

Lund University
Centre for languages and literature, Greek
M. A. Thesis
Supervisor: Professor Karin Blomqvist
Spring 2008

Masters of the Imperial City

Ideological perspectives on the Byzantine
emperors of *Patria Konstantinoupoleos*

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1. Introduction

This paper concerns itself with the expressions of ideology in the late 10th century text known as *Patria Konstantinoupoleos*, the *Patria* of Constantinople. More specifically, it aims to examine the ideological tendencies and patterns which can be identified regarding the Byzantine emperors, individually and collectively. It takes a critical stance towards parts of the research that has previously been carried out on the subject and aims to refute some of its conclusions through critical examination and a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the text.

My understanding of the text has been facilitated significantly through closer acquaintance with its subject matter, the imperial city of Constantinople, present day Istanbul, which has been made possible through the support of the Swedish Research Institute of Istanbul. I would therefore like to express my heartfelt gratitude to its board of trustees for giving me this opportunity as well as to the staff in Istanbul for an educational and immensely inspirational stay.

1.1 Corpus and previous research

Patria Konstantinoupoleos (Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως) is the commonly used designation for a collection of texts concerning Constantinople's history, buildings and other monuments, edited and published in two volumes by T. Preger.¹ It is also the title of one of the texts in the collection, the one with which this paper is concerned, and unless specified otherwise the designation *Patria Konstantinoupoleos*, often simply shortened to *Patria*, will henceforth be used to refer to this specific text and not the collection as a whole. This text consists of four separate books, titled *Patria Konstantinoupoleos* I, II, III and IV respectively. A comprehensive and thorough study of the *Patria* has been carried out by A. Berger, intended to investigate its relationship to its sources and to a later topographical survey as well as its own value as an historical source. It also provides a

¹ *Patria* I-IV.

commentary to large parts of the text.² Berger touches only briefly upon matters of ideology, but the information provided by his work constitutes an essential background for further analysis.

The oldest version of *Patria Konstantinoupoleos* was composed approximately 989/90. It can be regarded as belonging to a literary tradition known as that of the local chronicle, which can be traced back to historical writings of antiquity. A local chronicle concerns itself with the history of a geographically limited area, such as a city or a territory, and is characterised by its interest in the story of the city's foundation, explanations for various names of places and buildings as well as the character of the lands around the city, its citizens and its political constitution. As a historical source the *Patria* stands out primarily on account of its many stories concerning the buildings of Constantinople, which appear in none of its known sources and no other known comparable text.³

The origins of the *Patria* are somewhat obscure, but it can be said with certainty that it was not written by a single author at a single point in time. Instead, it appears to be a compilation of various earlier texts with the common denominator that they are all concerned with the city of Constantinople in some way. It can consequently not be regarded as a homogeneous historical source. Approximately half of its source material is known to us and the rest is highly unlikely to originate from a single uniform source. Berger does however argue persuasively that the text was essentially compiled and edited by a single editor in a single process, mainly by demonstrating that several paragraphs in *Patria* I, II and III must have been edited dependently of each other and thus in the same process, and concludes that the text has achieved a high degree of uniformity through this procedure.⁴ The identity of the editor or editors of the *Patria* is completely unknown to us. It could have been compiled and edited by a single individual or a group of individuals working closely together, but there is no reason to prefer one over the other and this question of identity is of little consequence for this study. Therefore, for the sake

² Berger (1988), 30.

³ Berger (1988), 35, 50, 187.

⁴ Berger (1988), 50, 54-85.

of simplicity, this person or group will henceforth be referred to simply as ‘the editor’ and the pronoun used will for the same reason be the feminine⁵ singular.

The division of *Patria Konstantinoupoleos* into four books is of a thematic nature and this is in all likelihood a consequence of the differing character of its sources, as far as can be determined on account of the ones that are known. *Patria* I is a lengthened and revised version of the so-called *Pseudo-Hesychios*, a text concerning the history of ancient Byzantium and the founding of Constantinople that was originally written in the 6th century and added to the historical writings of Hesychios Illustrios of Miletus. *Patria* II is based primarily on the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai*, a compilation of shorter texts, not unlike the *Patria* itself, from around the year 800 that concerns itself with the statues and monuments of Constantinople, with particular focus on the supernatural abilities of the pagan ones. The subject matter of *Patria* III is buildings and other important locations in the city. Unlike the other three books it is not based primarily on a single source and even though much of its material can be traced back to different chronicles and hagiographical sources it must almost certainly have been conveyed through other sources that are completely unknown. *Patria* IV is an almost unedited reproduction of a text concerning the edification of the Hagia Sofia from the middle of the 9th century to which a few new paragraphs have been added at the end. In some of the preserved manuscripts, an independent appendix has also been added to the text after *Patria* II, briefly recounting the history of the first seven ecumenical councils. Preger has given it the designation *Patria* IIa, but since it appears entirely unrelated to the rest of the *Patria*, it will not be considered as part of the text for the premises of this study.⁶

It should be made clear that despite their subjects, *Patria* II and III are in all likelihood not intended to constitute a kind of traveler’s guide to the city. As regards the characteristics of the different buildings, statues and monuments the text gives either

⁵ This is, of course, not meant to suggest that the editor or editors of the *Patria* were female, but rather that we are obliged to use either masculine or feminine pronouns and, since the identity of the editor or editors is completely unknown to us, both alternatives are, strictly speaking, misleading. The only neutral options are to consistently use either both masculine and feminine pronouns (he or she) or some sort of gender-neutral composite (s/he), both of which would have a debilitating effect on the readability of the text and not serve any other purpose than acknowledging an issue of no importance to the study itself. It would thus, for the sake of simplicity, appear reasonable to simply choose one. I have decided to use the feminine forms.

⁶ Berger (1988), 35-50, 55-85.

brief descriptions or none at all, and concerning their locations it is, with few exceptions, similarly vague or silent. Instead most of the text consists of various historical anecdotes where the buildings, statues and monuments play a prominent part, such as descriptions of when, how, why or by whom they were erected, explanations of their names and accounts of important historical events or curious incidents that can be related to them in some way. *Patria* II also elaborates on the subject of the supernatural abilities of pagan statues. On account of this it seems reasonable to assume that the text was intended to be read by persons who were already closely acquainted with the city.

The ideological tendencies of the *Patria* have been examined by G. Dagron, who has concluded that the text was intended to glorify the city but debase the emperors who ruled it. Dagron argues that the *Patria* means to bring the city to life and portray it in all its glory, while its emperors, with the possible exceptions of Constantine the Great and Justinian I, are reduced to chronological indicators, separate from and bereft of the glorious legacy of the imperial capital. He compares it to *De ceremoniis*, in which the emperors are portrayed in the midst of sumptuous ceremonial, claiming that the *Patria* focuses solely on the buildings and monuments of the city and that the emperors are included in the narrative primarily as points of reference to facilitate the counting of time. Furthermore, Dagron argues that the emperors are debased through the use of epithets, which were probably not copied from the chronicles used as sources, but introduced originally in the *Patria* with the intention of drawing depreciatory caricatures. By emphasising, for instance, an emperor's foreign or provincial origins, the text portrays him as an outsider, thus disassociating him further from the glories of the imperial city.⁷

There are however reasons to question Dagron's conclusions. Firstly, the comparison with *De ceremoniis* is not especially relevant. A detailed account of the imperial ceremonies would naturally portray the emperors in a favourable light, simply because the ceremonies described were intended to do so. Considering the subject-matter of the *Patria*, there would be little reason to recount the details of the sumptuous ceremonial that surrounded the emperors and the favourable portrayal which would be conveyed by such an account would consequently be omitted as well. It would be unreasonable to assume that all literature which focused primarily on other issues than

⁷ Dagron (1984), 315-330. My thanks to Delphine Velut for help with translation and interpretation.

the emperors or the matters most intimately associated with them should be regarded as adopting a denigratory attitude towards them. Secondly, as regards Dagron's claim that the emperors are reduced to chronological points of reference in the narrative of the *Patria*, even a brief survey of the text would indicate that this interpretation is overly simplifying at the very least. There are for instance numerous paragraphs in which specific emperors are credited with works of construction and if the text, as Dagron suggests, was intended to glorify the city through its buildings and monuments, part of this glory would naturally fall to those who were responsible for these edifices. The apparent weaknesses in Dagron's reasoning clearly merit a systematic study of the ideology conveyed by the *Patria* as regards the Byzantine emperors.

In this context one additional piece of previous research should be mentioned, namely an article by Cyril Mango titled "Antique statuary & the Byzantine beholder", which often refers to the *Patria* and the *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* as sources. Mango examines the Byzantine attitude towards antique statuary, focusing on the curious circumstance that hundreds of pagan statues, many of them mentioned in the *Patria*, were erected in Constantinople and with few exceptions were allowed to remain unmolested by the Christian inhabitants of the city. In fact, the circumstances concerning their erection were less than curious and simply a result of the religiously ambiguous policies of Constantine the Great, but it appears to have been a troublesome matter for later writers to explain why the supposed champion of Christianity chose to decorate his capital in this manner. The explanations in general appears to have gravitated towards a position stating that the statues were objects of ridicule, demonstrating the folly of the pagan faith and these apologetic attitudes may have been one of the reasons for sparing the statues during centuries to come. However, the general belief appears to have been that the statues were inhabited by demons, malevolent at worst, but usually merely mischievous and that it was possible to bring about certain magical effects through use of sorcery involving them, many examples of which has been recorded and usually condemned by contemporaries. Nevertheless, there were also examples of statues that were perfectly harmless until attempts were made to move or destroy them, which naturally had a dissuasive influence

as regards such endeavors, and some of them were even considered to bring about beneficial effects, which people in general appeared to have no qualms about enjoying.⁸

1.2 Theoretical framework

Before proceeding to define the specific aim of this paper some theoretical distinctions must be made regarding the terminology and different levels of analysis that will be employed.

1.2.1 Ideology

The concept of *ideology* will be defined essentially as a set of normative statements and factual statements of relevance to the normative ones. The purpose of the normative statements is to define an ideal, proscribing how individuals should act and how societies should function, while the factual statements serve to demonstrate how and to what extent the world conforms, or has conformed historically, to that ideal. In the Byzantine society of the late 10th century, we can safely assume that the ideological variations as regards the fundamental normative statements were nearly non-existent. The core beliefs of Byzantine moral thought appear to have been universally accepted, its central concept being that of order (*κόσμος, τάξις, εὐταξία*). When God created the world he established a divine order, a reflection of the order of his own heavenly kingdom, and it was his will that the inhabitants of the earth would conduct themselves in concord with this order in all aspects of their lives. By doing so they conformed to the inherent harmony of the universe and contributed towards making the imperfect material world resemble the eternal and flawless Heaven.⁹ We could consequently expect all Byzantines to agree to the normative statements that a good action was one that corresponded to the divine will and that a good society was one that resembled God's heavenly kingdom to the greatest extent possible. There would however be considerably more dissent on a factual level, when it came to determining exactly what this entailed. For instance, through the

⁸ Mango (1963), 55-64.

⁹ Mango (1980), 218.

empire's entire history, the importance of maintaining religious orthodoxy was universally recognised, whereas the definition of orthodoxy was a constant source of debate, dissent and even violence.

When examining the portrayals of individuals or groups of individuals, the concept of ideology should thus be understood as the sum of all implications resulting from a comparison between the factual statements about the individual or individuals in question and the normative statements which the author or editor could have expected her intended readers to take for granted as well as those which are explicitly or implicitly expressed in the text. For a text as heterogeneous as the *Patria*, however, the normative statements expressed in one part of the text cannot be assumed to be intended to apply to the factual statements in another part and such comparisons must consequently be handled with care. If all the factual statements regarding a specific individual portray this individual in a manner consistent with the norms and ideals of Byzantine society, the ideology expressed as regards the individual in question will be concluded to be consistently favourably inclined. If, on the other hand, all the factual statements contribute to a portrayal at odds with these norms and ideals, the ideology expressed will be considered to be consistently unfavourably inclined towards the individual in question. On this level of analysis, however, no effort will be made to reconcile conflicting ideological tendencies. If the text conveys information that contributes towards a favourable portrayal, but also expresses statements that are clearly unfavourably inclined, the portrayal will be characterised as ideologically complex.

1.2.2 Ideological message

The next level of analysis which will be employed is that of *ideological message*. We must recognise that the ideological elements of a text such as the *Patria* could have been included in the text under different circumstances. An ideological message is constituted by an ideology, the elements of which have been included in a text with the specific purpose of conveying their ideological implications as a message to the intended readers. A text that conveys an ideological message must consequently also convey an ideology, although the ideological message does not, of course, need to be constituted by all the ideological aspects of the text. However, not all ideologies constitute ideological

messages. The ideology of a text might also simply reflect the personal opinions of its author or editor, or the ideology prevalent in the society in which it was conceived or in the sources on which it was based, without being expressly intended to be conveyed as an ideological message. Such an ideology will henceforth be referred to as a *reflective ideology*, as opposed to an ideology that constitutes an ideological message.

Two criteria will be employed in order to distinguish ideological messages from reflective ideologies: *consistency* and *relevance*. As regards consistency, we can assume that if an author or editor desired to convey an ideology to her readers, she would neither neglect to do so when she had the opportunity, nor allow this ideology to be contradicted in the text. A text conveying an ideological message should express it on most or all occasions when the narrative provides an opportunity to do so and its narrative should be structured in a manner that provides such opportunity to a considerable extent. Specifying exact numeral definitions for these criteria can only be done arbitrarily, thus giving a misleading impression of exactness, for which reason we will abstain from doing so. We must however recognise that we might not always be able to determine with absolute certainty whether a specific ideological aspect in the text constitutes an ideological message, but its potential for doing so can always be discussed based on the premise that such a potential is intimately dependent on the degree of ideological consistency observed. Concerning the criterion of relevance, it would be reasonable to assume that if a text conveyed an ideological message, the contents of this message would, firstly, have been of some sort of significance for contemporary issues and, secondly, not have been taken for granted by its intended readers. The only meaningful purpose of an ideological message would be to affect the values, opinions or beliefs of its readers, which would be impossible if those readers regarded its contents as unimportant or self-evident.

1.2.3 Ideological purpose

The third and final level of analysis that is relevant for this paper is that of ideological purpose. We have determined that an ideological message is an ideology that has been included in a text with the specific purpose of conveying it as a message to the intended readers. This purpose will be characterised as an ideological purpose. The distinction is necessary because, although an ideological message must always have originated from an

ideological purpose at some point, the definition we have adopted also makes it entirely possible for such a message to be included in a text whose purpose is not to convey it. For a text such as the *Patria*, an ideological message might originate from one or several of its sources and thus be unintentionally included in the text in question through use of these sources. Under such circumstances it would be unreasonable to claim that the text had an ideological purpose based upon the ideological message it conveys. If, on the other hand, an editor agreed with the ideological message conveyed by her sources, she could consciously employ them in a way that maintained that message in her own text, in which case it would have an ideological purpose even though the ideological message originated from the sources employed.

To determine whether an editor transmitted an ideological message consciously or unconsciously it would naturally be necessary to study both the text and the sources on which it is based. Similarly, a text may convey an ideological message on account of the demand of its genre and although this would require at least some degree of intention from the author or editor it is doubtful whether it would be reasonable to speak of an ideological purpose under such circumstances. In either case an extensive investigation of the genre in question would be required to reach any conclusions on the subject. Based on the definitions above it must be concluded that although a text can convey an ideological message without having an ideological purpose, the opposite is not possible. There can be no ideological purpose unless there is an ideological message. One further distinction must however be made at this point. If it is possible for an editor to consciously convey the ideological messages of her sources, it must also be possible for her to purposely use her sources in a way that prevents their ideological messages from being conveyed by the text. Such text could indeed be considered to have an ideological standpoint of some kind, but if a text is completely devoid of ideological messages its purpose could still not be regarded as being of ideological nature.

1.3 Aim and delimitations

The first delimitation that will be made is that only the four books of *Patria Konstantinoupoleos* will be analysed, since an extension of the corpus would enlarge the field of study far beyond the intended scope of this paper. Based on the theoretical framework stipulated above this imposes clear restrictions on the conclusions which will be possible to draw from the study and this must be clearly acknowledged. The analytical levels of ideology and ideological message can be employed without difficulty, but even if a clear ideological message can be identified in the text it will not be possible to determine whose message it is or for what reasons it was included in the *Patria* without studying its sources and preferably other texts from the same genre. This paper will consequently never be able to conclude that the *Patria* has an ideological purpose. However, this does not make the study irrelevant. To conclude that a text has an ideological purpose the existence of an ideological message is a necessary but not sufficient criterion that has to be fulfilled. If no ideological message can be identified, there is no reason to believe that the text has an ideological purpose. If any theory suggesting that the *Patria* has an ideological purpose, for instance to glorify the city and debase the emperors, is to be accepted the text must be proven to convey an ideological message to that effect. If such a message can be identified and its contents analysed, this would provide a solid basis for an extended study. If it cannot, we would have good reason to doubt that there is any ideological purpose behind the *Patria*. Either way, the study has the potential to provide a well-founded hypothesis concerning the ideological content of the *Patria*, which could be of considerable value for future research into the subject.

