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BYZANTINE FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE REIGN OF CONSTANS II

by

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B.A. Florida State University, 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of History
in the College of Arts and Humanities
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the foreign policy of Constans II as the first Byzantine Emperor to rule after the initial Arab conquests in Syria-Palestine. His reign, 641-668, was the first reign of a Byzantine Emperor where the entire reign was subject to Arab raids and invasions. Constans II also had to contend with the Slavs in Thessalonica and Greece and the Lombards in Italy. To complicate matters more, Constans II was forced to cope with the religious division between the eastern and western churches due to Monothelitism in the East. Beset on every frontier and inheriting a much reduced empire after decades of intermittent warfare and several disastrous defeats, scholars have reasoned that Constans II's reign was defensive and turbulent in nature. This thesis uses literary and archeological sources to argue that Constans II had a foreign policy focused on actively retaking lost Byzantine territory. While stabilizing the frontiers in his early reign, he suffered devastating defeats and serious threats, primarily from the sea, where the Arab navy had gained superiority. His attempt in securing the western provinces of Italy and North Africa demonstrate not an emperor who was abandoning Constantinople, but one that was attempting to regain the initiative from the Arabs and deprive them of Egypt, which was providing the Arabs with a navy, wealth, and an agricultural surplus. Despite the Byzantine losses Constans II did not accept the transformation in Byzantine territory and influence. The thesis concludes with a historical analysis of his successors and how their foreign policies differed from Constans II's.

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I would like to thank Dr. Larson and Dr. Dandrow for serving as my advisors during this process. I realize I did not make the process as easy as it could have been otherwise. The Library of Congress specifically provided the necessary resources to make my thesis possible. Without the Library of Congress I would have had been in a tough position! Also I would like to thank Dr. Pineda and Dr. Walker for serving on my committee and providing valuable input. Furthermore, I would like to thank my other graduate professors Dr. Lyons and Dr. Solonari for helping prepare me academically for my thesis and its defense. Without all my professors I would never have been able to research and write my thesis to the university's standards. Finally, I appreciate all the help and support my graduate school colleagues have offered while I attended UCF.

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INTRODUCTION

For the Byzantine Empire, the seventh century was a period of turmoil, desperation, and a re-evaluation of its role and place in the eastern Mediterranean. Before the seventh century the traditional boundaries of the Byzantine Empire encompassed Egypt, North Africa, the Levant, Anatolia, the Balkans, Greece, Thrace, and varying parts of the Italian peninsula. Over the course of the seventh century much of this territory would repeatedly change hands between numerous ethnic and political entities; sometimes these territories were lost permanently. It is during this time that the Byzantine Empire of the Middle Ages began to form, and it was primarily the foreign policy decisions made during latter half of the century by the emperor Constans II, as well as the emperors succeeding him (Constantine IV and Justinian II), that were most significant to the survival and future of the Byzantine state.

It was following the conquests of Justinian I, who drastically expanded the empire to the west almost turning the Mediterranean Sea, yet again, into a Roman lake, that the trials of the Byzantines began. The recurring struggle with the Sassanid Empire on their eastern frontiers erupted into a titanic conflict between the two rival empires. The context for this final war between these centuries-old enemies was the murder of Emperor Maurice by the usurper Phocas in 602¹. In 588/89 a Sassanid general rebelled against King Hormizd IV leading to his captivity and death. His son Chosroes II ascended the throne and appealed for help from Maurice. Maurice decided to

¹ Chronology is a difficult issue. This thesis will utilize sources and their dating systems from both Byzantine and Islamic sources. Regardless of the sources origins the dates will, as accurately as possible, fit into the Julian calendar. Byzantine chronology was solar and began on September 1 and Islamic chronology is based on a twelve lunar month cycle beginning with July 16, 622 AD (Palmer, Andrew. *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*. Liverpool [England]: Liverpool University Press, 1993. xxxiv-xxxv). Because the sources employ different chronologies, as the lunar cycle is not static like the solar cycle, and the sources themselves might be unreliable, the dates for events may not line up with other sources discussing the same events. It is not the purpose of this thesis to determine the exact chronology, and as long as the dates are used competently, corroborated when possible. The difficult issue of chronology itself will not hinder the aim of this thesis.

support Chosroes's claim to the throne and with his military support defeated the rebels and officially took the throne in 591.² Upon learning his benefactor, Maurice, was assassinated Chosroes launched an invasion seeking revenge against the usurper Phocas.³

The Sassanid invasion initially met with incredible success, taking Egypt, the Levant, and Anatolia while the Byzantines were fighting a civil war as well as the Sassanid invasion. The result was the defeat of Phocas by Heraclius in 610. Over the next two decades Heraclius was able to bring the Byzantines back from the brink of collapse and defeat the Sassanids through cunning and fortuitous counterattacks. Achieving this enormous success in his campaign of 627, Heraclius was able to return all the former Byzantine territories to his control and make a favorable peace with the Sassanids. This victory was short-lived, however, as by the end of the century both the Arabs⁴ and Bulgars had quickly emerged as rival neighboring powers that drastically reduced the territorial domains of the Byzantine Empire and threatened its very existence.⁵

The Arabs were the dominant threat to the Byzantine Empire at this time. They quickly conquered vast tracts of Byzantine territory as well as destroying the Sassanid Empire. The Avars and Slavs, who penetrated even farther into Byzantine lands as well. By the end of the seventh century the Byzantine Empire had been reduced to a remnant of its prior territory and dominance.

² Dignas, Beate and Winter, Engelbert. *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 42-43.

³ Haldon, John F. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century The Transformation of a Culture*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1990. 35.

⁴ Arabs can be defined using linguistics, culture, geography, or genetics. It is not the intention of this thesis to define this term. Therefore, the term Arab will be used to describe the forces administered by the leading Muslim figures that opposed the Byzantines despite their religious affiliations. Their territory stretched from Egypt through Syria to the western borders of the deceased Sassanid Empire. The term the Arab State will be applied to refer to the early Arab administrative organization as well as the ensuing Caliphates.

⁵ Kaegi, Walter E. *Byzantium and the early Islamic Conquests*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 27 & 66-69.

These shrunken territories were limited to North Africa, Greece, Anatolia⁶ and parts of Italy.⁷ Even the Byzantine holdings in the Italian peninsula were being diminished during the seventh century as the Lombards, who had begun migrating in the sixth century, continued their expansion there.⁸ These three foreign powers threatened the Byzantine Empire during the seventh century and were the focus of its foreign policy.

The ascension of Constans II, at the age of 11, following Heraclius's death in 641 gave historians the first picture of how a Byzantine emperor would rule and interact with these aggressive foreign powers throughout his entire rule, as opposed to solely the waning years of his reign like Heraclius. During Constans II's reign Egypt was lost to the Caliphate and the Byzantines led military actions in Armenia, the Balkans, and Italy in an attempt to reassert control over these areas. Constans II was assassinated in Sicily in 668 leaving his policies unfinished.

The two emperors following Constans II, Constantine IV and Justinian II, provide further historical context and aid in demonstrating the effects of his foreign policy. These two emperors each had different policies and priorities during their reigns. Constantine IV's reign from 668-685 witnessed a concurrent Slav invasion of Thessalonica⁹ and the first Arab siege of Constantinople, both unsuccessful. Afterwards, the Bulgars arrived in the Balkans in Byzantine territory, defeating Constantine IV's army in 680, ushering in a Bulgar state abutting the Byzantine Empire. After Constantine IV's death, Justinian II ruled from 685 to 695¹⁰. He immediately obtained peace with the Umayyad Caliphate following a brief incursion into Armenia. Subsequently, Justinian II

⁶ Anatolia is also known as Asia Minor and can be used interchangeably. The borders of present day Turkey accurately reflect this geographic region.

⁷ Kaegi, Walter Emil. *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 300-303.

⁸ Christie, Neil. *The Lombards: The Ancient Longobards*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995. 73-85.

⁹ A northeastern region of Greece.

¹⁰ He would also rule from 705-711.

launched an invasion on Slavic and Bulgar territory in Thessalonica achieving his desired results. Emboldened by this success, Justinian II broke the peace treaty with the Umayyad Caliphate but after the Slav forces that Justinian II had deported from Thessalonica deserted his own forces in 693, he was defeated by the Arabs. This action resulted in a rebellion in Armenia and an Arab occupation of Armenia in 694-695. In 695, Justinian II was exiled by the usurper Leontius.¹¹

This thesis will demonstrate how the Arabs, Slavs, and Lombards affected Byzantine foreign policy during the reign of Constans II. I chose Constans II because his rule was pivotal in establishing Byzantine foreign policies at a crucial time for the empire as it fought for its very survival, a period about which little has been written. The lack of scholarly work done on this particular time period provides an opportunity to delve into a subject that until now has only been briefly dealt with. Furthermore, Constans II was the first emperor to begin his reign with the persistent threat of Arab expansion influencing his foreign policy decisions. While Heraclius was the first Byzantine emperor to contend with the emergence of the Arabs as a strategic threat to the Byzantine Empire, these events were near the end of his reign and have been extensively studied. So it is with the insufficiently studied reign of Constans II that this thesis attempts to shed some light on the foreign policy decisions and international relations of this vital time period for Constantinople. Byzantine foreign policy was not static and defensive in nature, as has been assumed. Constans II's foreign policy was malleable and adjusted to the political realities over the course of his reign. Constantine IV and Justinian II each had a different agenda that shaped Byzantine foreign policy and serve in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of Constans II's policies. These two very disparate reigns each emphasize the wisdom and failures of Constans II's decisions. While each reign had an aggressive foreign policy to varying extents, along with

¹¹ Haldon. 53-74.

intermittent amicable relations, the reasons behind these measures were very different. They would have involved available manpower, monetary considerations, territory acquisitions and retention, material resources, and religion.

Constans II's foreign policy was an aggressive policy aimed at not only securing the remaining territory under Byzantine control but also at reconquering territories that had been lost to the Arabs, Slavs, and Lombards. The natural barrier presented by the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains along with the First Arab Civil War allowed Constans II a sufficient enough reprieve to begin expanding Byzantine influence and territory. These actions indicate that Constans II had not yielded to the new reality presented by the Arab conquests. This is unsurprising considering the Byzantine territorial losses were still very recent. It is impossible to know Constans II's strategic plans for re-conquest; however, it is reasonable to infer certain aspects of his plans. Both diplomacy and warfare served his purposes depending on the situation indicating a state of perpetual warfare did not exist. Even though Constans II fought conflicts in almost every section of his empire, these conflicts were intended to stop Arab advances (in Anatolia and Armenia) and to reconquer critical territories such as Egypt. The explanations for his ultimate failure to permanently reconquer these lost territories is outside the purposes of this thesis; the focus is on how and why Constans II approached his foreign policy in the manner he did.

Constans II was in an unstable situation with the Lombards advancing in Italy and the Arabs raiding Anatolia and Armenia. Using both diplomacy and military action he was able to stabilize his frontiers enough so that he could begin securing Byzantine western possessions with the intent of retaking Egypt. His foreign policy was far-sighted with the intent of pushing the Arabs back to their original desert frontiers. The situation with Constans II's successor, Constantine IV, was both more

stable and more dangerous¹². He went to great efforts to keep his frontiers as peaceful as possible. The appearance of the Bulgars and the first Arab siege occurred during his reign, leading him to be more cautious. This defensive posturing of Constantine IV led him to strengthen his ties in the west with the Roman Church and settle religious controversy with his remaining subjects.¹³ This, however, was a short-sighted arrangement because it would make any retaking of Egypt and Syria more difficult since the local Monothelists were receiving more tolerance from the Arabs than they would have received under the Byzantines. While his decisions did not result in Byzantine expansion, he was able to more permanently stabilize most of his frontiers.

The opportunism of Justinian II's reign, conversely, further led to the eroding of Byzantine frontiers due to his military defeats and broken peace treaties. His mercurial foreign policy was short-sighted and destructive. The initiation of wars against the Slavs and the Arabs were apparently only intended to accumulate loot and prestige. His actions were driven by glory and greed. Even in the theological realm his ambitions were to increase the influence of the See of Constantinople, regardless of the inevitable conflicts that would arise with Rome. None of his foreign policies would have positive ramifications throughout his reign, let alone during the coming centuries. It was fortunate the Byzantine Empire persevered through both his reigns; 685-695 and 705-711.¹⁴ These three emperors reigned during the latter half of the seventh century during an important era for the Byzantine Empire. Each of their foreign policies were extremely different from each other's, indicating different situations, available resources, world views, and agendas, and together they highlight the dynamic nature of Byzantine foreign policy under Constantine II at this crossroads in history.

¹² Constantine IV's reign was not plagued by rebellions however the first Arab siege of Constantinople took place during his reign.

¹³ Haldon. 63 & 66-70.

¹⁴ Ibid. 70-73.

Various scholars have attempted to survey the entire field of Byzantine foreign policy but these attempts were brief and inadequate. Most studies only mention this subject as a side note. It is in these studies, along with primary sources, that the information must be gleaned from specific examples of Byzantine interactions with foreign powers, particularly from certain reigns, as these works have gathered a lot of information and translated the required primary sources. Since the preparatory work is general but extensive, what remains is for a work to focus on the subject of Byzantine foreign policy as its primary goal. Furthermore, since Byzantine history spans over a thousand years the most productive works would, by necessity, place emphasis on particular time periods. This would prevent a loss of focus and allow the content to be more understandable for the reader.

It is important to have an understanding of the participants in Byzantine foreign policy implementation and organization during the latter half of the seventh century. The Byzantine government was centralized in Constantinople around the Emperor and his court. Most of the major strategic decisions regarding foreign policy were issued from there. The limitations of communications at this time, however, and the speed with which decisions needed to be made in volatile situations resulted in numerous secular and ecclesiastical individuals acting without directions from the capital. The role of the Church illustrates this state of affairs. As the Arabs advanced on Byzantine cities like Alexandria, Cyprus, or Aradus, for example, local communities or the invading Arab forces themselves employed clergy in attempts to negotiate terms. While the centralized government dictated foreign policy, there are examples in the primary sources of politicians, military individuals, and Church members being utilized for the purposes of Byzantine foreign policy.

The events of the seventh century are recorded in few surviving literary sources and even fewer contemporary ones. A few examples are the works of Theophanes, al-Tabari, and Sebeos. These primary sources will be explained and discussed as they are introduced during the course of this thesis. The secondary sources, however, should be examined to familiarize the reader with the historiography of Byzantine history, especially the seventh century. The historiography of the Byzantine Empire is found through a wide range of topics such as economic, political, military, and general historical studies as well as biographies. These works typically cover a couple of centuries and only give the latter half of the seventh century a cursory review and analysis due to the scarcity of sources. The majority of scholarship concentrates primarily on the reigns of Justinian and Heraclius and the time period following the seventh century when the Byzantines had reorganized their forces and stabilized their remaining territories. This is due to the scarcity of primary sources originating from or immediately after the seventh century. It wasn't until the eighteenth century that the first piece of major Byzantine historiography was published in English. Gibbon's famous work *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1789) can be considered the seminal work for later Byzantine history.

Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is an early comprehensive secondary source concerning the Roman Empire, including the Byzantine Empire. This work, published in six volumes from 1776-1789, is in general representative of scholarly work that relied greatly, if uncritically, upon primary sources.¹⁵ The main purpose of Gibbon's work is to offer an explanation for the collapse of the Roman Empire. To this end his thesis argues that the Romans lost their civic virtue and therefore their will to fight, employing barbarians to fight other barbarians on their behalf. Gibbon's work is important not only for its extensiveness but also its methodology where he

¹⁵ Gibbon, Edward, and Rosemary Williams. *Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979. iv-v.

applied contemporary primary sources to support his work. The weaknesses of this work are that it is centuries out of date, relies almost exclusively on literary sources, and does not offer the level of detail for Byzantine history as it does for the western Roman Empire and, when it does, it portrays the Byzantines as immoral degenerates. Gibbon's work is considered by many scholars to be among the first of modern historical works and his application of primary sources adds a lot of value to this early work.

The earliest English work in the nineteenth century to be considered is Finlay's two volume *The History of the Byzantine Empire* (1855).¹⁶ The purpose of Finlay's work is to be a comprehensive chronological tome from the beginning of Byzantine civilization to its end, in 1453, with the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire. To accomplish this task, Finlay relies primarily on secondary sources. Since he does not attempt to assess any particular aspect of Byzantine civilization but instead seeks to bring it all together, his reliance on secondary sources does not negatively impact his objective. The comprehensiveness of the two volumes is also the significance of his work. His attempt shows that Byzantine studies were beginning to take shape, and his work was an early attempt at bring everything under one title. Finlay still refers to them as Romans continuously throughout his work, however, so Byzantine studies still were not completely separated from the Western Empire at this time. While the beginning of the Byzantine Empire, separate from the West, is debatable, Finlay unfortunately does not begin his work until 717. This weakness conveniently omits the initial Arab invasions and avoids the problem of the seventh century's dearth of sources.

Another early work from the nineteenth century is Todiere's *The Last Caesars of Byzantium* (1891). This scholarly work focuses on the last two centuries of the Byzantine Empire, particularly

¹⁶ Finlay, George. *The History of the Byzantine Empire*. Edinburgh and London, U.K.: William Blackwood and Sons, 2003. i-xii & 1-15.

the advance of the Ottomans against Byzantine territory. The current events of the time are reflected in the chosen topic of this work and its implications. The Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire brought them into increasing direct contact with the Russian Empire. At the time this monograph was written the Ottomans and the Russians had been involved in numerous military confrontations which the rest of Europe was watching warily.¹⁷ The monograph's structure is chronological, which is clear to follow. The weaknesses, though, are its reliance exclusively on secondary sources. The work is beneficial in that it does not attempt to cover too large a span of time for its purposes and instead focuses on the relevant period of Ottoman expansion.

The last work to be mentioned from the nineteenth century is Charles Oman's *The Byzantine Empire* (1892). While both this monograph and Todiere's were published almost at the same time, their approaches were very different. Instead of applying a certain aspect of Byzantine history that was relevant to their current political events Oman wrote the entirety of Byzantine history from the beginnings of the city as a Greek port to its fall in 1453. What is unique about this wide-ranging work is its intent to reassess the Byzantines and save them from the grasp of Gibbon's earlier work. The contributions of the Byzantine Empire are exhibited in this work with the intent of diminishing the Gibbon's depiction of a corrupt and decadent people. Again his work is reliant, like all previous scholars, on the literary sources from this time period.¹⁸ It is apparent in these works that material evidence did not begin to contribute to Byzantine studies until the twentieth century. In effect, Oman's work is very similar to Finlay's except it sees the Byzantines as a separate civilization, as an alternative to being merely a continuation of the Roman Empire. Oman's work is the culmination of the work Finlay started half a century earlier and is an excellent point to mark the beginnings of Byzantine studies separate from the western empire.

¹⁷ Todiere, L. *The Last Caesars of Byzantium*. H. L. Kilner & Co., 1891. iii-vi.

¹⁸ Oman, Charles. *The Byzantine Empire*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892. v-xiv.

The twentieth century's expanded Byzantine studies can be seen in the variety of works published throughout the century. John Bury's "The Naval Policy of the Roman Empire in Relation to the Western Provinces, from the 7th to the 9th century" (1910) is an early example. This article concentrates on the naval power of the Byzantines, why the Arabs were so successful at their first attempts at naval warfare, and how the Byzantines responded.¹⁹ Bury's analysis has a lot of value, especially because Byzantine studies tend to focus on the army instead, like Warren Treadgold's *Byzantium and its Army*, even though the Byzantine navy was crucial to their military efforts.

While some works are able to contribute directly to my thesis, others are only able to offer support through general information and their pioneering efforts. One such work is V. Zlatarski's, "The Making of the Bulgarian Nation" (1925). This article lacks an argument and only seeks to convey the broad history of Slavic and Bulgarian settlement in the Balkans and their relations between each other.²⁰ The significance of this article is its attention to the Byzantine's northern frontier while many historians were only paying attention to the Arab threat to the south. Unfortunately, the article does not go into sufficient detail and does not support itself with material evidence or literary sources.

An article also from 1925 by F.P. Johnson, "A Byzantine Statue in Megara," offers insight into the value of early twentieth century archaeological articles. This article's purpose is to discuss a specific stone statue in Megara.²¹ The style of the article is similar to the styles of various other early archaeological articles²². The article does not attempt to explain the significance of the statue or how it fits into the time period. Instead it seeks to merely accurately describe the statue and offers no

¹⁹ Bury, John, "The Naval Policy of the Roman Empire in Relation to the Western Provinces, from the 7th to the 9th century," *Centenario Della Nascita di Michelle Amari*, Vol. 2 (1910) 1-4.

²⁰ V. Zlatarski, "The Making of the Bulgarian Nation," *The Slavonic Review*, Vol. 4, No. 11 (Dec., 1925) 362-364.

²¹ Johnson, F.P., "A Byzantine Statue in Megara," *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1925) 34-35.

²² Examples are E., A.C., "Byzantine Crosses," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts of the City of Detroit*, Vol. 7, No. 8 (1926) and Mango, C. A., "Byzantine Brick Stamps," *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (1950).

insight to its relative value to Byzantine studies. Limitations in early archaeological articles are represented by Johnsons' article.

