

Pulcheria's Crusade A.D. 421–22 and the Ideology of Imperial Victory

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“C’EST qu’en effet l’empereur byzantin, comme son ancêtre l’*imperator* des derniers siècles de Rome, est essentiellement, aux yeux de son peuple, un maître victorieux.” This pointed definition (from the pen of Jean Gagé¹) underscores a theme of imperial ideology which receives such insistent emphasis in the official art, ceremonial and panegyric of late antiquity that it must correspond to a chilling reality. The defeat of an emperor threatened not only the integrity of the frontiers but internal stability as well and the ascendancy of the emperor and his friends. Conversely, if a weak emperor could claim a dramatic victory, he might establish a more effective hold on the imperial power. In A.D. 420–22 this inner logic of Roman absolutism led to innovations in imperial ideology and to a crusade against Persia, with implications which have escaped the attention of scholars. The unwarlike Theodosius II made war not to defend the Empire but to become “master of victory,” and, as will be seen, to strengthen the dynastic pretensions of his sister Pulcheria Augusta.

I

The numismatic evidence is crucial. Between 420 and early 422 the mint of Constantinople initiated a strikingly new victory type, the much-discussed ‘Long-Cross Solidi’ (PLATE 2):²

Obverse AELPVLCH—ERIAAVG Bust right, diademed, crowned by a hand
Reverse VOTXX MVLTXXXΔ Victory standing left, holding a long jeweled
CROSS, CONOB in the exergue

¹ “Σταυρὸς νικητοῦς: la victoire impériale dans l’empire chrétien,” *Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 13 (1933) 372.

² PLATE 2 presents a specimen from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. For the same reverse type with obverses of Theodosius II and of the western emperor Honorius see e.g. I. I. Tolstoi, *Monnaies byzantines I* (St Petersburg 1912) 73 nos. 47–48, and H. Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l’empire romain VIII* (Paris and London 1892) 188 no.68. For discussion see J. P. C. Kent, “Auream monetam . . . cum signo crucis,” *NC* 6 20

Coin design during this period was generally not an inspired enterprise. Solidi of Theodosius II show only a dozen reverses during his long reign (402–50), and most of these continued themes already “trite and monotonous” in the last decades of the fourth century.³ Another element of traditionalism was the reluctance of coin designers to introduce themes of Christian imperial ideology. The labarum, which Christian writers identified with the cross, had appeared since 327–28,⁴ and beginning in the earlier years of Valentinian II (383–88) the cross sometimes replaced Victory on the imperial globus.⁵ But neither these nor other Christian marks and symbols affected the traditional victory themes of the coinage. Thus when Theodosius I had defeated the usurper Eugenius and his pagan associates on the Frigidus River (September 394), the mint of Milan issued solidi with obverses of Theodosius and his sons and reverses which expressed the traditional ideology of victory:

VICTORI—AAVGGG Emperor standing right, holding military standard and globus surmounted by Victory, trampling on captive.⁶

In contrast with the coins, Christian apologists in various quarters of the Empire exploited the battle of the Frigidus as an opportunity to recommend a Christian ideology of victory: *Theodosii ergo fides fuit vestra victoria*.⁷

(1960) 129ff; A. A. Boyce, *Festal and Dated Coins of the Roman Empire* (ANSNNM 153, New York 1965) 60ff; and R. Storch, “The Trophy and the Cross: Pagan and Christian Symbolism in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries,” *Byzantion* 40 (1970) 105ff, citing earlier literature. Chronology is established by the reverse legend VOTXX MVLTXXX, which associates the initiation issue (Kent type 1) with the *vicennalia* of Theodosius II celebrated sometime within the two-year period preceding 10 January 422, the twentieth anniversary of Theodosius’ accession (Boyce 71). Kent 130f and Boyce 60ff attempt closer dating of the *vicennalia* and the initiation issue to late 421 or 422, but the numismatic evidence is indecisive and the literary evidence they adduce is unreliable (*infra* pp. 155–57).

³ A. Voirol, “Münzdokumente der Galla Placidia und ihres Sohnes Valentinian und Versuch einer Chronologie der Münzprägung unter Theodosius II (408–450),” *Verhandlungen der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Basel* 56 (1944–45) 431ff. For derivation of the reverses from earlier coinage cf. *Roman Imperial Coinage* [hereafter, *RIC*] IX 311ff (index of types) and see *ibid.* p. xxxix for Pearce’s characterization “trite and monotonous.”

⁴ *RIC* VII 62, 64, 572–73 nos. 19, 26, cf. *infra* n.50.

⁵ M. R. Alföldi, “Signum Deae: Die kaiserzeitlichen Vorgänger des Reichsapfels,” *JfNG* 11 (1961) 30f.

⁶ *RIC* IX 83–84 no.35a-c; O. Ulrich-Bansa, *Moneta Mediolanensis* (Venice 1949) 159f, cf. 177f for continuation of the type after the death of Theodosius I (395).

⁷ Ambr. *De obit.Theod.* 8, cf. 2, 7, 10, 52, and similar reactions in Jo.Chrys. *Hom. VI in eccl.apost.* (PG 63, 491–92); Paul.Nol. in Gennad. *De vir.ill.* 49; Aug. *De civ.Dei* 5.26; Oros.

Amid the general conservatism of the coinage, the appearance of the long jeweled cross on the solidi of ca 420–22 was an event which demanded explanation. In his *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* (written about 450) the African bishop Quodvultdeus put them into a historical context:

Indeed we know that in our own time there was a persecution among the Persians when Arcadius, a pious and Christian prince, was emperor. To avoid giving back Armenians who took refuge with him, he went to war with the Persians, assured of victory in advance by a sign—bronze crosses which appeared on the cloaks of his soldiers as they went into battle. For this reason, when he had won the victory the emperor also ordered that gold coins be struck with the same sign of the cross, coins which still circulate today in the whole world, especially in Asia.⁸

Kent⁹ and Boyce¹⁰ have used this text to help date and interpret the Long-Cross Solidi, but it presents difficulties. As Boyce and Kent recognized, Quodvultdeus placed these events in the wrong reign. No other source mentions a Persian war in the time of Arcadius (395–408). From 399 Yazdgard I ruled in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, a monarch whose benevolence toward Christians¹¹ raised hope in influential Roman circles that he would embrace Christianity and force the Persian magi and aristocracy to do likewise.¹²

The only persecution which might reasonably be associated with the Long-Cross Solidi came more than a decade after the death of

7.35.14, 20–22; Severian of Gabala in A. Wènger, “Notes inédites sur les empereurs Théodose I, Arcadius, Théodose II, Léon I,” *REByz* 10 (1952) 50; and esp. the ecclesiastical histories written during the reign of Theodosius II, *Socr.* 5.25.12–15, *Soz.* 7.24.4–6, *Thdt. HE* 5.24.