The second delimitation that will be made is also necessitated by the limited scope of the study. In a paper of this size and academic level it would simply not be possible to conduct a comprehensive study of the entire ideological content of the *Patria*. The field of study must consequently be significantly narrowed, whilst retaining its relevance for the previous research it means to evaluate. For this reason, this paper will only examine the ideological content of the text regarding the Byzantine emperors. It aims to challenge Dagron's arguments, but it will also take a broader approach and

perform a systematic analysis of all the paragraphs of relevance for the portrayals of the emperors, individually and collectively, employing the analytical levels of ideology and ideological message.

In accordance with these delimitations the study will pursue the following three primary lines of questioning:

- Which ideologies are expressed as regards each individual emperor mentioned in the text? Which portrayals are consistently favourable, which are consistently unfavourable and which are ideologically complex?
- Which general ideological tendencies and patterns can be identified if the portrayals of the individual emperors are examined collectively? Can a consistent ideology encompassing all the emperors mentioned be identified?
- Which, if any, aspects of the identified ideology can be considered to constitute ideological messages?

1.4 Method

In accordance with the first line of questioning established above, the study will begin by analysing the ideology expressed concerning the emperors on an individual basis. Throughout chapter two, the portrayals of the individual emperors will be examined in chronological order, from Constantine the Great to Basil II, who was the reigning emperor when the *Patria* was composed. The factual statements of the text concerning each emperor will be recounted and compared to the norms and ideals we have reason to believe were prevalent in the late 10th century Byzantine empire. We will, of course, examine the characteristics ascribed explicitly to the individuals in question when possible, but in a text such as the *Patria*, we can expect most of the ideologically relevant information about the emperors to be conveyed in a more implicit manner, through the accounts of their actions. In order to determine the norms and ideals which we will use as points of comparison, previous research will naturally be instrumental. Mango describes the Byzantine conception of the ideal emperor as follows:

Above all, he should be man-loving (*philanthrōpos*). While remaining awesome by reason of his authority, he should make himself loved by the exercise of beneficence. Generosity and leniency are especially appropriate to the emperor, but he must also insist on due observance of the law (*eunomia*). In his own person he must be self-restrained, circumspect, resolute in action and slow to anger. His unique position is, however, defined, first and foremost, by his relation to God, the only being of whom he stands in need. His greatest ornament is, therefore, piety (*eusebeia*). He is, by definition, faithful in Christ (*pistos en Christō*) and Christ-loving (*philochristos*), these attributes being expressed in his titulature, as was also that of being victorious (*nikētēs, kallinikos*), since victory was granted to him in return for his piety.¹⁰

We shall look for all of these qualities, and others of similar connotation, in the portrayals of the emperors and consider them indications of a favourable ideological inclination. However, considering the subject matter of the text, it should also be noted that the construction, reconstruction, renovation, enlargement and embellishment of buildings and monuments will be regarded unequivocally as commendable activities unless the text itself gives us reason to believe otherwise. If an emperor is credited with achievements in the field of construction, thus contributing to the physical development of the city, he is clearly represented as important in relation to the subject-matter of the text and portrayed as both capable and enterprising, which, indeed, can be regarded as the antithesis of being reduced to a chronological indicator. Many edifices, especially buildings of religious importance such as churches or monasteries, would also have been regarded as contributing to the well-being of the emperor's subjects, thus conveying a sense of his philanthropy, generosity and, most importantly, piety. By contrast, characteristics at odds with the commendable qualities associated with the ideal emperor, such as impiety, greed, cruelty, intemperance and failure in military enterprises, will be considered as conveying an unfavourably inclined ideology. The matter of ideological messages concerning individual emperors will be discussed when the ideology identified motivates such considerations, but mainly in order to facilitate a more comprehensible discussion of such matters in the following chapter.

Having examined the ideology expressed regarding the individual emperors, we shall proceed to identify and analyse ideological tendencies from a larger perspective in chapter three. Firstly, we will consider the use of epithets without obvious ideological implications. Dagron's claim that the epithets associated with the emperors were intended to draw depreciatory caricatures will be refuted through a comparison between the

¹⁰ Mango (1980), 219.

expected manifestation of such intentions and the actual use of epithets in the text, whereupon the same method will be used to support the theory argued for in this paper, namely that the use of epithets of this kind was motivated solely by practical reasons and thus should not be regarded as expressing ideology. Secondly, we shall briefly inquire into the portrayals of magistrates, dignitaries and other non-imperial but important individuals, in order to ensure that the achievements and commendable qualities ascribed to the emperors cannot be regarded as being overshadowed by those ascribed to their subjects. Thirdly, the chapter will conclude with a summarising analysis. The conclusions reached concerning the individual emperors in chapter two will be summarised and discussed in order to identify general ideological tendencies. Based on this summary, the potential of these ideological tendencies to constitute ideological messages will be examined. The criteria of relevance and consistency will be applied in the analysis, which will compare the expected manifestations of the possible ideological messages to the ideological implications identified in the text. Finally, based on the conclusions of this analysis, it will be argued that the identified ideological tendencies of the *Patria* suggest that it is devoid of ideological messages regarding the Byzantine emperors.

All translations from Greek are my own, although I am indebted to Berger, whose interpretations have provided crucial assistance in this process. As regards the transliteration of Byzantine names and titles, Anglicised forms have been used when plausible ones can be found and otherwise Latinised forms.

2. The Emperors of Constantinople

2.1 Constantine the Great

As the founder of Constantinople and the first emperor to embrace Christianity, Constantine the Great occupies a central position in Byzantine history. Thus it is hardly surprising that he also appears as the single most dominant character in a collection of writings devoted to the city that bears his name. He is mentioned in 100 of the 452 paragraphs of the *Patria*, which is significantly more often than any other person. In this chapter we shall examine how the *Patria* portrays Constantine's achievements as the founder of Constantinople, his religious policies and efforts to promote Christianity as well as any other assertions that can be regarded as passing ideological judgement on his character.

Constantine is introduced in the following way in *Patria* I:

Δύο δὲ καὶ ἐξήκοντα καὶ τριακοσίων ἐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Αὐγούστου Καίσαρος μοναρχίας διεληλυθότων τῇ πρεσβυτέρᾳ Ῥώμῃ καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτῆς ἤδη πρὸς πέρας ἀφιγμένων Κωνσταντίνος ὁ Κωνσταντίου παῖς ἐπιλαβόμενος τῶν σκήπτρων τὴν νέαν ἀνίστησι Ῥώμην Κωνσταντινούπολιν λεγομένην προθύμως ἀνασχομένην τὴν προσηγορίαν. Θαυμαστὴν γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀπεργασάμενος τῷ κάλλει πόρρωθέν τε μεταγαγὼν τὰ τείχη [...] λουτρά τε καὶ ἱεροὺς οἴκους ἀπέδειξεν, [...].¹¹

The text proceeds to relate that Constantine built palaces, fortifications, churches, baths, porticoes, aqueducts and sewers, erected statues and triumphal arches, finished the hippodrome that the emperor Septimus Severus (r. 193-211) had begun building and constructed houses for the senators who had followed him from Rome as well as a senate house for them to congregate in. Sometimes the assertions are of a general nature, stating that Constantine built houses or erected statues, but most often the text simply lists the edifices for which the emperor allegedly was responsible.¹² Constantine continues to make frequent appearances throughout the other books of the *Patria*, in which he is

¹¹ *Patria* I, §§ 42f. Translation: “When 362 years had passed since the monarchy of the Emperor Augustus in the old Rome and her affairs had come to fulfillment, Constantine, the son of Constantius, seized power and founded the new Rome, called Constantinople and willingly enduring the name. For he made her admired for her beauty, moved the walls far away [...] and built baths and churches, [...]”

¹² *Patria* I, §§ 44-71.

credited with the construction of statues and monuments, churches and palaces as well as many other buildings and works of art.¹³ The frequency with which construction works ascribed to Constantine are mentioned is of course impressive in itself and can be regarded as an indication of implicit praise for the emperor, thus expressing ideology. Nevertheless, if this praise was intentional it is remarkable how little is done to emphasise it apart from mentioning the edifices for which he was responsible. A vague emphasis on his efforts to adorn the city can possibly be identified and there are some references to Constantinople's status as the new Rome which clearly signifies greatness to some extent, but virtually nothing is said in praise of the multitude of buildings that Constantine apparently was to be given credit for, despite the fact that the paragraphs concerning the individual buildings are more numerous than the ones concerning the individual statues and other works of art.

There are nine paragraphs in the text in which works of construction or embellishment are attributed to Constantine in general terms. If an editor had wished to emphasise the magnitude of Constantine's achievements in founding the city, thereby conveying an ideological message, these paragraphs would have provided an excellent opportunity to include adjectives or even entire sentences to this effect. Adjectives are indeed used to indicate a large quantity in three of them, all three concerning statues and works of art exclusively. One paragraph concludes that Constantine built many churches, but given its context this should probably be regarded as an indication of the emperor's religious policy more than anything else and as such it will be discussed below. In the remaining five paragraphs there is no emphasis on the quantity of the buildings mentioned at all, but only references in plural forms.¹⁴

Having inquired into the lack of praise for the quantity of Constantine's edifices it would be reasonable to proceed by considering the praise for their quality, which in fact is equally sparse. The porphyry pillar on the forum of Constantine is described as *περίβλεπτος* 'much admired' and the statue standing upon it is claimed to "shine like the Sun for the citizens", but this is the only one of Constantine's works which receives such

¹³ *Patria* II, §§ 15, 18, 40, 42, 44f, 49f, 54f, 63-66, 87, 102, 106, 110; *Patria* III, §§ 1-3, 7-10, 12f, 15, 18, 20, 35, 86, 88, 91, 115, 127, 131, 143f, 150, 158, 163, 182, 191, 204, 206, 209f, 215; *Patria* IV, §§ 1f.

¹⁴ *Patria* I, §§ 43f, 47f, 60, 62, 68f; *Patria* IV, § 1.

explicit praise.¹⁵ In the brief descriptions of a few other statues and monuments, different precious materials are mentioned in passing, but it is never commented upon further.¹⁶ It is also noted that Constantine adorned the church of St. Euphemia with precious materials when he built it, although it is highly possible that the primary purpose of that remark was to emphasise the villainy of Constantine V (r. 741-75), who according to the same paragraph turned the church into an armoury and a dunghill. The text also mentions that Constantine depicted Christ and the Mother of God as well as his own mother and himself when building another church, but nothing else is said about the nature or quality of these images. Furthermore, it is stated that he rebuilt a small chapel to make it large, which says little about the final size of the church apart from it being greater than that of a small chapel. Interestingly enough there is even one paragraph in which it is stated that Leo VI (r. 886-912) rebuilt a church dedicated to St. Stephen, which had originally been built by Constantine, making it smaller and in this process acquiring golden mosaics, multicoloured precious stones and pillars which he used to build another church. Consequently the sources of the *Patria*, at least as they are represented here, must have indicated that Constantine had built such a church and decorated it richly and yet the text only mentions these decorations when they are removed by Leo.¹⁷

Finally, it is asserted in one paragraph that Constantine “surrounded the city with great walls and embellished different places, as if he brought it to completion in rivalry of the old Rome.”¹⁸ The reference to Rome certainly implies greatness, but it is also interesting that the text focuses specifically on Constantine’s efforts to fortify and adorn the city. As regards the fortifications, this passage clearly represents them as impressive, but the walls of Constantine are also mentioned in other paragraphs, none of them saying anything about their size and fortitude, which makes the one comment expressing appraisal the anomaly.¹⁹ With the exception of these few and mostly vague comments

¹⁵ *Patria* I, § 45; *Patria* II, § 45. The Greek text reads: δίκην Ἡλίου τοῖς πολίταις ἐκλάμπουτα and ὡς Ἡλιος τοῖς πολίταις ἐκλάμπων respectively.

¹⁶ *Patria* II, §§ 18, 50, 87, 102.

¹⁷ *Patria* III, §§ 9, 66, 88, 209.

¹⁸ *Patria* I, § 47. The Greek text reads: τείχεσίν τε μεγίστοις περιβαλὼν τὴν πόλιν καὶ διαφόροις κοσμήσας τρόποις ὡς πρὸς ζῆλον ἀπεργάσασθαι τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης.

¹⁹ *Patria* I, §§ 43, 53, 55.

the *Patria* is utterly silent as regards the size, beauty or general usefulness of Constantine's works of construction.

There are however three additional passages that refer to Constantinople's status as the new Rome. The first one has already been quoted in the beginning of this chapter and is quite straightforward. Although it says nothing about exactly what being the new Rome entails, such specifications would surely have been deemed superfluous by the contemporary Byzantines, who still prided themselves on being Roman and would continue to do so for the remainder of the empire's existence. The other two are less direct but clearly imply continuity, one of them being a story about how Constantine makes twelve reluctant senators move from Rome to Constantinople by building exact replicas of their houses and moving their families there while they were away on a military campaign, the other one simply mentioning that Constantine wished to have a hippodrome like the one in Rome.²⁰

On another note there is a paragraph inserted in the middle of the long account of Constantine's achievements in the first book of the *Patria*, which presents the names and titles of seven magistrates who are said to have "participated in and approved of the founding of God-protected Constantinople". This statement is immediately verified by a list of sources consisting of the names and titles of five of their contemporaries who "all became eyewitnesses and careful observers of that which was done at that time", which constitutes one of the few such explicit reference in the text. Similarly, the senators who reluctantly moved from Rome to Constantinople are credited with the edification of several buildings and the text also relates that Constantine left his magistrates, two of whom are mentioned by name, in charge of the construction works while he was away on a military campaign. It is also mentioned that a patrician named Eleutherius assisted Constantine with the construction of the so-called harbour of Eleutherius.²¹ The notion that a large body of magistrates played a crucial part in the foundation of the city is of course entirely uncontroversial, but although their contribution can be taken for granted, the *Patria's* explicit references to it cannot. An ideological message emphasising the

²⁰ *Patria* I, §§ 61, 63-67; *Patria* III, § 91.

²¹ *Patria* I, §§ 58, 67, 70. The Greek text of the quotes read: *συμπραττόντων καὶ συνευδοκούντων εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς θεοφρουρήτου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* and *πάντες αὐτόπται καὶ θεαταὶ γενόμενοι τῶν τηρικᾶτα πραχθέντων ἀκριβῶς* respectively.

greatness of Constantine's achievements as the founder of Constantinople would simply have been more clearly conveyed if no one else was given a share of the credit for said achievements. Even though these few references in no way threaten Constantine's dominant position in the narrative of the city's foundation their inclusion in the text constitutes one further indication of the absence of such an ideological message. The unusually specific list of sources attesting to the contribution of the seven magistrates mentioned should however probably not be regarded as implying that the statement which they substantiate could be considered especially dubious. Since similar circumstances are expressed elsewhere without such attestation to support them, it would appear more likely that the inclusion of the list of sources is simply due to the heterogeneous nature of the text.

Considering these paragraphs which refer to Constantine's achievements as the founder and builder of the city, we must conclude that although there are few explicit statements of ideological significance the ones that can be identified do indeed reinforce the notion of greatness that is implicitly manifest in the sheer quantity of buildings, monuments and works of art ascribed to Constantine. It must however also be concluded that these sporadic and generally vague comments cannot constitute sufficient premises for the conclusion that there is an ideological message consisting of the values expressed. If there had been any intention to impress upon the intended readers the greatness of Constantine's achievements as founder of the city there would have been extensive opportunities to do so in the 100 paragraphs that mention him, but all there is to be found in the text are these disparate comments which occasionally hint at it. It would appear considerably more reasonable to regard the ideology expressed as a reflective ideology, representing an uncontroversial view that was probably shared by the editor as well as her presumptive readers. As such it could be expected to be reflected by the text on occasion, but apparently not deemed necessary to be made a specific point of. It should also be pointed out that while the text occasionally emphasises the large quantity of statues and other works of art used to adorn the city but never the multitude of other edifices, this is in all likelihood not an attempt to emphasise one activity at the expense of the others, but rather necessitated by the circumstance that the objects used for embellishment simply were too many to be individually mentioned and few of them interesting enough to merit

such specific attention anyway. This means that the text would have given a misleading impression of their quantity if this had not been addressed in general terms.

Leaving this issue aside for the moment and proceeding to investigate how Constantine's religious policies are represented in the *Patria*, it seems reasonable to first consider his efforts to build new churches, as we have already touched upon this subject. The text mentions over 20 different churches built by Constantine and many of them are mentioned several times.²² It should be noted that among these is the first church of Hagia Sophia, usually considered to be the work of Constantine's son Constantius II, but here clearly attributed to Constantine himself on three separate occasions. Berger explains this by pointing out that Constantine probably did build the actual building, but as a large hall, possibly dedicated to his own divine wisdom, and that it was later converted to a church by Constantius. The text also mentions that a large number of statues, most of them pagan, were removed from *Hagia Sofia* at some point in time after it was built by Constantine, which obviously refers to the rededication although this is not specified in any way.²³ As we have seen above, the lack of emphasis on the quantity and qualities of Constantine's works of construction applies to churches and other buildings equally, although the notion that he is mentioned as the builder of that many churches does contribute somewhat towards a portrayal of him as the champion of the Christian faith. However, an even more interesting aspect of the construction of churches is how it relates to the old pagan temples. The text reads:

Ἐκδοδόμησεν δὲ παραχρῆμα καὶ ἱεροῦς οἴκους ἓνα μὲν ἐπώνυμον τῆς ἁγίας Εἰρήνης, ἕτερον δὲ τῶν Ἀποστόλων· καὶ τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων πάντα καθεῖλε θρησκευάματα, πολλοὺς δὲ ναοὺς ἀνήγειρεν, [...]²⁴

As Mango has pointed out, the ambiguous religious policies of Constantine's government were a source of concern for later Christian authors and this passage appears to be a clear attempt to secure Constantine the Great for the Christians. It certainly leaves no room for ambiguity; the pagan temples were destroyed, Christian churches were built in their place

²² *Patria* I, §§ 48-50, 59f; *Patria* II, §§ 66, 110; *Patria* III, §§ 1-3, 9, 18, 35, 86, 88, 115, 144, 163, 182, 191, 209f; *Patria* IV, §§ 1f.

