from the Mediterranean at the New Rome. For all of them the year 476 was not the end of The Roman Empire but only the moment when the whole Roman world started a new life under the rule of the emperor form Constantinople. Justinian saw himself less as Arcadius' descendant and more as Constantine successor.

At all those considerations we have to add Justinian's own point of view. The eastern part of the Mediterranean was mostly Greek and had many details that made it differ from the western part. But even so, those differences were not obvious for a

man with his past. Unlike other emperors that preceded him in Constantinople, Justinian came from the European world, and even more importantly from a Latin area. He saw himself not only as the ruler of the eastern part of the Mediterranean but also as the rightful ruler of the whole Roman world. Considering the favorable circumstances and his ambitious nature he was in the position of transforming that vision into reality.

Secondly, at what we name Justinian's Roman point of view we have to add another consideration, his Christian vision which was a very important issue both in his external and in his internal activities. As many of the barbarians that had occupied the old Western Empire territories were heretics, many of them Arians, Justinian saw it as his duty to regain those territories and to reestablish the rightful faith, that decided at Chalcedon.

With impressive financial resources, a thorough organization and especially with skillful generals such as Belisarius, Narses, Germanus or Mundus, Justinian started a campaign to regain the territories that once belonged to the Romans and which were fallen under barbarian rulers. Step by step, the Byzantines conquered Africa from the Vandals in 533, Italy from the Ostrogoths in 554 and Spain from Visigothes and so Justinian made his dream come true: the Mediterranean as a "Roman lake".

To follow his plans for the western campaigns Justinian needed peace in the eastern area where his interests were in conflict with those of the Persians. With the Persians the Byzantines had peace treaties and sometimes the conditions were humiliating. In 532 Justinian concluded an "Eternal Peace" which cost him tribute to the Persians and in 562 he signed a peace treaty for 50 years under same conditions.

Justinian's wars were both offensive and defensive. The offensive ones were against the Vandals and the Ostrogoths taking back from them Africa and Italy. Those wars were long and demanding but the satisfaction was great cause Justinian won them all.

The defensive wars were against the Persians, in the East, even if the Byzantines mostly bought their peace from king Chosroes with large amounts of gold, and against the Slavs and Huns whom he defeated and then forced them to retire in the northern area of the Balkan Peninsula.

If externally Justinian was extremely active, internally his reign also faced a lot of a movement. The year 532 brought to his capital city the Nika riots which

started because of the complaints against the administrative power. Nika started at the Hippodrome with an uprising of the 2 factions, The Greens and the Blues, uprising which normally should have been easy to control. By their anarchic actions they brought chaos to the Capital, they set part of the Imperial Palace on fire, killed people and tried to replace Justinian with one of his nephews, Hypatius. Being afraid the emperor thought of leaving Constantinople but it was the strength of character and the determination of his wife Theodora that made him change his mind. Counting on the loyalty of his generals Belisarius and Mundus Justinian conceived a plan, the riots were ended and their leaders executed.

Nika riots were the only main internal events that endangered Justinian's reign. Ruined after that rising of the Parties the Capital knew a long process of reconstruction to remove the traces of the destructions. The great work of reconstructing the city would culminate with the architectural innovation of the domed Hagia Sophia.

VI. The legislative and economic work of Justinian

Justinian owes his universal celebrity to his legislative work remarkable in its dimension. His belief was that an emperor "should not find glory only in arms, but to be armed with laws to govern in time of wars and in time of peace; he has to be the powerful protector of laws and victorious over the enemy." Even more, he considered that God let the emperors with the gift of giving laws and interpret them. The emperor had to be a legislator as sanctioned by the divinity. Justinian understood that he had to involve himself practically because the Roman law in his time was chaotic.

The emperor's reliable aid in this quest was Tribonian. He led a commission of ten members whose job was to review the three old codes – Codex Gregorianus, Codex Hermogenianus and Codex Theodosianus, to eliminate everything obsolete and to systematize the constitutions appeared after the publishing of Codex Theodosianus. The results of this work were reunited in one collection and published under the name of Codex Iustinianus at 7th April 529.

In December 530, the emperor named a new formed commission of 16 members, led by the same Tribonian to review the works of all classic jurists of II and III centuries to eliminate the obsolete paragraphs and to rearrange the rest in a certain

order. The new work got the name *Digesta* or *Pandectae* and came into effect in the legislative practice of the Empire.

But according to the emperor not everybody could hope to know the whole content of those works so there was a necessity to form a manual useful for the practice. That manual was divided into 4 parts and was named *Institutiones*.

The decrees published by the emperor between 534 –565 were named *Novellae*. They represent a last part of Justinian's legislative work and they are a very important source of knowledge for his internal politics.

Justinian wanted his 4 collections of laws, *Codex*, *Digesta*, *Pandectae*, *Institutiones* and *Novellae* to form a single body of laws but this didn't happen during his reign. Much later starting with the 12th century the jurists at the University of Bologna named this body of laws *Corpus Juris Civilis*, name that has been used ever since.