The earliest useful works for my thesis are articles that focus on particular subjects. The next article directly relates to the foreign policy between the Byzantine Empire and the Umayyad Caliphate. This work, published in 1958, is Hamilton Gibb's, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate". The argument of this thesis is extremely interesting in that it states that a state of official war did not necessarily involve the suspension of all commercial and civil relations. To support this argument, Gibb relies on literary sources for examples of the Umayyad dependency on the prior Byzantine systems that were already in place, gifts between the Caliph and the Emperor, and taxes on trade at their border regions. From this argument he speculates that the Caliphs conducted annual raids and warfare because it was expected of them by their Muslim subjects, not out of any animosity to the Christian Byzantines themselves.²³ This article is significant in that it begins working on the complex subject of Byzantine-Arab relations at such a formative stage in Byzantine historiography.

The next work is Michael Hendy's *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300-1450* (1985). This massive work, while wide-ranging, aids in both describing the Byzantine economic system as a whole as well as providing more focused information. Hendy asserts that the Byzantine economy was a closed one and that it was not primarily a monetary economy but a barter system where the government circulated coinage primarily for the purposes of their spending capital, collecting taxes, and diplomatic expenditures. In this work the most worthwhile sections for the purposes of this thesis are the monetary historical background and Hendy's analysis of the production and circulation of coinage. The section on coinage will be indispensable in analyzing the

²³ Gibb, Hamilton, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 12, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958. 222-223 & 229-332.

Byzantine Empire's wealth during the latter half of the seventh century.²⁴ A better understanding of the Byzantine Empire's available wealth will aid in examining what resources they had available to apply in foreign policy both to influence and to maintain their standing military forces. In spite of the importance of the seventh century, which profoundly affected Byzantine society and economy, Hendy does not offer a considerable analysis nor does he ever examine the influence of the Church on the Byzantine economy which detracts from his work. Finally, there is abundant archaeological evidence of extensive coin circulation in Anatolia that would seem to contradict Hendy's conclusions.²⁵

The general historical studies are especially numerous. A significant example of this is John Haldon's *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: the Transformation of a Culture* (1990). Haldon concentrates on the tumultuous seventh century with general analyses regarding the preceding and succeeding centuries to give his focus more clarity. He argues that the seventh century witnessed social, economic, and cultural changes which laid the foundations for the medieval Byzantine Empire. Despite the fact that this work emphasizes the social, economic, and military standpoints it does briefly discuss political aspects especially during the reigns of Constans II, Constantine IV, and Justinian II.²⁶ Works such as this contribute to the understanding of the seventh century and serve as a good induction point in focusing avenues of research and speculation.

Numismatic evidence begins to have increasing importance during the end of the twentieth century. This trend can be discerned by Alan Walmsley's, "Coin Frequencies in Sixth and Seventh Century Palestine and Arabia: Social and Economic Implications," (1999) that contributes to the

²⁴ Hendy, Michael F. *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, C.300-1450*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 1-20, 257-259, 297-299, 499 & 640-645.

²⁵ Foss, Clive, "Review of *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300-1450*, by Michael F. Hendy," *Speculum*, Vol. 64, No. 4, Oct., 1989. 968-969.

²⁶ Haldon. 1-8.

field of Byzantine studies similar to Hendy's monograph. This article is more concise and specific compared to Hendy's work although it still offers a lot. The purpose of the article is to investigate the significance of the coins discovered at Pella in Jordan, paying special attention to their frequency and distribution. Numismatic data contributes to understanding the economy of a period if there is a dearth in the available literary evidence. The largest drawback to numismatic data is readily admitted in this article in that the data is not typically presented in a manner easily understood by scholars.²⁷

In recent years, Byzantine studies have begun to see more work devoted to the seventh century and the effect the Arab invasions had on the Byzantine Empire. Hugh Kennedy's *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (2006) is a compilation of articles ranging from the original conquests to the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate.²⁸ The strength of his work relies on its versatility on both its topics and its use of archaeology, numismatic evidence, and literary sources. Each of the various authors' articles are able to focus on a different topic such as diplomacy, foreign policy, economics, government organization, etc. It is works like this that begin to bring desperately required attention to the early Islamic rule and its relations to the Byzantine Empire.

An excellent monograph for the historiography of the Byzantine Empire that includes the latter half of the seventh century is Edwards N. Luttwak's *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (2009). In this work Luttwak argues that the Byzantines had a continuous foreign policy that spanned several centuries. Furthermore, he asserts that they spared defeated enemies and balanced them against various other enemies that pressed upon their frontiers. In this way, Luttwak maintains that the Byzantines always attempted diplomacy before violent confrontations because they always

²⁷ Walmsley, Alan, "Coin Frequencies in Sixth and Seventh Century Palestine and Arabia: Social and Economic Implications," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1999) 326-327.

²⁸ Kennedy, Hugh. *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*. Aldershot [England]: Ashgate/Variorum, 2006. v-viii.

had more enemies and never enough trained military strength to confront them all. Although this work encompasses the foreign policy of the Byzantine Empire, it assumes far too much with its grand strategy and does not concentrate on the decisive decades of the seventh century after the early Arab conquests.²⁹ Luttwak's overall methodology discounts key events in Byzantine political history, which detracts from his work. Regrettably, more explicit scholarship regarding foreign policy, especially pivotal moments like the seventh century, has yet to be earnestly conducted.

Another article that contributes to the field of Byzantine archaeology is Christina Maranci's, "Building Churches in Armenia: Art at the Borders of Empire and the Edge of the Canon" (2006). The purpose of this article is to indicate how Armenian architecture flourished at a time when construction was stunted in the rest of the empire as well as the messages these Churches were meant to convey.³⁰ Furthermore, this article shows not only the continued use of archaeology to benefit scholars understanding of the Byzantine Empire during the seventh century but also focuses on Armenia, a region typically on the fringe and therefore less studied. This article is significant in that it offers specific architectural information on Churches in Armenia as well as how they fit into the time period.

The final work to contribute to the historiography of Byzantine history during the seventh century is Howard-Johnston's *Witness to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (2010). The world crisis of this book runs from 603-717. There are two purposes that his work seeks to achieve. First, he evaluates the primary literary sources that discuss this time period as contemporaries to the events. While evaluating the credibility of these sources, he uses them to depict his interpretation of events and the thought processes of the significant actors at the

²⁹ Luttwak, Edward. *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009. 5-16.

³⁰ Maranci, Christina, "Building Churches in Armenia: Art at the Borders of Empire and the Edge of the Canon," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 88, No. 4, (2006) 656.

time. Second, the work is very thorough and applies a methodology of applying material evidence to substantiate or cast doubt on the available sources.³¹ The significance of this work is apparent in its meticulous evaluation of the sources and assessment of the events in the seventh century.

The Byzantines did not consider themselves anything but Roman even when Rome was lost to them, and it was in this light that early scholars, like Gibbon, viewed them as well. We can see this perspective began to change near the end of the nineteenth century and begin to become commonplace early in the twentieth. It is at this time when historians began to separate the Eastern and Western Roman civilizations from each other that Byzantine historiography took on a new importance. It was in this new light that historians approached the Byzantines.

Even though the historiography of the Byzantine Empire has numerous facets that scholars have examined, few scholars have limited themselves to a concise topic concentrating on the latter half of the seventh century. Each of the aforementioned scholarly works are instances of broad or subject-based works that can appreciably contribute to the historiography of the Byzantine Empire in their own way. Part of the reason for the paucity of scholarship done in regards to the latter half of the seventh century is the dearth of resources available; there is a limited amount of literary sources as well as archaeological and numismatic studies available at this time to support them. Applying the material evidence, however, should appreciably establish the validity of certain aspects of the literary sources, giving scholars a better understanding of the events and the reasoning behind important decisions during the reign of Constans II or the succeeding reigns of Constantine IV and Justinian II. The arguments put forward in this work will contribute to the existing scholarship on Byzantine history because of these limitations. Both the historiography's attempts at broad subjects and the scarcity of sources from this period have left the immediate time frame after the initial Arab

³¹ Howard-Johnston, J. D. *Witnesses to a World Crisis Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. vii-xvi, 1-15, & 517-530.

invasions in dire need of investigation. And while the events and military subjects during this time have been touched upon, Byzantine foreign policy during these crucial years has not been sufficiently examined. With this in mind, this work will offer a useful foundation for further research to be conducted in the future.

The two types of resources applied in this work are literary and material. The literary will consist of both primary and secondary sources while the material will primarily consist of archaeological. Primary literary sources serve a crucial role in the vast majority of historical works from this time period, despite their scarcity, although relying on them too much can be problematic. The sources used by these primary sources, their inherent bias, their motive, and their intended audience must always be utmost in a historians mind.³² Archaeology also comes with its own benefits and drawbacks. Concrete evidence would seem an excellent source but it can be open to interpretation, and it is difficult to reliably determine dates from the sites. Furthermore, a historian needs archaeological evidence from numerous sites to strengthen their conclusions, and many of the sites from this time period are still occupied. Only accidental finds during construction help contribute information from these continually habituated sites. Numismatic evidence³³ can be used to help determine the general context of an area, principally the economic and social situations in addition to the message portrayed on the coins. The quality and quantity of coin finds help determine the economic state of an area at the time they were lost or when they were hidden.³⁴ If coins were hidden in great quantities then that might indicate social turmoil. The material evidence is best applied in conjunction with the literary sources so that they can support each other and

³² Haldon. xxi, xxiv & xxvii.

³³ The study of coins.

³⁴ Dumbarton Oaks, Alfred R. Bellinger, Philip Grierson, and Michael F. Hendy. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1992. 5-7, 65 & 94.

provide a clearer picture. Each of these sources are open to interpretation, and while the literary sources attempt to tell the historian what happened, it is the material evidence that makes the literary sources into more than just propaganda.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term foreign policy will be defined as a policy pursued by a nation in its dealings with other nations, designed to achieve national objectives.³⁵ These policies will be understood to include both military actions and diplomacy. Military actions are fairly straightforward in being both defensive and offensive military campaigns of diverse sizes, but will be limited to conflicts with foreign entities and not internal military conflicts, such as rebellions, so as to not obscure the issue. Strategically important maneuvers, like those of Constans II in the West, can also be indicative of intended future military actions that have implications for foreign policy and will fall under this category. Diplomacy for the Byzantines of the latter half of the seventh century is more complicated. Instances of diplomacy include negotiations for surrenders or reaffirming peace treaties, cordial requests, peaceful economic relations, and communications between governments. These are the methods that will be applied to demonstrate how foreign policy was pursued in the Byzantine Empire's dealings with other foreign states.

³⁵ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/foreign+policy>

CHAPTER 1: CONSTANS II AND THE EAST/LITERARY SOURCES

The foreign policy of Constans II is significant because his is the first full reign after the sudden and rapid expansion of the Arab State during the reign of his father Heraclius. In the past the Byzantine Empire had suffered territorial reductions only to recover them at a later date. The Sassanid invasion a generation earlier highlights this point. These temporary losses were always recovered so that the Byzantines never truly lost any significant amount of territory.³⁶ It is clear from the efforts of Constans II that he saw the territorial losses to the Arabs as no different than previous ones. It will be shown in this thesis that his assertive policies were not only aimed at securing his borders against outside aggression but also at reconquering the territories lost, primarily from the Arabs. While the Lombards and Slavs had made incursions into Byzantine territory, it was the Arabs that threatened and held the strategically significant territories of North Africa, Egypt, and Syria. In this light, his reign was very similar to that of his father Heraclius and his war of reconquest against the Sassanids. Constans II's reign followed a foreign policy that rejected the new reality presented by the Arab conquests, and while his reign was cut short by his assassination, he was successful in at least securing Byzantine frontiers.

The literary sources from this time period offer the best avenue to understand the events that occurred during this time frame. Material evidence for this time period is very limited but can be employed when it is available. With this in mind, the literary sources will be used to supply the initial information while the material evidence will be applied to support or challenge the literary sources. By applying both the literary sources and material evidence, it is hoped that a relatively

³⁶ The Byzantines perceived themselves, as did other peoples, as the continuation of the Roman Empire. As such, they viewed the West as part of their empire and attempted to reclaim it on multiple occasions. However, for the purposes of this thesis, we are only dealing with the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire and territory commonly associated within their sphere of influence: North Africa, Greece and the territories extending to Armenia.

clear picture of the time period and events will emerge allowing for the foreign policy of Constans II to become apparent. Furthermore, by utilizing both the literary and material evidence, this thesis will differentiate itself from other works that solely relied upon one or the other.

Byzantine Literary Sources

It is generally implied that the Byzantine Empire forfeited all the territory south of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains when Heraclius retreated after Yarmuk.³⁷ The work of Theophanes³⁸ is an excellent primary source that covers the entire time span that this thesis encompasses and it is within sources like this that evidence is found that argues against the Byzantines abandoning their lost territories. The *Chronicle* written by Theophanes is a chronological Byzantine source whose chronological format and Byzantine perspective make it an ideal baseline. According to Theophanes, Constans II assumed the throne in 641. In this year, Palestinian Caesarea also fell to the Arabs after a seven year siege and they killed thousands of Byzantines.³⁹ This information is significant in that the Battle of Yarmuk was fought five years previously. The Byzantine defeat was followed by a hasty withdrawal behind the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains. The fall of Palestinian Caesarea indicates that the Byzantines still had control in some areas after their withdrawal and were able to logistically support the city as well as others like Ascalon that did

³⁷ Bosworth, Edmund, "The City of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine Frontiers in Early and Middle Abassid Times," *Oriens*, Vol. 33 (1992) 269-270 & Kaegi (2003). 247-248.

³⁸ Theophanes was a monastic chronicler who was born in the mid-eighth century to a wealthy family with connections to the Macedonian house that ruled the Byzantine Empire. He was married to Megalo, the daughter of a Byzantine Patrician, even though this marriage was nothing more than a polite fiction. Theophanes and Megalo separated when the anti-iconoclast policies temporarily ended with the death of Leo IV, and he pursued the monastic way of life. Theophanes founded a monastery near Sigriane and lived there until 815. When iconoclasm resumed under Leo V, Theophanes was imprisoned in Constantinople and then exiled to the island of Samothrake. He died there in 818. He is referred to as a Confessor because while he did not suffer like a martyr, he lived a very holy life under difficult circumstances. His greatest accomplishment was writing and leaving his *Chronicles* behind for us. (Harry Turtledove, viii-ix).

³⁹ Theophanes, and Harry Turtledove. *The chronicle of Theophanes: an English translation of anni mundi 6095-6305 (A.D. 602-813)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982. 41

not fall till 645/646.⁴⁰ Palestinian Caesarea was along the coastline, giving credence to the idea of feasible Byzantine logistics and continuing presence. Also, this information helps demonstrate that although the Byzantines pulled back to a northern defensive position not all of Syria-Palestine collapsed and was under firm Arab control, evidenced later by the presence and effectiveness of the Maronites.⁴¹

In the year 644/645⁴² the Patrician⁴³ Valentinian rebelled, but Constans II had him killed resulting in the army being firmly brought back under his control. Rebellions like this are a common feature in Byzantine history and could influence an emperor's foreign policy. If an emperor could not trust his high-ranking officials, he would understandably be less likely to remove himself from the capital for long periods of time or undertake risky military ventures that might undermine his authority if they were to fail. This is not something that is evident with Constans II, as we shall soon see. The following year (645/646) Umar, leader of the Arabs, was assassinated and Uthman came to power. While this power transition went smoothly, future leadership disruptions would offer valuable opportunities for the Byzantines to exploit their enemies' weaknesses both diplomatically and militarily. An ironic example occurred the following year (646/647) when the Patrician Gregory in North Africa rebelled; his territory did not include Egypt. The ironic aspect of the rebellion is that instead of taking advantage of the Byzantine turmoil, the Arabs actually inadvertently resolved the issue for Constans II. The next year (647/648) the Arabs raided North Africa, defeated Gregory, drove him from Africa, levied tribute from the Byzantine province, and then withdrew without any permanent gains.⁴⁴ We can see that at this time Byzantine control over

⁴⁰ Ṭabarī. *The Conquest of Iran*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. 164-165.

⁴¹ Moosa, Matti. *The Maronites in History*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986. 143, 180-181, 183 & 190-192.

⁴² The Byzantine calendar began in September and carried through August. Therefore, most dates will be split between two years to be as accurate as possible.

⁴³ Patricians were the governing elites in cities and regions much like modern governors in contemporary America.

⁴⁴ Theophanes. 42-43.

some of its territories were tenuous. However, instead of Constans II being forced to take action against Gregory, which he undoubtedly would have since North Africa was one of the Byzantine's richest provinces and supplied agriculture supplies to Constantinople, he was relieved of the trouble by the Arab raid. As both the Byzantines and the Arabs began to realize the other state was not going to be so easily conquered, foreign policy took a significant role between the two powers. As the dust settled and both states consolidated their holdings, direct communications between them would quickly emerge and internal turmoil on either side, like the rebellion of the Patrician Gregory, would not be squandered.

In the year 648/649 Theophanes states that Mu'āwiyah attacked Cyprus with a sizeable navy. This is the first recorded instance of the Arabs operating a naval force. It is unsurprising, then⁴⁵, that while this initial naval raid was successful, it quickly withdrew when it learned a Byzantine force under the Chamberlain Kakorizos had been dispatched to intercept it. The strength of the Byzantine navy versus the emerging Arab navy would play a crucial role over the course of the next several decades for the survival of the Byzantine Empire and the direction of its foreign policy. After Mu'āwiyah withdrew to the Syrian coast, he sought to subjugate and deport the population of the island of Arados.⁴⁶ When he was unable to take the city by force, he attempted to use a bishop to convince the inhabitants to surrender.⁴⁷ Even though the attempt failed, it is important to note that a member of the clergy was engaged by Mu'āwiyah. The Arabs attempted to use the bishop in a local role to accomplish their aims. This system of collaboration would be used by the Arabs repeatedly to negotiate with local Byzantine populations over the course of their conquests and rule.

⁴⁵ As an unproven naval force, the Arab commanders would have been understandably hesitant to challenge the perceived might of the Byzantines at sea.

⁴⁶ Mu'āwiyah subjugated Arados the following year and deported its population, leaving the island uninhabited. The Arabs were primarily a land force and more than likely thought it would be too much trouble to govern the small island and protect it against the Byzantine navy.

⁴⁷ Theophanes. 43.

Constans II's foreign policy begins to take form at this time, differentiating itself from previous Byzantine policy regarding the Arabs. Up until now, a state of perpetual war had existed between the Byzantines and the Arabs. Due to the Arabs' religious motivations and the Byzantines' perception of the Arab conquests as a temporary setback, no other state was likely to exist. Nevertheless, this state of affairs could not sustain itself forever. Theophanes gives us the first example of formal Byzantine and Arab negotiations in the year 650/651. This abrupt change to Constans II's foreign policy was probably a result of the Arabs' emerging naval threat and a successful large-scale raid on Isauria.⁴⁸ In response to these events, Constans II sent Prokopios⁴⁹ to negotiate a peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah. Mu'āwiyah was given a hostage and a two-year peace treaty was arranged.⁵⁰ It is apparent that Constans II needed a respite from the continuous attacks on his territory to reinforce his defenses and military strength. This shift in foreign policy marks the beginning of Constans II's plans to deal with the Arab threat as more than a temporary issue. However, this does not mean Constans II had accepted the new reality that the Arab state represented.

The newly formed peace treaty was put to the test the following year (651/652) when the Patrician of Armenia, T'eodoros R'shtunik, rebelled against Constans II and made agreements with Mu'āwiyah. Armenia was critical to the defense of Byzantine Anatolia. The Armenian Taurus Mountain range was a natural extension of the Byzantine defense of Anatolia, and if the Arabs were able to circumvent it, then Arab raids would be able to penetrate deeper and more effectively into Byzantine territory. According to Theophanes, Constans II advanced as far as Caesarea in Cappadocia before turning back and giving up on Armenia.⁵¹ Sebeos offers more details on these

⁴⁸ A south central region of Anatolia.

⁴⁹ Byzantine military commander.

⁵⁰ Theophanes. 44.

⁵¹ Ibid. 44.

events. T'eodoros R'shtunik, according to Sebeos, along with other Armenian princes, submitted to the Arabs on favorable terms similar to those of a vassal state. Realizing this, Constans II marched his army into Armenia to Karin. It is here we already see a deviation between Theophanes and Sebeos. Theophanes has Constans II never reaching Armenia and retreating without a fight, whereas Sebeos states that Constans II not only reached Armenia but also gathered the loyal princes who did not follow T'eodoros R'shtunik in his betrayal.⁵² It is unlikely Constans II would have surrendered the strategically important Armenia without attempting to regain control, especially since Armenia's loyalty was divided, giving him ample opportunity to reassert his authority. This portion of Sebeos's account demonstrates the fragmented nature of Armenia as well as its significance for Byzantine foreign policy.

Armenia quickly turned into a battlefield as Byzantine forces and those loyal to them fought multiple small scale conflicts with the forces of T'eodoros R'shtunik and the Arab contingents sent to support him. While this crisis was occurring, Constans II was forced to return to Constantinople due to Mu'āwiyah's preparations for his intended assault on the Byzantine capital. In his absence, the remaining Byzantine forces were eventually defeated. By 655, Armenia, according to Sebeos, was completely under Arab control as they consolidated their power there.⁵³ Without Byzantine military support the loyalist Armenians were unable to effectively resist the Arab invasion and were forced to submit to their authority.