²³ *Patria* I, § 49; *Patria* II, § 96; *Patria* III, § 1; *Patria* IV: §§1f; Berger (1988), 303.

²⁴ *Patria* I, § 48. Translation: "He immediately built churches, one named after St. Eirene, another after the apostles; he destroyed all the heathen places of worship and built many churches, [...]"

and as it is distinctly stated that this applied to all pagan temples and that a large number of churches were built in the process, it is made clear that it was not a matter of isolated incidents but conscious religious policy. The use of the word *παραχρήμα* ‘immediately’ also signifies a certain degree of urgency, implying that constructing churches was considered a priority. The text also provides a few tangible examples of the practise of replacing pagan temples with churches, claiming that the church of the Mother of God at Kontaria as well as the church of St. Mocius had been built after the pagan temples that previously occupied the locations had been destroyed and that the church of St. Menas had been a pagan temple until Constantine had converted it to a church.²⁵

However, there are also passages indicating a less single-mindedly Christian religious policy. On the one hand Constantine is given credit for bringing various allegedly Christian relics into the city, such as the staff of Moses and the crosses of the two thieves who were crucified next to Christ as well as a bottle of oil used to anoint him, the latter two said to have been deposited by Constantine underneath the Forum together with many other ‘things of wonder’. The Greek word used here is *σημειοφορικά*, a term that Berger interprets as referring to other relics of the crucifixion.²⁶ On the other hand, the matter of these buried objects is revisited in another paragraph where it is mentioned that among them was the Palladion, a statue of Pallas Athena that according to legend fell from the sky into the hands of the Trojans, was stolen by the Greeks and eventually brought to Rome, thus always being in the possession of whichever power held sway in the Mediterranean area. Constantine is admittedly not mentioned by name in this paragraph, but since another paragraph identifies him as the one who buried the things of wonder under the Forum the obvious conclusion for a reader to arrive at would be that he considered this statue of pagan origin to be worthy of being kept next to relics of the crucifixion. In fact, this circumstance even makes it entirely possible that there were other objects of pagan origin amongst these so-called things of wonder, but the text gives no other indication either way. There are two other paragraphs referring to things of wonder that were placed in the city and none of them explicitly claims that it was done by

²⁵ *Patria* II, §§ 66, 110; *Patria* III, §§ 2f.

²⁶ *Patria* II, § 20; *Patria* III, § 88; Berger (1988), 291. The translation used here follows Berger, who uses the word “Wunderdinge”.

Constantine either, although it is hinted in one of them through the assertion that it was done before the inauguration of the city and the other one at least implies an association by stating that he erected a monument at the location in question.²⁷

Another indication of religious ambiguity concerns the Tyche of the city, as this originally pagan deity appears to have been represented by at least three different statues erected by Constantine. He apparently brought one from Rome, placing it on a triumphal arch, and had another one made for use in the inauguration ceremony. The text does however mention that he had engraved a cross on its head, which appears to have had a genuinely Christianising effect since Julian the Apostate is said to have found it appalling enough to have it buried in a pit.²⁸ This union of Christian and pagan elements is also clearly displayed in the paragraphs concerning the third statue which is claimed to have been honoured as the Tyche of the city, namely the statue of Constantine in the Forum. The text states that it was originally a statue of Apollo, but that Constantine had it erected in his own name and given a halo consisting of the nails used in the crucifixion of Christ, whereupon it was honoured with Christian hymns and prayers and recognised as the Tyche of the city.²⁹ Consequently the *Patria* appears to provide us with an account of a statue of pagan origin, rededicated for use in something that at the very least resembled a cult of personality, adorned with Christian relics and honoured through Christian ceremonies as the Tyche of the city. It is hard to imagine a more symbolic representation of the ambiguity in religious matters that characterised Constantine's reign.

On the subject of the statuary erected by Constantine it should be noted that although the text specifically mentions several monuments and works of art that are clearly of Christian nature, namely three monumental crosses, a group of icons and a statue of Christ that was said to possess miraculous powers, it also mentions several additional pagan statues in a similar way, such as the statues of Zeus Dodomaius and Pallas adorning the senate house, a statue of Bellerophon that was brought from Antioch and some of the pagan statues that were relocated when Constantius II turned the first *Hagia Sofia* into a church, as has been discussed above. In another paragraph it is stated briefly that Constantine had a relief made that depicted his own history as well as the

²⁷ *Patria* II, §§ 45, 49, 64; Berger (1988), 296f.

²⁸ *Patria* II, § 42; *Patria* III, § 131.

²⁹ *Patria* II, §§ 45, 49.

final fate of the city, which would appear to associate him with the pagan practise of divination, an activity which other sources claim that he abolished in his efforts to promote Christianity. In addition to this there are also three paragraphs mentioning objects that Constantine used to embellish the city that are neither clearly identified as Christian nor as pagan. It seems reasonable to conclude that no religious concerns appear to have been taken into account in the selection of statuary to be individually mentioned.³⁰

It should however be acknowledged that none of the pagan elements associated with Constantine that are mentioned above necessarily contradict the notion of Constantine's status as the champion of Christianity. We may consider them as reflections of the complex religious situation of the time, but we cannot assume that the text was read in the same way by the contemporaries of the *Patria*. As has already been concluded, the use of pagan statues to decorate the city was not considered as evidence of pagan sympathies and the arguments made by Christian apologists appears to have been accepted as truths that may well have been taken for granted by the time the *Patria* was composed, making the issue entirely uncontroversial. As regards the Palladion, the Tyche of the city and the statue of Constantine, it is important to keep in mind that although paganism was indeed a live issue for several centuries after Constantine's conversion, this was definitely not the case by the end of the 10th century. It would consequently seem reasonable that the concept of the Tyche of the city was regarded as having a purely symbolic significance rather than a religious one, serving as a representation of the city that could be used in ceremonies whose Christian nature was surely considered to be self-evident at the time. The same argument would apply to the Palladion, the story of its relocation constituting an analogy of the relocation of imperial government from Rome to Constantinople, and as regards the statue of Constantine it is clearly demonstrated by the episode where Julian buries the statue of Tyche with the engraved cross that pagan statues could be genuinely Christianised, possibly making their idolatrous origins irrelevant. The association with divination is somewhat more troublesome, especially since Constantine is claimed to have prohibited it himself in other sources, which appears

³⁰ *Patria* I, §§ 46, 49, 62; *Patria* II, §§ 18, 50, 64, 87, 102, 106; *Patria* III, §§ 12, 20, 206; Treadgold (1997), 40f.

to indicate that it at some point in time were considered unacceptable by Christian moral standards. Still, as we have concluded that paganism posed no threat to contemporary religious dogma, it is entirely possible that attitudes to practises that were pagan in origin but not inherently idolatrous had changed in a conciliatory manner, meaning that divination could be regarded as harmless or in some situations even beneficial, provided it yielded useful results. Nevertheless, if the text had been compiled with any intention of disassociating Constantine with paganism, virtually all of the passages mentioned above could have been left out, or at least provided with an explanation, without disrupting the narrative structure. It must consequently be concluded that the eagerness to keep Constantine unsullied by the taint of idolatry displayed in the passages concerning the pagan temples is clearly nowhere to be found in these parts of the text. The text can in its entirety not be said to convey an ideological message to this effect, although it could still be argued that elements of a reflective ideology portraying Constantine as vigorously forwarding the cause of Christianity can be identified.

Concerning the parts of Constantine's policy which concerns neither religion nor construction, there are only a few relevant paragraphs to examine. Some details concerning his civil policy are given during the long account of his achievements in the first book of the *Patria*:

Ἐφιλοτιμήσατο δὲ τῷ δήμῳ καθ' ὃν ὑπάτευσε χρόνον ἄρτους ἡμερησίους, ὀνομάσας αὐτοὺς παλατίνοὺς ὡς ἐκ τοῦ παλατίου χορηγουμένους, καὶ οἶνον καὶ κρέας καὶ ἔλαιον καὶ σιτηρέσια τάξας, ὧν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἡ πόλις ἀπολαύει [...], νόμους τε πολλοὺς καὶ συμβόλαια <περὶ τῶν> καθ' ἑκάστην τιθεὶς ἀπὸ τοῦ βελτίστου καὶ δικαίου, [...].³¹

The distribution of grain rations is mentioned once more during an account of the city's inauguration and there is a short note stating that Constantine was the first to arrange chariot-races in the hippodrome, a notion that is hardly surprising considering that the text had already mentioned that he was the one who finished the construction of said hippodrome. These are however the only indications of civil policy that can be found in

³¹ *Patria* I, § 47. Translation: "While he was consul he presented the people with daily bread, calling it palatine since it was distributed from the palace, having procured wine, meat, olive oil and grain rations, which the city enjoys even to the present time, [...] and established laws concerning daily matters justly and in the best way, [...]."

the text.³² Nevertheless, keeping one's subjects fed, entertained and protected by just laws would definitely have been regarded as the characteristics of a good ruler.

Concerning Constantine's military policies there is no specific information at all to be found in the text, but their effectiveness appears to be reflected in a few passages. The most impressing of these is a brief account of a campaign against a people referred to as Scythians, whom the emperor defeated, making the area immediately south of the Danube secure enough to enable the foundation of four new cities, a task which was carried out with the assistance of one of the magistrates mentioned above. There are also two passing references to his capture of Byzantium in 324 as a brief mention of him being acclaimed after another military victory.³³ This does serve to portray Constantine as a successful military commander, but all of these passages appear to have been included in order to explain the circumstances of other episodes rather than to convey a message of their own. The account of the campaign against the so-called Scythians serves as an explanation as to why Constantine was absent from the city and consequently chose to delegate the responsibility for some of his construction projects to his subordinates, while the other three references to his victories are all used to provide some historical background to paragraphs concerning different locations in the city. This is further underlined by the fact that none of these passages say anything explicitly or implicitly about the emperor's military skills other than mentioning the simple historical fact that he eventually emerged victorious. It can thus be called into question whether these passages have any ideological content as regards Constantine, but even if they do, this ideology can certainly not be regarded as constituting any ideological message.

As regards the accounts of Constantine's policies in various fields, we can thus conclude that they portray the emperor in a distinctly favourable light. He is given credit for an impressive number of edifices, a vigorously pro-Christian religious position, a collection of laws that justly regulate everyday life, the introduction of grain allowances and chariot races as well as a number of military victories. When taken together, this could easily be interpreted as an ideological message with the purpose of glorifying Constantine's achievements, but as we have seen the notion of such a message cannot be

³² *Patria* I, § 62; *Patria* II, § 49.

³³ *Patria* I, §§ 70f; *Patria* II, §§ 42, 67.

substantiated if the individual accounts are examined systematically. The references to the buildings, monuments and works of art ascribed to Constantine are of course numerous, but apart from mentioning their existence the text makes no attempt to impress upon its readers the greatness of Constantine's construction works, despite ample opportunities to do so, and the mere mention of them can hardly be assumed to be ideologically motivated, since the city which these edifices constitute is the primary subject matter of the text. Similarly, although there are several paragraphs portraying Constantine as a devout champion of Christianity and zealous enemy of paganism, he is also repeatedly associated with pagan practises and symbolism elsewhere in the text. If the accounts of Constantine's pro-Christian religious policies were intended to constitute an ideological message, this message would inevitably be diluted by idolatrous associations and consequently we could expect the editor to remove or explain them, which she evidently has abstained from doing. Furthermore, we have seen that all references to Constantine's military victories are made in passing to provide background information to different episodes. This essentially leaves us with the few remarks concerning lawmaking, grain allowances and chariot racing, the latter two of which can be considered necessary measures in the process of founding a new capital. What remains is a single sentence, allowed to unequivocally portray Constantine as a just lawgiver, and this cannot be regarded as sufficient evidence for the conclusion that the text conveys an ideological message which glorifies the emperor's achievements. However, this does not mean that the editor or anyone else considered Constantine's exploits to be less than glorious, the text does indeed appear to imply the contrary, but simply that the editor did not consider it necessary to convey that sentiment through a ideological message in the *Patria*.

Having reached this conclusion concerning the accounts of Constantine's policies we must proceed to examine the *Patria's* portrayal of the emperor on a more personal level and consider a few paragraphs regarding his personal moral qualities and relationship to God. The text reads:

ἽΟτι μέλλων κτίσαι πόλιν ὁ μέγας Κωνσταντῖνος, ὀφείλων πῆξαι τὸ θεμέλιον καὶ καταμετρήσαι τὴν πόλιν, πεζὸς ἐξῆλθεν μετὰ τῶν μεγιστάνων αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸν Φόρον λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ ἄρχοντες· ἰποίησον τέλος τοῦ τείχους.' Ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔφη· ἕως οὔ στή ὁ

προαγωγός μου, οὐ μὴ στήσω τὸ θεμέλιον.’ Μόνος γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἐώρα τὸν ἄγγελον. Ἀπελθὼν δὲ μέχρι τοῦ Ἐξακιονίου περὶ μετὰ πάσης τῆς συγκλήτου ἐκείσε ἐθεάσατο τὸν ἄγγελον τὴν ῥομφαίαν αὐτοῦ πήξαντα, μηνύοντα ἕως ἐκεῖ στήναι αὐτόν. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἔπηξεν ἐκείσε τὸ τεῖχος.³⁴

What is particularly spectacular about this episode is not the appearance of an angel, as it was taken for granted that such beings existed and could make themselves known to mortals, but rather that the divine messenger showed himself only to Constantine, which implies that he alone was chosen by God to found the city and thus enjoyed a very privileged relationship with the divine. There are also three references to monumental crosses which Constantine had erected in the city, where it is stated that they had been made in the image of the cross he had seen in the sky, which must refer to the legendary prelude to the battle of Milvian Bridge in 312. Grammatically, the text employs the regular indicative mood in all three instances, which would appear to indicate that Constantine’s vision should be regarded as a historical fact and not something the emperor claimed had happened. If so, the references serve to underline the notion of Constantine’s special relationship with the divine, even though they are only made in passing. There are also two passages where the emperor is described as ἅγιος ‘holy’ an epithet which is most commonly used in references to saints, and a further two where the less dramatic attribute ἐν ἀγίοις ‘of blessed memory’ is employed. The epithet most commonly associated with Constantine throughout the text, ὁ μέγας ‘the great’ or ‘the first’ clearly has a praiseful connotation, but since the use of this epithet in literature is the conventional way to distinguish the emperor from other emperors with the same name, a distinction which is clearly needed in a text such as the *Patria*, there is insufficient evidence to conclude its inclusion in the text should be regarded as part of an ideological message. The references to his holiness are on the other hand somewhat less conventional and thus of greater significance in this respect. Furthermore, as Berger

³⁴ *Patria* III, § 10. Translation: “When Constantine the Great was to found the city, establishing its foundations and measurements, he went out on foot with his grandees; when they came to the Forum the magistrates said to him: “Let the wall end here.” He replied: “I shall not establish the foundation until my guide makes a halt.” For only he saw the angel. When he came on foot with the entire senate to Exakionion he saw the angel thrust its sword into the ground, signalling that he was to stop. On account of this he established the wall there.”

points out, it is probably no coincidence that the number of the senators whom Constantine had relocated from Rome was twelve, the same as that of the apostles.³⁵

With this in mind we must proceed to examine another interesting episode. Referring to historians named Herodotus and Hippolytus, the text claims that Constantine became suspicious of one of his sons through the unspecified actions of his wife Fausta and thus had both of them summarily executed without the benefit of a trial. It proceeds to relate that this roused Constantine's mother Helen to indignation and that she convinced him to meditate on his actions, whereupon he realised that he had committed a grave injustice. The insight tormented him and compelled him to do penance by abstaining from washing himself or sleeping in a bed for forty days and forty nights, erecting a statue of his son with an inscription acknowledging that he had done him wrong and earnestly praying to God for forgiveness. The text also mentions five other statues of magistrates whom the emperor had unjustly executed and commemorated in this way after realising his mistake. A modern reader would probably consider this portrayal of Constantine as short-tempered and brutal to stand at odds with the saintly demeanour presented elsewhere in the text, but there are reasons to believe that the contemporaries of the *Patria* might disagree. Remorse, penance and redemption are fundamental concepts of Christian moral thought and from a Byzantine point of view it would be entirely possible to obtain the saintly qualities implicitly ascribed to Constantine elsewhere by doing penance for past crimes, no matter how heinous those crimes might have been. The emperor eventually realises the error of his ways, displays genuine guilt and is clearly willing to do penance. The greatness of his achievements, the magnitude of his piety and his status as the favoured instrument of the divine providence does not inherently contradict the notion of him displaying very human flaws. Being sinful was regarded as part of being human; it was remorse that separated the virtuous from the wicked. The edification of the statue which is the focus of the narrative resulted directly from the emperor's repentance and only indirectly from his brutality, which makes it quite plausible to read the episode as a story of Constantine's redemption rather than as an account of his misdeeds.

³⁵ *Patria* I, §§ 58, 63; *Patria* II, §§ 18, 50, 67, 102; *Patria* III, § 18; Berger (1988), 221.