⁸ 3.36. I translate from the text of R. Braun, *Sources chrétiennes* 101–02 (Paris 1964) II 558–60: *Sane nostris temporibus apud Persas persecutionem factam novimus imperante Arcadio religioso et Christiano principe. Qui ne traderet ad se confugientes Armenios, bellum cum Persis confecit, eo signo ante potitus victoriam quo euntibus ad proelium militibus aeneae cruces in vestibus paruere. Vnde etiam victor auream monetam cum eodem signo crucis fieri praecepit quae in usu totius orbis et maxime Asiae hodieque persistit.* See Braun’s introduction (I 13ff) on this work and the authorship of Quodvultdeus. I thank my colleagues William T. Avery and Robert Boughner for discussing this text with me.

⁹ Kent, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 129ff.

¹⁰ Boyce, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 61f.

¹¹ J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l’Empire perse* (Paris 1904) 87ff; A. Christensen, *L’Iran sous les Sassanides*² (Copenhagen 1944) 269ff.

¹² Jo.Chrys. *Ep.* 14 (PG 52, 618), *Socr.* 7.8.5, 18, *Theoph.* p.82, cf. Labourt, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 92.

Arcadius. In 420 a zealous Christian destroyed a Zoroastrian fire altar in Khuzestan, and the bishop Abdas refused to rebuild it, demonstrating the attitude of defiance which forced Yazdgard to execute Abdas and other confessors and to renew persecution. Even before Yazdgard's death (late 420) Christians had begun to flee to the west. The phylarch Aspebetus assisted them until he too had to escape with his followers to Roman territory, where Anatolius *magister militum per Orientem* placed him in charge of Rome's Saracen federates. Then Vahram V, Yazdgard's son and successor, intensified the attack, apparently aiming to root out Christianity entirely.¹³ Socrates Scholasticus and St Augustine confirm that the persecution struck hard and that when the refugees reached safety they pleaded that their sufferings not be ignored.¹⁴

Even if Quodvultdeus correctly associated the Long-Cross Solidi with persecution in Persia and an ensuing war, obviously he was profoundly ignorant of chronology, of Roman-Persian relations, and of the vicissitudes of Christianity in the Persian Empire, and there is little reason to believe that other elements of his account came from a dependable source. In addition the iconography of the coins casts doubt on his interpretation. As has been suggested, for him the cross of the coins represented miraculous bronze cross-*fibulae* of the military costume to which the soldiers attributed their success.¹⁵ But the long jeweled cross of the coins is far removed from such *fibulae* and indeed, to judge from the figure of Victory beside it, appears to be too large and heavy to be carried easily. Scholars should recognize that the interpretation of Quodvultdeus is without historical foundation. It is a product of the author's "goût du surnaturel,"¹⁶ of his effort to prove

¹³ Socr. 7.18.1, Thdt. *Therap.* 9.32 (ed. Canivet II 345), *HE* 5.39, Cyrill.Scyth. *V.Euthy.* 10 (*Texte u. Untersuch.* 49.2, 18-19), Marcell.com. 420.3, Theoph. pp.82-83; G. Hoffmann, transl., *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig 1880) 34ff; P. Peeters, "Une passion arménienne des SS. Abdas, Hormisdas, Šâhin (Suenes) et Benjamin," *AnalBoll* 28 (1909) 411ff; cf. Labourt, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 105ff; A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient I* (CSCO Subsidia XIV, Louvain 1958) 282ff; P. Canivet, *Histoire d'une entreprise apologétique au V^e siècle* (Paris 1959) 17ff. For the date of Yazdgard's death see Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt* (Leiden 1879) 419f. Socrates denies that Yazdgard began the persecution, but the other sources unanimously refute him. On Anatolius, whom Cyrill.Scyth. identifies as ὁ τότε τῆς ἀνατολῆς στρατηλάτης, cf. *infra* n.66.

¹⁴ Socr. 7.18.2, Aug. *De civ.Dei* 18.52.

¹⁵ Braun, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) *ad loc.*, II 558 n.6. For cruciform *fibulae* cf. J. Heurgon, *Le trésor de Ténès* (Paris 1958) 21ff.

¹⁶ Braun, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) I 69.



Figure 1. Obverse: AELPVLCH-ERIAAUG Bust right, diademed, crowned by a hand



Figure 2. Reverse: VOTXX MVLTXXXA Victory standing left, holding long jeweled cross, CONOB in exergue

SOLIDUS OF AELIA PULCHERIA AUGUSTA (A.D. 420-22) AT DUMBARTON OAKS

Twice actual size

(photographs by courtesy of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection)

that "the promises and prophecies of God" work themselves out in history.

Another aspect of the coins leads to an interpretation which does not depend upon speculation and miracle. Previous scholarship has failed to evaluate Pulcheria specimens among the Long-Cross Solidi of *ca* 420–22. The appearance of an imperial woman on the coinage of the Christian Empire was not without precedent. Mints throughout the Empire had struck for Constantine's mother Helena, his consort Fausta and Constantia his sister, and after a hiatus of more than half a century eastern mints issued coins with obverse portraits of women of the house of Theodosius I: of Flaccilla his first wife in the period 383–86, of Eudoxia consort of his son Arcadius 400–404, and of his granddaughter Pulcheria 414–*ca* 420. But this practice remained unusual and probably controversial.¹⁷ More significantly, until *ca* 420 the mints restricted reverses on coins of imperial women to female types, in every case distinct from the concurrent types of the emperors,¹⁸ confirming that the mints recognized a distinction between males and females of imperial rank. Thus in this respect also the issue of *ca* 420–22 broke with tradition: the mint of Constantinople struck solidi concurrently with identical long-cross reverses and obverses of Theodosius II, of his western colleague Honorius and of Pulcheria.

II

The iconographical assimilation of an empress with the reigning emperors becomes comprehensible when evidence for Pulcheria's prominence in the eastern court is brought under review.¹⁹ Born 19 January 399, she was the senior child of Arcadius and Eudoxia. Her mother bore two more daughters (Arcadia 400, Marina 403) and a son

¹⁷ *Soz.* 2.2.4 following Euseb. *VC* 3.47.2 considers Helena's rank Augusta and her *Münzrecht* unusual distinctions. For nearly a century after 329 no western mint struck for an imperial woman, even when eastern mints had resumed the practice for Flaccilla 383. In 404 the western court protested iconographical assimilation of Eudoxia with the emperors in the East, *Coll. Avell.* 38.1 (*CSEL* 35.1, 85), *cf.* H. Kruse, *Studien zur offiziellen Geltung des Kaiserbildes im römischen Reiche* (Paderborn 1934) 31f.

¹⁸ *e.g.* Fausta SALVSREI—PVBLICAE Empress (Salus) standing facing, looking left, head veiled, holding two children in her arms, *RIC* VII 749 (index of reverse legends and types); and Flaccilla SALVSREI—PVBLICAE Victory seated right on cuirass, writing *chi-rho* on shield held on small column, *RIC* IX 316 (index of types), distinguished from a concurrent *vota* reverse of the emperors by its legend and by the absence of *vota* numbers.

¹⁹ In general Ensslin, *RE* 23 (1959) 1954ff.