It is evident that members of the Armenian ruling class were not content to be ruled directly or indirectly by a non-Christian Arab state. Throughout this time Byzantine forces continued to pressure Arab positions in Armenia but were defeated. After the Byzantine defeat, the Arab forces

⁵² Sebēos, Robert W. Thomson, J. D. Howard-Johnston, and Tim Greenwood. *The Armenian history attributed to Sebeos*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999. 135-137.

⁵³ Sebeos. 146-150

ravaged Armenia and took hostages from the prominent families.⁵⁴ The conquest of Armenia would be a temporary blow to Constans II but would permanently affect his policies with regard to the Arabs. The loss of Armenia, at this time, was especially disastrous due to the absolute naval defeat Constans II suffered in 653/654 off the coast of Lycia at the hands of an expeditionary force sent by Mu‘āwiyah against Caesarea which he barely escaped with his life.⁵⁵ These twin defeats would have severe ramifications on Constans II’s response to the Arab threat, as we shall see. Constans II would now no longer view the Arabs as an adversary he could defeat with his available manpower and materials as his grandfather had the Sassanids; he would now have to find ways to increase his strength and strategically weaken the Arabs instead of only facing them on the field of battle where Byzantine forces had not proven themselves able to ensure victory.

At first glance Byzantine naval defeats by the newly created Arab navy seem shocking. How could the Byzantines, an established maritime power for several centuries, be defeated by a people with no history of naval warfare? And how could the Arabs, who had never had any naval experience in their history, have conducted repeatedly successful naval campaigns against the Byzantines? Upon further research the outcomes of these engagements should not be surprising.⁵⁶ While these naval battles were definitely not guaranteed victories for the Arab navy, their disadvantages were not as acute as could easily be assumed. The strategic positions these particular powers controlled during the latter half of the seventh century as well as the sea avenues their fleets secured for their movements were becoming increasingly important in the ongoing conflict between the Byzantines and the Arabs. This emerging naval trend was not lost on Constans II, and he

⁵⁴ Ibid. 150.

⁵⁵ Theophanes. 45.

⁵⁶ Bury. 1-14 & Fahmy, Aly Mohamed. *Muslim Naval organization in the Eastern Mediterranean, from the 7th to the 10th Century A.D.* Cairo, U.A.R.: National Publication and Printing House, 1948. 27-28.

adjusted his foreign policy accordingly. It is unfortunate that Constantine II's immediate successors showed little interest in securing the Mediterranean Sea as it descended into a state of anarchy compared to the preceding centuries where the Roman Empire had turned it into their personal lake.

Since the Battle of Actium in 31BC, Roman naval forces were primarily only required for police and transport purposes. Even when the Roman Empire fractured itself into a state of civil war, the fate of the Empire was decided by land engagements, leaving the navy, both its experience and material, to deteriorate. This ominous situation became unmistakable when the Vandals seized North Africa and became a naval power in the fifth century. Roman naval capability had declined to the point where the Vandals completely dominated the western Mediterranean Sea after only a few years, a situation eerily similar to the Byzantines and Arabs in the seventh century. With their navy, the Vandals were able to conquer Sicily, raid Italy, and sack Rome. It wasn't until the conquests of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian the Great that the Mediterranean Sea, for all intents and purposes, returned into being a Roman lake. It is unsurprising then that the navy would be neglected since ships would only have been required for police and transport purposes again; even military ventures utilized fleets primarily for transport purposes. An example closer to our time frame is the African fleet which brought Heraclius to Constantinople when he overthrew Phocas in 610. Again this fleet was meant for transport purposes only and it can only be assumed Phocas did not have a similar fleet with which to intercept Heraclius's, probably because the Sassanid invasion was land-based and did not require the creation of a Byzantine fleet.⁵⁷ Thus, at the end of antiquity, the Byzantines did not have a professional navy. If the Byzantine naval forces were insufficient for transportation or police purposes during a time of war, merchant ships were commandeered.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Bury. 1-3.

⁵⁸ Howard-Johnson. 476.

The creation of the Arab fleet, however, forced the Byzantines to devote the necessary resources into creating and training their own fleet. Recreating a fleet for military engagements only provides the ships. Without military naval experience or training, however, a fleet would be of limited value. Studied in this light the Byzantine and Arab navies were on remarkably similar terms. Both were manned by officers with limited naval combat experience, and the seamen on each side were Christian sailors with similar experience, knowledge and abilities, giving neither side a significant advantage. This demonstrates a weakness in Byzantine defenses that the Arabs quickly took advantage of. Constans II, realizing not only the danger represented by the Arab navy but also his current inability to destroy it, had to alter his foreign policy to cope with this new situation.

Fortunately for Constans II these defeats were followed by the assassination of Uthman⁵⁹ which led to the First Arab Civil War. This respite let Constans II refocus his attentions on strengthening the Byzantine Empire's defenses against external threats as well as reasserting control over Armenia. Another fortunate event was the death of T'eodoros R'shtunik, leaving Hamazasp as the new prince of Armenia. According to Sebeos, it was after Hamazasp gained political control of Armenia that Armenia withdrew from Arab vassalage and pledged allegiance to Constans II. This allowed Constans II to focus his efforts in the west since Armenia would act as a buffer for his eastern territories. Even though Sebeos does not offer definitive dates for these events, it is probable that Hamazasp returned his allegiance to Byzantium around the time the First Arab Civil War erupted between Mu'āwiyah and Ali.⁶⁰ With Arab forces and priorities diverted away from Armenia, this was the only reliable time that Byzantine forces would have been able to reassert

⁵⁹ Uthman was the leader of the Arab state from 644/645 through 655/656.

⁶⁰ Sebeos. 153-154.

control over these territories. The First Arab Civil War was extremely fortunate for Constans II, especially after his defeats, and were appropriately taken advantage of regarding his foreign policy.

It was during the respite of the First Arab Civil War that Constans II embarked on his far-sighted plan of strengthening the Byzantine Empire. What is noteworthy is that instead of embarking on significant military expeditions against the Arabs to the south, Constans II instead attacked north. Two years after Uthman's assassination (656/657), Constans II campaigned against the Slavs in Thrace and the Balkans. He was able to take numerous prisoners and bring parts of Thrace back under Byzantine control. It is sensible to speculate this successful campaign would also have had the benefit of improving morale for the army and citizens of the empire, necessary after all so many Byzantine defeats. In the following year, 657/658, a peace treaty was created between the Byzantines and Mu'āwiyah's faction. Due to the First Arab Civil War, Mu'āwiyah needed to secure his northern borders from Byzantine attacks, so he sent an embassy requesting a peace treaty. Constans II accepted this treaty along with the proposed tribute.⁶¹ With this favorable treaty securing his southern borders and Armenia protecting his eastern borders, Constans II was now free to begin an aggressive foreign policy aimed, indirectly, at re-establishing and securing Byzantine control in the east.

In 660/661, according to Theophanes, Constans II left Constantinople for Syracuse in Sicily. The timing for his western campaign was inopportune as the First Arab Civil War had already ended in 658/659 with the assassination of Ali and Mu'āwiyah's victory. This resulted in the creation of the Umayyad Caliphate with Mu'āwiyah as the sole ruler of the Arab state. Theophanes states that Constans II intended to transfer the capital to Rome.⁶² This is unlikely, however, as Constans II was

⁶¹ Theophanes. 46.

⁶² Ibid. 47.

not popular with the population of Rome or the clergy there. It is far more probable that he expected to set up a seat of government in the west to allow more centralized control over these precarious regions. While it is impossible to fully know Constans II's plans while in the west, certain deductions can be made that are consistent with the reality of the times. With the rise of Arab naval power in the east and the threat the Arabs represented to Byzantine North Africa (one of the wealthier remaining provinces that boasted not only economic wealth but also a significant agricultural surplus now that Egypt was in Arab hands), it was critical to confine the Arab advance to the east and maintain control of the western Mediterranean. A reasonable way for Constans II to achieve this goal was to concentrate his energies in the west, hence his presence and military activities in the region.

There were several advantages to securing the central Mediterranean Sea. Protecting the commerce and territory of these areas from Arab expansion was important. What was critical, though, was that if the Arabs were able to gain a permanent footing in the central Mediterranean then Greece was exposed as well as the entire Adriatic Sea coastal regions. This would also have left the Exarchate of Ravenna, with whom Constans II was on better terms with than Rome, vulnerable as well.⁶³ His concerns were not unfounded, as was apparent when the Arabs did eventually conquer North Africa then Sicily, which led to Arab raids throughout the Mediterranean. These preventative actions in the west were not only intended to protect against further losses to the Arab state but also to retake crucial regions from the Arabs. Constans II's foreign policy was focused on the Arab threat even at the expense of only partially dealing with other, less significant threats such as the Slavs and the Lombards. It is apparent from his actions that the Arabs were his primary objective and that he felt he could subdue the other threats at a later date.

⁶³ Bury. 4-5.

Another advantage to shifting his focus west, other than to repulse Arab expansion, was to reassert Byzantine influence and control over regions that were less accustomed to direct Byzantine rule. Much of Italy and Sicily were recent acquisitions, dating back to the military conquests of Justinian the Great. Control of North Africa, moreover, was more than likely still questionable after the attempted rebellion of the patriarch Gregory. An Arab incursion had solved this particular problem for Constans II but it highlighted the rising threat of a more serious Arab invasion in the future. Basing himself in Sicily gave Constans II the geographic location necessary to cement firm Byzantine control over these regions before they fell under either Arab or Lombard control or outright broke away from the empire themselves.

Syracuse was a convenient base of operations for Constans II when he established his government for several years in the west. From here, he could easily control the sea routes from east to west, thus protecting the western Byzantine regions from Arab advances. This position also offered a centralized location for him to obtain more resources from Italy, Sicily, and North Africa for his military plans. He was also able to institute a poll-tax from these areas to help fund his naval building program. This naval program, intended to create a second and central Mediterranean fleet, was an important factor in his selection of Syracuse for his residence. At this time Syracuse was a major naval sea port and relatively secure from attack. Utilizing Syracuse's port, Constans II initiated a large ship construction program using the region's available timber, dockyard workers, and sailors. With these material assets and geographic advantages, Syracuse was a logical choice for Constans II's residence. While it is impossible to definitively discern Constans II's plans upon completion of his new western fleet, it can certainly be argued that he was attempting to gain naval superiority over the Arabs. If that was the case, then his ultimate objective would have in fact have

been Arab-held Egypt.⁶⁴ Although it can also be argued that this naval program was defensive in nature it wouldn't explain Constans II's personal oversight of the program, especially for a period of several years with the burden he imposed on the entire region financially. Assuming Constans II was able to gain naval superiority, he would more than likely have been able to march his army from North Africa and sail his navy up the Nile and secure Egypt.

Nonetheless, Constans II's intentions in the west never came to fulfillment partially as a result of his assassination in 667/668. The primary hindrance to him achieving his goal was not in the astuteness of his policy but in his inability to accumulate sufficient funds for his programs.⁶⁵ Other contributing factors included his difficulty subduing the Lombards in southern Italy, religious friction with Rome, inadequate defense of North Africa due to his lack of sufficient employment the navy, and his failures at sea. After the death of Constans II, his successor Constantine IV kept the navy in the east, leaving North Africa and the central Mediterranean islands vulnerable to conquest and constant raids from the Arab navy.⁶⁶ While it is impossible to know the alternative historical possibilities of Constans II's foreign policy, aimed at reconquering Egypt, it was designed to prevent the Arab expansion in the west. Constans II's foreign policy in the west was as ambitious as it was imperative for the Byzantines to regain the initiative against the Arabs. Yet, his lack of funds critically restricted him.

With Constans II focusing his attentions in the west and the First Arab Civil War concluded in 658/659, Arab raids on Byzantine territory began again. For the rest of Constans II's reign, Arab raids annually penetrated into Byzantine Anatolia, going even so far as to winter in Byzantine territories. Nonetheless, these raids did not represent a significant threat to the Byzantine Empire,

⁶⁴ Howard-Johnson. 486.

⁶⁵ Bury. 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 5.

and so Constans II did not deviate from his programs in the west. In 663/664, according to Theophanes, a Byzantine force of Slovaks betrayed the Byzantines, joined with an Arab raiding party, and resettled in Syria; they were probably the force sent to intercept the Arabs.⁶⁷ It is likely that these Slovakian soldiers were part of a deported population that Constans II had acquired on his campaign against the Slavs in the north while on his way to Italy. These soldiers would have been settled in Anatolia to aid in defending the territory from the Arab raids but would have had minimal loyalty to Constans II. The significance of these raids is that they demonstrate that despite their renewal on Byzantine territory, Constans II did not return to Constantinople or send any of his forces back east; this indicates that these events were not worthwhile enough to alter his foreign policy in the west. His heir, Constantine IV, was left in the east to respond to these raids.

Constans II's reluctance to change his plans in the west and Constantine IV's own manner of response to crisis would be put to the test in 666/667. In this year, the Byzantine Strategos of Armenia⁶⁸, Saborios, rebelled against Constans II. He sent his general, Sergios, to the Arab Caliph, Mu'āwiyah, seeking an alliance with the Arabs. Saborios offered the income from the Byzantine public revenues in exchange for military aid in overthrowing Constantine IV in Constantinople because Constans II was in Sicily, thereby securing the eastern part of the Empire. Constantine IV was informed of the rebellion and sent the cubicularius⁶⁹ to convince Mu'āwiyah against aiding the rebels. This effort was unsuccessful, and Mu'āwiyah ordered troops dispatched to aid Saborios. In response to the failed diplomatic efforts, Constantine IV sent a Byzantine army to defeat Saborios before sufficient Arab aid could reach him. In a fortuitous turn of events for Constantine IV, Saborios died an accidental death, terminating the rebellion in Armenia. When the Arab force

⁶⁷ Theophanes. 48.

⁶⁸ The military governor of Armenia.

⁶⁹ Eunuch chamberlain.

arrived, they found the Byzantines unified and sent back a messenger for guidance on the changed situation. This guidance arrived in the form of a large Arab army. Capturing the city of Phrygian Amorion and taking numerous prisoners the large majority of the army returned to Syria leaving 5,000 soldiers to garrison the city. During the winter, the Byzantines would retake the city, killing all the garrisoned troops.⁷⁰ The only notable characteristic of Constans II's foreign policy to be revealed from this incident is that none of the sources mention his intention to return to the east to deal with the crisis in Armenia. It is possible that he did not have enough time to react to the events before they were concluded, that he trusted his son Constantine IV to handle the crisis, or that even the loss of Armenia was inconsequential to his aims in the west, with his defense of the western territories and his possible reconquest of Egypt. As for Constantine IV, he displayed the initiative to undertake both diplomatic and military avenues to protect his territories. This is the first unmistakably recorded instance where a Byzantine emperor initiated a diplomatic attempt with the Arabs without first resorting to a military confrontation, possibly indicating a recognition of the Arab Caliphate as a legitimate state and actor on the international stage.

The assassination of Constans II in 667/668 brought an abrupt end to his foreign policy and naval ambitions in the west. Following his death, the soldiers proclaimed Mizizios emperor, initiating another rebellion against which Constantine IV had to take action to secure his position. Already having experience with this type of matter, he quickly sailed to Sicily, defeated and then executed Mizizios. With that he sailed back to Constantinople to rule in the east as the west gradually eroded away.⁷¹ It will later become apparent that these two attempted rebellions early on in his reign, under his father and after, influenced his foreign policy decisions.

⁷⁰ Theophanes. 48-50.

⁷¹ Theophanes. 50-51.

With Constans II's death, Constantine IV succeeded him with his own foreign policy interests and methods which would concentrate in the eastern part of the empire's possessions. The focus of naval activities in the west would diminish with Constans II's death, alleviating coastal pressure on the Arabs. An indication of this effect is noticeable when the governor of Egypt, Yazid ibn Abdallah, in 859 ordered the fortification of the coastal cities and ordered ships and soldiers to be garrisoned along the coast after a Byzantine attack at Damietta.⁷² This military reaction suggests that the coastal areas were unprepared for Byzantine attacks, leaving large parts of the Egyptian coast vulnerable to raids in later centuries. While this is two centuries after Constans II's reign it indicates that succeeding emperors did not consistently pursue an aggressive naval policy towards Egypt, allowing it to operate relatively safely. If this was indeed the case, then it implies that no serious threats had menaced the Arab naval operations in Egypt which allowed the Arabs to utilize their navy and expand not only westward, but also to conduct raids and sieges throughout the eastern portion of the Byzantine Empire. The death of Constans II led to the neglect of the west by Constantine IV and Justinian II and the retention of Egypt for the Arabs without serious challenge. Although it is impossible to know if Constans II's policies would have proved successful, it is evident that the attempt would have been beneficial since the consequences of his death were dire for the Byzantine Empire.

Theophanes and Sebeos were invaluable as sources for the latter half of the seventh century; however, their largest potential drawback for relying too much on these sources is that they both are Byzantine in perspective. The Syrian sources discuss the seventh century while offering more information and diverse perspectives from Arab-held territory, allowing for research into this time frame to expand beyond what the Byzantine sources would otherwise have allowed.

⁷² Fahmy. 31-32.

Arab Literary Sources

There are four Syrian sources that either contribute to the information already provided by Theophanes and Sebeos or help support it. These sources are the Maronite Chronicle, Chronicle of Zuqnin, extracts from two chronicles up to AD 819 and 846, and the Chronicle of AD 1234. These sources are beneficial not only for the new information they present but the information from other sources they help corroborate. The Maronite Chronicle mentions Constans II going north to conduct war in 658/659 lending support to Theophanes.⁷³ The extracts from two chronicles up to AD 819 and 846 are two similar chronicles written in the ninth century, the latter utilizing parts of the former's information and adding additional data where necessary. These chronicles discuss the peace treaty Mu'āwiyah offered during the First Arab Civil War.⁷⁴ The primary value for this source is that it substantiates information provided by other sources. The Chronicle of 1234 covers the rebellions of Valentine and Gregory, raids on Cyprus, conquest of Aradus, the Byzantine naval defeat off the Lycian coast, the First Arab Civil War, and the rebellion in Armenia by the Strategos Seborius. One last piece of information this source may support is the invasion of Egypt in 664/665 by Mu'āwiyah. While this information may seem incorrect because Egypt had long since been incorporated into the Arab state, it may be a reference to the rebellious Arab soldiers stationed in Alexandria, mentioned by Sebeos, which had sworn allegiance to the Byzantines.⁷⁵ All these repeatedly mentioned events in various sources help validate each other.

The Maronite Chronicle only goes up to 664 and was likely written by someone who lived through the events. The writer was a Maronite and a supporter of the Byzantines who utilized

⁷³ Palmer. 29-35.

⁷⁴ Palmer. 75-77.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 85 & 167-193.

several successful defenses of Byzantine Anatolia to increase the morale of contemporary readers. This source supplies significant implications such as the silver and gold currency being rejected by the Byzantines. According to the source, in 659/660, Mu'āwiyah became Caliph (date overlaps with Theophanes), minted his own silver and gold coinage, which was rejected by the Byzantines because it did not have the cross on it⁷⁶, and Mu'āwiyah broke the peace with the Byzantines now that he had unified the Arabs under his rule. This likely references the tribute stipulated in the peace treaty Mu'āwiyah made with Constans II during the First Arab Civil War. The fact that Mu'āwiyah had re-minted his own coinage implies an increased sophistication regarding the Arab states development along with a likely increased sophistication in relations between the two states⁷⁷; this would have had implications for how the Byzantines would have interacted with the Arab state. The writer suggests, that by minting his own coinage, the Arabs earlier had been entirely dependent upon Byzantine coinage. Also, this information infers that Byzantine-Arab interactions by this time had developed sufficiently enough to allow for dialogue and transactions between the two states. Furthermore, the recommencing of warfare offers ancillary information to Theophanes work which

⁷⁶ This is the only source that mentions Mu'āwiyah minting his own gold and silver coinage, and this information closely resembles the events associated with Caliph Malik's monetary reforms in the 690's. Nonetheless, a large amount of pseudo-Byzantine (locally minted), Umayyad Imperial, and Standing Caliph series copper and gold coins were circulated in the Syria-Palestine region, though far less numerous. These circulated in the late 650's to the 670's. These dates are feasible because the coins were largely dependent on the image of Constans II. The Umayyad Imperial Image coin's weight, size, and imagery indicate a greater attempt at coordination at the provincial level. Information provided by Alan Walmsley, "Economic Developments and the Nature of Settlement in the Towns and Countryside of Syria-Palestine, ca. 565-800," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 61, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press (2007) 321-322. These imitation coins could possibly be the basis for the Maronite Chronicles' reference to the events at the end of Constans II's reign.