Again, we can identify the elements of an ideology in the passages referred to above, but there is insufficient evidence to conclude that they constitute an ideological message. The story of how an angel determines where the walls are to be built is clearly significant, but it is also the only one of its kind. If the text had been composed with the intention of stating that Constantine received direct and explicit instructions from the heavenly powers when founding the city, we could at least have expected to find a brief reference to this divine interference in the first book of the *Patria*, which focuses specifically on the city's foundation. Similarly, even though giving the emperor the epithet 'holy' is a clear indication of reverence it is only done twice in the 100 paragraphs mentioning him, several of which depicting him as acting at least just as piously as in the two paragraphs where the epithet is used. The references to the vision before the battle of Milvian Bridge are only made in passing in order to describe the monumental crosses and the numerical correspondence between the senators and the apostles is never pointed out explicitly, which makes it a little too subtle to take into account when it is only mentioned once. All of these passages might well be based on sources written with the clear purpose of glorifying Constantine by elevating him to saintly status, but their inclusion in the *Patria* should in all likelihood be seen as a testament to the heterogeneous nature of the text, rather than as evidence of any ideological intent on the editor's part.

In this context there is however one further episode that needs to be considered. The text mentions that the consul Callistratus was hailed by the people as being of good fortune and destined for greater things, which made him fearful of being subjected to Constantine's wrath, whereupon he decided to take refuge in a church. It is stated that Constantine promised not to harm him, but that the consul declined the offer and chose instead to abandon his political career and become a priest before leaving the sanctuary. The text gives no clue as to whether the mistrust in the emperor's promises was justified or not, making the ideological dimension of the episode quite unclear, but the ideological ambiguity resulting from this lack of clarification does appear to confirm the impression that the text is devoid of ideological messages concerning Constantine.³⁶

³⁶ *Patria* II, § 44.

2.2 Between Constantine and Justinian

Constantius II (r. 337-61), Constantine's son and successor, is only mentioned in two paragraphs and neither of them appears to pass any ideological judgement on his character. The first one concerns a statue depicting the meeting between Constantius and his brother Constans after the death of their father, and reveals nothing more than the statue's existence and its motif. The subject of the second one is a pair of pagan statues and it is briefly mentioned that they were moved from the city gates to a large bath during the reign of Constantius.³⁷ The absence of passages depicting Constantius as an active ruler is especially noteworthy since the credit for the construction of the first Hagia Sophia is ascribed solely to Constantine I, as we have seen above, even though its rededication as a church was almost certainly the work of Constantius. Whether this is an expression of antipathy towards Constantius cannot however be determined with any certainty at this point and it will consequently be discussed below.

Constantius' successor Julian (r. 361-3), known to posterity as the Apostate, is also only mentioned in a few paragraphs. Yet unlike the references to his predecessor, these paragraphs do provide a clear and consistent portrayal of the emperor's moral character, depicting him as a savage anti-Christian tyrant. Julian appears plainly in three paragraphs, one of them stating that he burned Christians in a giant oven on the pretext of them being criminals and another similarly claiming that he martyred three holy men by burning them. The accusations of the third paragraph are more innocuous and concerns Constantine's Christianised statue of Tyche, which according to the passage mentioned above was buried in a pit by Julian on account of the cross which Constantine had carved on its head.³⁸ Concerning Julian there is also one additional paragraph of interest. It is mentioned briefly that the harbour of Julian was named after a consul who allegedly founded it. We can of course not be entirely sure of the identity of its founder, but according to Berger there is at least one other source, namely the works of the pagan historian Zosimus from around AD 500, which dates the foundation of the harbour to the reign of Julian the Apostate and given its name it would appear more obvious to associate

³⁷ *Patria* II, §§ 48, 85.

³⁸ *Patria* II, §§ 42, 53; *Patria* III, § 190.

its construction with the emperor rather than with a significantly more obscure consul. The absence of this association in the *Patria* could consequently be interpreted as indicating a reluctance to give credit for the construction of the harbour to the pagan emperor, although Zosimus could also have been mistaken or deliberately misleading due to a bias in favour of Julian.³⁹

The three short paragraphs in which Julian appears plainly could scarcely provide a nuanced portrayal of the emperor, even if there had been such an intention. Nevertheless, they must be considered as sufficient evidence of ideology due to their unanimously condemning attitude towards Julian's religious policies. This ideology should however probably not be considered an ideological message in itself. Although these paragraphs display the consistency that we might expect from an ideological message it is doubtful whether such a message could be regarded as sufficiently relevant to merit the designation. As we have concluded above, by the time the *Patria* was compiled paganism had not been a live issue for centuries and the errors of the Apostate's pagan ways were probably well integrated in the collective historical consciousness of the Byzantines. It is of course entirely possible that it was considered an ideological necessity to reiterate such condemning notions in writings of historical relevance, but although ideologically motivated this could reasonably be considered more as a matter of literary convention than as a contemporary political issue. Either way, if the disassociation between the harbour of Julian and the emperor is part of a larger ideological pattern throughout the text, this matter would certainly have the necessary relevance to merit a closer examination.

The brief reign of Jovian (r. 363-4) is not touched upon at all in the *Patria*. The aqueduct of Valens (r. 364-78) is briefly ascribed to the emperor whose name it bears, but this is the only reference made to him.⁴⁰

Concerning Valens' successor Theodosius I (r. 379-95) there is considerably more information to be found in the text. He is almost always referred to as *ὁ μέγας* 'the great' or 'the elder', but since his grandson and namesake is just as consequently referred to as *ὁ μικρός* 'the younger' the use of this epithet is probably not ideologically

³⁹ *Patria* III, § 39a; Berger (1988), 572f.

⁴⁰ *Patria* II, § 69.

motivated, but simply employed to distinguish the two emperors from each other by seniority. One of the paragraphs refer to the time before Theodosius' accession and relates that he was *πένης* 'poor' when he first arrived in Constantinople and that he upon his arrival met the saddler Rufinus, whom he later made magister. Berger points out that this episode is unhistorical and modelled on the similar story of how Basil the Macedonian came to power. Although the use of such a narrative model has ideological significance, reflecting positively on Theodosius to an extent, there is little reason to interpret it as conveying an ideological message. The notion of Theodosius' poverty is only mentioned in passing, as if it was a widely known and accepted historical circumstance, and the obvious purpose of the episode is to identify Ruphinus as the builder of a building complex that bears his name.⁴¹

Another paragraph mentions a hippodrome which was built by Theodosius but later demolished by Irene, but apart from these all paragraphs regarding Theodosius have religious significance. He is given credit for the construction of four churches and the deposition of relics in three of these. It is also stated that he secured the things of wonder which Constantine the Great had deposited underneath the Forum and, although it is uncertain exactly what this entails, the clear association with Constantine must be regarded as reflecting well on Theodosius. It is also related that individuals who were later made saints approached him on two separate occasions asking him for land on which to build monasteries, which he readily provided them with. It is noteworthy that although it was the future saints who were responsible for the actual construction of the monasteries the text points out that it was Theodosius who provided the land on which they were built, thus bestowing upon him a part of the credit for these pious undertakings, even though this piece of information just as easily could have been left out.⁴²

There is however one paragraph that could be considered to give a less ideologically consistent account of Theodosius religious policies:

Περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Μωκίου. [...] Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις Θεοδοσίου τοῦ μεγάλου ἐξορίζονται οἱ Ἀρειανοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἐλθόντες ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ ἁγίου Μωκίου ἠράσθησαν καὶ παρακαλοῦσι τῷ βασιλεῖ κατοικεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ, ὃ καὶ γέγονεν. Παρευθὺ οὖν ἀνεγείρουσι τὸν

⁴¹ *Patria* III, § 7; Berger (1988), 503.

⁴² *Patria* II, § 20; *Patria* III, §§ 145, 173, 188, 190, 193, 193a, 199.

ναὸν οἱ Ἀρειανοὶ καὶ δοξάζεται παρ' αὐτῶν ἔτη ζ'· καὶ πίπτει λειτουργούντων αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ζ' ἔτει, καθ' ὃν πολλοὶ Ἀρειανοὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν.⁴³

The primary ideological signification of this episode, that God wrathfully punishes heresy, is reasonably clear and not immediately related to Theodosius, but it is stated that he was the one who gave the heretics permission to rebuild the church which God deemed them unworthy to conduct service in. On the other hand it was also Theodosius who forbade the Arians to worship inside the city, which is also pointed out in the text. It is even possible to interpret Theodosius' role in these events as that of the agent of divine vengeance, directing the Arians to the church that later becomes the instrument of their undoing. Nevertheless, the text does not appear to give any guidance in this matter of interpretation and the episode consequently appears ideologically ambivalent as regards the actions of Theodosius, which could imply that there was no intention behind the comments concerning the emperor other than to provide some background for the story about God's wrathful judgement on the heretics.

However, this one ambiguous episode aside, the text quite consistently conveys an impression of Theodosius as a pious emperor and it is fully justified to speak of an ideology to this effect. There are of course no clear indications of any aspect of the emperor's character other than his piety, but on the other hand we can reasonably assume that there was no defining virtue valued higher by the contemporary Byzantines. This ideology certainly possesses the necessary consistency to be considered an ideological message, but it hardly fulfils the criteria of relevance in itself. Theodosius had no known living descendents when the *Patria* was compiled and, unlike for instance Constantine the Great, he can scarcely be considered as having a symbolical value for any issue of relevance in the late 10th century. Nevertheless, in a larger context, for instance concerning the text's attitude to emperors in general, these ideological remarks might well constitute an important part of a more comprehensive ideological message. We will consequently have to discuss them again in chapter three.

⁴³ *Patria* II, § 110. Translation: Concerning St. Mocius. [...] In the days of Theodosius the elder the Arians were expelled from the holy church and they went to St. Mocius' church, took a liking to it and asked the emperor that they would be allowed to reside there, which also came to pass. The Arians thus rebuilt the church immediately and it was honoured by them for seven years; it collapsed when they were conducting the service during the seventh year and many Arians were killed as a result of this.

Theodosius' son Arcadius (r. 395-408) appears briefly in one paragraph stating that he built a church which he became very fond of and bestowed many benefits upon.⁴⁴

Theodosius II (r. 408-50), on the other hand, is given credit for a wide range of construction projects. It is mentioned that he erected statues for the embellishment of the city on two occasions, that he enlarged the Boukoleon palace and that it was he who founded the imperial polo court Tzykanisterion. It is also stated that he built a church on a location that had previously been a marketplace after expelling the Jewish merchants, who sold copperwares there, and cleansing the site in a symbolically significant display of religious fervour which surely would have appealed to the intended readers of the *Patria*.⁴⁵ On the subject of religion there is another interesting paragraph regarding Theodosius. The text reads:

Ἄδὲ μικρὸς Θεοδοσίος εἰς τὸν πέμπτον χρόνον τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ σεισμὸς γεγονότος καὶ τῶν τειχῶν εἰς γῆν καταπιπτόντων διὰ τὸ τοὺς Ἀμαληκίτας τοὺς Χατζιτζαρίουσ οἰκῆσαι ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ βλασφημεῖν σφοδρῶς εἰς τὸ Τρισάγιον – ποιήσας ὁ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἱκεσίαν καὶ λιτὴν εἰς τὸν Κάμπον τοῦ Τριβουναλίου μετὰ τοῦ πατριάρχου Πρόκλου κραζόντων τὸ Κύριε ἐλέησον ἐπὶ πολλὰς ὥρας, πάντων ὁρώντων ἐπήρθη παιδίον εἰς τὸν ἀέρα καὶ ἤκουσεν ἀγγέλων μελωδούντων καὶ ὑμνούντων· ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμας. Κατελθόντος δὲ τοῦ παιδίου ὁ λαὸς ἐμελώδει οὕτως καὶ ἔστη ὁ σεισμὸς ἔκτοτε.⁴⁶

The text relates that Theodosius proceeded to expel the heretics from the city, clearly portraying the emperor as the principal defender of the faith, a forceful ideological statement indeed. This episode also constitutes the background for the construction of the famous Theodosian Walls in place of the collapsed ones, a feat that is referred to in two further paragraphs and clearly attributed to Theodosius on each occasion.⁴⁷ These achievements are of course impressive in themselves, but it is also noteworthy that the construction of the Theodosian Walls is usually ascribed to Anthemius, the Praetorian Prefect of the East, who initiated and oversaw the project during the minority of

⁴⁴ *Patria* III, § 25.

⁴⁵ *Patria* II, §§ 58, 75; *Patria* III, §§ 29, 32, 126.

⁴⁶ *Patria* I, § 72. Translation: “During the fifth year of the reign of Theodosius the younger an earthquake occurred and the walls fell down to the ground because the Chatzitzarian Amalekites lived in the city and blasphemed violently against the holy Trinity – the same emperor arranged prayer at the Field of the Tribunal together with the patriarch Proclus, they called out the prayer of *kyrie eleeson* for many hours and in full view of all a child was raised up in the air and he heard the angels sing and praise: “Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.” When the child came down the people sang in the same way and then the earthquake came to a halt.”

⁴⁷ *Patria* I, § 73; *Patria* II, § 58; *Patria* III, § 111.

Theodosius II, who was only seven years old at the time of his accession.⁴⁸ This also makes it appear unlikely that the emperor had taken the initiative in arranging public prayer prior to the construction of the walls. The editor of the *Patria* could scarcely have left out the episodes concerning the walls, but if she had wanted to avoid giving credit for their construction to the emperor, she would have stood on firm historical ground in doing so.

There are however two episodes forming a glaring contrast to this otherwise very favourable portrayal of Theodosius. The first one states that a certain magistrate named Cyrus participated in the construction of the walls and was cheered by the people. This apparently aroused the jealousy of the emperor and he decided to remove Cyrus from the city by appointing him metropolitan of Smyrna. Giving one's imagined rival a high ecclesial office could of course be considered a fairly mild expression of envy from an autocrat, but in the second episode the same vice leads to far less innocuous consequences. The text relates that a remarkable large and beautiful apple came in Theodosius' possession and that he gave it to his wife, the empress. She admired its size and beauty and presented it as a gift to the magister Paulinus because she was secretly infatuated with him. Paulinus, who unfortunately was unaware of the identity of its original owner, passed it on as a gift to the emperor, who recognized it and was seized with jealousy. As a result of this the emperor decided to assassinate Paulinus, but the attempt was thwarted through divine intervention. The emperor was too ashamed to admit his involvement, but according to the text this shame did not ultimately save the magistrate. The emperor merely bided his time and just when Paulinus had finished constructing a church in honour of the saints who had interceded on his behalf, Theodosius ordered his public execution, which apparently took place without any further intervention, divine or otherwise.⁴⁹

How then should the portrayal of the ambitious builder and pious defender of the faith be reconciled with the one of the cowardly ruler enslaved by his own jealousy? It should first and foremost be pointed out that they are not necessarily contradictory and might well reflect the complex character of the historical human being in question.

⁴⁸ Treadgold (1997), 89.

⁴⁹ *Patria* III, §§ 111, 146.

Nevertheless, the resulting ideological complexity would lack the necessary consistency required of an ideological message. If there had been an ideological purpose to debase Theodosius the most glorifying accounts of his achievements could easily have been left out, and vice versa. Consequently, the most obvious explanation for these circumstances is that there was no ideological agenda behind the editing process in which the paragraphs concerning Theodosius were included in the *Patria*.

There are however no such complexities to be found in the portrayal of Theodosius successor and brother-in-law Marcian (r. 450-7). The text reads:

Μενάνδρου μάντεως στήλη ἦκεν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, ἣν ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀρτοτυριανὸν οἶκον εἰς θέαν διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὴν στήλην εἰς μῆκος πηχῶν ιε', πλάτος δὲ πηχῶν η'. ἦντινα χυμειτὴν ὑπάρχουσαν καὶ ἀργυροελάτην καθαρὰν Μαρκιανὸς ὁ εὐσεβὴς εἰς ἀργύρια ἐχάραξεν καὶ τοῖς πένησιν διένειμεν.⁵⁰

In this paragraph Marcian is explicitly described as being pious and we are also given a tangible example of how this piety could be manifested, in this case through his expression of compassion on the poor. Two other paragraphs mention that the emperor had built a hospital and a home for the elderly, supposedly in a similar display of philanthropy, even though it is not pointed out explicitly.⁵¹ His piety also appears to have been expressed in his efforts to construct churches. It is stated that he oversaw the renovation of one church, he is mentioned as the builder of four others and concerning one of them we are also told that he embellished it with precious marble of many colours, which naturally implies a particular enthusiasm for the task.⁵²

Marcian is also credited with the construction of the palace hall named Chrysotriklinos, which is the only reference to his achievements that cannot be immediately related to the piety mentioned in the quote above.⁵³ The text is silent as regards the particular features of this imperial hall, but the name itself can reasonably be regarded as implying a certain lavishness, which could even be considered as contradicting the notion of an emperor more concerned with the well-being of his

⁵⁰ *Patria* II, § 98. Translation: “The statue of the seer Menander came to Constantinople and was placed on the Artotyrianon building to be seen, as it was fifteen cubits long and eight cubits high; since it was cast and forged in pure silver the pious Marcian struck it into coins and distributed them amongst the poor.”

⁵¹ *Patria* III, §§, 44, 63.

⁵² *Patria* III, §§ 2, 43, 44, 71, 187.