Theodosius II (b. 401, Augustus 10 January 402) before succumbing in 404 to a miscarriage.²⁰ When Arcadius himself died in 408, he left Theodosius in a precarious situation, with the danger that as Pulcheria and her sisters approached marriageable age an ambitious politician might arrange a union which would destroy the independence of the dynasty. Thus in her fourteenth year (412-13) Pulcheria devoted herself to virginity and persuaded her sisters to do likewise. According to Sozomen, a contemporary author who presumably knew the truth, she acted "in order that she might not bring another male into the palace and might remove every opportunity for competition and plotting." Pulcheria's method of announcing this vow revealed an appreciation of the value of publicity and the power of Christian-imperial symbolism. "Calling to witness God himself and the priests and every subject," Sozomen continues (9.1.3-4), she dedicated an altar decorated with gold and precious stones, "for her own virginity and her brother's rule," in the Great Church of Constantinople. At about the same time Pulcheria also revealed a mature will and skill at manipulation. She persuaded Theodosius to ignore the influential *cubicularius* Antiochus and herself began to direct her brother's decisions (Theoph. p.82).

At this point scepticism is in order. The initiative and acumen implied in Pulcheria's earliest political acts seem extraordinary in a person hardly past childhood. In addition, the fullest source is the miniature encomium with which Sozomen begins Book 9 of his *Ecclesiastical History*, a piece which certainly exhibits encomiastic *amplificatio* and perhaps contains distortion as well.²¹ Even so this encomium might help confirm that the emergence of Pulcheria in 412-13 was a political event of first importance. Sozomen dwells on Pulcheria's merits because in his view the piety of Pulcheria and her sisters won God's favor for Theodosius, protected him during his minority, and kept the eastern Empire secure in a period when the West faced grave crises.²² With this interpretation Sozomen implicitly refutes Socrates Scholasticus, whose more realistic treatment of the same phenomenon had appeared in his *Ecclesiastical History* soon after 439, about a decade before Sozomen's own. According to Socrates

²⁰ Seeck, *RE* 6 (1909) 917ff.

²¹ Soz. 9.1.13 expresses concern *μη και μωμήσῃται τις ως ἕτερα πραγματευόμενος εἰς ἐγκωμίων νόμον ἐπάπην*.

²² 9.3.3, 6.1. Thdt. *HE* 5.36.2-4 and Philostorg. 12.7 adopted similar interpretations.

(7.1.1–3), who mentions neither Pulcheria nor divine favor in this connection, the eastern Empire flourished during the minority of Theodosius II under the administration of Anthemius, praetorian prefect of the East.

Even if Sozomen knew the truth, in this case abundant evidence proves Socrates correct. After receiving the praetorian prefecture in 405, Anthemius²³ had distinguished himself by the ability to exercise power while respecting the traditional pretensions of aristocrats, men of nobility and intellect, many of whom he brought into his deliberations (Socr. 7.1.3). Synesius of Cyrene associates him with a circle of poets, philosophers and politicians who called themselves 'Hellenes'.²⁴ According to Socrates (7.1.3) the sophist Troilus, a leading figure in this group, advised him on every matter of importance. Even if he was a Christian, Anthemius demonstrated regard for traditional secular culture and a willingness to tolerate diversity. The same attitudes inspired his foreign policy. An ambassador to the Persian court early in his career,²⁵ Anthemius probably deserves credit for good relations with Yazdgard I and his benevolence toward Christians. Evidence exists that the Romans reciprocated in the time of Anthemius by tolerating fire cult in Roman territory. A statue base from the Lydian town of Hypaipa preserved epigrams from this period on two of its sides honoring a proconsul of Asia and on the third side a notice that the man responsible for erecting the monument was Apollonius *archimagos*. As Josef Keil observed, the fact that an official of the fire cult expressed his thankfulness openly suggests that he and his coreligionists enjoyed official protection.²⁶

The Hypaipa inscriptions, however, and Keil's perceptive analysis of them, also suggest why Sozomen, in contrast with Socrates, praised Pulcheria while suppressing the achievements of Anthemius. The proconsul honored at Hypaipa was the great prefect's own son Fl. Anthemius Isidorus. The proconsulship of Isidorus certainly fell

²³ There is no adequate study. For the evidence see C. Zakrzewski, *Le parti théodosien et son antithèse* (*Eos* suppl. 18, Lvov 1931) 156ff; É. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'Empire romain* (Paris 1951) 338ff, 499ff; and E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire I* (Paris/Bruges 1959) 245ff, 549f.

²⁴ *Epp.* 1, 26, 47, 49, 73, 75, 91, 99, 101, 118, 119, 123, 129.

²⁵ *Thdt. Hist. rel.* 8 (PG 82, 1369).

²⁶ J. Keil, "Die Familie des Prätorianerpräfekten Anthemius," *AnzWien* 79 (1942) 197f (inscriptions), 201ff (toleration). The doubts of L. Robert, *Épigrammes du Bas-Empire* (*Hellenica* IV, Paris 1948) 19 n.1, are unjustified.

between 405 and 410. In the latter year he became city prefect of Constantinople, and the two highest civilian posts in the eastern government were united in the same family.²⁷ The dynastic implications of such a conjunction alone might have seemed to a contemporary to threaten the independence of Theodosius II.²⁸ But at about this time Anthemius also married a daughter to a man of imperial pretensions; his son-in-law Procopius, *magister militum per Orientem* during the Persian war of 422, claimed descent from Procopius the usurper of 365–66, who was himself a relative of Constantine the Great.²⁹ Whatever his intentions regarding the sisters of Theodosius, such a marriage gave pause to rivals of Anthemius in the eastern aristocracy, for they knew of at least one other descendant of Anthemius, Fl. Anthemius Isidorus Theophilus, a young man perhaps a few years older than Pulcheria and an ideal prospect for her hand.³⁰ These rivals of Anthemius, whoever they were,³¹ recalled that two decades earlier another prefect had attempted to consolidate his power by marrying his daughter to Arcadius and had been forestalled when Arcadius chose Eudoxia instead.³²

Thus the *silentium* of Sozomen speaks with paradoxical clarity. As Otto Seeck recognized long ago,³³ the fact that Sozomen does not mention Anthemius or his achievements means that Pulcheria and those who admired her despised his memory. This attitude confirms that the danger of which Sozomen did write, which induced Pulcheria to adopt celibacy and impose it on her sisters, and which required a public display of her devotion so that no amount of persuasion could reverse her decision, came straight from the house of Anthemius.

The great prefectures changed hands in the next two years, and

²⁷ *Cod.Theod.* 8.17.2–3=*Cod.Just.* 1.19.6 (4 Sept. 410); Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.26) 192, 196, 199f, 202 (stemma).

²⁸ Cf. the case of Tatianus PPO Or 388–92 and his son Proculus PUC 388–92, *PLRE* I 746f, 876f, with the comments of G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale* (Paris 1974) 288f.