⁷⁷ Initially the Arab State had relied on preexisting Byzantine administrative and financial institutions to continue running their state as it expanded. During this time the Arabs utilized the Byzantine and Sassanid coins for currency. The creation of the Arab States own currency likely indicates that the state had developed enough sophistication to no longer rely on its Byzantine foundations. The stability and advancement this achievement shows implies the Byzantines were now interacting with an established state. Along similar lines as the Sassanid Empire that had professional minted its own currency like the Byzantines and now the Arabs.

indicates the resumption of raids around this date. After this date, the source only illuminates a few more years, all of them depicting raids on the Byzantine Empire.⁷⁸

The Chronicle of Zuqnin was probably written in 775 at the Zuqnin monastery in southeastern Anatolia on the southern side of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains. The source offers a pro-Byzantine perspective along the border where raids would have had a frequent impact on the region. The greatest weakness of this source is that its dates are off, sometimes by several years. However, this does not negate the importance of its content. The first instance of the advantages offered from this perspective is the mention of the capture of Caesarea⁷⁹ in 641-642. The capture of this city on the Byzantine side of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountain ranges would have had significant implications for the defense of Byzantine Anatolia. It appears the Byzantines responded offensively in 644/645, different from how traditional views held Byzantine military reactions to the Arab advances, by sending military forces to raid Arab held territory. It appears the Arab conquest of Caesarea was either short-lived or merely a raid since a few years later Constans II was able to go through Caesarea on his way to Armenia when T'eodoros R'shtunik rebelled against him, allying himself with Mu'āwiyah, in 650/651, according to Theophanes.⁸⁰

This excerpt from the source indicates that the Byzantines were not attempting large military offensives intended to reconquer their lost territory at this time, but instead sought to inflict damage and weaken Arab morale while increasing their own. This is a pattern we see change over the course of Constans II's reign as both the Byzantines and Arabs solidified their holdings before they reinitiated large-scale offensives. Another new piece of information it supplies is a battle in 651/652 at Tripolis, which was just a few years after Muawiyah had finally captured Aradus. This battle

⁷⁸ Palmer. 29-35.

⁷⁹ While this source mentions it in Palestine it is likely a source error and is probably in reference to Caesarea in Cappadocia. The capture of this city is also mentioned in the extracts from two chronicles up to AD 819/846.

⁸⁰ Palmer. 53-58.

implies that the Byzantines had not lost complete control of the coastal regions⁸¹ and were still attempting to defend them against Arab assaults. The Byzantine navy was doubtlessly responsible for the coastal cities initial ability to resist Arab control. The ability of these coastal cities to resist Arab dominion would have deteriorated in concurrence with the Byzantine navy's decline in influence in that coastal region.⁸² Throughout the reign of Constans II, this source's most beneficial contributions to the mosaic of events were the Byzantine attempts to defend coastal areas, despite withdrawing its land-based military might as well as the Byzantine's offensive attempts to regain momentum against the Arabs. Information such as this suggests the Byzantines, in the reign of Constans II, had not accepted the new reality of a rival Arab state nor were the Byzantines militarily incapable of responding to this new threat despite their recent defeats.

The Chronicle of 1234 was written by an anonymous source but incorporates much from Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, whose work only survives in other sources. An advantage of this source is its detailed chronological methodology. The peace treaty initiated by Constans II in 649/650 is mentioned in previous sources along with the death of the hostage Gregory after only one year. What was neglected, however, in earlier accounts is how the peace treaty perished along with the hostage, which is explicitly mentioned here. Formerly, the reasons for the continued attacks on the Byzantines were uncertain, and it seemed as if the peace treaty never achieved its intended goal. Another detail omitted in earlier accounts is Constans II's stay in Rome. It has been stated that he eventually departed for Syracuse, but the Chronicle of 1234 states that he left for Syracuse because the Senators in Rome complained about his presence. This small detail implies that Constans II's activities in Italy led to dissatisfaction among his more powerful local subjects. The final worthwhile detail of information contained in the Chronicle 1234 is how the rebellion of the Armenian

⁸¹ As seen in the continued persistence of Palestinian Caesarea and Ascalon.

⁸² Palmer. 53-58.

Strategos Seborius in 666/667 concluded. The Chronicle of 1234 differs from Theophanes; instead of a winter Byzantine attack killing the garrisoning Arabs, the Byzantines were forced to offer tribute for peace in the region.⁸³ How the Arab advance into Armenia, following the failed rebellion, was halted may not be significant in and of itself for Constans II's foreign policy. However, it is important for Constantine IV because he was the decision-maker in the east while Constans II was in Sicily, which is a further example of how Constantine IV was equally capable of military and diplomatic action, much like Constans II.

For a study of Byzantine foreign policy, Byzantine sources offer the most wide-ranging material. Nevertheless, an Arab source offers a unique perspective and material that would have been unavailable to Byzantine scholars. Al-Tabari, a ninth-century Muslim scholar, is a comprehensive source that satisfies this intelligence gap. Al-Tabari is particularly well suited in this role because of his meticulous research and his attention to detail. The information presented by Al-Tabari, while very explanatory regarding Arab military actions and internal politics, offers very little new to Byzantine foreign policy. Despite this, he helps corroborate, from an Arab perspective, much of the information presented by the Byzantine sources like Theophanes and Sebeos. An early new piece of information offered by Al-Tabari regards the conquest of Egypt and the capitulation of Alexandria. Even though the Byzantine sources mention this as well, Al-Tabari describes part of the delegation from Alexandria as consisting of Bishops.⁸⁴ This new piece of information offers insight into the importance of the Church's role in Egypt at this time showing how church figures could represent an urban population on significant political matters.

⁸³ Palmer. 85 & 167-193.

⁸⁴ Ṭabarī, and G. H. A. Juynboll. *The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. 164-167.

Following this example, Al-Tabari potentially sheds some further light on why Constans II made no effort to quell the rebellion of the Patrician Gregory in Northern Africa. According to Al-Tabari, in the same year of Umar's death and Uthman's ascension to Caliph, Mu'āwiyah invaded the Byzantine Empire as far as Amorium⁸⁵. This invasion represented a serious breach of the defenses of the Byzantine Empire. Applying these events into Theophanes' timeline shows us that Gregory rebelled the following year. With the rebellion of Valentinian the year before along with this invasion occurring the following year, it is understandable that Constans II would have decided that he had to concentrate on matters in the east for the time being.⁸⁶ This foreign policy decision must have been difficult to come to, but suppressing a distant rebellion, even in a rich territory, would have proved militarily dangerous with so much internal instability along with the increasingly penetrating Arab threat.

Regarding the reign of Constans II, Al-Tabari presents one last noteworthy piece of information. The section discussing Uthman during the year 654/655 nominally explains the strategic objective of continued Arab aggression towards the remaining Byzantine territories. It is in this section that Uthman tells the governors of the Arab-held territories to continue campaigns against the Byzantines. This in and of itself is unsurprising; the purpose behind this redundant order, however, is unexpected. Uthman tells the governors the purpose of the campaigns is to keep the people distracted on campaigns to alleviate internal conflicts. Evidently, Arab control over these vast territories with their large populations was still tenuous. Keeping the populations focused on a goal was probably more important than the actual continuing conflict with the Byzantines at this time. Regardless, Uthman's priority was not the conquest of new territories. The raids and campaigns were not expected to have a significant effect on the Byzantines, which aids in discerning

⁸⁵ This city is located in central Anatolia well into the Cappadocian plains.

⁸⁶ Ṭabarī (1994). 164-165.

why Constans II directed his foreign policy the way he did. Constans II made no serious effort in these early years to counterattack the Arab invasion. Instead he solidified his control and stabilized his remaining territories. The rebellions of Valentinian, Gregory, and Theodoros R'shtunik along with the constant minor raids during the early part of his reign dictated his priorities to accomplish these goals. With the land raids not representing a serious threat, the only actor that represented a danger to Byzantine survival was Mu'āwiyah and his naval operations that led to the raids on Cyprus and Rhodes as well as the devastating Byzantine naval defeat off the coast of Lycia. It is easy to understand why Constans II's foreign policy would have concentrated on a naval program seen in this light. Even after Uthman's death and the First Arab Civil War, Al-Tabari indicates constant Arab raids against the Byzantines.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, these raids never represented enough of a threat to pull Constans II away from the west where he was rebuilding the navy to confront what he viewed as the most crucial threat represented by Mu'āwiyah and his navy. It is surprising how something as simple as the purpose of the raids expressed by Uthman can have such momentous ramifications on Byzantine foreign policy, and the raids purpose would not have been available from any other source other than an Arab perspective.

The Importance of Egypt in the Literary Sources

Byzantine intentions to retake Egypt from the Arabs had historical precedents even before Constans II's military build-up in the west. The first attempt was made shortly after Egypt initially fell to the Arabs in 641. A Byzantine naval force in 646 was dispatched to Egypt after the recall of Amr b. al-As⁸⁸ in 645 by Uthman. The Byzantine forces easily secured Alexandria and began

⁸⁷ Ṭabarī, and R. Stephen Humphreys. *The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990. 136-138.

⁸⁸ Amr b. al-As was the original Arab general who conquered Egypt in 641.

securing the Delta region. Seeing this, Uthman reinstated Amr b. al-As who quickly marched on the Byzantines, preventing them from reaching Middle and Upper Egypt. After a brutal battle near Nikiu, Arab forces emerged victorious.⁸⁹ The next attempt at Byzantine re-conquest, according to Sebeos⁹⁰, was when the army stationed in Egypt renounced Islam and enlisted in the service of Constans II during the First Arab Civil War when neither Mu'āwiyah nor Ali could devote the resources to prevent this betrayal. Between them Constans II and the rebellious troops signed a treaty, and the troops were baptized, demonstrating the religious significance in serving in either of these states.⁹¹ Even though this is the final entry of Sebeos's history it can be inferred that Mu'āwiyah was able to quickly bring Egypt back under his control since no other sources mention this event and these same sources all still refer to Egypt as Arab territory after this time frame. Despite these failures, re-securing Egypt made reasonable sense. Its conquest would have been extremely beneficial for the Byzantine Empire and would have been equally catastrophic for the Arab Caliphate.

Egypt's significance relied on multiple factors that made its re-conquest not only desirable to Constans II's foreign policy but critical to regaining the strategic momentum against the Arabs. Materially, Egypt possessed wealth, timber, manpower, agricultural surplus, and extensive naval facilities. The loss of revenue and grain being sent to Constantinople was definitely detrimental to the Byzantines. Prior to the Arab conquest, the grain shipments to Constantinople were of primary importance to the Egyptian economy and the shipments remained an integral part of Egypt's economy after its conquest. However, now the grain was being sent to feed Arab cities and troops.⁹²

⁸⁹ Howard-Johnson. 477.

⁹⁰ Only Sebeos mentions this event.

⁹¹ Sebeos. 154.

⁹² Foss, Clive, "Egypt under Muawiyah Part I: Flavius Papas and Upper Egypt," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 72, Issue 1 (2009) 1-3.

Regardless, the gravest aspect of having Egypt under Arab control was its military capabilities. Egypt was not valuable for supplying soldiers; its value resided in its naval yards that would construct an Arab fleet. During the seventh century, Egypt did not boast a large standing army but instead had a small defending force to protect from Byzantine raids and to prevent internal discord. It was from Egyptian ports that numerous annual raids and invasions would set forth.⁹³

The importance of Egypt as a naval center was a fact not lost on the Arabs, and they concentrated on exploiting its resources and capabilities as much as possible. Due to this, the demands of the fleet were enormous and fell especially hard on Egypt, as opposed to regions within the Arab state that could contribute both manpower and revenue, with its long tradition of shipbuilding and producing fleets and sailors. During the reign of Uthman, the Egyptian naval presence was seen at the initial Arab raid against Cyprus, the Battle of the Masts, and a failed attempt at sailing to the walls of Constantinople where a storm sank the fleet before it arrived. These naval actions were followed by many more over the years, and Egyptian ships and sailors were specifically mentioned as a large part of them. Since Egypt constituted an enormous naval threat to them, the Byzantines attempted to weaken Egyptian capabilities during the early years of Arab control. Examples of this are seen in 665 when Mu‘āwiyah sent an army to Egypt to repel a Byzantine incursion, and again in 673 when the Byzantines had occupied the town of Paralos.⁹⁴

The Arabs in the seventh century had dockyards capable of producing their fleets in Syria, Egypt, and, eventually North Africa. It was Egypt, however, that was the dominant producer, and it offered more security from Byzantine raids than Syria did. Prior to the Arab conquest of Egypt, the Byzantine Empire had operated sizable dockyards at Alexandria, Clysma, and other minor dockyards

⁹³ Mikhail, Maged S. A., “Notes on the Ahl al-Diwan: The Arab-Egyptian Army of the Seventh through the Ninth Centuries C.E.,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 128, No. 2 (2008) 277-279.

⁹⁴ Foss (2009, Issue 1). 19-22.

throughout the delta region. According to available papyri, it is evident that the Arabs utilized these facilities with the aid of the local Greek and Coptic shipwrights.⁹⁵ Clysma was a harbor city whose significance relied on its location as the southern harbor of the Kahlih Amir Al-Mu'minin canal. This dockyard connected the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea and was important for the corn shipments that passed through as well as its dockyards. Shipbuilding at these dockyards prospered under both Byzantine and Arab rule. Alexandria provided both ships and sailors for the Arab navy. Surviving papyrus letters shed further light on the advantages and importance of Alexandria as the largest market and busiest port in the Mediterranean during the Byzantine period. Papyrus letter #1392 discusses supplies being sent to Alexandria for soldiers in the raiding fleet.⁹⁶ Another papyrus letter, 1353, expresses an urgent demand for sailors, skilled workmen, and supplies for the raiding fleet located at Alexandria. These sources indicate that Alexandria was an important staging area for the raids against the Byzantine Empire.⁹⁷ The loss of Alexandria would turn out to be a substantial setback for the Byzantine navy even before they recognized the emerging threat of an Arab navy. Capturing Alexandria would also turn out to be an important factor for the Arab navy's development into a naval power.

At this time in the seventh century, the principal feature of the naval organization was the corsair. This ship was the means by which the Arabs annually raided the Byzantine Empire and vice versa. Even though both rival powers originally created similar navies, due to the Arabs exploiting Syrian and Egyptian shipwrights into their service, the expenses for each were very different. Papyri indicate that the cost for one naval expedition for the Arabs during the reign of Yazid Mu'āwiyah was approximately 100,000 dinars while the Byzantine expedition against Damietta⁹⁸ in the 9th

⁹⁵ Fahmy. 23.

⁹⁶ The papyri are provided by the Fahmy monograph.

⁹⁷ Fahmy. 23-24 & 27-29.

⁹⁸ Egyptian dockyard.

century cost over 800,000 dinars. Unfortunately, Fahmy does not mention the number of ships, men, supplies, etc. involved with either Byzantine or Arab ventures to aid in distinguishing differences between the two.⁹⁹ Even though both these expeditions were over a century apart, it shows that the cost of financing a navy was far more expensive for the Byzantines than the Arabs indicating the financial obligation the Byzantine naval undertaking truly was. This demonstrates a significant long-term advantage the Arabs had over the Byzantines and underscores the importance of weakening and depriving them of Egypt to help relieve the Byzantines of an ever increasing financial burden.

To support the creation and maintenance of the Arab navy, Egypt's resources, both financial and material, were invested considerably into its support. Egypt's tax revenue and population were geared and mobilized to sustaining the fleet and its operations. The extensive archive of Flavius Papas¹⁰⁰ lends a large amount of information on the resources devoted to the Arab navy in Egypt. This archive consists of 107 documents in Greek and Coptic. The majority of the documents are official in nature while the rest are personal. This archive reveals the relations between Christian officials and their subordinates, peers, and their superiors, both Christian and Arab. A considerable weakness of this archive is that it is almost exclusively concerned with civil matters and offers virtually no information of the Church's role in government matters under Arab governorship.¹⁰¹

Taxes to support the Arab state and its military ventures were collected either in kind or cash. The former rarely appears in these documents. The monetary taxes were collected in installments twice a year from the population. These documents also disclose that a substantial part

⁹⁹ Fahmy. 87, 95-96 & 120.

¹⁰⁰ The pagarch of Apollonos Ano in the southernmost area of the Thebaid in Upper Egypt. He probably attained the office of pagarch (a secular office) in the 650's as a member of the land-owning aristocracy. Upper Egypt is the southern portion of the country, but since the Nile flows north, Upper Egypt is located in the south while Lower Egypt is located in the North.

¹⁰¹ Foss (2009, Issue 1). 5-9 & 22.

of the taxes were spent on the fleet. In Document 106, it states the governor of the island of Babylon had given orders to send sailors with their equipment and supplies to him and to have this act provided from the taxes. These requisitions were common and resulted in great hardships for the population.¹⁰² This is how the Arab administration of Egypt was able to fund the creation of a new fleet and keep it supplied every year for various military engagements and raids against the Byzantines.

The other major resource Egypt had to offer the Arab navy was its manpower. This manpower was mandatory from all parts of Egypt, not only the coastal towns that would have been more familiar with naval requirements. Service with the fleet was compulsory through a form of conscription, and each area of Egypt had to supply numerous individuals of varying crafts.¹⁰³ Unsurprisingly, the conscripted manpower that built and rowed the ships were Christians who were there in a support capacity and did not participate in the fighting; the soldiers in the navy were predominately Arabs. This arrangement worked against the Arabs at least once. In 716, Egyptian sailors abandoned their ships and warned the Byzantines of the impending attack.¹⁰⁴ The availability of experienced sailors and craftsman necessary in the establishment of a navy greatly facilitated the Arab efforts in Egypt. Constant II realized the threat Egypt and its resources represented to the Byzantine Empire and embarked on a policy intended to drive them out of Egypt and deprive them of their greatest naval assets.

The surviving documents from this period mostly discuss civil matters. However, a few documents allow scholars to view the power and wealth of the Coptic Church that continued to be very important under Arab rule. These documents indicate that the Church was one of the greatest

¹⁰² Ibid. 15-18.

¹⁰³ Foss, Clive, "Egypt under Muawiya Part II: Middle Egypt, Fusa and Alexandria," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 72, Issue 02 (2009) 275-276.

¹⁰⁴ Mikhail. 277.

landowners of Egypt and would have administered them under Arab rule. Church administration would have involved supplying taxes and supplies to the Arab state and its navy in exactly the same manner as secular authorities would have. Agathon was Patriarch of Alexandria from 665-681. In this position he still had the ability to ordain bishops and build churches while under Arab rule. Clergy were not exempt from the poll tax, and the Church had to pay the fees like everyone else. As a result of internal Christian politics, Agathon was penalized and forced to pay the Arabs a large amount to subsidize the construction and operation of the Arab navy. This suggests that the Church still had considerable resources to draw upon.¹⁰⁵ Even though the existing documents don't offer much information regarding the Church under Arab rule, they do provide glimpses of the Church's continuing role and wealth. The two most essential facts to take out of the limited information is that the Church still played a critical role in the daily lives of the population, which would have been significant if Constans II had survived to attempt to retake Egypt, and that the Church, whether indirectly through poll taxes or directly, contributed to the establishment of the Arab navy.

The creation and maintenance of the Arab navy in Egypt necessitated massive demands on Egypt. These demands took the shape of ships, money, sailors, craftsmen, military equipment, and supplies as well as food to feed the sailors and workforce. The scant surviving documents from this period illustrate the efforts involved and how they were directed towards the fleet from both secular and ecclesiastical institutions.¹⁰⁶ With the available information, Egypt represented a considerable threat to Byzantine security as well as offered an invasion route into North Africa and the Mediterranean Sea. It is unrealistic to believe that Byzantine foreign policy at this time could have afforded to ignore such a threat; indeed, it did not. The raids on Egyptian coastal cities in addition

¹⁰⁵ Foss (2009, Issue 2). 266-267 & 272-273.

¹⁰⁶ Foss (2009, Issue 2). 275-276.

to his naval build-up in the west suggest Constans II's primary foreign policy was to eliminate the Arab naval threat in Egypt before its full potential could be realized. During the reign of Constans II, Egypt epitomized Islam's "center of gravity"¹⁰⁷ for future Arab expansion throughout the Mediterranean Sea.

The literary sources make it clear that it was the Arab fleet that was the sword aimed at the heart of the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine navy was able to support coastal cities like Ascalon and Palestinian Caesarea for years after the Byzantines had withdrawn behind the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains. It wasn't until their utter defeat at the Battle of the Masts, when Constans II barely escaped, that the entire Anatolian coastline and Constantinople were open to seaborne attacks. Up until this time Constans II was busy maintaining control of his remaining territories against Arab raids and the uprisings of Valentinian, the Patrician of Africa, and the Patrician of Armenia. The Battle of the Masts, though, demonstrated to Constans II that to drive the Arabs out of Byzantine territory he would have to first regain command of the sea. According to the sources this is exactly what he was attempting to do in Sicily before his death. The sources indicate that he did not genuinely clash with the Slavs in the Balkans or the Lombards in Italy. The decisions made by Constans II, in the literary sources, signify his policy as one of opportunity as he moved towards his objective. His presence in Sicily, a prosperous island containing shipbuilding facilities and sailors, argue that he was attempting to regain the initiative against the Arabs.

¹⁰⁷ The term "center of gravity" was coined by Carl von Clausewitz in the early nineteenth century. It can refer to an opponent's basis of power both on a tactical, strategic or political level.