If Justinian codes offered to the imperial power the basis for its absolute authority during Middle Ages, it also preserved and later on made recur in the Occident the idea of State and social organization principles. On the other hand Justinian brought to the rigor of Roman law a new dimension, that of social justice, of public morality and humanity.

Justinian was faithful to the Orthodox Church dogmas, many of them being present in his works. He tried to preserve and protect the rightful faith. He considered all those against the rightful faith as his own enemies. He called them heretics. He included in this category not only those who were astray from the faith, Arians, Monophysites, Nestorians, but also the Pagans, Judeans, Samaritans and Mani. He issued lots of laws against them, trying to prevent their activities.

In order for the Church to achieve its goals, Justinian felt obliged to help in any way possible. His dogmatic writings and his edicts against the infidels and the heretics had the same purpose. But this was not enough. Justinian was concerned with increasing the morality of spiritual leaders of the Church as well as with the efficiency of his system of government. Because of that he issued many edicts regarding the members of the clergy – bishops, priests, deacons, regarding the monastic life and the organization system of the Church. Through those legislative measures Justinian fixed many of the Church' flaws. His edicts didn't introduce new principles to the Church's organization but they brought order and improvement to the existing ones.

As a conclusion to all said above about Justinian's legislative work we have to underline the concern he had for the Church hierarchy, the seats of the bishops and the monastic life. All the laws he issued had as a purpose to help the Church, to organize it better and to increase the morality of the empire's subjects. By removing the flaws in all those clergy categories he could only help strengthening the Church's hierarchy and the relation between the State and the Church.

One of the main characteristics of Justinian's economical policy was his determined fight against the large land owners. The State considered the large land owners to be the most dangerous of its enemies because they were making business paying no attention to the State. Justinian led a merciless fight against those land owners. By forced donations, sometimes even fake, to the emperor, by interfering with inheritance matters, Justinian tried to destroy the large estates. After the Nika riots he confiscated many properties. However he did not manage to completely deal with this problem.

The wars of conquest, the grandiose projects and the colossal buildings were financially demanding and because of that Justinian considered that the main duty of the citizen is to pay taxes. The clerks had to take an oath that they would do their duty with honesty and at the same time they were held responsible for collecting the total amount of money in their respective areas. Those who were found guilty of abuse had to be punished and those who were honest and did their jobs were promoted in better positions.

By all his economic and legislative innovations Justinian tried to reform the two parts of the State, which, in that period were in a continuous process of degradation. Even if his success was a partial one, we have to admire the immense efforts of those who tried to make work Justinian's great ideas.

VII. Justinian connections with the Danubian territories

Coming from the Roman population south of Danube (born in 482 in Tauresium, near Skopje, city that gave many rulers to the Empire in the IV – VI centuries), Justinian never forget his birthplace and helped organizing the Church life in the Prefecture of Illyria. The name Tauresium was replaced by Justiniana Prima and became the political and religious center of Illyria. With the 11th Novella, from

14th April 535 he decided to establish an archiepiscopate in this new center of the province Illyria. The political capital of Illyria was moved from Thessaloniki to Justiniana Prima and the latter became also the religious center of the province. The new set archiepiscopate had under its jurisdiction the following provinces: Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Prima, Dardania, Dacia Mediterranea, Macedonia Secunda and some cities north of Danube. The Novella gives us the names of Recidava (today varadia, near Oravita) and Litterata (probably Palanca, Serbia).

In the 6th century the Justiniana Prima Archiepiscopate played an important part in the preservation and continuity of Romanity south of Danube, as well as of Eastern Christian faith in front of papal pretences in the Illyria province. That archiepiscopate is still present in the memory of the present national Churches that on those days were under its canonical jurisdiction.

Justinian's connections to our country territories were not only administrative, as the establishment of the Justiniana Prima Archiepiscopate or the restoration of some cities on the left bank of Danube, but also dogmatic, through the Theopaschite controversy.

The Theopaschite controversy (adding to the hymn "Sfinte Dumnezeule" the Chalcedonian nuanced "Cel ce te-ai rastignit pentru noi", which implied the acceptance of the formula "One of the Trinity suffered") which started in Constantinople in the first years of the 6th century, under the Patriarch Macedonius, disturbed the life of the Eastern Church. Peter the Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch was the one that added this. The Orthodox did not approved of this fighting him with synods, writings and even riots. The theopaschite formula was old and was first encountered at Saint Ignatius Theophorus, who said that "Christ suffered".

The Theopaschite controversy is closely related to the Scythian Monks. They had an important role in the Christology discussions which continued in the 6th century, under Athanasius (491- 518), Justin the 1st (518-527) and Justinian (527 – 565). These monks brought the Theopaschite formula to Constantinople hoping to conciliate the Orthodox with the moderate Monophysites. Papal legates present in the capital of the Empire with the mission to end the Acacian Schism accused them of doctrinaire innovations and brought those charges before Pope Hormisda who vehemently rejected the monks' formula.