²⁹ *Sid.Ap. Carm.* 2.68–69 *cui prisca propago Augustis venit a proavis*, 94; Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.26) 191, 202 (stemma); cf. *PLRE* I 742f on Procopius the usurper.

³⁰ This Isidorus (unknown to Keil) appears as *praeses provinciae Arcadiae* in two papyrus fragments, *Stud.Pal.* XIV 12a and *P.Oxy.* XVI 1879, the latter dated 434. He may have been born *ca* 395 and was perhaps the son or nephew of the better-known Isidorus.

³¹ Aurelian is a strong possibility, *infra* p.161. Since most of the high officials attested 412–22 are mere names for us, further speculation would be unproductive.

³² Rufinus PPO Or 392–95, *PLRE* I 778ff, A. Cameron, *Claudian* (Oxford 1970) 53, 64f.

³³ *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* VI (Stuttgart 1920) 401 *ad* 69.8.

evidence suggests more than a change in personnel. Anthemius' son Isidorus laid down the city prefecture between 29 October 412 and 21 March 413,³⁴ about the time of Pulcheria's vow; Anthemius himself is last attested as praetorian prefect of the East 18 April 414³⁵ and after that date is not heard of again. Chronographical sources record two events which prove that as the Anthemian threat receded Pulcheria continued to emerge as a force in the eastern Roman government. On 4 July 414, about the time Anthemius disappeared, she received the rank of Augusta,³⁶ and on 30 December of the same year Aurelian, the new praetorian prefect of the East, dedicated her portrait bust in the senate house of Constantinople along with busts of Honorius and Theodosius her fellow Augusti.³⁷ The Paschal Chronicle gives no details as to the respective size and arrangement of the three portraits, but the inclusion of Pulcheria focused attention on her rank. Like the initiation series of Long-Cross Solidi, Aurelian's dedication represented iconographical assimilation of an empress with the reigning emperors. It confirms that more than encomiastic exaggeration lurks behind Sozomen's description of her position: "(Pulcheria) took control of the government, reaching excellent decisions and swiftly carrying them out with written instructions."³⁸

This government of Pulcheria broke with its predecessor in some respects, issuing harsh legislation against Jews, for example, and excluding from the administration those accused of Hellenism or tainted by excess devotion to culture.³⁹ New directions were to be expected, because Pulcheria's vow had a religious and ascetic as well as a dynastic side. In Sozomen's encomium (9.3.2) she and her sisters give up the idle life of the palace to devote themselves to the loom and other pursuits worthy of "admirable women." Socrates confirms that the palace of Theodosius took on the atmosphere of a cloister, with much fasting, singing of hymns and observance of canonical hours.⁴⁰ Devotion to asceticism increased Pulcheria's susceptibility,

³⁴ *Cod.Theod.* 15.1.50, cf. 6.13.1 etc. to Priscianus PUC.

³⁵ *Cod.Theod.* 9.40.22. *Cod.Theod.* 8.4.26 of 17 Febr. 415 needs redating; see O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste* (Stuttgart 1919) 26, 311.

³⁶ Marcell.com. 414.1, *Chron.Pasch.* p.571.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, cf. *PLRE* I 128f on Aurelian.

³⁸ 9.1.5, cf. similar (but independent) language in Philostorg. 12.7.

³⁹ Seeck, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.33) VI 68ff; Ensslin, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 1955ff, Stein, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.23) I 275f; also Lippold, *RE* suppl. 13 (1973) 1015, expressing caution.

⁴⁰ 7.22.4-6, also Thdt. *HE* 5.36.4.

and the susceptibility of the government, to the influence of priests and holy men. At about this time Bishop Atticus of Constantinople composed a treatise *De fide et virginitate* for Pulcheria and her sisters.⁴¹ Unfortunately this treatise has not survived, but perhaps Atticus presented it with a sentiment like that with which Vegetius dedicated his *Epitoma rei militaris*: "and no one should know more of beneficial things than the prince, whose learning can profit all of his subjects."⁴²

III

The Pulcheria regime broke most dramatically with its predecessor in relations with Persia. Although no direct evidence exists, it is reasonable to assume that devotees of the fire cult no longer enjoyed official benevolence in Roman territory after 414. Roman persecution of fire cult would help explain why Yazdgard, under pressure from Persian nationalists, could no longer maintain his policy of tolerating Christianity in Persia in the face of outbreaks like the defiance of Abdas. In addition the Romans did not respond to persecution in Persia with diplomacy, as might have been expected from Anthemius. According to Socrates, Christian refugees from Persia turned first to Bishop Atticus. "Eager to help them however he could," Atticus informed Theodosius, and the government, "ready to do anything for the sake of Christianity," decided to break Rome's treaty with Persia and go to war (Socr. 7.17.3, 6-8).

Socrates dates this change in Roman policy to the period following Yazdgard's death, but apparently it had come earlier. On 5 May 420, perhaps a year before hostilities began, the emperor issued a decree (*Cod. Just.* 8.10.10) inviting property-holders in provinces exposed to Persian attack to protect their estates with private fortifications. This dangerous practice, which might permit local magnates to escape the emperor's authority, seemed necessary because all available forces were to be thrown into the offensive.⁴³ Theodosius even ordered units of the field army stationed in Europe and the vicinity of Constantinople to march to the Mesopotamian frontier,⁴⁴ a hazardous move

⁴¹ Gennad. *De vir. ill.* 53, Marcell. *com.* 416.2.

⁴² 1 *praef.* Hence there may be a point to Seck's sneer, "Weiberherrschaft ist meist auch Pfaffenherrschaft," *op. cit.* (supra n.33) VI 72.

⁴³ Socr. 7.18.10 says that the Mesopotamian frontier was undefended during the Roman offensive (*infra* pp.167-68).

⁴⁴ Socr. 7.18.15-17 implies this. Theoph. p.104 reports that Marcian, eastern emperor

in view of the Hun threat on the Danube. The court planned a major campaign against Persia and was determined to ensure success.

While the troops marched Pulcheria turned to other preparations which would invest their operations with religious significance. Acting "under her influence" (κατὰ μίμησιν τῆς μακαρίας Πουλχερίας) Theodosius sent a rich donation for the poor to the archbishop of Jerusalem, and also a "golden cross studded with precious stones" (σταυρὸν χρυσοῦν διάλιθον) to be erected on Golgotha. In exchange for these gifts the archbishop sent relics of the right arm of St Stephen Protomartyr. When St Stephen informed her in a dream that he was in Chalcedon, Pulcheria "arose taking her brother with her and went to greet the holy relics" in what can be recognized as a public *adventus* celebration. Then she deposited the relics in a martyr church which she founded for St Stephen in the imperial palace.⁴⁵ Theophanes reports this sequence of events under the year 428, but his date can be corrected with confidence to 421.⁴⁶ Since chronographical sources most likely transmitted the date of the *adventus*, the court's decision to seek translation of the relics came in 420 or early 421 at the latest.