CHAPTER 2: CONSTANS II AND THE EAST/ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

The material sources complement the literary sources' contributions and aid in adding another dimension to the study of Byzantine foreign policy during the latter half of the seventh century. By means of archaeology an impression of Syria-Palestine, the border regions of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains and Anatolian coastal regions becomes apparent. It was the border regions between the Byzantines and Arabs during the reign of Constans II that provides the most material evidence regarding the Arab impact on the conquered territories and the extent of their military reach. Even though an increasing amount of research and excavations at sites in these regions has been conducted over the years it is necessary to note that there are still gaps in our knowledge. More work remains to help define our present picture for this time period. What is evident, though, is that Syria-Palestine did not suffer structurally from the Arab invasion as it had from the previous Sassanid invasions. The archaeology at the border regions of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains indicate a contraction into urban centers but no significant levels of destruction. It was the coastal regions of Anatolia that show signs of severe devastation. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the greatest threat to the Byzantines originated with the Arab navy and not its raids across the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains. Furthermore, the absence of destruction and urban or rural contraction in Syria-Palestine implies that the population within these regions would have had little motivation to revolt or support a Byzantine counterattack, especially considering they would have experienced more religious toleration and lower taxes under Arab rule.

Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountain Regions

The frontier region between the two hostile states of the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate originated from the earliest phases of the conflict. Arabic sources state that Heraclius devastated the region between Alexandretta and Tarsus and evacuated the region's defenses as he withdrew from Edessa to Cilicia. This created a no man's land in southern Cilicia just north of the Amanus Mountain range that also was intended to act as a natural barrier. The Byzantines were left with their strongholds in western Cilicia and the Arabs were able to advance as far as Antioch. Throughout the Umayyad period and onward Tarsus became a focal point for attack for both sides as it fluctuated between them.¹⁰⁸ The Byzantines wanted a defensive position forward of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains while the Arabs required Tarsus as a forward operating base with which to launch farther raids into Anatolia. Regardless of who created the no man's land between the two powers both had excellent reasons to do so because it allowed the Byzantines the distance they required to regroup after their disastrous defeats in Syria-Palestine and it allowed the Arabs to consolidate their new territories more securely. While Tarsus fluctuated between the Byzantines and the Arabs, Antioch became the principle frontier base of operations for the Arabs. Uthman, as well as Mu'āwiyah, had permanent forces stationed in Antioch and detachments in outlying bases such as Cyrrhus. As the frontier advanced, though, Cyrrhus received more permanent forces.¹⁰⁹

This information depicts a permeable Byzantine frontier region. Unlike the frontier border that had existed between the Sassanids and the Byzantines this newly emerged border was not static; in large part due to the constant warfare and precarious periods of peace between the two rival powers. Both Byzantine and Arabs would continuously raid across this permeable frontier. Cities formed the primary nodes of political and military control. If these centers fell to the invading

¹⁰⁸ Bosworth. 269-270.

¹⁰⁹ Foss, Clive, "Syria in Transition, A.D. 550-750: An Archaeological Approach," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 51, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997. 191-192.

Arabs so too did the regions surrounding them. The earliest frontier stretched from Antioch in Syria to the riparian districts¹¹⁰ of the Euphrates and Tigris; east of which the frontier dissolved into desert and steppes. The failure of the initial defensive frontier in Cilicia resulted in the more enduring medieval frontier. This frontier was characterized by the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains and the several passes that allowed easy access through them. Arab attacks on Anatolian cities were constant threat to the region for the Byzantines. Cappadocia, a large and higher elevation territory, became a critical region of resistance and defense against the Arab onslaught.¹¹¹

The city of Militene serves as an example for the difficulties the new frontier represented for Cappadocia. Limited excavations and surveys portray Militene as the scene of fierce fighting between the Byzantines and the Arabs. Mu'āwiyah was able to conquer the city in 656/657 and used it as a launching point for annual raids. The importance of the city to the Byzantines to push back the Arabs to the other side of the Anti-Taurus Mountains can be seen when they were able to retake the city during the reign of Abd al-Malik.¹¹² This frontier zone along the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains witnessed continuous warfare and the crossing of raiding parties back and forth for centuries. The difficulty this frontier proved to major Arab military actions is evident with the attention the Arabs directed towards Armenia. The conquest of Armenia would have allowed them to stretch the Byzantine frontier and allowed them to gain easier access to the inlands of Anatolia thus circumventing the southern defensive fortifications and mountain passes. These realities were obviously known to Constans II as his early foreign policy actions indicate great concern for the southern and eastern frontiers against the Arabs.

¹¹⁰ The riparian districts refers to the areas along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

¹¹¹ Decker, Michael, "Frontier Settlement and Economy in the Byzantine East," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 61, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007. 217, 220-221 & 238.

¹¹² Decker. 245.

Syria-Palestine

The impact of the Arab conquest on Syria-Palestine would have religious ramifications for the foreign policy of Constans II. Christian religious differences (i.e. Chalcedonians and Monothelites) had created rifts throughout certain regions of the Byzantine Empire; primarily Egypt and Syria-Palestine were in conflict with the north and western regions of the empire. These religious differences would have made it more difficult for Constans II to retake the lost territory while their loss could have simultaneously relieved the internal religious pressure the Byzantine Empire was under. Furthermore, the effects of the Arab conquest on the urban and economic landscape in Syria-Palestine would indicate whether or not the Arabs were increasing, maintaining, or wrecking these systems, resulting in either more accommodating, passive, or hostile local populations to invading Byzantine forces. The archaeological evidence in Syria-Palestine will additionally depict areas of conflict casting light on how Constans II approached the reconquest of Syria-Palestine.

To better understand the foreign policy of Constans II regarding the emerging Arab state it is critical to understand the impact the Arabs had on the regions in Syria-Palestine once they had acquired them. Previous scholarship¹¹³ had come to the conclusion that the arrival of the Arabs had only intensified the decline of both the urban and rural sites leading to the eventual abandonment of many of them. The evidence for this conclusion was based principally on dedicatory inscriptions and not on investigations of the archaeological structures themselves. This type of research attributed the causes for these sites decline to economic dislocations, religious strife, political

¹¹³ Charanis, Peter, "Cultural Diversity and the Breakdown of Byzantine Power in Asia Minor," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 29, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press (1975) 3-5 & Haldon. 56 & 63 & Walmsley (2007). 319 & A.P Kazdan according to Ostrogorsky, George, "Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages," *Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, Vol. 13 (1959) 48.

indifference, warfare, natural disasters, etc. Only in recent years have historians placed emphasis on the economic conditions that preceded the Arab invasion as well as the economic situation afterwards, and archaeology has been used to demonstrate that most cities, with exceptions like Jerusalem, offered little resistance to the advancing Arab forces due to their already weakened state. However, the archaeological evidence indicates temporary disruptions within a period of economic continuity.¹¹⁴ The best way to illustrate this argument against an economic decline and site abandonment due to the conquests of the Arabs are regional case studies. Most notably the urban centers in Syria-Palestine such as Antioch, Epiphania, Bostra and Pella.

The economic conditions in these eastern regions that preceded the Arab onslaught are significant in understanding whether or not they declined under Arab control. The condition of these urban centers at this time allows us to analyze their development and compare their circumstances from the early to the latter half of the seventh century. Since the Arabs, in the seventh century, did not extend their control north of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains into Byzantine Anatolia the case studies presented to examine the condition of the urban centers that the Arabs interacted with will concentrate on separate regions of Syria: the Orontes Valley and the region of Hauran. The Orontes Valley is in northern Syria and has Antioch, Epiphania, and the countryside surrounding these cities while Hauran is located in southwestern Syria and has Bostra and Pella. These regions were selected because they covered a swath of territory from north to south giving us an abundance of case samples. Furthermore, these regions contain cities and villages that have been considerably excavated.¹¹⁵

Antioch was the greatest city in Byzantine Syria. It was home to a patriarch and a governor who ruled over a large expanse of territory, both strategic and populous. Regrettably, the sixth and

¹¹⁴ Walmsley (2007). 319-321.

¹¹⁵ Foss (1997). 189-190.

seventh centuries were ill-fated for Antioch. In 525 a severe fire swept through the city and an earthquake hit it the following year. The earthquake in 528 was even more brutal, destroying most of the city. Antioch had barely begun to recover when the Sassanids captured the city in 540. This event saw the fiery destruction of the city and the deportation of the large parts of the population. Following quickly on the heels of this disaster was the outbreak of the bubonic plague in 542 and 560 as well as more earthquakes in 551, 557, 577 and 588. The Sassanids burned Antioch's suburbs again in 573. The final calamities of the sixth century was a drought in 599 that killed the olive trees in the entire region and an infestation that ruined their crops. Despite all this adversity Antioch did not succumb and in fact began to rise again as an important urban center. These events depict a much reduced Antioch by the end of the sixth century. It was this diminished Antioch that the Sassanids again wrested from the Byzantines in 610. They were to control Antioch for the next two decades. Not much is known about Antioch during this period of Sassanid control and the brief Byzantine reconquest. It is likely the Sassanids did not rebuild or repopulate Antioch during their occupation over the course of the war and the Byzantines' rule was too short to have made much of a difference. Therefore, Antioch was still in its reduced state¹¹⁶ when the Arabs permanently seized control from the Byzantine Empire.¹¹⁷

The countryside surrounding Antioch shared in its misfortune. The economies of the urban centers and their territories were always closely tied. Villages in the surrounding area thrived, as far as their population, into the middle of the sixth century. Their decline is probably linked to the reduction in Antioch's markets where the villages would have sold their agricultural surpluses. Demographics is the only area where they differed. The villages were not depopulated and their

¹¹⁶ Archaeology does not indicate an immediately revitalized site in 638.

¹¹⁷ Foss (1997). 190-191.

populations remained high well into the Umayyad Caliphate.¹¹⁸ While the countryside appears to have avoided the disasters brought on by plague and warfare they were indirectly affected by Antioch's faltering economy on which their prosperity depended.

In the seventh century under Arab ruled Antioch continued to transition from a great city of antiquity to an urban center with a very different role. Due to the fact that Antioch was located in the north near the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains and the Byzantine defensive position located there Antioch emerged as an important frontier fort for the Arabs in the early years of their conquests. Antioch became the launching point for the frequent Arab raids into Byzantine Anatolia. The Caliph Uthman permanently stationed military forces there probably as both an offensive and defensive measure, signifying the new position Antioch held at this time. Mu'āwiyah, while he was caliph, stationed additional troops in Antioch and outlying bases as the frontier advanced northward.¹¹⁹ The troops stationed in Antioch in both the reigns of Uthman and Mu'āwiyah confirm the continued importance of Antioch despite its reduction in population and prosperity. Even though Antioch was utilized primarily as a military fort and a starting point for Arab raids its archaeological remains demonstrate the impact the Arab presence had on the city, allowing scholars insight into how their military forces would have interacted with other population centers and thus the locals attitudes towards them.

Antioch, like many other sites, has limited definitive remains from the seventh and eighth centuries. A mint for copper coinage in the early eighth century indicates Antioch quickly became an administrative center; however, the coins are infrequent and seem to be only from a temporary mint, suggesting that Antioch had limited economic importance at this time and likely beforehand.

¹¹⁸ Foss (1997). 204.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 191-192.

In addition, the Christian community residing in Antioch was still vibrant, signified by the continuity of substantial churches throughout this period. The stationing of troops, establishment of an administrative center, and persistence of the Christian community all indicate that the Arab impact on Antioch was constructive, though limited. The evidence available within the city demonstrates a level of continued occupation on a smaller scale, even though much of Antioch had been reduced to rubble and the great public buildings no longer functioned, life continued. The hippodrome was filled with small houses and larger residences were divided into smaller rooms. Boulevards were occupied by modest buildings and coin finds represent a continuation of a monetized economy.¹²⁰ There is no evidence that the Arab conquest of this region was a factor in its decline. The Arabs appear to have maintained Antioch on a small scale but the city never regained its previous position of importance nor its former glory.

Even though there is no information to suggest that the Arab presence ushered in a new era of prosperity there is also nothing to suggest a period of decline. The fact that the Arabs relied on Antioch militarily and administratively implies they, at least, minimally offered stability to an urban center in desperate need of it. By the time the Byzantines had recovered from the initial Arab onslaught and Constans II had matured as a ruler¹²¹ the urban center of Antioch and its surrounding regions would have had ample time to become acclimated to the stability of Arab rule, which followed two decades of Sassanid rule.

The rural areas surrounding Antioch paint a similar picture. The Arabs found a densely populated countryside living in increasing poverty but did little to change it. The villages remained highly populated, increasingly poor, and overwhelmingly Christian. The region does not even

¹²⁰ Foss (1997). 191-192 & 195.

¹²¹ Constans II became emperor at the age of 11.

contain any Muslim buildings from the latter half of the seventh century.¹²² It is apparent the Arab presence was primarily concerned with occupying the region and using it as launching point for further incursions into Byzantine Anatolia. Like in Antioch, the Arabs did not directly contribute to the impoverishment or growth of this region.

The urban center of Epiphania was distinct from the great city of Antioch because it was an inconsequential city in the sixth and early seventh centuries. It was under Arab rule that it gained importance under its new name, Hama. Despite the fragmentary archaeological evidence it is apparent that Epiphania did not undergo a period of ruralization like Antioch. Urban life in large comfortable houses continued without interruption through the troubles of the sixth and seventh centuries. The lower town showed signs of prosperity, evident in its major renovation of the town's cathedral in 595. Numismatic evidence also suggests continued urban life. The countryside surrounding Epiphania also appears to have had continuous prosperity during the tumultuous sixth century. It is at this time major construction took place throughout the surrounding villages.¹²³ Epiphania offers another perspective of what the Arabs would have found as they conquered Syria-Palestine. In this region there are no indications of widespread destruction or a disruption in urban or rural continuity.

While Antioch did not experience a significant transition under Arab rule, Epiphania gained prominence at this time. Epiphania did not suffer the calamities its other northern urban centers did through natural disasters or the Sassanid invasions so remained a relatively prosperous small city. The luxurious large houses continued uninterrupted and the cities church survived the sixth century and was rebuilt in 595 showing the cities financial ability to undertake major construction. Probably under the Umayyad Caliphate, the church was converted into the primary mosque for the city.

¹²² Foss (1997). 204.

¹²³ Ibid. 229-231, 233-234 & 236.

Distinct from the other urban centers considered, Epiphania had a large mosque in the seventh century indicating a transformation from a Christian to a Muslim city. As a result of the church's late sixth century construction (and survival) as well as its transformation into a mosque, Epiphania demonstrates a significant difference from its greater late antiquity neighbors of Antioch. It appears to have continued to prosper up until the eve of the Arab conquest and then retained its status with a great degree of continuity.¹²⁴ The desolation evident in other parts of the Orontes Valley did not occur here nor did the Arab conquest instigate its decline or cause a disruption in its prosperity. And even though the Arab impact was greater in Epiphania than elsewhere with the establishment of a major mosque to the detriment of the Christian community their presence is minimal in the material sources. Similar to the other sites in the Orontes Valley Epiphania continued along its original path without either destruction or affluence originating from the Arab presence.

Bostra was an extensive Byzantine city in southwestern Syria in the Hauran. It was the capital of the province of Arabia and home to a major military encampment. While the literary sources provide scant information regarding the fate of Bostra during the latter portion of antiquity, the archaeological remains are more useful. From these remains it is apparent that Bostra survived the chaotic sixth century relatively in peace. The city's forces were defeated by the Ghassanids¹²⁵ in 581, who rose in revolt but were quickly paid off. The city was conquered by the Sassanids in 613 and reoccupied by the Byzantines in 629. Finally, Bostra was captured early on by the Islamic forces in their advance north in 635. Despite these events the archaeological evidence depicts Bostra continuing to prosper regardless of who controlled the region. The Church continued to exercise authority in Bostra as well as the surrounding countryside without interruption up until the Islamic

¹²⁴ Foss (1997), 231 & 236.

¹²⁵ The Ghassanids were a large tribe of Arabs that the Byzantines typically employed as allies. They were tasked with providing security to the southern desert frontiers of the Byzantine Empire.

forces conquest.¹²⁶ The following archaeological evidence will demonstrate that the Bostra the Islamic forces secured in their conquests was an affluent and influential city that had mostly avoided the costly destruction that their northern neighbors had suffered.

The sixth century, especially during the reign of Justinian I, witnessed a great deal of construction in Bostra, both secular and ecclesiastical. It was during this time that the churches of Sts. Sergius, Bacchus, and Leontius were built and the primary cathedral in the city was refurnished. The cathedral continued to be maintained throughout the sixth century and into the following centuries even under Arab rule. The smaller churches, however, were reduced to small basilicas.¹²⁷ This is probably a result of the great earthquake of 749 and not an indication of a decline in the Christian community. The south baths and the construction of an affluent farmhouse also suggest prosperity leading up to the eve of the Islamic forces conquests. These secular buildings would survive and endure till the earthquake of 749.¹²⁸ Secular and ecclesiastical archaeological remains reveal that Bostra was a prosperous city not only before the Islamic forces conquests but well into them.

Bostra maintained its significance as a large urban center after the Islamic forces conquest. This urban center held a major place in Islamic tradition and became the capital of its district. Several traditions link Muhammad to Bostra, thus ensuring its continued relevance. Copper coins were even struck in small quantities at this site on two occasions. Unlike the previous sites discussed Bostra was exposed early to a large Arab presence that transformed the urban center. Arabs settled or the local population converted in large amounts early on in Bostra. The most substantial Muslim Arab impact was the great mosque of Umar located in the middle of the city. An inscription dates

¹²⁶ Foss (1997). 237-239.

¹²⁷ At this time Basilica were small churches designed with a central nave and aisles.

¹²⁸ Foss (1997). 243-245.

the construction of the mosque to 720, decades after the reign of Constans II. Regardless, the quality and prominent location of the mosque signifies the importance of Bostra, further demonstrating that the Muslim Arabs had established a major and permanent presence there unlike the more northern sites. Despite the strong Muslim Arab presence the Christian community still thrived in Bostra indicating the Muslim Arabs did not create hardships for the local population even though they established a large local community within the preexisting Christian community. The cathedral continued to be maintained and function. Normal urban life also appears to have continued unabated. The remains of the southern baths and the construction of an affluent farm house at the edge of the city further indicate no disastrous upheavals occurred upon the Islamic forces conquest. It wasn't until the earthquake of 749 that these structures would be irreparably damaged.¹²⁹ Bostra is a unique example in that it shows an outcome where the Muslim Arabs established a major presence in a city that still thrived. Previously, the Islamic forces had left little impact on the urban centers under their control. At Bostra we can see that the Islamic forces conquest and following occupation did not result in a decline or damage to the urban center. With the addition of mosques it appears Bostra underwent a transformation instead of a deterioration.

Another example of Muslim Arab rule having positive effects is Pella, located in southern region of Syria-Palestine west of Bostra. The archaeological record indicates activity as well as a concern for the economic infrastructure. Sometime in the seventh century, probably circa 659/660 after an earthquake, a two story complex of rooms was added to the outer part of the town's cathedral facing an open courtyard. The addition was commercial in nature and significant for the daily life of the town. Furthermore, the houses in Pella were transformed into self-contained units with courtyard additions. It is noteworthy that the houses of Pella could be rebuilt or refurnished by

¹²⁹ Foss (1997). 240-243.

individuals on a suitable scale. This indicates financial resources well above poverty and is an example of continuity under Muslim Arab rule.¹³⁰

It should be mentioned that numerous town sites have revealed the seventh century as a period of contraction.¹³¹ This does not mean decline, however, and the trend is complex and debatable. For instance, at Jerash peripheral parts of the city were abandoned while the center of the city saw an increase in the concentration of the population.¹³² Streets and plazas were filled in with likely commercial structures. The transformation of Jerash demonstrates changes, especially commercial changes, not decay.¹³³ While it has already been noted that the southern portions of Syria-Palestine fared better than the northern regions the examples of Pella and Jerash imply that Arab rule allowed these urban centers to continue prospering or even aided their development.

Syria-Palestine prospered significantly in the sixth century under Byzantine rule. Even when natural disasters struck or Sassanid invasions devastated rural and urban communities alike great efforts were made to repair the damage. The vast majority of the literary sources focus on the war between the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires, mainly concentrating on Mesopotamia and Armenia where the fighting was most vicious. Syria, however, appears to have been spared this devastation since the Sassanids had every intention of retaining their newly acquired territories permanently. Archaeology in northern Syria shows signs of stagnation though. This is probably an indication that this region's resources and manpower were required to support the Sassanid war effort in the adjacent regions. In essence the Sassanids seem to have done nothing to either improve or change the situations in these urban centers and their surrounding countrysides.¹³⁴ This state of affairs

¹³⁰ Walmsley (2007). 333-334.

¹³¹ Ibid. 334.

¹³² Jerash was the largest city in the Jerash governate and is located in the northwestern part of modern Jordan.

¹³³ Walmsley (2007). 334.

¹³⁴ Foss (1997). 258-261.

probably would have been different if they could have afforded to divert their attention and resources from the Byzantines in the north.

When the Islamic forces conquered Syria-Palestine they found a variety of situations depending on the region in both the urban centers and countryside. In the south they found urban centers with flourishing surrounding regions able to construct and maintain ecclesiastical buildings. Here the Muslim Arabs settled among the local population letting them continue on as before. The Orontes Valley was in a different state when the Islamic armies swept north. Epiphania was still prosperous, but Antioch was a husk of its previous splendor with densely populated and impoverished rural areas. The Orontes region apparently no longer had the resources to construct or maintain their infrastructure; possibly due to their proximity to the conflict in Anatolia where the Sassanids would have drawn upon their resources more heavily. It is here that the Muslim Arabs would have already found the Byzantine urban and rural areas already in transformation.¹³⁵ Jareh and Pella, for example, shows signs of cities retracting in size, vacating the periphery, but this does not necessarily demonstrate decay. The Muslim Arabs intended to establish an enduring state in these conquered regions. Even though the early Arab rule, during the reign of Constans II, was a continuation of the Byzantine administration¹³⁶, the perpetual conflict against the Byzantines would eventually necessitate reform to strengthen their urban centers so as to increase their state's power. This is apparent during the reigns of the Marwanid Umayyads¹³⁷ where they instituted economic reform to the benefit of the population both Muslim and Christian.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Foss (1997). 263-264.