⁵³ *Patria* III, § 126.

subjects than with imperial splendour. To infer such a notion from the quote above would however in all likelihood be to misinterpret it. The text does not appear to see any contradiction between philanthropy and lavishness and the most reasonable explanation for this is that contemporary imperial ideology expected the emperor to be able to care for his subjects while simultaneously surrounding himself with splendour reflecting the majesty of his divinely instituted imperial office. We can consequently conclude that the portrayal of Marcian is consistently favourable. Its relevance as regards ideological messages will be considered in a larger context below.

Marcian's successor Leo I (r. 457-74) is also represented in a fairly favourable light. He is referred to as *ὁ μέγας* in two paragraphs, although it is uncertain if this should be read as 'the great', emphasizing the emperor's ability and achievements, or as 'the elder', distinguishing him from his grandson and namesake. Leo is given credit for the construction of two churches, one smaller shrine, a hippodrome as well as the renovation of the Theodosian Walls. The latter achievement appears to have been a considerable one, since we are told that the people acclaimed Leo as an equal to Constantine and Theodosius upon its completion. At the end of the same paragraph there is a brief comment stating that Leo was the first emperor to legislate against working on Sundays. The ideological implications of this action are not explicitly accounted for, but given the biblical origins of the decree we can probably assume that the comment should be read as an indication of the emperor's concern for the spiritual well-being of his subjects. Leo's agreeable religious credentials are also touched upon in two other paragraphs which refer to him as *ὁ εὐσεβής* 'the pious'. Furthermore, the text recounts that Leo employed a procedure for answering petitions which resulted in an efficient handling of such matters, thus portraying the emperor as an efficient and sensible ruler.⁵⁴

There is also one paragraph claiming that Leo worked as a butcher before he became emperor, yet another unhistorical cliché with the apparent purpose of explaining Leo's commonly used by-name *Μακέλλης* 'butcher', which he in all likelihood received on account of having resolved his power-struggle against the general Aspar through assassination.⁵⁵ The murders of Aspar and his son Ardabur are mentioned three times in

⁵⁴ *Patria* II, §§ 31, 71, 99, 108; *Patria* III, §§ 75, 159, 175.

⁵⁵ Berger (1988), 515f; *ODB*, 1206; *GLRB*, 728.

the *Patria*, but never connected to Leo's by-name. One paragraph mentions only the murder of Aspar in passing, while another states briefly that both father and son were killed by Leo and also refers to τὰ πρότερα κακά 'the previous evils' committed by Ardabur, thus implicitly expressing support for Leo. The third paragraph is a bit more specific, stating that Aspar and Ardabur conspired against Leo and that the emperor prevented them from overthrowing him by killing them through guile and treachery.⁵⁶ According to this passage Leo appears to have acted in self-defence, but guile and treachery hardly seems like the typical methods of the legitimate ruler righteously defending his throne from usurpers. The contemporary Byzantines would surely have been able to understand that those probably were the only effective methods at Leo's disposal considering Aspar's immensely strong political position, but if there had been an intention to glorify Leo's achievements we could have expected this piece of information to be conveniently left out and the text to state simply that the generals were killed when they tried to overthrow the emperor. There consequently appears to have been no such intention, despite the otherwise thoroughly sympathetic portrayal of Leo.

Since Leo's grandson Leo II (r. 474) only was seven years old upon his accession and died before his eighth birthday it is hardly surprising that he is not mentioned at all in the *Patria*. His father Zeno (r. 474-5, 476-91), the son-in-law of Leo I, who became sole emperor when his son died, does however appear in a number of paragraphs. It is mentioned that he destroyed a pagan temple and gave the soldiers of the *tagmata* permission to build a church,⁵⁷ but the remaining paragraphs where he is mentioned all concern rebellions against his rule. One of them regards the attempted rebellion of the magistrate Illus and even though the rebel is given credit for having served as magistrate with great honour the text clearly refers to him as a tyrant, which naturally serves to enforce the notion of Zeno's legitimacy and suitability as emperor.⁵⁸

Considering that the common Byzantine attitude towards rebellion appears to have been that legitimacy was determined by divine favour and that divine favour was made evident through success, it is not surprising that a failed rebellion is considered illegitimate. Matters do however become somewhat more complicated in the case of the

⁵⁶ *Patria* II, §§ 71, 99; *Patria* III, §§ 43, 104.

⁵⁷ *Patria* II, § 21; *Patria* III, § 66.

⁵⁸ *Patria* III, § 33.

remaining paragraphs, which concern the successful rebellion of Basiliscus (r. 475-6), the drugary of the Watch. Since Basiliscus was successful in deposing Zeno and being crowned emperor, but was deposed himself when Zeno returned after having gathered enough loyal forces to retake the throne, it would seem as if the divine favour shifted from Zeno to Basiliscus and then quickly back to Zeno again. The *Patria* does not appear to take a decisive stance on this issue, but a vague tendency in favour of Zeno can possibly be identified. Two paragraphs concern the location where Zeno set up a court to judge Basiliscus and giving one's opponents the benefit of a trial, however predictable the verdict, reasonably implies righteousness to a greater extent than summarily executing them would.⁵⁹ There is also one episode where it is mentioned that Basiliscus had a eunuch executed for opposing his rule by burning him alive, a form of punishment which is only mentioned elsewhere in the *Patria* in association with Julian the Apostate, as we have seen above, or the iconoclasts, as we shall see below.⁶⁰ On the other hand, there is also one paragraph regarding Basiliscus' house, stating only that the drugary lived there before he came to power and mentioning nothing about the means through which his accession was attained, which we might have expected it to do if it was unfavourably disposed towards him. This appears to indicate an ideological ambivalence that is incompatible with the notion of an ideological message.⁶¹

Zeno's successor Anastasius I (r. 491-518) is credited with the construction of a considerable number of churches, specifically a grand total of eight. A few details are given in three of these paragraphs, one of them mentioning that the emperor embellished the church with ten pillars decorated with images in relief, another specifying that the church in question was built in celebration of the arrival of saintly relics to the city and the third one asserting that Anastasius donated large amounts of property to the newly built church.⁶² These details all underline the notion of the emperor's sincere interest in building churches, which is implied through the large number of such construction projects associated with him in the text, consequently conveying a favourable impression of his piety.

⁵⁹ *Patria* II, § 27; *Patria* III, § 26.

⁶⁰ *Patria* II, § 23.

⁶¹ *Patria* III, § 124.

⁶² *Patria* III, §§ 40, 51, 52, 55, 67, 181.

This favourable portrayal is however complicated by two further paragraphs. The ideological significance of the first one is somewhat unclear. It relates that Anastasius built the Mocius-cistern, but also mentions that he did this while there was a famine in the city, thus supplying an additional piece of information that could be interpreted as reflecting either favourably or unfavourably on the emperor. In a long-term perspective, the construction of a cistern would contribute in a vital way to the well-being of his starving subjects, but when a famine was raging in the city it would surely have been more beneficial to those subjects in the short term if the emperor had directed his energy and resources towards alleviating the imminent shortage of grain. The text does however not imply that Anastasius did not do both and, given the opulence of the imperial coffers at the time, the intended readers of the *Patria* might well have been expected to assume that he did. It is also entirely possible that the mentioning of the famine was included in the text solely as a chronological indication without any intended ideological implications. Considering these circumstances it would be most reasonable to interpret the paragraph as reflecting favourable on the emperor, but lacking any further clarification in the text we cannot be sure.⁶³

The ideological significance of the second paragraph is however considerably less obscure. The text reads:

Λέγεται δὲ Μαναῦρα ὁ τρίκλιος τοῦ μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου, διότι Ἀναστάσιος ὁ Δίκωρος ὁ ἀποσελευτιάριος τῷ εἰκοστῷ ἐβδόμῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ τετάρτῳ μηνὶ βροντῶν καὶ ἀστραπῶν πρὸς τὸ παλάτιον εἰλουμένων ἀδημονοῦντος καὶ φεύγοντος ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον ἐν ἐνὶ τῶν κοιτωνίσκων αὐτοῦ ἐκείσε κατέλαβεν αὐτὸν ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡγοῦν ἡ ἀστραπὴ καὶ ἡ βροντὴ· καὶ ἐκεραυνώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πυρίκαυστος. Ὅτε δὲ ἀπέθνησκειν, ἔβαλεν φωνήν· ὦ μάνα, ὑπὸ τῆς αὔρας ἀπόλλυμαι. Τὴν δὲ φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἤκουσάν τινες τῶν ἀνθρώπων αὐτοῦ καὶ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως ἐκάλεσαν τὸν τρίκλινον ἀπὸ τῆς μάνας καὶ τῆς αὔρας τοῦ πυρός.⁶⁴

It is hard to imagine a more palpable indication of villainy than being subjected to such a direct form of divine punishment and the text makes it unquestionably clear that this is

⁶³ *Patria* III, § 84.

⁶⁴ *Patria* III, § 180. Translation: “The hall of Constantine the Great is called Manaura because Anastasius Dicorus, the former silentary, during the 27th year and fourth month of his rule when there were thunder and lightning over the palace, was frightened and fled from place to place until he was seized by the wrath of God, that is the thunder and lightning, in one of his chambers; he was struck and consumed by the fire. When he died, he cried out: “Oh mother, I perish under the flames.” One of his servants heard the cry and therefore the hall is named in this way, after the mother and the flames.”

indeed the case here. It would probably be safe to assume that the origins of this paragraph is somehow related to Anastasius monophysite sympathies, but this not mentioned or implied anywhere in the *Patria*, which, as we have seen, generally appears very favourably inclined towards the emperor, who is characterised by a sincere piety that no one deserving of being struck down by God's hand could reasonably possess. This results in a seemingly contradictory portrayal which leads us to the conclusion that no effort has been made in the editing process of the *Patria* to reconcile the conflicting ideological tendencies of the different sources as regards Anastasius, clearly disproving the notion of an ideological message in this respect.

There are only two references of ideological significance to Anastasius' successor Justin I (r. 518-27) in the text. One paragraph relates that he constructed a nunnery in which he was later buried, while the other one simply states that the events it recounts took place under his reign. Both of these paragraphs do however refer to him as *κράτιστος* 'exceedingly mighty'.⁶⁵

2.3 Justinian

The reign of Justinian I (r. 527-65) is universally recognised as a period of great importance in the history of the empire and the emperor has become known to posterity for his expansionist military policies, his ambitious construction projects and his achievements as a lawmaker, as well as through a large number of colourful but highly tendentious anecdotes. His efforts in the judicial field are however not mentioned at all in the *Patria* and the drastic expansion of the empire which he envisioned and oversaw has left few marks on the narrative, but given the subject matter of the text it is hardly surprising that these subjects are neglected in favour of his building activity in the imperial city. The most impressive of the construction works ascribed to Justinian is clearly the church of the Holy Wisdom, more widely known by its Greek name, Hagia Sophia. The importance of this achievement is underlined by three separate paragraphs, all of them concerned with subjects unrelated to the church in question, identifying

⁶⁵ *Patria* III, §§ 59, 183.

Justinian as ὁ κτίτωρ τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας ‘the founder of the great church’ or ὁ κτίτωρ τῆς ἁγίας Σοφίας ‘the founder of Hagia Sophia’.⁶⁶ No other individual appearing in the text is identified through a reference to a specific building, which implies that the construction of Hagia Sophia was considered an unparalleled event in the history of the city.

There are however few paragraphs mentioning Hagia Sophia in the first three books of the *Patria* and this is in all likelihood due to the close examination of the subject in the fourth, which reasonably was considered to make such information superfluous in the first three. Apart from the references mentioned above there are only three paragraphs touching upon the subject. The first one simply mentions that Justinian built Hagia Sophia, while the second one states in passing that he did so μετὰ πίστεως καὶ πόνου ‘with faith and effort’.⁶⁷ The third one concerns the Basilica cistern and reads:

Ἡ δὲ καθεζομένη ἐπὶ δίφπου ἐκεῖσε μεγάλη στήλη ἐστὶν τοῦ Σολομῶντος, ἣν ἀνέστησεν ὁ μέγας Ἰουστινιανὸς κρατοῦντα τὴν σιαγόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὀρῶντα τὴν ἁγίαν Σοφίαν ὅτι ἐνίκηθη εἰς μῆκος καὶ κάλλος ὑπὲρ τὸν παρ’ αὐτοῦ κτισθέντα ναὸν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ.⁶⁸

The notion of the church’s magnificence is clearly expressed in this paragraph, as the splendours of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem would have been a very familiar point of reference for the contemporaries of the *Patria*. Nevertheless, the emphasis of the episode appears to be on explaining why the statue by the cistern is modelled in such an unusual pose and the neutral language could be interpreted as indicating that the intended readers were expected to consider the unrivalled grandeur of Hagia Sophia to be self-evident.

The comparison with the temple in Jerusalem does however appear again in *Patria* IV, in which Justinian, upon entering the newly built church, is quoted exclaiming: “Glory to God who has deemed me worthy to complete such a work; I have surpassed you, Solomon.”⁶⁹ Even though this is the only such direct parallel, the ideological content

⁶⁶ *Patria* III, §§ 18, 24, 39.

⁶⁷ *Patria* II, § 17, 96.

⁶⁸ *Patria* II, § 40. Translation: “The statue sitting on a throne there depicts Solomon. It was erected by Justinian the Great holding its jaw and looking at the *Hagia Sofia* because [Solomon] had been surpassed in size and beauty as regards the temple in Jerusalem which he built.”

⁶⁹ *Patria* IV, § 27: The Greek text reads: Δόξα τῷ θεῷ τῷ καταξιώσαντί με τοιοῦτον ἔργον ἀποτελέσαι· ἐνίκησά σε, Σολομών.

of the fourth book of the *Patria* does, as far as Hagia Sophia is concerned, appear to correspond well to that of the disparate comments in the first three. Its narrative is disposed in a chronological manner. After providing a brief exposition of the historical background, it recounts the events of the construction process from the procurement of building materials and purchase of land up until the lavish inauguration of the completed church, followed by a few paragraphs about related events that took place later. As regards the church itself, its grandeur and splendours are stressed repeatedly throughout *Patria* IV. It is stated in the very first paragraph that the church was built “like no other had been built since Adam”,⁷⁰ an abstract notion which is gradually made concrete by the detailed account of the construction process. The text underlines the enormous magnitude and importance of the project by informing us that the emperor sent requests for building material to all important magistrates in the four corners of the empire and that as many as 10.000 men were employed as construction workers. The occasional details about the considerable expenses required for the procurement of land and material, as well as the account of the grandiose inauguration ceremony, can be considered to have the same effect.⁷¹

Furthermore, the text gives a circumstantial description of the ornamentation of the church, listing all the exclusively precious materials used for that purpose: gold, silver, marble, amber, ivory and a multitude of gemstones. The sumptuousness and beauty of these materials are also often emphasised through the use of adjectives. A few examples will suffice. A group of eight green pillars from Ephesus are described as ἀξιοθαύμαστος ‘worthy of admiration’, the pure gold used for gilding is given the epithet ὑπερτέλειος ‘beyond perfection’, we are told that the floor is embellished διὰ ποικίλων καὶ πολυτελῶν μαρμάρων ‘with intricate and valuable marble’ and the pulpit is depicted as πολυτίμητος ‘highly honoured’, πολύολβος ‘expensive’ and πολυθαύμαστος ‘much admired’.⁷² This is clearly of ideological significance, indicating an intention to not only describe the church, but convey a sense of the awe and admiration it inspires in its

⁷⁰ *Patria* IV, § 1. The Greek text reads: οἶος οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδάμ.

⁷¹ *Patria* IV, §§ 2-5, 7, 9, 16, 21, 24f.

⁷² *Patria* IV, §§ 2, 9, 13, 15-18, 21-25, 28.

beholders. This notion is also expressed in another paragraph, which can be regarded as summarising the chronological account of the construction:

Ὁ δὲ Ἰουστινιανὸς μόνος ἤρξατο καὶ μόνος ἐτελείωσε τὸν ναὸν μηδεὸς ἑτέρου συνδρομὴν ποιήσαντος ἢ οἰανδήποτε οἰκοδομῆν. Θαύμα δὲ ἦν ἰδέσθαι ἐν τῷ κάλλει καὶ τῇ ποικιλίᾳ τοῦ ναοῦ· ὅτι πάντοθεν ἔκ τε χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου ἐξήστραπτεν. [...] Τὴν δὲ ὠραιότητα καὶ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τοῦ κεχρυσωμένου καὶ διηργυρωμένου ναοῦ ἀπὸ ὀρόφους ἕως ἐδάφους τίς διηγῆσεται.⁷³

This paragraph not only praises the beauty and lavishness of the church, but also states unequivocally that the credit for its construction belongs solely to Justinian, the portrayal of whom is the principal concern of our inquiry in this chapter. A similar eagerness to stress Justinian's status as the founder of the church can be found in a paragraph which concerns the renovation of the church under Justinian's successor Justin II (r. 565-78). The text recounts the restorative work that was done and mentions that, because of the extensive renovation, there are those who believe that the church was actually built by Justin, whereupon it immediately states that anyone who claims such a thing is lying.⁷⁴ Even though it is only explicitly stressed in these two paragraphs, the notion that it is Justinian alone who should be credited with the construction of the church appears to be consistently conveyed, even taken for granted, in the narrative. There are other individuals to whom the text ascribes a measure of importance, such as the emperor's adoptive brother Strategius, who is given credit for assisting the emperor by performing several tasks associated with the building activity, and the master-builder Ignatius, who is described as very intelligent and well suited to build the church, even though he is otherwise only mentioned once, and then in passing, in the account of the construction process.⁷⁵

The emperor, on the other hand, appears as the central character throughout the entire account of the construction process, figuring as the acting subject in virtually every paragraph that concerns important phases of the project. As the narrative is structured, it

⁷³ *Patria* IV, § 26. Translation: "Justinian alone initiated the construction of the church, he alone completed it and no one else ever accomplished such a concerted effort or such an edifice. It is a wonder to behold the beauty and manifold ornaments of the church; because it flashes like lightning from the gold and silver everywhere. [...] How could anyone describe the vibrant beauty and sumptuousness of the beautiful church, adorned with gold and silver, from the ceiling to the floor?"