The coincidence in dates suggests that Pulcheria's interest in St Stephen was associated with the approach of war against Persia. Presumably she brought him into the palace for dynastic reasons because she expected him to intercede in the present crisis for the Empire

450–57, had served early in his career in a unit which marched from Greece to fight the Persians, from context clearly 421–22. Ardaburius, commander in the campaign of 421 (*infra* pp.167–68), was *magister militum praesentalis* at the time and thus led a praesental army.

⁴⁵ Theoph. pp.86–87, cf. Cedren. p.592 copying Theoph. and Niceph. *HE* 14.9 (PG 146, 1084–85), following the source of Theoph. but including the significant detail that Praëyllius was bishop of Jerusalem at the time. A sermon quoted *infra* p.164 provides contemporary evidence that Pulcheria brought St Stephen into the palace. On the *adventus* character of the celebration see most recently S. MacCormack, "Change and Continuity in late Antiquity: the Ceremony of Adventus," *Historia* 21 (1972) 747f, and N. Gussone, "Adventus-Zeremoniell und Translation von Reliquien: Vitricius von Rouen, De laude sanctorum," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 10 (1976) 128ff. See also W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*³ (Mainz 1976) no.143, for a famous ivory in the Trier Cathedral treasure which may depict St Stephen's *adventus* and Pulcheria's reception of the relic. I plan to explore this possibility in another article.

⁴⁶ Theophanes dates the *adventus* correctly to the twentieth year of Theodosius but erroneously makes this 428 because he numbers Theodosius' years 408–50 (ἔτη μβ'), while his source, counting from 10 January 402 (*supra* p.158), had intended 421. The latter date must be correct because Praëyllius (*supra* n.45) died in 422; see E. Honigmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," *DOPapers* 5 (1950) 211.

and its rulers. On the symbolic level, in a contemporary sermon the familiar deacon and first athlete of Christ took on the character of the ideal Christian soldier, and the rich ambiguity of Stephen's name evoked the imperial crown of victory which Pulcheria brought into physical intimacy with herself and her brother: "the crown (*Στέφανος*) is in the palace, for the virgin empress has taken him to herself (*ἐθαλάμεισε αὐτόν*)." ⁴⁷ This symbolism gains significance from its setting. The sermon is an encomium of St Stephen found among the *spuria* of St John Chrysostom but almost certainly delivered in Constantinople within a decade or two after 421, perhaps in Pulcheria's *martyrium* itself. ⁴⁸

What of the "golden cross studded with precious stones" which Theodosius sent to Jerusalem "under Pulcheria's influence"? Theophanes recognized in this cross no more than a gift which invited the archbishop's gift in return, but this interpretation does not account for the object chosen and for the fact that the court specified Golgotha as the site of the dedication. As is well known, Christian authors had long spoken of the cross as the *vexillum* or *tropaion* which symbolized Christ's victory over death, the devil and the enemies of faith. ⁴⁹ Dedication on Golgotha, the scene of Christ's victory, confirms that this was the symbolism Pulcheria had in mind. In addition Christian authors since Eusebius had recommended the cross as the instrument of the emperor's victory, sometimes recognizing it in the labarum, the *vexillum* or *tropaion* of the Christian Empire. ⁵⁰ This symbolism of

⁴⁷ PG 63, 933, cf. Gagé, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 381, on victory symbolism and the cult of St Stephen.

⁴⁸ F. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople* (*Studi e testi* 247, Vatican City 1967) 158, identifies PG 63, 933–34 as a work of Proclus.

⁴⁹ e.g. Col. 2:15, Justin.Mar. *Apol.* 1.55, Orig. *In Iudic.hom.* 9.1, Euseb. *LC* 9.16, VC 1.32.2, Cyrill.Hier. *Ep. ad Const.* 3 (PG 33, 1169), Greg.Naz. *Or.* 5.3 (PG 35, 669), Aster.Am. *Hom.* 8.6.1 (ed. Datema p.89), Ambr. *De obit.Theod.* 43, and in Pulcheria's time esp. Soz. 1.3.4; H. Grégoire, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Asie mineure* (Paris 1922) no.104; and the popular acclamations in W. Kraatz, *Koptische Akten zum ephesinischen Konzil vom Jahre 431* (*Texte u. Untersuch.* 26.2, Leipzig 1904) 50: "Christus, unser Herr, Du hast gesiegt; Kreuz (*κραυπέος*), Du hast gesiegt." The symbolism was also current in apse mosaics and other Christian art of the period; see Ch. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei* (Wiesbaden 1960) 79ff, and E. Dinkler, "Bemerkungen zum Kreuz als *ΤΡΟΠΑΙΟΝ*," *Mullus, Festschrift Theodor Klauser* (*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* suppl. 1, Münster 1964) 71ff.

⁵⁰ e.g. Euseb. *LC* 9.8, VC 1.29, 31.3, Cyrill.Hier. *Ep. ad Const.* 5 (PG 33, 1172), Ambr. *De obit.Theod.* 41. For identification of the labarum with the cross see Euseb. *HE* 9.9.10, VC 1.31, 40, 3.3, Greg.Naz. *Or.* 4.66 (PG 35, 588), Ruf. *HE* 9.9.3, Soz. 1.4.1 with Dinkler, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.49) 74f, citing further literature.

the imperial victory cross was current in Pulcheria's time in ecclesiastical historians who resurrected the Eusebian account of Constantine's famous vision,⁵¹ but as of ca 420 it had found only slight expression in the coinage and other visual and literary media of official ideology.⁵²

At this point the initiation issue of Long-Cross Solidi becomes crucial to a profound understanding of Pulcheria's Golgotha cross, and conversely the Golgotha cross will clarify the symbolism of the coins. The cross of the solidi, like the Golgotha cross, was a "golden cross studded with precious stones." The goddess Victory of the coins, like dedication of a cross on Golgotha, associated the symbol of Christ's passion with victory. The two designs appeared within close chronological limits in the context of the Persian war. Their provenance was the same. Moneyers of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* produced the coins in Constantinople and a workshop of the same *comes* probably created the Golgotha cross.⁵³ Similar iconography, proximity in time and circumstance, and identity of origin make it virtually certain that the Long-Cross Solidi and the Golgotha cross presented the same victory symbolism, conceived "under the influence of Pulcheria." Solidi with "Victory standing left holding a long jeweled cross" recalled Christ's victory on Golgotha, while the Golgotha cross of 420–21 promised Theodosius victory over the Persians. In the vivid

⁵¹ Rufin. *HE* 9.9.1–3, Philostorg. 1.6, Socr. 1.2.4–7, Soz. 1.3–4.1, cf. J. Vogt, "Berichte über Kreuzeserscheinungen aus dem 4. Jahrhundert n.Chr.," *AnnPhilHist* 9 (1949) 593ff, arguing *contra* Grégoire that Eusebius' account was not completely unknown in the fourth century.