¹³⁶ With the key differences of lower taxes and religious toleration.

¹³⁷ Umayyad rule was divided between two branches of the family: the Sufyānids (661–684) and the Marwanids (684–750).

¹³⁸ Walmsley (2007). 332-334 & 339.

There is little evidence at any of the sites in Syria-Palestine indicating a period of destruction at this time.¹³⁹ This absence of destruction signifies that these regions capitulated without bloodshed. While the reasons for a submission of this magnitude are outside of the scope of this thesis it is pertinent to emphasize that the local populations apparently lacked the will power, means, or interest in resisting another invading force. It is unlikely that Constans II would have been able to rely on the local population for support of an invading Byzantine force unless a permanent overwhelming victory was assured. The Muslim Arab presence in these regions was minimal. With the exception of Bostra they did not typically reside in the same communities and offered religious tolerance. The most notable impact of the Islamic conquest was probably the poll tax on the non-Muslims. None of these conditions led to inciting the population to be seditious or rebellious. In effect the Arabs allowed both the urban centers and rural areas to continue along their previous paths with little interference.

In the decades prior to the Islamic forces conquests the local populations would have lived under Sassanid rule and a brief Byzantine administration. This short-lived Byzantine period, between 627 and 636, likely introduced higher taxes to aid in the restoration of the Byzantine's empire and the resumption of religious controversy. How the Islamic forces interacted in their newly acquired territories would be significant for Constans II's foreign policies regarding these regions. The population was already accustomed to living under other governments than that centered in Constantinople. If the Muslim Arabs were seen as preferable¹⁴⁰ to renewed Byzantine control, then Constans II would have had a more difficult time retaking these territories without local support.

¹³⁹ Foss (1997). 264.

¹⁴⁰ Very likely because the Arabs originally demanded lower taxes and religious toleration between the differing Christian communities.

The Islamic forces impact on their conquered territories was a significant factor for Constans II's plans on retaking them. The Arab occupation resembled the final Sassanid occupation. The Arab occupation was intended to be permanent as they continued their jihad in every direction. Like the Sassanids before them the Muslim Arabs initially had very little influence on their new urban and rural centers. Those that were already in decline continued to do so while those that were prospering did as well. The Muslim Arabs, for the most part, did not interfere at this point in time with their new subjects as long as they paid the poll tax and supplied the Arabs with whatever they required, leaving the locals the freedom to live and worship as they pleased as long as it did not interfere with emerging Arab state. For this reason it can be perceived that the locals might have preferred or at least been indifferent to the Arabs' rule. Constans II endorsed a tolerant position towards faith against that of Rome which solely supported the Chalcedonian faith, while the Monophysites in Syria-Palestine were guaranteed religious freedom under Arab rule, a freedom that could switch easily and quickly in the Byzantine Empire. The archaeological evidence demonstrates that the urban and rural centers in Syria-Palestine were chiefly left to their own affairs or even became more prosperous, negatively impacting Constans II's foreign policy because the support of the local population would have proved insufficient for his aims.

Inland Anatolia

Anatolia's urban centers experienced a dramatically different experience regarding the invading Arab forces, the principal difference being that these urban centers actively resisted the encroachment of Arab control and were still effectively governed by the Byzantine Empire. As the Byzantine forces retreated the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountains emerged as the border region and became a large zone of contact and contention between the two states. Arab attacks and raids on Anatolia were serious and continuous. Although these attacks were to have severe impacts on the

urban centers most recovered to some degree and few were entirely abandoned. Their geographical location would also have implications for their survival. For the most part Anatolia, consisted of high steppes with a difficult climate that allowed the Byzantine forces to more effectively mount a stronger resistance, especially at the few mountainous passages that allowed access into the Anatolian plateau. A survey of the plains indicates that the interior of Anatolia did not witness a decrease in seventh century settlements and in fact they increased considerably in size and number. These results are signified by an increase in the exploitation arable land. Regardless of the land's suitability for cultivation as even poor hill side soils were developed denoting an increase in population.¹⁴¹ In this era urban centers became hubs that controlled their surrounding regions. The only effective way for the Arabs to bring a region under their control was to subdue the urban centers in the region. This allows the material sources to aid scholars in understanding the impact of the Arab incursions and the pressures they applied on Constans II's foreign policy.

Cilicia is unique in that it is the only Anatolian region to be discussed here that was located south of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountain ranges. Hotly contested in the mid-seventh century, Cilicia became a region important to both the Byzantines, as a defensive location before the mountains, and the Arabs, as an offensive staging area. In the eighth century Cilicia began to be seriously colonized by the Arabs since it offered an excellent region to raid across the mountainous terrain to the north. Despite this, warfare and population relocation depopulated Cilicia in the seventh century. Arab control of Syria meant that the exposed populations of Cilicia south of the mountain defenses were pressured and encouraged to flee to more secure regions. By the mid-seventh century the Byzantines had effectively evacuated the main urban centers of Cilicia, Tarsus¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Decker. 239 & 241.

¹⁴² Tarsus was a significant urban center in central Cilicia located south of the strategically important Cilician Gates.

and Mopsuestia¹⁴³. Tarsus was captured by the Arabs in 637. Sometime afterward it was retaken and repopulated by the Byzantines as is evidenced by the fact that the Arabs destroyed the city in 682. Mopsuestia eventually became the major Arab stronghold in Cilicia.¹⁴⁴ It is clear that the majority of Cilicia was abandoned or fortified in the seventh and eighth centuries. Cilicia emerged as the primary land frontline for the war between the Arab and Byzantine states.

Tarsus was important to both the Byzantines and Arabs because it was strategically positioned to control the southern end of the Cilician Gates. It was from these passes that the Arab and Byzantine incursions went through each spring and summer when the snows had melted. Due to the significance of its location, control of Tarsus fluctuated between the two powers in the seventh century.¹⁴⁵ The defensiveness of Cilicia and the passes would have already been established by the time Constans II came to the throne at 11 years old. The early years of his reign show no signs of his vigorous foreign policy that he would later develop. It wasn't until several years had passed before he had matured and became more active in the frontiers of his empire. By this time the southern Anatolian defenses had become relatively stable demonstrating to Constans II that he could afford to focus his resources on more immediate and threatening concerns, most notably the newly emerged Arab navy and its growing superiority. The archaeological evidence will later show that it was the coastal regions, due to the Arab navy, that suffered inordinate devastation.

Sardis is a western Anatolian city that indicates the seriousness of the threat posed by the Arab navy. Sardis was an inland city and did not suffer severe devastation at the hands of an Arab incursion primarily because it was not readily accessible from the coast. Even being inland, though, it was too close to the coast and too significant to take the chance of an Arab naval raid marching a

¹⁴³ Mopsuestia was a large urban center in southeast Cilicia.

¹⁴⁴ Decker. 246, 248-249 & 252-253.

¹⁴⁵ Bosworth. 268-270.

little inland. Located 100km inland at a strategic crossroads, Sardis was the capital of Lydia. It was home to a civil and ecclesiastical center, a military base, the only weapons factory in western Anatolia, and had abundant natural resources. All these factors led to a very prosperous city up until the seventh century. The Sassanid invasion did not pass Sardis by, as evidenced by the available numismatic evidence. The abundant copper coins, present in large quantities due to the prosperity of the city as well as its function as an economic center, suddenly ceased in 615/616. It was at this date that the Sassanid forces reached Sardis and ravaged the city. The extent of the damage is evident when Constans II sent workers to restore parts of the city's highway. The workers used local marble from ruined buildings as building material for the highway making no effort to repair the colonnaded street, which it was built over, or the adjacent shops and gymnasium. A contemporary constructed edifice was the fortress atop the acropolis. The fortress was also built using local building material available from nearby dilapidated buildings.¹⁴⁶ Three observations are apparent from these remains. The first is that the movement of troops and traders was important since the highway was repaired unlike other public buildings. The second is that a fortress was built atop the most defensible topographical feature indicating that Constans II perceived Sardis to be threatened by Arab attack. And finally since both the highway and the fortress were constructed it indicates Constans II was emphasizing troop mobility and local defense. It is also evident from the lack of literary and material evidence that Sardis was not significantly assailed in the seventh century, even though the threat apparently existed and warranted Constans II's attention. Sardis's proximity to the coast likely warranted special attention for both offensive and defensive measures.

As a further example of the strategic importance the navy played for both the Byzantines and the Arabs, Amorium sits in central Anatolia far removed from any possible naval threat. This

¹⁴⁶Foss (1977). 475-476.

urban center would only have been menaced by Arab raids and invasions by land originating from either Syria or Iraq. Located in central Anatolia, Amorium survived relatively unscathed in the seventh century. This major urban center did not reduce in size and benefited from an impressive circuit of pre-seventh century fortifications that were not built in a hurry from nearby rubble and buildings like the fortifications of Sardis. These fortification likely allowed Amorium to retain its prosperity and infrastructure despite the turbulence of the seventh century. Unlike other sites closer to the coast and the threat the Arab navy represented, Amorium's urban center did not retract to occupy only its acropolis. Instead the excavations, which have been continuing since 1988, make it clear that the lower city area was densely populated in the seventh century as well as the succeeding centuries. Within Amorium are the remains of numerous wineries which undoubtedly resulted in a variety of local support and service industries. These wineries are evident by a number of screw-press weights, usually found in the countryside and associated with wine production, along with a drum-shaped press weight, clearly part of a winery. These wineries can show that Amorium represented a secure place where produce could be stored and processed safe from Arab raids that could threaten the surrounding territory. This further indicates that Amorium was never seriously in danger in the seventh century since it still prospered and did not decline in size or population.¹⁴⁷ Amorium was briefly captured by Arab forces in 667, however, this was a result of failed rebellion of Saborios which likely gave them this rare opportunity.¹⁴⁸ The Arab navy was the most serious threat to the Byzantine Empire; a fact that the Byzantines would have been well aware of. Amorium was not merely an administrative, ecclesiastical, or military center but was a vibrant urban center. The

¹⁴⁷ Lightfoot, Christopher, "Trade and Industry in Byzantine Anatolia: The Evidence from Amorium," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 61, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007. 269-274.

¹⁴⁸ Theophanes. 48-50.

fortifications and the inland location of this urban center allowed this urban center to persevere despite continuous Arab raids which likely rarely represented a significant threat.

The region of Cappadocia¹⁴⁹ was a significant land route for the Arab incursions and represented the first line of defense against land based Arab incursions. The majority of the passes through the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains fed straight into Cappadocia. Arab attacks on the cities of Cappadocia were severe and sustained. Despite these continuous attacks, though, most of the urban centers were able to recover and few were outright abandoned; the continuous occupation and use of churches in both urban centers and rural communities throughout Cappadocia aid in this assessment. Eichaia, located on the northern fringe of Cappadocia, even prospered in the seventh century with a vibrant commercial center. Cappadocia was never settled as densely as Syria or other parts of the Byzantine Empire. Caesarea represented the region's central hub for communications, trade, religion, and for military forces. This significant urban center was located north of the Cilician Gates and would have been a priority target for Arab raids and attacks. Regardless, Caesarea was firmly in Byzantine control during the reign of Constant II and was not conquered by the Arabs until 726, indicating that the land based assaults on the Byzantine Empire were not a strategic threat during the reign of Constant II.¹⁵⁰

This does not mean that the Arabs were not able to establish a foothold in Cappadocia and use it to launch their raids from as evidenced by Militene. This urban center was located on the Byzantine side of the Anti-Taurus Mountains in the far eastern portion of Cappadocia. Militene was effectively between Byzantine Anatolia and the hotly contested Armenia, albeit to the south side. Although there have been limited excavations and surveys the archaeological evidence suggests

¹⁴⁹ Cappadocia is located in central Anatolia north of Cilicia (separated by the Taurus Mountains) in present day Turkey. It is a massive upland territory with a harsh climate, few trees and fresh water.

¹⁵⁰ Decker. 221 & 238-239.

fierce fighting between the Byzantines and Arabs. This is supported by the literary sources which state its conquest by Muawiya's forces in 656/657 and trading hands a few more times in the latter half of the seventh century after the reign of Constans II with the end result of it remaining in Arab control. During the reign of Constans II this urban center was the launching point for annual Arab raids.¹⁵¹ Even so, this foothold was on the fringe of the Byzantine Empire and only significant because it was located across the Anti-Taurus Mountains. The continued prosperity of Caesarea and Amorium imply that this forward base of operations could not extend its power and reach in a meaningful way into Byzantine Anatolia. Militene was only a few hundred kilometers from Caesarea and still the Arabs were unable to conquer the region which would have likely allowed easier access through the mountain passes. In fact, the archaeological and literary evidence suggest that the Arabs had to fight hard to retain control of Militene. Urban centers like Militene and Caesarea further denote the importance the Arab land forces did not have without the presence of the navy to support it.

The Konya Plains Survey led by Douglas Baird was focused in south central Anatolia, admittedly farther away from the more eastern regions where the Arab threat would have loomed larger. The survey does aid in revealing how Byzantine inland settlement was affected during the seventh century. The survey's results indicate a continuation of existing urban centers as well as a substantial increase. The utilization of substandard land for agriculture suggests a population growth and pressure on the existing infrastructure. Examples of mediocre land where the archaeology shows the population spread to are alluvial fans and hill sides.¹⁵² This implies this portion of the Cappadocian plateau was relatively secure from serious inland Arab raids. The literary sources insinuate that the Arab raids were able to penetrate deep into Byzantine territory whenever they

¹⁵¹ Decker. 245-246.

¹⁵² Decker. 239.

wished to causing great damage and deporting populations like they did at Cyprus. The archeological evidence present from the Konya Plains Survey shows that the Arab raids into Anatolia were more contained to the coastal regions and the eastern part of Cappadocia.

Coastal Regions

Lycia is located in southwest Anatolia where the Taurus Mountains reach the Mediterranean Sea. The region is primarily mountainous and consequently the majority of the urban centers were located along the coast. This location and topography allowed Lycia to develop as a natural trade and communication route between the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean. Unlike Cilicia or the interior of Anatolia, coastal areas like Lycia are exceptionally abundant in available archaeological excavations. Late Antiquity witnessed an elevated level of prosperity for the region. The final war between the Sassanids and the Byzantines brought this peaceful era of prosperity to an end. The archaeological evidence from Xanthus and Limyra suggest the Sassanids ravaged at least some urban centers in the region. It was the Arabs, though, who inflicted widespread devastation on the region. Lycia's coastal cities were in the direct path of the Arab fleets as they sailed north into Byzantine territory. The first sign of this was the Arab naval victory at the Battle of the Masts in 654. This battle was fought off the coast of Lycia and opened the entire region up to Arab naval raids. This event was probably the first indication to Constans II that to effectively confront the Arabs he would need to gain complete naval superiority; especially since the naval raids were resulting in far more destruction. The subsequent centuries resulted in continuous raids and periods of destruction. The archaeological evidence from Xanthus and Myra shows the extent of the damage to the

region.¹⁵³ It was coastal regions like these that suggest that gaining a naval advantage was a driving motivation for Constans II's foreign policy.

Xanthus, a large urban center that was protected by a circuit of walls, was severely damaged by the Arab raids during the seventh century. Remains indicate considerable prosperity in late antiquity as evidenced by extensive coin finds that continue from the third to the early seventh century. These final coins were issued by Heraclius suggesting a decline in economic activity beginning with the last war with the Sassanids. The east basilica aids this interpretation, as it was burned to the ground in the mid-seventh century. The oldest coins found in the rubble are dated 641, alluding to the destruction of the church being related to the Byzantine defeat at the Battle of the Masts when the Byzantine navy was no longer capable of keeping the region secure according to Foss. The basilica remained ruined for centuries, demonstrating the pressure on the urban center as well as the entire region. This failure to rebuild along with the major seventh century fortifications around the acropolis indicate Xanthus was ravaged by Arab attacks and shrunk to the much smaller acropolis. These fortifications vary in styles of construction, indicating continual use over a long period of time. Furthermore, the fortifications closely resemble the inner circuit at Ankara which is datable to the reign of Constans II. This promotes the concept that the fortifications were initially constructed during the reign of Constans II, probably in response to the devastating Byzantine naval defeat. The east basilica's destruction and the construction of the fortifications represent a contraction of the urban center into basically a hilltop fortress.¹⁵⁴ From the archaeological evidence it appears that Xanthus suffered repeatedly over the centuries from constant Arab naval raids due to the Byzantine inability to consistently repel their advances. The Lycian coast offers the most

¹⁵³ Foss, Clive, "The Lycian Coast in the Byzantine Age," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 48, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 1-3.

¹⁵⁴ Foss (1994). 11.

extreme example of how the regions that did not submit to Arab rule were treated and how they responded to survive in this new reality. It is reasonable to argue that Constans II realized this after the Battle of the Masts and concentrated his foreign policy on gaining naval superiority thus his motives and actions in the west.

Myra offers extensive archaeological information for both the city (as well as its port of Andriace) and the countryside. This evidence indicates the flourishing region was devastated by the Arab incursions, but still managed to continue functioning at a diminished capacity. Up to the seventh century Myra was a prosperous urban center and acted as the administrative and ecclesiastical core of Lycia. The imperial grain fleet, transporting grain from Egypt to Constantinople, appeared to store grain at Andriace as evidenced by the large granary that was 65m long and 32m deep. The port also had paved colonnades, five churches, a large water mill, and extensive commercial and residential buildings. This infrastructure and houses' quality of construction indicate a prosperous urban center. The countryside was densely populated with numerous settlements and the solid stone, some of exceptional craftsmanship, demonstrate the quality of the countryside churches and the general prosperity of the rural regions. The reason for this prosperity was the sea route it was located on, and it was this location that brought disaster on the urban and rural areas surrounding Myra when Arab naval raids became common. The port's southern half was abandoned and a new fortification wall was built to enclose the residential district. The primary church, the Church of St. Nicholas, in Myra survived until the eighth century due to the new walls built to protect it. Even when this structure was destroyed it was rebuilt to its full size and was an ambitious cross-domed basilica signifying that despite the decline in the region's prosperity it still survived as a commercial center. The acropolis fortifications also were expanded above the theatre, implying the rest of the urban center was largely abandoned. Essentially Myra was transformed from a large prosperous urban center to three separate fortified positions. Even

though the coasts were more exposed to the Arab raids the interior rural regions also suffered, albeit to a more limited degree. Most of the settlements in the rural areas show decline and site abandonment. Chapels and houses either fell into ruin permanently or were replaced by markedly inferior structures. An example is the large church at Turant Dag, which fell into shambles and was replaced by a single-aisle chapel. This small chapel, however, indicates continuity at some of the rural sites. Even here new fortifications were constructed revealing the extent of the Arab raids penetrating the region.¹⁵⁵ Lycia suffered because of its location along the coast and the rising strength of the Arab navy. The urban centers of Xanthus and Myra along with their countryside's demonstrate the severity of the Arab raids during the seventh century, but they also signify that the region continued to be occupied and function. Because of urban centers such as Myra, the region shows that it was capable of resisting the Arab raids to a sufficient degree to allow Constans II to focus his plans elsewhere while simultaneously enlightening him to the significance naval superiority would play in the current conflict.

Western coastal Anatolia fared similarly to the southern coastal regions. The coastal cities suffered due to their accessibility to the Arab navy and their raiding parties, while inland areas were more secure. After the Battle of the Masts, the Arab navy could strike as far as the Aegean Sea, which left the entire western and southern coast of Anatolia vulnerable. An example of this is Ephesus, one of the greatest cities in Anatolia in Late Antiquity. It was the site of the then-ruined Temple of Artemis, seat of the proconsul of Asia, two church councils, and a center for government, commerce, and finance. The harbor was also a major contributor to its prominence. Numismatic evidence suggests the Sassanid invasion in the beginning of the seventh century forever changed this urban center. It is apparent that the agora was abandoned and the luxurious dwellings

¹⁵⁵ Foss (1994). 23-27, 32 & 36-37.

were levelled and replaced with huts and storehouses. Sometime in the seventh century the city constructed a new wall because of the threat posed by either the Sassanids or the Arabs. Regardless, the urban center that the Arabs would have encountered would have been diminished compared to its previous state. The wall surrounds the harbor and approximately half the urban center indicating a large reduction in the overall size of the urban center. Within these new walls the public baths fell into ruin and were replaced by poorly constructed rubble houses. Even parts of the theatre and palace were replaced by small housing and a cistern, indicating there was an increase in the density of the urban population possibly for security behind the walls and the public functions were no longer operating. Eventually a strongly fortified inland settlement developed around the Church of Saint John. In essence, the flourishing urban center was replaced by two separate fortified settlements: one by the harbor and the other a fortress one mile inland.¹⁵⁶

While it is impossible to know exactly when these changes occurred, it is likely that they happened during both the Sassanid and Arab invasions. The initial contraction was possibly due to the Sassanid land invasion of the region, which likely resulted in the construction of the walls around the harbor. The continued deterioration of this significant harbor and the development of an inland fortress likely indicate the pressure from the Arab navy. Ephesus, as a harbor, would have shown signs of continuation and stability if only a land force threatened it but the Arab navy could have effectively restricted the use of the harbor and caused the general decline as well as the need for an inland fortress away from direct naval raids. Ephesus shows that the Arab naval raids impacted the western coasts of Anatolia much like the southern region of Lycia, demonstrating their reach and effect on the Byzantine regions far away from their own territory.