⁷⁴ *Patria* IV, § 29.

⁷⁵ *Patria* IV, §§ 8, 10.

is Justinian who buys and surveys the land, orders his magistrates to supply the building materials, initiates the construction process, embellishes the interior and organizes the inauguration ceremony.⁷⁶ His enthusiasm for the project is also emphasised in another paragraph, relating that he was unable to sleep at night until he had seen for himself the progress which had been made during the day.⁷⁷ The text does not, of course, mean to suggest that it was the Justinian himself who fastened the mosaic stones on the wall, but through this narrative structure it clearly identifies him as the visionary and driving force behind the construction of Hagia Sophia. It should nevertheless be noted that the emperor's prominent role in the construction process would have been emphasised even more if neither Strategius nor Ignatius had been mentioned at all. Justinian's distinguished position in the narrative is also emphasised through his personal relationship to the divine. The text recounts that "God breathed into his mind" that he was to build the church and another paragraph relates that its shape was announced to the emperor by a divine messenger in a dream.⁷⁸ Apart from fulfilling the role as instrument of the divine will, Justinian is also portrayed as possessing an insight into the workings of the heavenly powers. When a divine messenger appears in the guise of the emperor and contradicts his instructions to the workers, it is Justinian who perceives the true nature of the messenger and understands that his words are the words of God, whereupon he promptly orders the workers to follow the messenger's instructions rather than the ones he had previously given them himself.⁷⁹ In another interesting episode, the son of the master-builder is left alone in the church to watch over it and is visited by a eunuch with a shining face who urges him to go and bring back the workers, so that the edifice can be completed sooner. When the boy says that he cannot leave his post the eunuch replies:

Ἄπελθε ἐν σπουδῇ καὶ φώνησον αὐτοῖς τοῦ ταχέως ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐγὼ ὀμνύω σοι, τέκνον, οὕτως· μὰ τὴν ἁγίαν σοφίαν, ἣτις ἐστὶ λόγος θεοῦ, τὴν νῦν κτιζομένην, οὐχ ὑποχωρῶ τῶν ὧδε – ἐνταῦθα γὰρ ἐτάχθην καὶ δουλεύειν καὶ φυλάττειν παρὰ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ –, ἕως ὅτου καὶ ὑποστρέψεις.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *Patria* IV, §§ 2f, 6, 14, 15-18, 21, 23-25, 27.

⁷⁷ *Patria* IV, § 9.

⁷⁸ *Patria* IV, §§ 1, 8. The Greek text of the quote reads: ἐνέπνευσεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτοῦ.

⁷⁹ *Patria* IV, § 12.

⁸⁰ *Patria* IV, § 10. Translation: "Go with haste and call to them that they are to come quickly and I promise you this, child: by the holy wisdom, which is the word of God, which is now being built, I am not leaving those that are here – for I am stationed here to serve and protect by the word of God – until you return."

The text proceeds to relate that the boy left the church, met his father and told him what had happened. The master-builder brought his son to the emperor and the boy recounted the events once again. After Justinian had made sure that eunuch was not one of those in his service, he deduced that it must have been a divine messenger and, considering the eunuch's oath, cleverly ordered the boy to leave Constantinople and never visit the church again, thus ensuring that the edifice would enjoy heavenly protection for all eternity. We are also told that because of this, the emperor declared that the church was to be named after the divine wisdom.⁸¹ That the emperor's orders should be interpreted as cleverness and not unfair exploitation of the divine messenger's well intended oath is made evident in the next paragraph, when the same messenger appears once again and, far from being offended, offers to help the emperor acquire more money when the imperial coffers had nearly been depleted.⁸² It can consequently be concluded that whenever God or his messengers interfere directly in the construction process, Justinian is either the immediate recipient of the message or the one who is able to understand it and take the appropriate action.

These paragraphs can also be regarded to reflect Justinian's piety, the principal Byzantine virtue. Imperial ideology maintained that the position of emperor by definition entailed status as God's formal representative on earth, but this does not mean that every emperor was considered to enjoy immediate communication with the divine. The fact that Justinian is portrayed as being worthy of such an honour in the account of the construction of Hagia Sophia is in itself an indication of his piety. This notion is reinforced further by his apparent eagerness to heed the word of God and immediately adjust his plans in accordance with the divine will. The words quoted above and allegedly exclaimed by the emperor himself when he entered the newly built church describe it well; Justinian surely deserved credit for having been deemed worthy to build such a magnificent church, but the glory for its edification belonged foremost to God. By ascribing this acknowledgement to the emperor, the text once again conveys a sense of his piety.

⁸¹ *Patria* IV, § 10.

⁸² *Patria* IV, § 11,

As regards Justinian's other virtues, there are several paragraphs in *Patria* IV which portray him as a conscientious and generous ruler. We are told that the emperor, "in order to gladden and encourage the people", had 2000 copper coins thrown into the earth which had been heaped up every day, so that the workers could search through it and find the coins at the end of the day.⁸³ His fairness is also attested in the paragraphs dealing with the acquisition of land. The text states that Justinian had the houses occupying the intended location of the new church valued and offered to buy them at the appropriate prices. Five different sellers are mentioned in the text. Two of these, the eunuch Charitonus and the patrician Mamianus, appear to have been very cooperative, selling their houses to the emperor with gratitude and joy respectively.⁸⁴ The remaining three were somewhat more troublesome. The text recounts that a widow named Anna first refused to sell to the imperial magistrates, which made the emperor decide to visit her and ask her to sell in person. When he arrived at her house, she immediately threw herself at his feet and told him that she would gladly give him the house without receiving compensation if he would only allow her to be buried by the church, so that she would have a share in its glory and be rewarded on the day of judgement, a request the emperor graciously granted.⁸⁵ The text also relates that a certain Xenophon refused to sell unless he was honoured in the hippodrome and given twice the amount of money his house was actually worth. The emperor accepted his request but mocked him publicly for his greed and arrogance, thus displaying remarkable restraint and reluctance to employ coercion when it could be avoided, even when confronted with such insulting and unreasonable demands.⁸⁶

The fifth seller mentioned in the text was the eunuch Antiochus, who refused categorically to sell at any price or under any circumstances. We are told that this troubled the emperor, "who loved righteousness and hated deceit", but that the aforementioned Strategius was able to solve the problem. Strategius had found out that Antiochus was extremely fond of attending the chariot-races in the hippodrome and decided to place the eunuch under arrest for the duration of the races. Once imprisoned,

⁸³ *Patria* IV, § 20. The Greek text of the quote reads: *εἰς χάραν τοῦ λαοῦ [...] καὶ εἰς προθυμίαν.*

⁸⁴ *Patria* IV, § 5.

⁸⁵ *Patria* IV, § 3.

⁸⁶ *Patria* IV, § 5.

the whimpering eunuch soon agreed to sell his house to the emperor if he would only be allowed to go to the hippodrome, whereupon he was immediately brought to the imperial box where the sale was carried out.⁸⁷ Even though a measure of coercion was required in this particular case, the text makes it clear that the righteous emperor preferred to avoid it and the methods used must be regarded as exceedingly mild considering the multitude of harsher options at the autocratic emperor's disposal. Moreover, the intended readers of the *Patria* would surely agree that use of coercive measures would be infinitely preferable to allowing one man to stand in the way of the fulfilment of God's will.

In addition to the lengthy account of the foundation of Hagia Sophia, Justinian is credited with the construction of seven other churches and the reconstruction of a further two. It is also specified that he embellished an older church and favoured one of the new churches by making it beautiful and donating property to it. In addition to this, Justinian is mentioned as the builder of two palaces, but these are the only buildings of profane nature ascribed to him. These fairly numerous achievements clearly reflect favourable upon the emperor and adds further weight to the glorifying account of his role in the construction of Hagia Sophia. It should however be noted that, from an ideological viewpoint, the only feature distinguishing the paragraphs recounting these deeds from the many paragraphs ascribing similar achievements to other emperors is the frequent use of the attribute *ὁ μέγας* 'the great' or 'the first' to identify Justinian.⁸⁸ The question of whether the use of the epithet should be regarded primarily an expression of admiration or simply as a conventional literary way of separating the emperor from his more than a century younger namesake will have to remain open, but if there was an ideological purpose behind its inclusion in these paragraphs we could have expected this to be evident in the accounts of his actual achievements as well.

The portrayal of Justinian is however not consistently favourable. In the last paragraph dealing Hagia Sophia in the fourth book of the *Patria*, it is suddenly stated that Justinian became envious and fearful of the master-builder Ignatius, who was widely admired amongst the people on account of the magnificent church he had built. At the time, Ignatius was working on Justinian's equestrian statue on top of a high pillar in front

⁸⁷ *Patria* IV, § 4. The Greek text of the quote reads: φιλοδίκαιος ὦν [...] καὶ μισοπόνηρος.

⁸⁸ *Patria* II, § 110; *Patria* III, §§ 18, 24, 39, 117, 122, 135, 142, 169, 182.

of Hagia Sophia and in order to have his potential rival removed, Justinian declared that the scaffolding was to be removed while Ignatius was working, so that he would be trapped on top of the pillar and eventually starve to death. We are told that the master-builder managed to escape the pillar during the night and left the city to avoid the emperor's vengeance. He stayed away for three years, disguised as a monk, before he returned and met the emperor, who recognised him and pardoned him, realising that if he had managed to survive the previous attempt on his life, it was clearly God's will that he should live. Even though the episode ends on a positive note, it definitely gives a less than flattering impression of Justinian's character. Furthermore, the text also includes an episode with a more widely familiar theme, but with strikingly similar ideological implications and a far less happy ending. The subject of the emperor's envy is Belisarius, the most successful and famous general in his service. The text relates that the general, described as *στρατηγικώτατος* 'most skilled in warfare', was sent by the emperor against the Persians and the other tribes of the east, defeated them all and put them to flight. Nevertheless, Justinian, not content with the glory the victories bestowed upon him, became envious of Belisarius' achievements and ordered that the general was to be blinded and reduced to mendicancy, which accordingly came to pass.⁸⁹

We must conclude that the accounts of Justinian's deeds in the *Patria* are expressing a wide range of ideological implications. By themselves, the paragraphs constituting the account of the construction process in *Patria* IV definitely display all the defining characteristics of an ideological message, providing a praiseful portrayal of Justinian. This is supported to some degree by the few paragraphs in the other books of the *Patria* concerning the same subject-matter, which implicitly express a vague notion of the church's unparalleled magnificence and clearly identify Justinian as its builder. However, the paragraphs regarding his other accomplishments in the field of construction clearly differ from those concerning Hagia Sophia by not conveying any praise for the emperor other than that which is inherent in being credited with the construction of significant edifices. More importantly, two separate paragraphs, in two different books of the *Patria*, clearly portray the emperor as paranoid and vengeful, explicitly contradicting the notion of his fairness and restraint expressed elsewhere. The heterogeneous origins of

⁸⁹ *Patria* II, § 17; *Patria* IV, § 31.

the text obviously explain the variegated ideological implications resulting from the combination of the explicitly praiseful account of the construction of Hagia Sophia given in the fourth book of the *Patria*, the favourably inclined but hardly panegyric episodes of the second and third books and the two paragraphs whose portrayal of Justinian is distinctly and harshly critical. The significant point to be made, however, is that the editor evidently brought together these disparate paragraphs without making any apparent editorial effort to achieve a measure of ideological coherence. There consequently does not appear to be any ideological message as regards Justinian in the text.

2.4 Between Justinian and iconoclasm

Justinian's nephew Justin II (r. 565-78) is also credited with a large number of buildings and even though his achievements within this field are not quite as impressive as those of his uncle, he remains free from association with other less flattering episodes. As with many of his predecessors, most of the buildings attributed to Justin are churches. The text associates him with the construction of nine new churches, the reconstruction of one and the enlargement and beautification of another. As we have seen above, he is also given credit for extensive restoration work in Hagia Sophia and he is moreover said to have gathered and deposited the relics of several saints in a church.⁹⁰ On a more profane level the text gives credit to Justin for the construction of an orphanage and a palace, the embellishment of another palace and the foundation of the harbour of Sophia, which is named after his wife and mentioned on three separate occasions.⁹¹ We must conclude that the portrayal of Justin is consistently positive and its potential for constituting an ideological message will consequently be discussed below.

Justin's successor Tiberius I (r. 578-82) is credited with some building activity as well. The text mentions that he built a fortress, rebuilt a palace and initiated the construction of a church, which was later finished by his son-in-law Maurice (r. 582-602). Tiberius and Maurice are similarly given the shared credit for the construction of

⁹⁰ *Patria* III, §§ 23, 32, 35, 47, 123, 147, 148, 164; *Patria* IV, § 29.

⁹¹ *Patria* II, § 62; *Patria* III, §§ 37, 164, 169.

another palace and the text ascribes yet another palace to one of them, but it is unclear to whom it refers.⁹² The construction projects associated with Tiberius are few, but the ones that are mentioned appear to have been comprehensive and the text's portrayal of the emperor can consequently be regarded as brief but mildly favourable.

Apart from the joint enterprises with his father-in-law, Maurice is also given credit for a few construction projects of his own. Two churches, a portico and a home for the elderly are mentioned in the text, as well as a palace that the emperor rebuilt in honour of his mother-in-law. The text also relates that he renovated a church that had been damaged in a fire.⁹³ However, Maurice is not only associated with construction, but also with destruction, as there are three separate paragraphs relating that statues were destroyed during his reign. One of them concerns a large number of statues, of which we are told nothing more than their location. The second paragraph states that there was a large bronze statue of a bull standing in one of the harbours and that this statue bellowed loudly once every year, which signified that many misfortunes were to occur during that day. The text recounts that it was sunken in the harbour during Maurice's reign, but it is not specified whether the emperor was personally involved or whether this resulted in fewer misfortunes occurring in the city. The third paragraph mentions that Maurice destroyed a statue depicting the Tyche of the city which had been brought to Constantinople by Constantine the Great.⁹⁴

The text itself draws no explicit conclusions of ideological relevance from these episodes. It is entirely possible that this is because there was no such intention behind their inclusion in the narrative, but there are some aspects with ideological connotations that should be pointed out. Firstly, if the bellowing of the bull statue caused misfortune in the city and this ceased when it was sunk in the harbour, doing so should definitely be regarded as commendable. However, the text does in no way substantiate that those were the prevailing circumstances when the statue was removed and even if it did, it does not give direct credit to the emperor, which makes it unreasonable to interpret the episode as an expression of ideology. Secondly, destroying images is an activity usually associated with iconoclasm, but to read these paragraphs as inferring an implicit accusation of

⁹² *Patria* II, § 107; *Patria* III, §§ 46, 157, 170f.

⁹³ *Patria* III, §§ 30, 73, 125.

⁹⁴ *Patria* II, §§ 54, 88; *Patria* III, § 131. This statue of Tyche has been mentioned once before, on page 23.

heresy would definitely be to over-interpret them. It would also be hard to see the ideological relevance of such accusations. Nevertheless, the episode where Maurice destroys the statue of Tyche could be seen as prelude to the rapid reversal of his own fortunes when he was overthrown and executed in 602. A connection of this kind could contribute towards explaining the origins of the episode and perhaps even the more general association between Maurice and the destruction of statues, but it is somewhat too speculative to be used as evidence of an ideology to that effect.

Maurice's downfall is however referred to directly in two paragraphs. In one of them it is simply mentioned in passing that Maurice was executed together with his wife and children, while the information in the other one is slightly more specific. It not only relates that Maurice and his entire family were executed, but also mentions that it was the usurper Phocas (r. 602-10) who was responsible. The text denigrates Phocas further by stating that he threw the corpse of Maurice's wife in the sea instead of allowing her to be given a proper burial and by referring to the usurper as *παράνομος* 'lawless'.⁹⁵ We are told nothing about the prelude to these events, but the notion that Phocas' rebellion was a criminal act naturally confers a degree of legitimacy on Maurice's rule.