⁵² For the coinage see *supra* p.154. On the base of the column of Arcadius two flying Victories bore a victory wreath and a cross within; see J. Kollwitz, *Oströmische Plastik der theodosianischen Zeit* (Berlin 1941) 43ff, Beilage 6, and A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris 1936) 32, 34. This column, founded ca 402 but not dedicated until 10 July 421 (Marcell.com. 421.2, *Chron.Pasch.* p.579), appears to be the earliest monumental representation of imperial victory-cross symbolism. Despite attribution to Constantine, cross monuments in Constantinople at the Milion, the Philadelphion and the Forum of Constantine recorded in *Script.orig.Const.* I 30–31, II 160, 166, 178, 205 (ed. Preger) probably should be dated a century or two later when their symbolism had become a commonplace (cf. Dinkler, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.49] 75ff).

⁵³ *Cod.Just.* 12.23.7 (A.D. 384) listing departments of the *sacrae largitiones* includes *aurifices solidorum* but also *aurifices specierum*, 'goldsmiths', *sculptores et ceteri artifices*, 'engravers and other craftsmen', and *barbaricarii*, who decorated armor and did other fine work in precious metals; cf. J. P. C. Kent, Excursus: "The *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*," in E. C. Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps* (Washington 1961) 43f; A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire I* (Oxford 1964) 427f; M. F. Hendy, "Aspects of Coin Production and Fiscal Administration in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Period," *NC* 12 (1972) 124.

language of Christian victory symbolism, both declared that the victory of Christ and the emperor's victory were identical.⁵⁴

If this interpretation is correct, it is reasonable to hypothesize a common model for the Golgotha cross and the cross of the *solidi*,⁵⁵ a “golden cross studded with precious stones” which received such veneration at the court that Pulcheria naturally selected it as a pattern for the craftsmen of the *largitiones*. In the *Vita Constantini* Eusebius describes an imperial cross which he himself saw in Constantinople in Constantine's palace. “Made of precious colored stones set in gold,” it occupied the central ceiling panel of the most intimate chamber and served, according to Eusebius (VC 3.49), as a *palladium* (*φυλακτῆριον*) of the Empire. This cross did resemble the hypothetical pattern cross in design, location and function, but it was done in mosaic or fresco, while the text of Theophanes and particularly the coins indicate a model which was plastic and movable.⁵⁶

A more attractive possibility is the “cross of St Constantine the Great” known from a number of passages in Constantine Porphyrogenitus *De cerimoniis*. Described as “very beautiful,” “much-revered,” “studded with precious stones” and “large,” it was portable enough to be brought forth for coronation rites and the veneration of the faithful and to be carried in processions with the *labara* and other military standards. To judge from its name it was also ancient by the tenth century, and it was kept, significantly, in the palace church of St Stephen with other implements of imperial ceremonial.⁵⁷ It may have been there from the beginning. Perhaps when Pulcheria deposited

⁵⁴ Contrast Kent, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 131, on the coins: “Christianity, symbolized by the great cross, is supported by Roman Victory.” In my view the symbolism of the cross is much richer than Kent admits, while the figure of Victory, far from evoking the strength of Roman arms ‘supporting’ Christianity, is no more than a trite abstraction for the notion of victory.

⁵⁵ Most scholars believe that the Golgotha cross itself inspired the cross of the *solidi*, e.g. Kent, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 132; Boyce, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 60; Storch, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 117 n.2. A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin* (Paris 1957) 28 n.2, denies any connection, observing that the Golgotha cross was fixed while the cross of the *solidi* appears to be portable. The theory of a common model removes this difficulty.

⁵⁶ Thus Victory *holds* the cross. If she did not, it would fall. (Contrast Kent's view, *supra* n.54.)

⁵⁷ *De cerimoniis*. 1.1 (ed. Vogt I 6): τὸν μέγαν καὶ περικαλλῆ καὶ πολυτίμητον τοῦ ἁγίου Κωνσταντίνου σταυρόν, 1.41, 43, 44 (ed. Vogt II 18–19, 27, 33), also 1 *app.* (Bonn ed. I 502): τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ τοῦ μεγάλου τε καὶ διαλίθου, 2.8, 10 (Bonn ed. I 538–41, 549–50), esp. 2.40 (p.640): ὁ μέγας σταυρὸς τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου. Cf. Grabar, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.52) 36, and C. Cecchelli, *Il trionfo della croce* (Rome 1953) 110.

St Stephen's relics in her newly-built *martyrium* she placed this cross there as well,⁵⁸ for this cross or another much like it was present in 420–21 to inspire the common symbolism of the Golgotha cross and the Long-Cross Solidi. In the intimacy of the palace the 'cross of Constantine' became a palladium of Theodosian victory, like St Stephen's relics a physical guarantee of divine favor for the dynasty. Pulcheria's cross-piety paralleled her piety toward the saint in a coherent program of ideological preparation for the war against Persia.

IV

Despite the usual intractability of the sources,⁵⁹ the strategy of 421 is not difficult to grasp. Roman generals planned to inflict grave damage on Persia and extract enough concessions for the 'victory' which the court expected. Thus Ardaburius *magister militum praesentalis* crossed the frontier east of Amida and plundered Persian Arzanene, then marched into Mesopotamia and besieged Nisibis.⁶⁰ In the meantime a satraps' revolt in Persarmenia invited the Romans to challenge Persia on a second front. Anatolius *magister militum per Orientem* marched northward (also in 421) and fortified Karin on the frontier between Roman and Persian Armenia, renaming it Theodosiopolis.⁶¹

⁵⁸ A sermon published among the *dubia* of St John Chrysostom seems to contain a contemporary reference: *Nῦν Δάφνη τερπνὴ καὶ θεοφιλῆς, οὐ μόνον διειδέστατα βλύζουσα νάματα, οὐ κόμας δένδρων χαριεστάτας ἐκτρέφουσα, ἀλλὰ προσλαβοῦσα ξένον φυτὸν τὸν σταυρὸν* (PG 50, 715). Leroy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.48) 216f, recognizes that this sermon is in the manner of Proclus of Constantinople and suggests (p.158) that Proclus delivered it in the imperial palace ('Daphne'), "sans doute dans la même église S. Etienne de Daphni, en quelque sorte paroisse impériale."

⁵⁹ Socr. 7.18.9–25, 20 gives the only connected account, a selective and tendentious version which reflects his own speculation and the panegyric tone of his sources (*infra* pp.168, 171). His distortions have led some scholars to perceive a Roman victory in 421–22, e.g. Labourt, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 118, and J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire II* (London 1923) 4f, while Seeck, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.33) VI 85ff, and Stein, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.23) I 280f, adopt proper caution. The Persian tradition preserved in Tabari, transl. Nöldeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) 108, is even more tendentious, from the opposite point of view. In addition modern scholars (though not the ancient authors) have confused events of 421–22 with a second Persian war of 441 (*infra* n.66).

⁶⁰ Socr. 7.18.9–14, 20, cf. Demandt, *RE* suppl. 12 (1970) 747f, on Ardaburius and his command.