¹⁵⁶ Foss, Clive, "Archaeology and the "Twenty Cities" of Byzantine Asia," *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 81, No. 4, 1977. 472-475.

The regions of Cilicia, Lycia, and the west coast of Anatolia demonstrate the severity of the threat represented by the Arab navy once it was free to expand its radius following the Byzantine defeat at the Battle of the Masts. The inland regions of Cappadocia and Amorium further reveal this point. Amorium's urban center changed but remained affluent and sizeable. The fate of Cappadocia was similar even though it was on the front lines of the continuing conflict with the Arabs who held sway just over the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains. Each region of Cappadocia endured and even prospered as indicated by the archaeological evidence, with some region's evidence more readily available than others. The reign of Constans II only saw the loss of Melitine. And even with that forward base of operations the Arab raids and attacks had remarkably little impact on the Byzantine urban centers and populations. Admittedly the region's urban centers adapted to the changing circumstances, but they did not appear to enter a spiral of decline as previous scholars¹⁵⁷ would have us believe.

The archaeological evidence points to a minimal impact on the urban centers and rural communities in Arab-controlled territories, with most of the devastation a result of the previous conflict with the Sassanids. Anatolia's interior survived despite constant raids demonstrating their ability to resist and thrive without serious Byzantine military support. The regions along the coast tell a different story. It is apparent that the Byzantines' most seriously affected and vulnerable territories to the Arabs were along the coast. From Cilicia to the western coast the urban and rural areas display a drastic decline in quality of living, size of the urban centers, as well as population density. It is a probable conclusion then that this was due to the success of the newly emerged Arab navy. With the Byzantine defenses relatively stable against the land-based assaults of the Arabs, Constans II would have needed a way to neutralize the ability of the Arab navy to inflict damage.

¹⁵⁷ Charanis (1975). 3-5 & Haldon. 56 & 63 & Walmsley (2007). 319 & A.P Kazdan according to Ostrogorsky (1959) 48.

Accomplishing that would be a severe blow to the Arab state, a further indication that Constans II's focus in the west was intended as an aggressive policy towards the Arab state and retaking lost Byzantine territory.

Monetarily speaking, the Byzantines attempted to operate a closed economy as best they could. This means that they tried, through the creation of laws for gold and most likely silver, to prevent the exportation of precious metals and gems from within their borders while simultaneously encouraging the importation of these items. Regardless, these provisions on the exportation of material wealth were either never intended for the Byzantine Empire to adhere to or were merely impractical. An example of these exceptions is when Hierapolis paid 2,000 lbs. in silver to buy off Chosroes I in 540. These laws were probably intended for private citizens. The middle and late Byzantine periods witnessed a considerable reduction in the outward flow of wealth as evidenced by the sharp reduction in available coin finds outside Byzantine frontiers. Sometimes the outward flow of wealth was balanced by the inward movement of wealth from other states. Two examples of this are in the later part of Constantine IV's and the earlier part of Justinian II's reign. At these times the Arabs were paying 365,000 dinars annually, a considerable amount.¹⁵⁸ This is the general type of monetary system the Byzantines attempted to operate, and their financial solvency during the reign of Constans II is significant for how he coordinated his foreign policy in both the east and the west.

In conclusion the material evidence indicates the severity of the Arabs naval raids against the coastal regions of Anatolia. Not only were the coastal regions vulnerable after the Byzantine fleets destruction at the Battle of the Masts, but the loss of the Byzantine fleet opened up Constantinople to seaborne attacks¹⁵⁹. These coastal regions show signs of abandonment and contraction whereas

¹⁵⁸ Hendy. 257, 260, 264 & 280.

¹⁵⁹ The first great siege of Constantinople (674-678) was primarily orchestrated by the Arab navy. Numerous islands along the coast of Anatolia and coastal cities in Anatolia were captured in advance of the operation. For

the border regions along the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains show signs of continued prosperity. The desolation along the coast of Anatolia and the lack of destruction along the land borders in the archaeological record indicates that the true threat to Byzantine security was not the raids through the mountain passes but the raids along the coast from the Arab navy. Furthermore, the material evidence implies that the Arabs did not interfere significantly in the urban centers and rural areas of Syria-Palestine allowing the cities and town to continue to prosper or decline. Conditions under the Arab states rule would not necessarily have prompted the local populations to rebel or encourage Byzantine invasion.¹⁶⁰ With no guarantee of popular support in Syria-Palestine or substantial threat along the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountain ranges the Arab navy, as demonstrated by the devastation along the coast and eventual siege of Constantinople, would have been the primary threat to Byzantine security and the main obstacle in Constans II's way to retake the lost Byzantine territory. The material evidence demonstrates the threat posed by the Arab navy and the literary sources establish that Constans II was in Sicily building up his naval forces. His actions in the west help aid in inferring his objectives not only against the Slavs and Lombards but also unwavering focus on the Arab naval threat.

four years a large Arab fleet would lay siege to Constantinople. It wasn't until the Byzantines deployed Greek Fire that the Arab fleet was destroyed and the siege lifted. (Haldon, 63-64.)

¹⁶⁰ The Arabs initially offered religious toleration and lower taxes.

CHAPTER 3: CONSTANS II AND THE NORTH AND WEST

The Slavs

On the northern frontier Constans II was forced to contend with the Slavs (his successors would have to contend with an emerging powerful Bulgar state) despite them never representing the level of threat to the Byzantine Empire that the Arabs constituted. The Slavic invasions had been occurring repeatedly since the beginning of the sixth century. Eventually, in the closing years of the sixth century, the Slavs permanently settled in the Balkans as far south as southern Greece and the Peloponnese. During this time real Byzantine control extended only over a few coastal towns. Because the Slavs did not possess the political cohesion as a unified state or the administrative sophistication necessary to replace the Byzantine system, the Byzantine Empire was able to maintain a fictional sovereignty over the territory. This state of affairs did not reflect the reality of the situation though.¹⁶¹ In reality the Byzantines ruled the Balkans in name only.

Maurice successfully restored some imperial control over these regions again after concluding a war with the Sassanids and reinforcing his European territories. He was even able to subdue the Slavs and retake territory from the Avars, thus forcing a treaty and securing the frontier at the Danube in 600. When he ordered his troops to winter across the Danube in 602, however, they mutinied and put Phocas on the throne in Constantinople.¹⁶² With the disastrous coup of Phocas and the resumed hostilities with the Sassanid Empire the Danube frontier collapsed completely. The Slavs and Avars poured across the old frontier, leading to permanent Slav settlements in Illyria, Dalmatia, Macedonia and Thrace. In 617 the Avars and Slavs even reached the walls of Constantinople, while the Slavs spread into Greece and the Peloponnese forming

¹⁶¹ Ostrogorsky, G., "Byzantium and the South Slavs," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 42, No. 98 (1963) 2-4.

¹⁶² Obolensky, Dimitri, "The Empire and its Northern Neighbors," in *Byzantium and the Slavs: collected studies*, London [England]: Variorum Reprints (1971) 480-481.

independent communities. The Avars occupied Pannonia,¹⁶³ while the Slavs occupied their newly conquered territories in the Balkan.¹⁶⁴ Upon his succession to the throne Constans II was confronted with not only the Arab threat to the south but also a threat to the north that had effectively removed most of the Balkans from Byzantine control. This was not an insignificant threat. Twice in his father's reign the Avars and Slavs had marched on Constantinople. The only alleviating factor was that the Slavs did not possess the organization or the skills, unlike the Avars, to threaten heavily fortified centers like Constantinople, and the Slavs were far closer than the Avars. This allowed Constans II to focus his attention on the Arab threat since the northern territories were either already lost or had been re-secured.

The literary sources available to shed light on the northern frontier during the reign of Constans II is scanty. It is understandable since at this time the Arab threat to the south occupied most of the attention of the Byzantine Empire. Along with previously mentioned literary sources such as Theophanes and the anonymous Chronicle of AD 1234, scholars are able to rely on the Chronicle of Monemvasia¹⁶⁵ to help understand Byzantine foreign policy at this critical stage of the seventh century. The Chronicle of Monemvasia is a brief source that neither the author nor the date of its writing is known.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, this new source does help our understanding of the events that occurred in the Balkans in the seventh century as well as corroborate information provided in the other literary sources.

The Chronicle of Monemvasia informs us in detail about the effects the Slav invasions had on the local populations in the Balkans, especially Greece. The local populations in many areas in

¹⁶³ A Byzantine province in the northwest part of the Balkan Peninsula.

¹⁶⁴ Obolensky. 481-482.

¹⁶⁵ Monemvasia is a small region located in the southeastern Peloponnese along the coast.

¹⁶⁶ Charanis, Peter, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece," in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 5, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press (1950) 141.

Greece, according to the Chronicle of Monemvasia, were either killed or emigrated to other lands like Italy and Sicily. This information is not corroborated in other sources and as such has been debated. The significance of this source, however, is that it discusses the consequences for the portions of the population that choose to stay in Greece. It is here that we learn in the literary sources that parts of the population found an inaccessible place along the coast: Monemvasia. Monemvasia remained secure and large enough for it to have its own bishop.¹⁶⁷ The implications of this brief piece of information should not be overlooked. This information shows that Byzantine control still existed in parts of the Balkans despite the massive territorial losses to the Slavs. Rugged and coastal terrain were areas where Byzantine control could still be maintained and Monemvasia undoubtedly represents one example of multiple locations the Byzantine Empire was able to hold. This is the situation Constans II would be confronted with on his northern borders and one he could not afford to ignore despite the threat represented by the Arabs.

The year 655/656 gave Constans II his first chance at conducting a proactive foreign policy instead of just reacting to the assaults on Byzantine territory. The First Arab Civil War gave Constans II three options: Side with one faction over the other, hoping for better relations after the conflict; attack both sides while they are divided; or stay on the sidelines. In this situation Constans II decided to not entangle himself in his enemies' domestic affairs and took the opportunity to strike north while he had a reprieve, an astute decision because Mu'āwiyah proposed terms for peace the following year to Constans II, giving him not only tribute but also (indirectly) the breathing space he so desperately required. The campaign north was probably due to his need to show a victory after his recent devastating naval defeat. Slavic occupation of the Balkans not only represented an affront to Byzantine pride but also represented a much easier enemy than the Arabs. The Slavs neither had

¹⁶⁷ Charanis (1950). 148.

the reputation not the organization that the Arabs had, allowing Constans II to strike north in 657/658. This assault would give Constans II a much need victory in the face of so many defeats. As a result Theophanes states that Constans II was able to take many captives and bring numerous people back under his control. These captives were likely deported to Anatolia to help bolster the defenses in the region.¹⁶⁸

From later sources we know that he did not reconquer the Balkans or Greece but likely attacked the regions closest to Constantinople, not moving too deeply into enemy territory. Furthermore, his quick campaign illustrates that this struggle was aimed at boosting Byzantine morale and providing more depth to the defenses in Anatolia; not making any long lasting territorial gains in the Balkans. As always, Constans II's foreign policy would principally be aimed at dealing with the threat posed by the Arabs.

The next and final campaign of Constans II against the Slavs reinforces his priorities in dealing first with the Arab threat to the south of the Taurus Mountains before focusing his attention on his other frontiers. The available literary sources do not concentrate on Constans II's brief second campaign against the Slavs because his goal was reasserting stronger Byzantine control in Italy and the central Mediterranean. His conflict with the Slavs was merely a result of his moving his troops through the Balkans to Italy and then Sicily. This campaign began in 661/662 as he moved through Thessalonica and marched along the coast through Athens and Corinth. Once he had moved his forces safely through the Balkans, subduing the Slavic communities enroute, he could securely set sail from either Corinth or Patras¹⁶⁹ for Italy.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Theophanes. 45-48.

¹⁶⁹ Patras is a Greek city located on the north central part of the Peloponnesian coast.

¹⁷⁰ Haldon. 60.

Even though Constans II's presence in the Balkans, Thessalonica and Greece was brief, material evidence is still available to aid in corroborating the literary sources. Archaeological evidence, in the form of inscriptions and construction/destruction remains, are scarce due to lack of Byzantine control and focus during the seventh century. The material evidence is relatively confined to grave remains and numismatic evidence though.

Two grave sites outside the acropolis of Corinth have yielded belt buckles, weapons and ornaments, dating from the mid to early seventh century, closely resembling similar finds in Hungary, i.e. of Bulgar origin.¹⁷¹ Similar belt buckles to those found at the grave sites in Corinth are also found along the entire route of Constans II. Material evidence in Athens, Italy and Sicily also have presented similar belt buckles like those at Corinth.¹⁷² It is likely that either Constans II's Byzantine forces utilized Bulgar equipment as they marched through the region in 661/662 or the grave remains imply the presence of Bulgar allied troops or mercenaries that constituted part of Constans II's forces. Abundant coin finds leading up through the reign of Constans II at Corinth likewise signify Byzantine presence there while he was preparing to transport his troops to Italy. The sudden drop in coins following Constans II's reign demonstrate the lack of Byzantine control and interest in this region in the later seventh century.¹⁷³

Athens, like Corinth, offers material evidence to substantiate the available literary sources. The material evidence signifies Constans II passed through these regions and gave little thought of actually asserting lasting military control or establishing any administrative apparatuses. A considerable number of coins belonging to the reign of Constans II have been found at Athens.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Setton, Kenneth M., "The Bulgars in the Balkans and the Occupation of Corinth in the Seventh Century", *Speculum*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct., 1950) 520.

¹⁷² Theophanes. 55.

¹⁷³ Setton. 522-524.

¹⁷⁴ Charanis, Peter, "The Significance of Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 4, H. 2/3 (1955) 164.

Showing his presence at this port as he traveled westward along the coast as the literary sources indicated. These coin finds, like the grave remains at Corinth, reflect the path that Constans II marched along on his way to Italy. Corinth and Athens are coastal cities and with the lack of material and numismatic evidence inland it is unlikely that Constans II seriously invaded the regions held by the Slavs.

Constans II's second campaign against the Slavs, as he transported his forces to Italy, is better recorded in the material sources than it is in the literary sources. What can be taken away from this concise overview of Constans II's campaign is that it was of a secondary concern for him. The lack of a united Slavic political entity and a strong military force probably prevented Constans II from attempting or achieving a diplomatic solution for the safe passage of his military forces. Instead it appears Constans II marched along the essential routes for his troops to reach a convenient transporting port to Italy while subduing the Slavs along his path. Yet, he did not attempt to station a permanent force to maintain control of the areas he passed through nor did he endeavor to extend the reach of his influence in the region as he passed through beyond his coastal route. His focus was solely on reaching Italy. It is apparent from his limited actions and seemingly indifferent attitude towards retaking lost territory from the Slavs in the Balkans that he did not consider the Slavs an imminent threat nor the Balkans a strategically significant territory. The Western territories included the culturally important region of Italy and Rome as well as that of North Africa.

The Lombards

The Lombards were a Germanic tribe that slowly migrated south towards Italy during the fifth and sixth century. In the early part of the sixth century the Lombards expanded into parts of

Pannonia,¹⁷⁵ especially after 526 with the death of Ostrogothic king Theoderic and the instability that followed. In 568, not long after the death of Justinian the Great, the Lombards and a large force of their Saxon allies migrated into Italy. Over the course of the next several years the Lombards conquered large portions of northern and central Italy. The Byzantine Empire was able to defend the coastal cities only with the aid of their fleet. Fortunately, the Byzantines were able to maintain control over the powerful Sees of Ravenna and Rome, connected by a thin inland tract through Perugia. The Byzantine response to the Lombard invasion of Italy was initially minimal due to an ongoing and escalating conflict with the Sassanids. Justin II, due to his forces being preoccupied in the Balkans and the East with the Sassanids, attempted to use gold to sue for peace and to buy the loyalty of the Lombard dukes. His successor, Tiberius II, also sent gold and a few troops to support the defense of Italy in 579. These efforts did little to slow the tide of the Lombard advance in Italy, however.¹⁷⁶ Eventually the Lombards established their own Italian kingdom divided into numerous duchies.

The Byzantine counter-offensive in 590 was intended to expel the Lombards from Italy. Allying with the Franks, the Byzantine forces pushed northward towards Verona. Nevertheless, the Lombards were able to bribe the Frankish forces, leaving the Byzantine conquest unfinished. Byzantine gains were eventually taken away by the new Lombard King Agilulf. By 605 Emperor Phocas ratified a peace treaty ceding the conquered northern and central Italian territories to the Lombards.¹⁷⁷ The treaty is indicative of Byzantine acceptance of their inability to expel the Lombards from Italy. Not until the reign of Constans II would a Byzantine emperor again attempt to remove the Lombards from their Italian holdings.

¹⁷⁵ Pannonia was a former Roman province east of the Italian Peninsula. Today Pannonia is part of Hungary, Austria, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia.

¹⁷⁶ Christie. 31-37, 63 & 73-85.

¹⁷⁷ Christie. 89-91.

One of the best literary sources available is Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards*. This particular source was written in the eighth century at the monastery of Monte Cassino. Paul the Deacon was born in approximately 720 and it is worth noting that he represents not a Byzantine but a Lombard source. His family was probably of sufficient status to have had him educated in Pavia, the Lombard capital. Under the employ of King Liutprand, who favored scholars and clergy, Paul appears to have tutored the daughter of the Duke of Beneventum, giving him access to accounts of Constans II's activities in Italy that other sources did not have. The fall of the Lombard kingdom as well as its duchies in 774 to Charlemagne resulted in Paul the Deacon joining the monastery of Monte Cassino.¹⁷⁸

Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* benefited greatly from his experiences with a robust literary culture in Italy and Gaul. By this time too he had several decades of experience as a historical writer to bring to bear on this greatly beneficial historical work. His ability to write a national history of the Lombards incorporating their interactions with the Byzantine and Frankish powers as well as utilizing ecclesiastical history is where his true value is shown. The weaknesses apparent in his work originate in his imprecise chronology.¹⁷⁹ The importance of the information Paul provides is not so much the precise dates of the events, which can only fall within a few years anyways, but with the events themselves.

It is according to Paul the Deacon that Constans II left Constantinople, made his way along the coast to Athens and eventually landed at Tarentum¹⁸⁰. It is from here, according to Paul, Constans II's army marched north into Lombard territory. He conquered all the Lombard cities as he passed them, razing Apulia. He could not capture Agerentia, however. Realizing his inability to

¹⁷⁸ Paul, William Dudley Foulke, and Edward Peters. *History of the Lombards*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. vii-xiii.

¹⁷⁹ Paul. xv-xvii.

¹⁸⁰ Tarentum is a port city located on the southeastern part of Italy where the Byzantine Empire still held sway.

quickly capture Agerentia and probably not wanting to lose momentum, Constans II moved against Beneventum, which was the capitol of the Duchy of Beneventum. He laid siege to Beneventum and was initially having success against its fortifications. The Duke of Beneventum, Romauld, aware of Constans II's approach, sent a message to his father, Grimauld, king of the Lombards, asking for immediate aid. According to Paul, upon learning of Grimauld's approach Constans II straightaway attempted to make peace with Romuald.¹⁸¹ What can be ascertained from these events are Constans II's likely motives and priorities.

With the threatening approach of the northern Lombard army of King Grimauld, Constans II turned immediately to negotiations, showing his capability to utilize both force and diplomacy against his enemies. Constans II might have intended to defeat the Lombards and reconquer Italy but that is extremely unlikely, with his reluctance to face the Lombards in a large scale battle. It is more probable that he either intended to conquer as much as he could, acquiring both territory and wealth, or hoped to subjugate the Duchy of Beneventum in the south without interference. Either of these aims only serve to illustrate further Constans II's true priorities in the central Mediterranean. From this source it can be assessed that Constans II was particularly reluctant to wage any kind of serious engagements against the Lombards. His intentions were to strengthen his central Mediterranean territories against the advancing Arab onslaught and to eventually retake his lost territories in the east. A long conflict in Italy against the Lombards would only drain his resources both monetarily and materially.

Romuald was informed of the approach of King Grimauld's forces, however, and Constans II was unable to secure a favorable peace treaty with him. Realizing the siege of Beneventum left his army in an adverse position, Constans II lifted the siege and set out for Naples, along the coast.

¹⁸¹ Paul. 217-220.

According to Paul the Deacon, the Count of Capua defeated Constans II's army as he progressed to Naples. Nevertheless, Constans II's forces reached Naples intact implying that this Lombard victory is exaggerated. Capua's population probably only allowed the Count a small readily available military force. Because the defeat did not stop the Byzantines or hinder their ability to wage war, the engagement was likely a skirmish.¹⁸² It is significant to note that the Byzantines were avoiding major engagements and had moved to the coast where they could be reinforced and resupplied by their fleet.