Phocas is mentioned in a few more paragraphs and although he is hardly portrayed in a distinctly favourable way in any of these, none of them is nearly as denigratory as the account of Maurice's execution. One of them relates that Phocas hurriedly erected a statue of himself during the final year of his reign, but that he was overthrown a mere 18 days after its completion, which conveys the impression of a ruler who either vainly attempted to cling to power by glorifying himself or desperately tried to create at least the impression of a glorious legacy when he felt dominion slipping through his fingers. Neither interpretation is particularly flattering, but the paragraph definitely portrays the emperor as pathetic rather than malicious. The emperor is also referred to as *ὁ στρατιώτης* 'the soldier' in this paragraph, which further reinforces the mildly denigratory impression it conveys. In another paragraph it is stated that Phocas started building a church dedicated to his namesake St. Phocas, an activity that certainly would have been looked upon favourably by the contemporaries of the *Patria*. On the other hand it is also emphasised that he never finished the church and that it was renamed after

⁹⁵ *Patria* III, §§ 166, 185.

he had been deposed, which implies that although the church was named after an actual saint its name had ideological significance that reflected favourably on the namesake emperor, thus creating the impression that the principal reason for its construction might have been vanity rather than piety. This could be read as an indication of a reluctance to give the emperor credit for the construction, but this could have been achieved more easily if the references to Phocas had been left out all together and the credit for the construction had simply been given to the one who actually finished it and gave it its final name. We must consequently consider such an interpretation uncertain.⁹⁶

Furthermore, Phocas is clearly given credit for erecting two pillars decorated with golden mosaic depicting Constantine the Great and his mother Helen and it is related in another paragraph that a patrician widow took pity on the convicts detained in the dark and fetid Praetorium, the main imperial prison, and thus donated a building to Phocas who turned it into a new Praetorium. The credit for this compassionate act is obviously given to the widow, but the text does at least mention that the emperor cooperated with her, which it easily could have abstained from doing if there had been an intention of depicting the emperor in a depreciatory manner.⁹⁷ We must conclude that although the text assumes a clear ideological stance in the paragraph concerning the execution of Maurice, this position is not consistently expressed throughout the text, which in a few instances even portrays Phocas in a mildly favourable light. The text can consequently not be considered to convey an entirely clear ideological message regarding Phocas.

As regards Phocas' successor Heraclius (r. 610-41) there is one paragraph that gives a distinctly favourable account of the emperor's military victories against the Persians. It relates that the Persian king Chosroes had conquered much Roman territory and carried away the true cross from Jerusalem, but that Heraclius defeated him, ended the occupation of Roman lands and restored the cross to its rightful place. The accounts of his domestic achievements are however far more modest. It is stated that he finished the construction of the church which his predecessor had begun building and that he melted down the giant oven used by Julian to burn Christians in order to mint coins. There is also a brief reference to a standard measure attributed to Heraclius, but it is only

⁹⁶ *Patria* II, §§ 34f.

⁹⁷ *Patria* II, § 35; *Patria* III, §§ 13f.

made in passing and never commented upon further anywhere.⁹⁸ That the emperor's military achievements appear greater than his domestic ones is hardly surprising considering that the empire fought for its existence more or less during his entire reign. The portrayal of Heraclius is very brief, but must still be considered markedly favourable.

Nothing of ideological significance is said about the four emperors following Heraclius. Neither Heraclonas (r. 641) nor Constans II (r. 641-68) are mentioned at all, while Constantine III (r. 641) and Constantine IV (r. 668-85) are mentioned in a single paragraph each, but in ideologically insignificant contexts.

The next four emperors, and the political turmoil that characterised their reigns, have however left a slight mark on the narrative of the *Patria*. Justinian II (r. 685-95, 705-11) is referred to as ὁ τύραννος 'the tyrant' in passing on two separate occasions, which clearly has ideological significance. On the other hand, there are three other paragraphs which instead use the epithets ῥινότμητος or ῥινοκοπημένος, both of which should be translated 'slit-nosed', a by-name referring to the mutilation he suffered when he was deposed the first time. References to the maimed emperor's shameful predicament can, of course, not contribute towards a favourable portrayal, but it is nevertheless by these epithets Justinian has become known to posterity. Since this appears to be the conventional literary way to refer to the emperor by the end of the 10th century, we cannot assume that the use of these epithets was motivated by anything other than a desire to distinguish him from his older namesake. As regards the contents of these paragraphs, two of them are of ideological significance and neither expresses any sentiments of denigratory nature on the emperor. One of them credits Justinian with the construction of two palace halls, while the other gives a brief account of Justinian's exile and return to power in a seemingly impartial way, displaying no particular preference, neither for Justinian nor for any of his opponents. It is also mentioned that Justinian built the church of St. Anna and that relics were brought to Constantinople during his reign, implying a maintained spiritual health in the city which the contemporaries of the *Patria* would scarcely associate with tyranny.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *Patria* II, §§ 35, 41, 53, 92.

⁹⁹ *Patria* II, §§ 41, 77; *Patria* III, §§ 53, 79, 130.

The usurper Leontius (695-8) is only mentioned in two paragraphs, one of them mentioning briefly that he exiled Justinian, the other stating with equal brevity that Leontius himself was overthrown by Tiberius II (r. 698-705), had his nose slit and was confined to a monastery. Again, the text appears to adopt a neutral attitude to these violent events. Tiberius is admittedly given credit for repairing the sea walls elsewhere, but this alone can hardly be taken as evidence for a preference for him over his rivals. Philippicus (r. 711-13), who deposed Justinian during his second reign, appears briefly in an episode where he orders a malicious pagan statue to be buried, which appears to be a prudent measure but hardly of particular ideological significance. There is however another reference to him which gives him the attribute *πραότατος* ‘most gentle’.¹⁰⁰ This could naturally suggest either amiability or weakness, but the latter appears highly improbable since anyone desiring to slander an emperor who seized power as brutally as Philippicus did would surely find more efficient ways of doing so than accusing him of being weak. Unless we decide to read this as a rare use of irony, it is likely that the notion of Philippicus’ gentleness, as well as the accusations of tyranny directed at his predecessor, originates from the propaganda circulated by the usurper to provide justification for his bloodstained assumption of power. The stark contrast between these paragraphs and the seemingly impartial accounts of the events of this turbulent period, some of them even portraying Justinian in a mildly favourable light, clearly implies that no effort has been made to present an ideologically consistent portrayal of the emperors. The ideology expressed in these paragraphs can consequently not be regarded as constituting an ideological message.

The emperors Anastasius II (r. 713-15) and Theodosius III (r. 715-17) are not mentioned at all in the *Patria*.

¹⁰⁰ *Patria* II, §§ 24, 39, 109; *Patria* III, §§ 79, 207.

2.5 The first iconoclasts and Irene

Leo III (r. 717-41), being the emperor who first imposed the doctrine of iconoclasm, is not usually given a favourable portrayal in sources written after the final repudiation of the dogma and the *Patria* is no exception. There is especially one paragraph in which the emperor is thoroughly defamed:

Τὸ δὲ Τετραδήσιον τὸ Ὀκτάγωνον [...] διδασκαλείου ἐκέισε ἐτύγγανεν οἰκουμηνικόν· καὶ οἱ βασιλεύοντες αὐτοὺς ἐβουλεύοντο καὶ οὐδὲν ἔπραττον χωρὶς αὐτῶν· ἐξ οὗ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐγένοντο πατριάρχαι καὶ ἀρχιεπίσκοποι. [...] διήρκεσε ἔτη υἰδ' μέχρι τοῦ δεκάτου χρόνου Λέοντος τοῦ Συρογενοῦς τοῦ πατρὸς Καβαλλίνου. Παρατραπείς δὲ τῆς θείας χάριτος καὶ γυμνωθεὶς τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὸ μὴ συγκοινωνεῖν αὐτῷ τοὺς μοναχοὺς τῇ ματαίᾳ αὐτοῦ βουλήῃ πλησθεὶς ὀργῆς φρύγανα καὶ ξύλα ἀθροίσας κατέκαυσεν ἐκέισε τοὺς διδάσκοντας δεκαεὶς μοναχοὺς.¹⁰¹

Apart from the obvious severity of the crime itself, the act of martyring righteous Christians by burning them also implies a less than flattering association with Julian the Apostate. Similarly, another paragraph states that a magistrate named Niketas founded a monastery and then immediately proceeds to relate that he was later murdered on Leo's orders. The paragraph is silent as regards the specific motives for the murder and does not explicitly account for any other ideologically significant circumstances, but the act of founding a monastery indicates piety and the primary ideological purport of the episode consequently appears to be that the emperor murdered a pious and seemingly innocent man. The common denominator of monasticism could be perceived as implying a further connection with Leo's execution of the monks, but it could just as well be purely coincidental.¹⁰²

Leo's activities of a more characteristically iconoclast nature are only mentioned in two paragraphs. One of them is especially distinctive and relates that Leo removed a bronze statue of Christ which not only had been erected by Constantine the Great but also

¹⁰¹ *Patria* III, § 31. Translation: "Tetradesion Otagonon [...] was a public school; the emperors conferred with them and did nothing without them; therefore patriarchs and archbishops came from their numbers. [...] it remained for 414 years until the tenth year of the reign of Leo the Syrian, the father of Caballinus. When he turned away from the divine grace and repudiated God he was filled with anger because the monks did not share his empty delusions, gathered firewood and dry branches and burned the 16 monks who taught there."

¹⁰² *Patria* III, § 195.

was known to have performed miracles. These circumstances makes it quite clear that Leo defied the will of God and dishonoured the memory of Constantine in removing the statue, although those implications would surely have been regarded as self-evident by the contemporaries of the *Patria*. The other paragraph is less characteristic. It mentions that many statues were destroyed during Leo's reign because the emperor was ἀλόγιστος 'irrational'. This is an attribute commonly associated with iconoclasm, but it is interesting that the word used for 'statue' here is θεμάτιον, which appears to be used in this sense elsewhere, but only to denote statues of pagan origin. While it might have been considered imprudent to remove pagan statues it was certainly not a sin against God and hardly comparable to the destruction of icons depicting Christ or the saints, which makes this combination of words seem curious. Nevertheless, there is no way to know if this is the original wording of the paragraph and as far as this paper is concerned the primary importance of the episode is that the use word ἀλόγιστος clearly indicates a critical stance towards Leo.¹⁰³

We must also re-examine a paragraph in which it is stated that the Theodosian Walls were renovated by Leo the Great, or Leo the Elder. This paragraph was mentioned above when the achievements of Leo I were discussed, since no other emperor is commonly associated with that epithet, neither elsewhere in the *Patria* nor in Byzantine historiography in general. The contemporary Byzantines would consequently assume that the paragraph refers to him, but Berger argues convincingly that the emperor who actually carried out this renovation was Leo III. If so, the passage may have been altered at some point to shift the credit for the undertaking from an iconoclast to an orthodox emperor, but Berger also mentions two other possibilities. Firstly, the epithet may have been added because the editor of the *Patria* or one of its sources assumed that the renovation was the work of Leo I, which means that there was no explicit ideological intention behind it. Secondly, the paragraph could be based on a text written while iconoclasm was still official dogma, in which case the epithet could have been used originally to distinguish Leo III from his grandson Leo IV and then retained unaltered in the *Patria* because the editor believed that it referred to Leo I.¹⁰⁴ Since all three

¹⁰³ *Patria* II, § 90; *Patria* III, § 20; Cameron-Herrin (1984), 21, 31.

¹⁰⁴ *Patria* II, § 108; Berger (1988), 674f.

explanations are entirely plausible, the ideological implications of the paragraph as regards Leo III remain obscure.

Leo does however also appear to be given credit for the construction of a harbour, but the text significantly refers to him as Conon in this paragraph. This name, claimed to be Leo's baptismal name, originally appears in an anti-iconoclast text from the beginning of the 9th century which aggressively attacks the dynasty founded by Leo. Considering its origins we can safely deduce that the use of the name is meant as an insult. It is thus noteworthy that it is used in the one paragraph where Leo is clearly represented as doing something commendable, which implies a reluctance to credit him with this achievement.¹⁰⁵ Under these circumstances it should be concluded that the text appears to adopt a consistently critical ideological stance towards Leo, but the question of whether this should be regarded as an ideological message will not be addressed until the text's attitude towards the remaining iconoclast emperors have been examined.¹⁰⁶

The most famous, and most uncompromising, of these is probably Leo's son Constantine V (r. 741-75) who is portrayed in an even less favourable light than his father. The text makes frequent use of two derisive sobriquets given to him by later iconodule writers, *Καβαλλῖνος* 'groom' and *Κοπρώνυμος* 'dung-named', and refers to him as *μισόθεος* 'god-hating' and *θεήλατος* 'god-driven', an epithet commonly used for punishments visited upon mankind for its sins.¹⁰⁷ It also includes many paragraphs that vividly recount the emperor's misdeeds, although only one of them explicitly mentions the destruction of icons. We are told that Constantine turned a beautiful church into an armoury and a dunghill, threw the body of a saint into the sea and insulted a monastery called *Μυρέλαιον* 'myrrh-oil' by renaming it *Ψαρέλαιον* 'fish-oil'. It is also related that he turned another church into a barn, seduced a virtuous old maiden into prostitution and burned not only holy icons, but also a church in which he had imprisoned honourable and pious monks because they refused to take part in his abominable religious doctrines.¹⁰⁸

The text also mentions the rebellion of the general Artabasdus, who assumed power and ruled as emperor for two and a half years before being deposed and blinded by

¹⁰⁵ *Patria* II, § 68.

¹⁰⁶ *Patria* II, § 68; Berger (1988), 43f.

¹⁰⁷ *PGL*, 617.

¹⁰⁸ *Patria* III, §§ 9, 63, 68f, 134f, 149.

Constantine. However, the word used for Artabasdos usurpation of power is *ἐτυράννησα* ‘to become tyrant’, which implies Constantine should still be considered as the legitimate emperor, despite his many crimes. On the other hand, if Artabasdos’ actions truly were sanctioned by God it would be hard to explain Constantine’s ultimate victory. Apart from this episode there is only one further paragraph that mentions Constantine without accusing him of any heinous behaviour. Instead, it simply states that he decreed that the cattle market should be moved. It should however be noted that these two paragraphs refer to the emperor as *Καβαλλίνος* and *Κοπρώνυμος* respectively, which means that they can hardly be considered to represent Constantine in a neutral manner. We must consequently conclude that the text conveys a consistently depreciatory ideology as regards Constantine.¹⁰⁹

Constantine’s son Leo IV (r. 775-80) is not mentioned at all in the *Patria*, but the text does not neglect to mention the achievements of his wife Irene (r. 780-802), both as regent during the minority of their son Constantine VI (r. 780-97) and as sovereign empress in her own right. The achievement for which he is perhaps best known, the restoration of the icons, is never referred to explicitly in the text, but some significant symbolic references can be identified. The text relates that Irene restored the church which Constantine V had turned into an armoury and a dunghill and that she found the body of the saint thrown into the sea by the same emperor. Similarly, it is stated that she had a mosaic image of Christ made in the location where the miraculous bronze statue had stood prior to its removal by Leo III. Through these actions Irene is clearly portrayed as restoring the order which had been disrupted by her predecessors’ adherence to the heretical doctrine of iconoclasm.¹¹⁰

Irene is also given the attribute *εὐσεβειστάτη* ‘most pious’ on two separate occasions, a strong word of praise which stands in glaring contrast to the abuse heaped on her father-in-law. Furthermore, another paragraph states that because she was *εὐσεβὴς καὶ φιλάρετος* ‘pious and virtuous’ she cared for the needy by easing the burden of taxation as well as building shelters, communal kitchens, homes for the elderly and a graveyard where the poor could be buried for free. In addition to this Irene is given credit

¹⁰⁹ *Patria* III, §§ 63, 149.

¹¹⁰ *Patria* III, §§ 9, 20.

for the construction of two churches and an unspecified number of imperial halls. It is also mentioned that she rebuilt a church and constructed workshops and a palace together with her son, but it is not entirely clear what ideological significance the appearance of Constantine VI should be ascribed. He is mentioned briefly in three further paragraphs. The first one relates that he erected a statue of his mother in order to please her. The second one refers to him as ὁ τυφλός ‘the blind’, an attribute that appears once more in the third paragraph, in which he is also described as ὁ νεωτερίζων ‘the revolutionary’.¹¹¹ In all likelihood, these epithets refer to the prolonged struggle for power between him and his mother and his subsequent blinding at the hands of Irene’s supporters. If so, this paragraph appears to express support for Irene in this struggle, which of course is entirely consistent with the praise it confers upon her elsewhere. Nevertheless, Constantine is allowed to share the credit with his mother for a few achievements and the text can consequently not be considered to adopt a consistently denigratory attitude towards him. The portrayal of Irene is on the other hand as consistent as it is favourable and we can thus safely conclude that the text conveys a clear ideology as regards her.