During that period Justinian was looking for a dogmatic formula that could serve as a common point of interest both for Orthodox and for the moderate Monophysites. A solution to this problem seemed to be offered by the Scythe monks

who believed that an agreement can be achieved by the common acceptance of the confession that “ One of the Trinity suffered”. That formula could have been explained both for Monophysites and for Orthodox. It expressed the communion between the attributes of the Savior’s dual nature due to their union in the person of Jesus Christ, meaning that the second Person in the trinity did not suffer as a God but in its flesh, affecting his human condition united with the divine one. By approving of this formula, even against the Pope’s and his legates’ wish, in July 520, Justinian hoped to make the moderate Monophysite join the right faith. He did not succeed in his attempt because the Monophysites continued with their wrong belief.

In his decree in 533, Justinian ratified as compulsory the Theopaschite formula for all those who confessed the right faith. In this edict the Scythe monks’ formula was made in accordance to the whole Trinity and Christological teachings. The Holy Trinity remains unchanged even if one of them became human and suffered in flesh, but not in its divine essence. Later on, Justinian convinced the Pope Hormisda followers, Pope John 2nd and Agapetus the 1st to accept this formula. That was one more proof of the emperor’s power, prestige and also of how much passion he had when it came to Church’ issues, passion admired by the Roman bishops too. The Scythe monks’ formula was finally approved in the 5th Ecumenical Council in 553. The Scythe monks influenced the religious politics of Justinian by bringing closer the Monophysites through St Cyril of Alexandria’s theology and by preserving the decisions of the 5th Ecumenical Council. That was the basis of the religious politics of Justinian and it was a great honor for those monks from the far Scythia Minor to be of such importance in the contradictions between Orthodox and Monophysites whose reconciliation was so desired by the emperor.

VIII. The end of Justinian’s age

Although he fought with all his powers for the prosperity of the Orthodox Church and for attracting the Monophysites to the right faith, many of his contemporary historians and others later on doubted Justinian’s faith. The historian Evagrius tells us that in 564 Justinian issued a decree that imposed the Aphthartodocetism. This decree was not preserved and Evgarius is the only one to mention this fact. No other contemporary source brought that fact into discussion.

The Aphantocetism was proclaimed by Julian, Bishop of Halicarnassus who asserted that the body of Christ, born of Virgin Mary was the body of the New Adam, free of sin, incorruptible (from the Greek term *aftartos*), with no more traces of Adam's sin, without natural weaknesses: hunger, thirst, fatigue. Julian's doctrine was deeply wrong by considering the body of Christ unreal, impassible, free for its natural attributes (docetism). All those considerations brought the name Aphantocetism to this group.

Leontius of Byzantium fought this group because in his opinion the Savior became incorruptible not by birth but after his resurrection.

Most historians accept that note of Evagrius about the edict as being the truth. According to those historians Justinian did that either because in his last years he had converted to Aphantocetism or because of his age he was not fully aware of what he was doing.

At 14th November 565, after 38 years of being emperor, Justinian died but the Church has never forgot his merits in the fight for the triumph of Orthodoxy: the basileus lover of Christ is celebrated by the Church on 14th November after Julian's calendar. In spite of some voices, the Church has never stopped to mention and honor Justinian the Great for his love and loyalty to it, for his theological works and for trying so hard to bring the Monophysites under its wing.

The period between 565 –610 was one of sad memory for the Byzantine Empire, when anarchy, poverty and misfortunes stroke the whole empire. The chaos in that period made John of Ephesus talk about "the end of the world". Justinian's followers, Justin the 2nd (565-578), Tiberius the 2nd (578-582), Mauritius (582-602) and Phocas (602 -610) did not stand out by any action compared to their illustrious predecessor.

Byzantium called him Justinian the Great and, with all his flaws and vices he deserved the title. The popular legend, with more mercy than history forever consecrated his glory. The whole world kept in memory this great person. In Egypt in the 7th century as well as in Italy in the 9th century people were talking about the great measure Justinian took to bring back order into the provinces, about his great constructions and the magnificent churches he had built, about his generosity superior to that of his predecessors. The imagination of the people wove legends around the name and image of Justinian. In Byzantium, around 11th and 12th centuries, there was a legend of prestige and miracles around the domed Hagia Sofia which amazed a whole generation with its greatness.

So, centuries had been passing but his memory was still vivid and people experienced surprising episodes as in that day in 1204 when the Latin crusaders, in their lawless greed were plundering the imperial tombs in the Saint Apostles Church found in the profaned tomb Justinian's body still intact after six centuries and they stepped back in front of that emperor who seemed he was going to exit his tomb in all the splendor of his ceremonial clothes and of his jewelry. And finally, when Middle Ages were learning again from his Roman right books Justinian's prestige grew even more. Dante placed Justinian in his "Paradiso" and placed great words in his mouth, words that reflect his way of thinking and his glory:" Caesar I was, and am Justinian/...God in his grace it pleased with this high task/ To inspire me, and I gave me wholly to it."

Embodiment of imperial ideal completed by Christianity...that was indeed, that wanted to be Justinian and by these he was indeed great.