One of Constans II's chief men, Saburrus, believed he could defeat the Lombards and requested 20,000 men for this purpose. Constans II granted him these men and Saburrus marched towards Beneventum. Hearing this news Romuald was dispatched with his men and part of Grimuald's army to confront the approaching Byzantine force. In the battle that followed the Byzantines were soundly defeated. With this defeat Constans II decided to abandon his campaign against the Lombards, who fortuitously had diverted their attentions to the north where King Grimuald's absence had encouraged a revolt in Pavia.¹⁸³ There was no formal treaty between the Lombards and the Byzantines following the cessation of Constans II's brief campaign, and the Lombards continued to encroach upon Byzantine territory in Italy. It was not until 680, in the reign of the Lombard King Perctarit, that a formal peace treaty between the two powers, ultimately acknowledging the Byzantines' inability to remove them from Italy, was signed.¹⁸⁴ The brevity and caution with which Constans II dealt with the Lombards indicates that his intentions in the west were not aimed at them. The lack of a peace treaty to secure his borders in Italy also signifies that he did not consider them a serious threat. Viewing the Lombards in this way it is likely that

¹⁸² Paul. 222.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* 222-223.

¹⁸⁴ Christie. 101.

Constans II was in the west to secure these territories from the Arabs since he did not intend to divert the resources diplomatically or militarily on the Lombards.

The Papacy

At a time of international upheaval where the Byzantine frontiers were pressured on every front the Byzantine Emperors could ill afford internal discord. Well aware of the ramifications resulting from internal discord, Constans II sought to avoid rifts between the eastern and western Sees, primarily between the Sees of Constantinople and Rome¹⁸⁵. Religious doctrinal differences led to serious disputes between churches within the empire, principally in Egypt and Syria.¹⁸⁶ The Arab conquests of these regions should have, in theory, alleviated the internal pressures resulting from these competing schools of faith in the Byzantine territories. This was not the case however.

The best existing source that encompasses the ecclesiastical figures and their interactions with their secular counterparts is the *Liber Pontificalis*. This source is a series of biographies that range from Saint Peter to Pope Adrian II, effectively covering the first ninety Popes. Authorship of the work is unknown and the work is thought to have been gradually and unsystematically put together, resulting in a work that originally only consisted of a list of the Popes and the length of their administration. It wasn't until the sixth century that more useful information was included as well. A weakness of this work is that it is clearly biased towards the Church in Rome and therefore does not offer much depth regarding the Church in Ravenna or Constantinople. Furthermore, by the time the work was comprehensively compiled in the sixth century much of the preceding

¹⁸⁵ The rift originated from the Council of Chalcedon in 451 where it was decided that Christ had two natures in one body but they were separate. This doctrine was followed in the western provinces and Anatolia and were called Chalcedonians. It was rejected in Egypt and Syria though where they believed that Christ had one nature in one body. They were called Monothelites. (Moosa, 87.)

¹⁸⁶ Moosa. 87.

information was unobtainable or incorrect. Following the sixth century, though, the information provided is more dependable.¹⁸⁷

Heraclius had ruled in favor of Monothelitism in the early sixth century and the contemporary Pope, Honorius, had assented to it to avoid strife. Unlike Heraclius, Constans II attempted to avoid conflict with the Church and his subjects of varying Christian faiths. With the aim of circumventing the religious issues, Constans II, at the age of seventeen, issued the *Type* in 648. The *Type* forbade controversy on both sides, attempting to circumvent an issue he could ill afford to deal with while Arabs, Slavs and Lombards continually raided and encroached on his domains.¹⁸⁸

Pope Honorius's successors did not share his temperance, unfortunately for the Constans II. Pope Theodore I (642-649) actively sought to end the Monothelite "heresy." He refused to acknowledge Paul as Patriarch of Constantinople because he did not properly succeed his predecessor. Pope Theodore I's successor, Pope Martin I, further created a rift between Rome and Constantinople. His appointment lacked the confirmation of the Byzantine Emperor and Constans II, therefore, regarded Martin as a usurper. In 649 Martin convened the Lateran Council condemning the *Type* and those who defended it. Because Constans II viewed Martin as a usurper attacking his imperial policies he understandably perceived the Lateran Council as an act of rebellion.¹⁸⁹ With the majority of the Monophysites in the occupied territories of Syria and Egypt it would have been convenient for Constans II to renounce the policies of Heraclius. Continuing the strife with the Church in Rome, after it was apparent that tolerance between the two interpretations of faith was impossible, did not readily benefit Constans II's foreign policies. Why then would he

¹⁸⁷ Raymond, Davis. *Liber Pontificalis: The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD715*. Liverpool University Press. 1989. i-xii & xxxiv-xxxviii.

¹⁸⁸ Paul. 217.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. 217-218.

have damaged relations with the Western Church for a sect of the population he no longer controlled? The most likely interpretation is that Constans II always intended to reassert control over the Monophysite populations in Syria and Egypt. By urging religious tolerance he was looking at the long view by avoiding religious conflict in the future, assuming he was able to retake the occupied territories. His insistence on enforcing the *Type* is another indication that his actions in the west were aimed at containing the Arabs and then creating a military force capable of retaking the former Byzantine territories.

Monothelism had been rejected collectively in the West, both in Italy and Africa. It is in Africa that Maximus the Confessor gained prominence in condemning the imperial Monothelism policy as heresy. Following the Lateran Council, Maximus and his pupils carefully wrote up its acts to distribute as propaganda. He even referred to the Council as the sixth ecumenical council. Directly challenging the traditional role of the emperor as the leading figure of such meetings (Constans II was not invited to participate in the Lateran Council), Maximus had become a prominent figure in the conflict regarding the Monothelism controversy.¹⁹⁰ Because of his prominence in the Monothelism issue he shared a similar fate that Martin would eventually befall. In 657/658 Maximus was arrested and brought to Constantinople. There he was imprisoned, tried and several efforts were even made to change his stance on Monothelism. If he had recanted he would no longer have been insubordinate to the Byzantine emperor's authority possibly alleviating his sentence. Failing this, however, he was mutilated. His tongue was cut out and his right hand was cut off so as not to continue to profane the emperor's religious policies.¹⁹¹ He was exiled and died, probably as a result of his injuries, in 662 in Lazica in the Caucasus.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Haldon. 56-57.

¹⁹¹ Theophanes. 46.

¹⁹² Haldon. 58.

The death of Maximus removed one of the major figures stirring up controversy regarding the *Type* and the Monothelism faith. The other major figure was Pope Martin I. Martin's refusal to accept Constans II's policies, and therefore his ability to rule, could not be overlooked. While foreign enemies raided and pushed at his external borders, Constans II could ill-afford western parts of the Church rebelliously challenging his policies. To this end Olympius, the exarch¹⁹³ of Ravenna, was dispatched to Rome to compel the acceptance of the *Type* and arrest Martin if possible. Public opinion made the arrest of Martin questionable and Olympius was not able to secure the loyalty of the army in Rome so he would have the necessary manpower to arrest Martin and impose the *Type* on the bishops. Due to these factors Olympius attempted to have Martin assassinated, although this too failed. Olympius died of disease not long afterwards.¹⁹⁴ The new exarch had better luck in dealing with Martin. He and his troops were able to arrest Martin and transport him to Constantinople in 653. During his trial he was not allowed to discuss the *Type*. After being unable to convince him to come to terms with Constans II he was found guilty and sentenced to death, later commuted to exile in Cherson¹⁹⁵. Martin died in 656 while in exile and with both Martin and Maximus removed the last obstinate obstacles for Constans II and his religious policies were gone.¹⁹⁶ Even though Rome and the western churches were under the sovereignty of the Byzantine Emperor they were far from Constantinople. Due to the distance from Constantinople many of the western churches were increasingly becoming separate from the culture and faiths of the eastern churches, giving Rome an increased autonomy and authority on religious matters. So, despite Rome and its churches falling under Constans II's authority, he had to interact with them as he would a foreign organization. Up to the 650's he had already attempted diplomacy and been forced to apply force.

¹⁹³ The exarch was in effect a governor for the Byzantine Emperor who ruled over a province usually far removed from Constantinople.

¹⁹⁴ Raymond. 70-72.

¹⁹⁵ Cherson was a city in the far northeastern part of the Byzantine Empire just north of the Black Sea.

¹⁹⁶ Haldon. 58.

Rome was unique in that it was both a recipient of and a crucial factor for Constans II's foreign policy. His decisions on how he interacted with Rome would have consequences when the time came for him to move his plans west.

Not all of Constans II's relations with the western Sees were forceful or destructive. The influential See of Ravenna had been and still was on amiable terms with the Byzantine Emperors. The function of bishops varied from See to See. Sometime they were only influential figures whereas other times they conducted important civic functions. In the seventh century ecclesiastical management of the civic functions grew as the old civil institutions collapsed and the Byzantine Empire became increasingly destitute. Prior to the difficulties the Byzantine Empire faced in the latter half of the sixth century, Rome, Ravenna and numerous other Sees benefitted greatly from donations both from the emperors and private individuals. So the ecclesiastical estates and revenue became major contributors to the state during these decades as the Byzantine Empire fought for its survival. The amount of taxes required from the Sees must have been substantial as indicated from Pope Gregory's letters expressing relief when the taxes were diminished in the reigns of Constantine IV and Justinian II.¹⁹⁷ Despite the religious controversy between emperor and pope, Constans II had to keep these factors in mind when dealing with the western Sees. His policies indicate a complex relationship between rewarding those who aided his goals, removing individuals regardless of position who threatened stability, and imposing heavy taxes to subsidize his war efforts.

The apparent significance of the western Sees' financial and civic contributions, primarily from Rome and Ravenna, indicate that Constans II's foremost policies regarding the Church were conciliatory in nature. His attempt at producing the *Type* and enforcing it are examples of his efforts to rid the Byzantine Empire of a dangerous theological division. Despite Constans II thoroughly

¹⁹⁷ Brown, T.S., "The Church of Ravenna and the Imperial Administration in the Seventh Century," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 370 (1979) 2-3.

bringing down Martin and Maximus, it will become clear that he was trying to make both Rome and Ravenna more amenable to the imperial position in Italy. When Constans II visited Rome in 663 he confirmed Rome's rights as senior church, prayed at St. Peter's, and presented precious gifts; examples of which are jeweled gospel books, a gesture probably meant to assuage the Roman clergy regarding the events concerning Martin and Maximus.¹⁹⁸ Regrettably, the precariousness of his financial position while in Italy quickly made him unpopular in Rome. He needed to fund his military activities in the west just as much as he needed to pacify the Roman See. While in Rome he had all the city's bronze decorations dismantled along with various other precious objects sent back to Constantinople.¹⁹⁹ It is difficult to imagine that this was originally Constans II's intentions. It is possible that he had hoped to take Beneventum along with other Lombard cities, using tribute and loot from these cities to alleviate the cost of the expedition. Constans II's actions in Rome were not unique. In times of crisis other Byzantine Emperors had confiscated ecclesiastical property to fund their war efforts. Heraclius had used the church's silver plates to help finance his campaigns against the Persians. In the following centuries, Nicephorus I appropriated ecclesiastical estates and Nicephorus II interfered in church administrative affairs to ensure a more efficient system that would result in more taxes.²⁰⁰ It is evident that Constans II's pillaging of Rome had historical precedent in previous times of crisis. It is likely that he was attempting reconciliation with the Papacy at the same time as practicably managing his military finances, followed by the predictable results in Rome.

Ravenna experienced a different response from Constans II's time in Italy as a result of Ravenna's clergy working much more closely and loyally with Byzantine exarchs. It was at this time,

¹⁹⁸ Brown. 11-12.

¹⁹⁹ Raymond. 74.

²⁰⁰ Brown. 17 & 19-20.

in 666, that Ravenna reached the zenith of its power. Constans II granted the See of Ravenna the privilege of autocephaly²⁰¹. Rome inevitably reacted violently against this privilege, even though it was not an attempt to establish a new religious capital in the west. In fact, the judicial independence only extended to the provinces of Emilia and Flaminia. Even the autocephaly itself was not unusual, because precedents existed for jurisdictional independence. Constans II simply stated that Ravenna's position would be the same as other cities in various other parts of the empire. Regardless, Rome saw this as an attempt to undermine the importance of the Roman See. An exchange of anathemas²⁰² quickly followed between Pope Vitalian and archbishop Maurus. If Constans II was attempting to punish the clergy of Rome he miscalculated badly.²⁰³ It is probable, however, that he was only intending to reward the Ravenna See for its continuous support and contributions.

The archbishops of Ravenna perceived their See's position not in terms of rivalry with Rome's See but as lacking the status appropriate for an influential church located in a significant Italian city. The initiative for the autocephaly probably originated with archbishop Maurus himself. He is presented by Agnellus²⁰⁴ as an ambitious archbishop who frequently visited Constantinople to further his case for autocephaly. Furthermore, he is remembered in Ravenna's traditions as the driving force behind this event. The document from Constans II also states the reasons for the privilege as a reward for the loyalty and the services of the archbishop to the exarch. Constans II's motives were probably financial as well. The document also mentions the archbishop's payments to the exarch.²⁰⁵ In these tumultuous times the fiscal needs of the Byzantine Empire were virtually

²⁰¹ Autocephaly is the status of a church whose bishop does not report to a higher ranking ecclesiastical figure. In effect political independence but not separation.

²⁰² Anathemas are denunciations or curses.

²⁰³ Brown. 11-12 & 15.

²⁰⁴ Agnellus was a historian in Ravenna who specifically recorded the lives and actions of Ravenna's bishops.

²⁰⁵ Brown. 12-13 & 16.

unquenchable. The taxes imposed on Sicily, while he enacted his naval program there, made him extremely unpopular, and he was forced to seek money from the Church of Ravenna.²⁰⁶ The stripping of Rome's precious metals and the privileges granted to Ravenna are indicators of these policy necessities. If Constans II was to continue his military preparations and expeditions in the west he would need to find adequate funds for them. His policies regarding the Papacy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Italy are symptoms of this need regardless of his desire for reconciliation. In essence, Constans II's policies regarding the Papacy and the Italian Sees centered on maintaining internal religious stability, applying both brute force and diplomacy, as well as procuring the maximum amount of revenue and resources available.

Even though it may appear that Constans II's foreign policy shifted westward when he set up residence in Sicily, nothing could be further from the truth. His actions in the west signify that his ultimate goal was regaining the advantage at sea from the Arabs and using this advantage to retake the lost Byzantine territories. When he marched through the Balkans he did not garrison troops or attempt to extend Byzantine control over the region. His purpose was merely to move his military forces as close as possible to Italy before setting sail. Once in Italy he again demonstrated his primary interest in the Arab threat. As he marched through Italy he temporarily reconquered portions of lost Byzantine territory from the Lombards until faced with resolute resistance. Whereupon he immediately ceased the conflict and continued on his way to Rome. These actions indicate that his objectives in Italy were not in fighting with the Lombards since he did not appear interested in expending or jeopardizing his military resources. Finally, his actions in Rome were conciliatory towards the Papacy in an attempt to repair the relations between them before moving on to Sicily in an effort to stabilize his position as much as possible before beginning his naval

²⁰⁶ Haldon. 60.

buildup. Constans II did not intend to drive out the Slavic or Lombard threats to Byzantine territory because they were only threatening portions of Byzantine territory. The Arabs, however, were threatening Constantinople, Armenia, and the prosperous North African province as well as already possessing Egypt and Syria-Palestine. In essence they were threatening the existence of the Byzantine Empire. Constans II's realization of this threat is reflected in his foreign policy. He marched through the Balkans and Italy with no intention of campaigning in these regions, attempted to mend relations with the Papacy, and then began a large naval build-up in Sicily. Constans II did not require a navy to wage war against either the Slavs or the Lombards. The navy was necessary, though, to halt the damage being inflicted on the Byzantine Empire from the Arab fleet as well as to retake Egypt. Constans II's foreign policy in the west was aimed at matters in the east, where the most dangerous enemy had emerged.

CONCLUSION

The reign of Constans II has historically been perceived as an era when the Byzantines were on the defensive after the initial Arab onslaught had forced them to withdraw into Anatolia as the Byzantines fought for their very survival. Without a doubt Byzantine forces had suffered serious defeats²⁰⁷ and continuous raids that compounded their difficulties reacting to this new threat. Despite these setbacks, though, Constans II was actively seeking not only to stabilize his frontiers against the Arabs and repair Byzantine morale but also to regain the strategic initiative and reconquer lost Byzantine territories. The archaeological evidence from Anatolia indicates that the Arab raids through the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountain passes were continuous but never serious enough to endanger the Byzantine presence in these regions.²⁰⁸ The emerging Arab navy, however, was a significant threat that resulted in a crushing defeat at the Battle of the Masts and devastating naval raids along the coasts of Anatolia.²⁰⁹ Arab naval raids and dominance forced Constans II to set up residence in Sicily with the intentions of building a new fleet and protecting the western provinces from further Arab expansion.²¹⁰ To this end Constans II attempted to avoid enduring conflicts with the Slavs, Lombards, and Papacy that would have only resulted in draining his limited manpower and resources. With a new fleet Constans II would have been able to attempt to reconquer Egypt, severely reducing the Arab navy's strength. Ultimately his plans came to naught as he was assassinated in his bath in Sicily. His immediate seventh century successors are examples of defensive foreign policies that had accepted the new reality of an Arab State.

²⁰⁷ Yarmuk and Battle of the Masts.

²⁰⁸ Decker. 221 & 238-239.

²⁰⁹ Foss (2009, Issue 1). 19-22 & Foss (1994). 23-27, 32 & 36-37 & Foss (1977). 472-475.

²¹⁰ Bury. 4-5.

Constantine IV's (668-685) foreign policy differed significantly from his father's. As evidenced from his actions his reign was defensive and peaceful in nature. This might have been a result of rebellions early on leading Constantine IV to feel insecure in his position and reluctant to take any uncertain actions. Regardless, the expansionistic tendencies demonstrated by Constans II ceased when he perished. Even though Constantine IV displayed his willingness to use military force to protect his territories from invasions²¹¹ he preferred to negotiate peace especially following a defeat or if the outcome would be uncertain. When peace was negotiated to his benefit, the compensation was always monetary and never about increasing territory or power. Ecclesiastical matters were where Constantine IV devoted the majority of his energies. The Sixth Ecumenical Council was the culmination of his efforts by which the religious controversy created by Monothelism, deemed heretical, was put to rest during this period.²¹² This is an excellent example of Constantine IV placating the Church's western representatives (Rome) since the vast majority of Monothelites²¹³ were under Umayyad rule. In both matters of state and religion, Constantine IV tended to arbitrate conflicts and conciliate disparate parties as his method of foreign policy.

Justinian II's (685-695) foreign policy was marked by deportations, betrayal, and conquest. Whereas Constans II's foreign policy was expansionistic in nature and Constantine IV's was defensive, Justinian II's was opportunistic and eastern-oriented. During his reign he did not concern himself with western Byzantine interests, whether territorial or ecclesiastical; instead he broke peace treaties with both the Bulgars and the Umayyad Caliphate. While more aggressive like Constans II, Justinian II's foreign policy was intended to win him personal glory, similar to his namesake

²¹¹ Armenia from the Arabs and the Balkans from the Bulgars.

²¹² Haldon. 63-70.

²¹³ The region's most densely populated by the Monothelites were Syria and Egypt. By condemning Monothelism Constantine IV had the advantage of repairing relations with the Church, which had seen friction between the Church and the previous two emperors, without provoking his own subjects.

Justinian the Great²¹⁴, and financial gain, much like Constantine IV's foreign policy. It was also during his reign that the Umayyad Caliphate began minting its own coinage indicating an increasingly sophisticated Arab State, Armenia was lost to the Byzantine Empire, and the Maronites were removed from the Lebanon Mountain range.²¹⁵ These events had the effect of diminishing Byzantine financial influence and clout in Umayyad territory, diminishing Byzantine territory because of his military defeats, and deteriorating a strategic asset with the deportation of the Maronites. Justinian II's foreign policy during his first reign²¹⁶ was a failure that caused damage to the stability his predecessors had created.

Constantine IV and Justinian II made no serious attempts at expanding Byzantine territory or influence. Their foreign policies emphasize the assertive nature of Constantine IV's own foreign policies and the policies intended outcomes. The foreign policies of Constantine IV not only put emphasis on the Byzantine navy but also on the western provinces. Neither Constantine IV nor Justinian II's policies stressed the importance of the west or the navy because neither were actively trying to retake the initiative against the Arabs. They had come to accept the presence of an Arab State that controlled previously Byzantine territory. Not so with Constantine IV. He was constantly striving to expel the Arab forces from, what he considered, Byzantine lands and he realized naval dominance was the only way to achieve his goals.

²¹⁴ Justinian, also known as Justinian the Great, was born a peasant in Macedonia and reigned from 527-565. Three important accomplishments emerge from his reign. The first was his reconquest of Italy, North Africa, and the southern coastal portion of Spain. By defeating the Vandals and Ostrogoths Justinian was able to effectively return the Mediterranean Sea to a Roman Lake. The only two coastal portions of the Mediterranean he did not control were the northwestern coast of Africa and the southern coast of Gaul. In neither of these areas did a rival naval power exist. The second significant accomplishment of Justinian was the codification of the laws called Justinian's Code. The third was the construction of dozens of fortifications and churches including the Hagia Sophia. It is unfortunate that his reconquests of large parts of the former Western Roman Empire did not long outlive him. (Luttwak. 77-85)

²¹⁵ Haldon. 70-74.

²¹⁶ He was later to regain his throne from 705-711.

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