⁶¹ Movsēs Xorenaçi, *History of Armenia* 3.56–59 (transl. Langlois II 164–67), cf. *supra* n.13 and *infra* n.66 on the command of Anatolius. Based on Xorenaçi, Weissbach, *RE* 5A (1934) 1924ff, correctly dates Anatolius' fortification of Karin/Theodosiopolis to the time of the

From this position Anatolius presumably supported Armenian independence, although nothing is heard of his operations.

The Paschal Chronicle (p.579) reports that on 6 September 421 word of a 'victory' over the Persians reached Constantinople. This was most likely a minor success of Ardaburius during the Arzanene campaign, because during the siege of Nisibis King Vahram appeared with the bulk of his army and brought the offensive of Ardaburius to a premature end. While his Saracen allies struck across the frontier, the Persian king forced Ardaburius to withdraw from Nisibis (Socr. 7.18.21-22, 24). Then Vahram also went on the offensive, advancing deep into Roman territory to besiege Theodosiopolis—not Theodosiopolis in Armenia but an important Roman fortress in Mesopotamia (earlier Resaina).⁶² Vahram had wisely postponed the recovery of Persarmenia and concentrated instead on Mesopotamia, where the absence of Anatolius presumably gave him an advantage.

In this threatening situation Christian observers found material for speculation on the Christian ideology of victory. According to Socrates (7.18.23), God inflicted an "irrational terror" upon the Saracens, thousands of whom promptly threw themselves fully armed into the Euphrates, while Theodoret (*HE* 5.37.8-10) relates how a providential missile struck a blasphemous Persian lieutenant, inducing Vahram to give up the siege of Theodosiopolis. In reality the Persian king had already secured victory enough by carrying the war to the Romans and could cut his losses while depending on stalemate to bring renewal of the treaty.⁶³

In the next year Theodosius II decided to make peace. "Out of generosity," Socrates says, "and even though his side had been successful," the emperor dispatched his master of offices Helio to the Mesopotamian frontier to initiate negotiations.⁶⁴ The real reason for this

satraps' revolt which followed the death of Yazdgard I (late 420, *supra* n.13). The revolt lasted three years (Xorenaçi), but by 422 Anatolius had returned to Mesopotamia to participate in negotiations, after which he gave up his command (*infra* p.169).

⁶² Thdt. *HE* 5.37.6-10. Seeck, Weissbach, and Stein (*supra* nn.59, 61) are among scholars who assume that Vahram attacked Armenian Theodosiopolis, but Armenia was in revolt and Xorenaçi's account (*supra* n.61) makes it clear that Vahram did not intervene. On Theodosiopolis/Resaina see V. Chapot, *La frontière de l'Euphrate* (Paris 1907) 301ff.

⁶³ When Helio arrived in 422 to begin negotiations (*infra*), the Romans had fortified defensive positions in Mesopotamia, *ἐνθα τὴν τάφρον οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι πρὸς οἰκείαν φυλακὴν ἐπεποίητο*, Socr. 7.20.3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 1-3, Theoph. p.87, cf. Seeck, *RE* 8 (1913) 46f.

decision is clear from the failure of the Roman offensive in 421 and from a laconic entry in the Chronical of Marcellinus under 422: *Hunni Thraciam vastaverunt*. A major Hun invasion into the Danube provinces forced the Romans to bring forces committed to the Persian war back to their stations in Europe. These redeployments began as early as 3 March 422, when Theodosius issued a constitution to Eustathius praetorian prefect of the East providing quarters in the new land wall of Constantinople for troops “returning from campaign or setting out for battle.”⁶⁵

By this time the emperor was also listening to other advisers who persuaded him that the crusade against Persia was misguided and dangerous. At first Helio worked with the existing generals, sending Maximus, *assessor* of Ardaburius, to negotiate with Vahram (Socr. 7.20.3), and also Anatolius,⁶⁶ who had apparently led his army back from Armenia to reinforce the tenuous Roman position in Mesopotamia. Not long after his return, however, Anatolius gave up his command as *magister militum per Orientem* to Procopius, who won a victory (of minor importance, despite Socrates⁶⁷) and then brought negotiations to a conclusion.⁶⁸ This Procopius was the son-in-law of Anthemius, as noted above; his appearance thus marks the return to power of traditionalists who had lost influence along with Anthemius eight years earlier. In the previous year (7 June 421) Theodosius had

⁶⁵ *Cod.Theod.* 7.8.13, cf. J. O. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1973) 76, associating this constitution with the Hun invasion but not with redeployments from the Mesopotamian frontier.

⁶⁶ Procop. *BPers.* 1.2.11–15 (‘Α. τὸν τῆς ἑω στρατηγόν), Theoph. p.87 (‘Α. τὸν τῆς ἀνατολῆς στρατηγόν). Averil Cameron, “Agathias on the Sassanians,” *DOPapers* 23–24 (1969–70) 151, and Demandt, *RE* suppl. 12 (1970) 742, accept the suggestion of Nöldeke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) 116 n.2, that the embassy of Anatolius which Procopius and Theophanes mention followed a second Persian invasion of 441, after which an Anatolius negotiated peace. I see no reason to reject the dating of the sources. Cyril of Scythopolis and Xorenaçi, representing independent traditions, provide details of Anatolius’ operations 420–21 (*supra* nn.13, 61), and thus it is likely that he also participated in negotiations with Vahram, as Procopius and Theophanes clearly state. Procopius also records a treaty provision related to the war of 421–22 (*infra* p.170 with n.73).

⁶⁷ 7.20.5–11, characteristically tendentious, calling Procopius simply *στρατηλάτης*. Treaty provisions prove that the Persians more than held their own on the battlefield (*infra* pp.170–71).

⁶⁸ *Sid.Ap. Carm.* 2.75–93 reporting (perhaps inexactly) that Procopius received the eastern command only after completing the negotiations: *peditumque equitumque magister praeficitur castris, ubi . . . spectaret Orientem*. Jo.Mal. 14 p.364 calls him *στρατηλάτην ἀνατολῆς* in a confused passage on the war of 421–22. In 424 Theodosius addressed *Cod.Theod.* 7.4.36 to Procopius *magistro militiae per Orientem*.

married Athenais/Eudocia, the daughter of an Athenian sophist,⁶⁹ and with her support these men were able to break Pulcheria's hold over her brother. Their new leader was apparently Asclepiodotus, Eudocia's maternal uncle, a man of traditionalist persuasion who replaced Eustathius as praetorian prefect of the East⁷⁰ and entered the ordinary consulship 1 January 423, the day before Eudocia herself received the rank Augusta (*Chron.Pasch.* p.580). Within a year Anthemius' son Isidorus reappeared in high office for the first time since 412, as praetorian prefect of Illyricum.⁷¹

Various sources permit reconstruction of the terms which the Romans accepted:

1. Each side agreed not to receive disloyal federate Saracens of the other.⁷² Since Anatolius had so received Aspebetus in 420 (*supra* p.156), this provision was directed against Roman encroachment upon the *status quo* and was a Roman concession.

2. Each side agreed not to construct new fortifications in its own territory near the common frontier.⁷³ Since Anatolius had fortified Theodosiopolis in 421, this provision likewise represented a Roman concession to restore the *status quo*.

3. The Romans apparently agreed to renew or continue payments to Persia for defense of the Caucasus passes against incursions from the north which threatened both empires.⁷⁴

4. The Persian side agreed to end persecution of Christians in its territory. Although Socrates does not admit it, the Romans also agreed to return to Anthemian policy and protect fire worshipers in Roman

⁶⁹ Marcell.com. 421.1, *Chron.Pasch.* p.578, cf. Socr. 7.21.8, Olymp. fr.28; Seeck, *RE* 6 (1909) 906ff. The romantic story of the marriage found in Jo.Mal. 14 pp.352-55 and later sources is mostly fiction, including the notion that Pulcheria had anything to do with it.

⁷⁰ Asclepiodotus is attested as CSL 29 April 422 (*Cod.Theod.* 6.30.23) and as PPO Or for the first time 14 Febr. 423 (*Cod.Theod.* 7.4.35). The *V.Sym.Syr.* 130-31 (*Texte u. Untersuch.* 32.4, 174-75) attacks the ἱεραρχος (or ἐπαρχος) 'Asklepiades', maternal uncle of the empress, as friend of pagans and Jews for ordering Christians to restore synagogues seized from the Jews. This account receives general support from *Cod.Theod.* 16.8.25-27, 10.24 addressed to Asclepiodotus PPO Or February-June 423.

⁷¹ *Cod.Theod.* 11.1.33 (10 Oct. 423, cf. Seeck, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.35] 88).

⁷² Malchus fr.1, cf. *infra* p.171 and Bury, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.59) II 5 n.1, for association with the treaty of 422.

⁷³ Procop. cited *supra* n.66. Mention of this provision in Procopius' account suggests that it was included in the final version of the treaty.

⁷⁴ Tabari, transl. Nöldeke (*supra* n.13) 108, 116. On these payments cf. Prisc. frs. 31, 37, Jo.Lyd. *De mag.* 3. 51-53, Joshua the Stylite 8-9 (transl. Wright pp.7-8).

territory.⁷⁵ It is unlikely that either side was in a position to enforce toleration.⁷⁶

Procopius accepted these terms in the summer or autumn of 422, in a treaty which was to last for one hundred years.⁷⁷ They confirm that the military advantage lay with the Persian King and that the Roman government was prepared to return to the *status quo ante* in its relations with Persia.

Gibbon did not think much of this conflict of 421–22, “the slight alarm of a Persian war” which did little in the long run to affect the balance between Rome and the Persians.⁷⁸ In terms of international politics his judgement was correct. Later in the fifth century, however, the historian Malchus (fr.1) remembered it as “the greatest war against them in the time of Theodosius,” an attitude which may reflect the dangers it presented and the importance it assumed in debate on the Roman ideology of victory. Socrates reports that after the ‘victory’ the *literati* of Constantinople presented encomiastic orations in praise of Theodosius (*βασιλικοί λόγοι*). Among the *literati* was the empress Eudocia, who composed a poem on the ‘victory’ in heroic verse (Socr. 7.21.7–10). None of these works survives, but some of their content can be recovered from Socrates himself, who records the exploits of Roman heroes in Homeric fashion and attributes ultimate victory to the battlefield success of Procopius.⁷⁹ This interpretation would have pleased the pagan Eunapius of Sardes, who expressed profound shock that Christian victory propaganda belittled “the emperor’s courage, the strength of his soldiers and the conditions of real battle.”⁸⁰ Traditionalists discounted imperial piety and Pulcheria’s asceticism while stressing the dependence of Theodo-

⁷⁵ Socr. 7.20.13, Aug. *De civ. Dei* 18.52. About 464 the Persians complained in an embassy that the Romans were interfering with fire cult in their territory, but the government of Leo I denied such interference (Prisc. fr.31). The exchange suggests that an agreement existed on the subject.

⁷⁶ Thdt. *HE* 5.39.5, the Armenian passion in Peeters, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) 412, and Prisc. fr.31 (*supra* n.75) indicate continued persecution in both empires.

⁷⁷ Soz. 9.4.1, Marcell.com. 422.4. The fullest recent discussion of this treaty is H. Herrera Cajas, *Les relations internationales de l’Empire byzantin à l’époque des grandes invasions* (Bordeaux 1968) 65f.

⁷⁸ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* III (London 1897) 390.

⁷⁹ Socr. 7.18.25, 20.6–11, also reflected in Jo.Mal. 14 p.364 and Cedren. p.599.

⁸⁰ Eun. fr.78. On the date of Eunapius’ *νέα ἔκδοσις* see most recently F. Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime* (Paris 1975) 169ff, proposing the period after Pulcheria’s eclipse (423) because of Eunapius’ harsh attack in fr.87 on venal *suffragium ἐπὶ Πουλχερίας τῆς βασιλίσσης*. Fr.78, which relates to events *ca* 400, would have special point if written *ca* 423.

sus II, who was no soldier himself, on the good sense and capabilities of his generals.

With his speculation on divine intervention, Socrates also represents the response of Christian theorists, along with Sozomen and Theodoret. But the clearest expression of Christian victory ideology is the Long-Cross Solidi, which identified the emperor's victory with the victory of Christ on Golgotha. The mint of Constantinople continued to strike long-cross reverses after the 'victory', and the type remained in use in both east and west.⁸¹ Pulcheria herself employed still another medium of propaganda in her response to the traditionalist interpretation. It was probably following the 'victory' of 422 that she dedicated a statue of Theodosius on a column at the Hebdomon. The surviving inscription attributes the emperor's success to "the vows of his sisters" (*[pro] votis sororum*).⁸² The nature of these *vota* is not specified, but the inscription should be read in the light of Sozomen's miniature encomium. The inscription agreed with Sozomen that Pulcheria's vow of chastity and her pious life had secured God's favor, so that "every threat and war raised against her brother dispersed spontaneously."⁸³

The lines of evidence and reasoning converge. The unusual iconography of a coin has led into little-known court intrigues which propelled Pulcheria into prominence. The inner logic of Roman absolutism, together with Pulcheria's religiosity and her own dynastic pretensions, produced a war which endangered the Empire's defenses and provoked a change in government. Despite recent doubts,⁸⁴ political and ideological factions did form around empresses of the Theodosian house. Future research should bear this in mind, and should remember the conflict of 421-22 as 'Pulcheria's crusade'.⁸⁵

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⁸¹ Kent, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 130f, Boyce, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 63ff.

⁸² R. Demangel, *Contribution à la topographie de l'Hebdomon (Recherches françaises en Turquie III, Paris 1945)* 33ff.

⁸³ 9.3.3, *supra* p.158.

⁸⁴ Dagron (*supra* n.28) 384 n.4.

⁸⁵ I am grateful to Irfan Shahîd, Robert Hohlfelder, Brian Croke and other colleagues at Dumbarton Oaks for reading a draft of this paper and offering valuable suggestions.