2.6 Between Irene and the composition of the *Patria*

Concerning the five emperors who ruled successively after the deposition of Irene there is not enough information to draw any conclusions of ideological nature. Neither Nicephorus I (r. 802-11) nor his son Stauracius (r. 811) are mentioned at all, which is especially noteworthy since Nicephorus came to power through a coup against the empress who receives such explicit praise in several paragraphs. The next emperor in line, Michael I (r. 811-13), is mentioned in two paragraphs, but none of them expresses any relevant views concerning his character and achievements. One mentions briefly that prior to his accession, Michael was one of many prominent men who had read the gospel in a particular church, while the other states that the emperor cut off the hands of a statue of Tyche because he wanted to weaken the hippodrome factions and thus prevent them from threatening imperial authority. The intended readers of the *Patria* would surely have

¹¹¹ *Patria* II, § 56; *Patria* III, §§ 77, 85, 142, 154, 171, 173, 202.

been able to understand the emperor's concerns, but the ideological implications of this episode are somewhat obscure. Was Michael enlisting the aid of a pagan demon in order to prevent his subjects from voicing their legitimate concerns, or was he in fact crippling the demon who otherwise would have been able to incite the gullible masses to rebellion against his divinely ordained authority? As we have seen, statues of Tyche could be regarded as legitimate symbols of the city and closely associated with imperial authority, but the text does not appear to suggest that emperors should let policy be dictated by public opinion elsewhere. In the absence of ideological clarification it is of course entirely possible that the paragraph was included with no other purpose than to explain why the statue in question is missing both hands.¹¹²

Michael's successor Leo V (r. 813-20) is never mentioned in the text and neither is his successor Michael II (r. 820-29). Since Leo vigorously reintroduced iconoclasm as official doctrine it is remarkable that the text makes no references to him at all, whereas it studiously recounts the misdeeds of Leo III and Constantine V at almost every opportunity. Passing over an emperor's deeds in silence can naturally also be a way of debasing him, but considering this the paragraphs referring to Michael's son and successor Theophilus (r. 829-42), another committed iconoclast, provides for interesting reading. Theophilus is credited for renovating the sea walls, rebuilding a tower razed by an earthquake and converting an older building into a hospice. He is also said to have moved the market for the household slaves, but his motives for doing so are not recounted and we can consequently not draw any conclusions concerning ideology from this episode. Furthermore, there is one paragraph that portrays the emperor in a distinctly favourable light. It relates that a magistrate stole a large ship that belonged to a widow and used his influence to protect himself from prosecution. When the widow realised that she would not obtain redress by the usual legal means, she enlisted the aid of a group of charioteers, who managed to notify the emperor of these events during the chariot races in the hippodrome. Upon hearing of this injustice, Theophilus was roused to anger, ordered the arrest of the magistrate, had him burned together with his robes of office and restored the property to its rightful owner. Theophilus is clearly featured as a righteous ruler in this episode and since he not only remains unsullied by accusations of the kind

¹¹² *Patria* II, § 101; *Patria* III, § 147.

his iconoclast predecessors are subjected to, but is also given credit for a few works of construction himself, we must conclude that he is given a brief but consistently favourable portrayal, despite his iconoclast policies.¹¹³

It should be noted that Theophilus' empress Theodora, who permanently abolished iconoclasm during the minority of Michael III (r. 842-67), is mentioned in two paragraphs, one ascribing the construction of a church to her and one in which she is credited for converting an armoury to a monastery and donating much property to it. These pious deeds could be contrasted with the exclusively profane achievements ascribed to her iconoclast husband, but these two paragraphs can hardly be regarded as sufficient evidence of an ideological message accentuating their religious differences. Theodora is certainly not portrayed as a second Irene, despite the many similarities between them.¹¹⁴ Like his parents, Michael III is credited with a few works of construction as well. The text mentions two churches built by him and also relates that after confining his mother and sisters to a monastery he donated much property to it and thus made it wealthy. The one profane achievement he is given credit for is the enlargement of Tzukanisterion, the imperial polo grounds. No other deeds, neither commendable nor reprehensible ones, are ascribed to him and we must consequently regard the brief portrayal of him as mildly favourable.¹¹⁵

Michael is however also mentioned in three separate paragraphs which all refer to his murder at the hands of Basil I (r. 867-86), the founder of the Macedonian dynasty whose descendants still ruled the empire by the time the *Patria* was composed. One of these paragraphs refers to Michael as the one who was murdered by Basil, another concerns a hippodrome which it claims was the scene of the crime in question, while the third recounts an event which it states took place when Basil ruled alone after the murder of Michael.¹¹⁶ These references can hardly be interpreted as conveying any other notion of Basil's moral qualities than an exceedingly unfavourable one, even though no explicit words of condemnation can be found in the text. There are on the other hand also several paragraphs expressing a much more favourable view of the emperor. The text reads:

¹¹³ *Patria* II, §§ 64f, 109; *Patria* III, §§ 28, 150.

¹¹⁴ *Patria* III, §§ 41, 155.

¹¹⁵ *Patria* III, §§ 27f, 29, 77.

¹¹⁶ *Patria* III, §§ 27, 159, 182.

Τὸν δὲ ἅγιον Διομήδην ἔκτισεν ὁ μέγας Κωνσταντῖνος· ὁ δὲ Βασίλειος ὁ βασιλεὺς διὰ τὸ λαβεῖν ἐκέισε τὸν χρησμὸν ἀνήγειρεν μείζονα καὶ ἐκαλλώπισεν καὶ ἐπεκύρωσεν κτήματα πολλά.¹¹⁷

The prophecy referred to in this paragraph is known from other sources relating the story of Basil's ascension to imperial dignity. Details vary between the different versions, but the common theme is that a divine voice declared that Basil would become emperor. By referring to a story which confers considerable legitimacy to Basil's bloodstained accession, the *Patria* appears to accept its validity. To the contemporary Byzantines there would of course not have been an inherent contradiction between being a murderous thug and being a divinely ordained emperor, but the text also ascribes a number of commendable achievements to Basil. He is for instance credited with the construction of five different churches, the largest number attributed to any emperor since Justin II, several of which are mentioned in two, three or even four separate paragraphs, which clearly disproves the notion of any reluctance on the editor's part to recount the God-pleasing deeds of the emperor. The text also relates that Basil founded a monastery and made his daughters live there as nuns, which clearly must be considered an expression of piety. In addition to this, the text ascribes to Basil the construction of a palace, a bath and a graveyard, as well as the enlargement of Tzukanisterion. There are however also two paragraphs which both relate that the emperor destroyed a monument consisting of figures of various insects. One of them also specifies that it these figures had magical properties which prevented the depicted insects from infesting the city. We are told nothing of the emperor's motives, but since the effects yielded by the monument appear to have been purely beneficial, but far from crucial for the well-being of the city, it would seem reasonable to assume that Basil's actions were ill-advised, but not important enough to have any significant ideological implications. In conclusion, considering the repeated references to his complicity in the murder of Michael and the considerable number of commendable achievements ascribed to him, the portrayal of Basil must be characterised as ideologically complex.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ *Patria* III, § 86. Translation: "Constantine the Great built the church of St. Diomedes; the emperor Basil enlarged it, embellished it and donated much property to it, since he had received the prophecy there."

¹¹⁸ *Patria* III, §§ 24, 29, 29a, 86, 162, 186, 200, 206; *Patria* IV, § 32.

None of Basil's successors are mentioned in considerable extent in the text, but when any of them do appear the circumstances are always favourable. Basil's son Leo VI (r. 886-912) is mentioned in three paragraphs, one of them stating that he rebuilt a church which had been destroyed in a fire, the second one relating that he rewarded a traveller who displayed considerable skill in the art of interpreting the prophetic signs of ancient statues and the third one giving him credit for building a church, to which he also donated much property and brought the relics of two saints. Leo's brother Alexander (r. 912-13) is not mentioned at all, whereas one paragraph credits his son Constantine VII (r. 913-59) with the construction of a church. Romanus I (r. 920-44) is credited with the construction of two churches and one paragraph states that he had two pillars with relief moved. Neither Romanus II (r. 959-63) nor Nicephorus II (r. 963-69) are mentioned in ideologically significant contexts at all, but John I (r. 969-76) appears in two paragraphs, one of them stating that he demolished a bath to procure materials which he used to build a church and the other one recounting that he enlarged, renovated and embellished another church, to which he also donated much property and brought sacred relics. Basil II (r. 963-1025), who in all likelihood was the reigning emperor when the *Patria* was composed, is only mentioned in a single, but quite flattering, episode, which refers to him as *εὐσχήμων* 'graceful', *καλοπράγμων* 'benevolent' and *συμπαθῆς* 'compassionate' before proceeding to relate that he demolished the holy bath in Blachernae in order to have it rebuilt and embellished with silver and gold, making it better and more beautiful than it had been before.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ *Patria* I, § 60; *Patria* III, §§ 30, 40, 96, 199, 212-214. *Patria* IV, § 33.

3. Beholding the Purple: General perspectives

3.1 Distinguishing one from the other: Epithets

Before proceeding to examine the ideological implications of the epithets given to the emperors throughout the text, we must recognise that these epithets can serve two different purposes. They can be used either to convey information about the character or achievements of the emperor in question, which more often than not would have ideological implications, or simply to distinguish the emperor from another emperor with the same name, which is not necessarily intended to have ideological relevance. An epithet can naturally also belong to both categories. We have previously examined only those epithets that have obvious ideological implications, thus belonging to the former category. For instance, the flattering adjectives ascribed to Marcian, Justin I or Basil II would naturally not be very useful for identifying these emperors if their identities had otherwise been in question, while the abusive names associated with Justinian II and Constantine V can also be used to distinguish them from their the other emperors with the same names, thus belonging to both categories of epithets. Similarly, when Michael III is identified as the one who was murdered by Basil, it is established with certainty which Michael the paragraph refers to, but the epithet also provides ideologically relevant information about Basil I. As regards the remaining epithets ascribed to emperors throughout the text, however, it is considerably more doubtful whether they were intended to have any ideological implications.

Addressing Dagron's claim that the epithets ascribed to the emperors were intended to draw depreciatory caricatures, we shall begin by examining the use of epithets identifying the emperors by their foreign or provincial¹²⁰ origins, as we have already touched upon one example which appears to support Dagron's conclusions, namely the paragraph where Leo III is referred to as Conon. In three of the other four paragraphs that concern him, Leo is identified by his Syrian or Isaurian origins, which appears consistent with the use of his baptismal name and Dagron's conclusions in

¹²⁰ There is, of course, a difference between provincial and foreign origins, but since Dagron does not appear to consider it especially significant and since this study will argue that the references to neither of them should be regarded as having ideological implications, there is little reason to elaborate on the matter.

general.¹²¹ From then on, however, matters become more complicated. Tiberius II appears in two paragraphs, both of them referring to him as Tiberios Apsimar, the latter name betraying his Germanic origins.¹²² Despite the similarities with the use of Leo's baptismal name, there is an important difference, namely that while the text uses Leo's Syrian name instead of his Roman one, thus implying a refusal to recognise his accession, Tiberius' German name is used as an epithet in addition to his Roman one. It consequently serves the purpose of distinguishing him from Tiberius I and if there are other intentions behind it, they are not immediately discernable from the two paragraphs in question.

The only other emperors who are given epithets that indicate their foreign or provincial origins on a reasonably consistent basis are Justin I, who is always referred to as the Thracian, and Irene, who is called the Athenian in a clear majority of the paragraphs referring to her.¹²³ However, as we have seen above, the former is given the additional flattering epithet *κράτιστος* 'exceedingly mighty' in two of the five paragraphs mentioning him, while the latter is characterised by her piety and virtue on several occasions.¹²⁴ If the editor of the *Patria* intended to debase these two emperors by referring to their provincial origins, we could have expected her to omit these additional epithets, which clearly would serve no other narrative purpose than conveying the exact opposite notion as regards the character of these emperors. Since the favourable references to their characters are of obvious ideological nature and the references to their origins are not, the most plausible explanation would be that the latter were used only to distinguish Justin I from Justin II and Irene the Athenian from, for instance, her mother-in-law Irene the Khazar, with no other ideological implications intended. If so, it cannot be assumed that there were ideological intentions behind the use of the epithets referring to the origins of Tiberius II and Leo III, with the exception of the one paragraph where the latter is denigratorily referred to only by his alleged baptismal name.

In addition to this, four other emperors are occasionally identified by their foreign or provincial origins. Phocas is referred to as the Cappadocian in two paragraphs, while

¹²¹ *Patria* II, § 90; *Patria* III, §§ 31, 195.

¹²² *Patria* II, § 109; *Patria* III, § 207.

¹²³ *Patria* II, §§ 26, 30, 56; *Patria* III, §§ 9, 17, 20, 59, 77, 85, 120, 129, 142, 154, 156, 171-173 183, 202.

¹²⁴ *Patria* III, §§ 9, 59, 85, 154, 183.

Tiberius I is called the Thracian in three. One paragraph notes that Anastasius I originally came from Dyrrachium and on one occasion the text uses Zeno's Isaurian name along with his Roman one. However, Phocas and Tiberius are mentioned in eight paragraphs each, Zeno appears in ten paragraphs and Anastasius in 14.¹²⁵ If the editor had intended to debase these emperors by referring to their origins, there appears to be no reason for doing so only on a few separate occasions and not consistently throughout the text. For instance, one paragraph refers to Tiberius I as Maurice's father-in-law, another calls him *ὁ πρῶτος* 'the first' and the emperor appears on three separate occasions without any epithet at all. If there were an ideological purpose behind the references to his Thracian origins, we could have expected such references in these five paragraphs as well. Again, the most plausible explanation appears to be that the epithet was used with no other purpose than to distinguish the emperor from his younger namesake.

Furthermore, the paragraphs mentioning Tiberius I are not unique in their employment of a wide variety of epithets to identify the emperor. Apart from being referred to as a native of Dyrrachium, Anastasius I is twice identified as *ὁ ἀποσελευτι-ἀριος* 'the former silentiary' and by his commonly used by-name *Δίκωρος* 'two-pupilled' on eight separate occasions.¹²⁶ Similarly, Justin II is mostly referred as *ὁ ἀποκουροπαλάτης* 'the former curopalates', but also as the Justinian's nephew or Sophia's husband.¹²⁷ Several other emperors are identified through family ties; Constantine III is referred to as the son of Heraclius, Constantine IV as the father of Justinian II, Michael III as the son of Theophilus, Leo VI as the son of Basil I, Constantine VII as the son of Leo VI and Basil II as the son of Romanus II. The text also distinguishes Basil II from his ancestor and namesake Basil I by using the epithet *ὁ νεός* 'the younger'. The same epithet is used to separate Romanus II from Romanus I and the latter is in turn referred to as *ὁ γέρων* 'the elder'. Michael I is identified simply by his family name Rhangabe.¹²⁸ The wide variety of different epithets used throughout the text can obviously be explained by

¹²⁵ *Patria* II, §§ 21f, 25, 27, 34f, 46, 53, 55, 83, 107; *Patria* III, §§ 14, 22, 26, 33f, 40, 46, 51, 55f, 66f, 84, 103, 116, 125, 157, 166, 170, 180f, 185, 189, 197.

¹²⁶ *Patria* III, §§ 22, 40, 51, 67, 84, 103, 180, 189.

¹²⁷ *Patria* II, § 62, *Patria* III, §§ 23, 32, 35, 169.

¹²⁸ *Patria* II, § 101; *Patria* III, §§ 29f, 40, 49, 53, 77, 96, 199, 212-214; *Patria* IV, §§ 33, 35.

the heterogeneous origins of the *Patria*. The important point to be made, however, is that there is no evidence of any editorial effort to achieve consistency as regards the use of these epithets.

Moreover, there are also several paragraphs in which an emperor can be identified by the circumstances of the recounted episode and in these paragraphs the emperors in question are almost never given any distinguishing epithets. As we have seen above, Tiberius I is mentioned without epithets in three paragraphs, but one of them refers to his predecessor Justin II and the remaining two to his successor Maurice, thus making it abundantly clear that the Tiberius in question is Tiberius I. Tiberius is consequently only distinguished by an epithet when he could otherwise be confused with his younger namesake, which implies that the epithets were used solely for practical reasons. There are a few more examples of this practice to be found in the text. One paragraph relates that a harbour was built “in the times of Zeno and Anastasius”, obviously referring to Anastasius I.¹²⁹ The same emperor and his wife Ariadne are credited jointly with works of construction in two paragraphs, both of them referring to Anastasius only by his name.¹³⁰ The same applies to three of the four paragraphs recounting the achievements of Justin II and his wife Sophia. The fourth of these paragraphs also refers to the family ties between Justin and Justinian I, but this exception can be explained by the fact that the paragraph recounts the deeds of both emperors. Since both emperors are mentioned in their own right, instead of one being mentioned as a means to identify the other, the reference to their family ties is not necessarily intended to serve as a distinguishing epithet.¹³¹ Justinian himself is likewise referred to only by his name in three paragraphs, two concerning Hagia Sophia and one concerning his wife Theodora.¹³²

Similarly, the emperors who do not share names with any other emperors are almost never given any epithets that could have served to identify them if there had been any need to do so. There are a few exceptions, most of which can be satisfactorily explained. Basiliscus and Leontius are both referred to by the titles they held prior to their accession in a total of three paragraphs, but two of the episodes concern the rebellions

¹²⁹ *Patria* III, § 166. The Greek text of the quote reads: ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις Ζήνωνος καὶ Ἀναστασίου.

¹³⁰ *Patria* III, §§ 55, 181.

¹³¹ *Patria* III, §§ 123, 147, 164, 166.

¹³² *Patria* II, §§ 17, 96; *Patria* III, § 93.

that brought these emperors to power, in which case it would be relevant to inform the intended readers from which political positions they chose to rebel, and the third one deals with events that took place before Basiliscus's accession, in which case it is only natural to refer to the titles he held at that time. None of the remaining paragraphs mentioning either Basiliscus or Leontius identifies them by their former titles.¹³³ In addition to this, John I is referred to by his family name Tzimiskes in both paragraphs mentioning him, but the increased importance and political power of the eastern military families during the latter part of the 10th century could reasonably account for a general tendency to use the full names of the members of these families, such as the emperor in question.¹³⁴ The only remaining exceptions that cannot be easily explained are the paragraphs mentioning Zeno's Isaurian name and referring to Phocas' Cappadocian origins respectively. Nevertheless, as we have seen above, this applies only to two of the 18 paragraphs mentioning either of these emperors, which must be considered an acceptable margin of error for an examination of the general tendencies of a text as heterogeneous as the *Patria*. Considering the conclusions reached above, as well as the fact that neither Constantius, Valens, Arcadius, Marcian, Maurice, Heraclius, Philippicus or Theophilus are referred to by any distinguishing epithets, it must be fully justified to speak of a general tendency to use such epithets only when there is a need to clarify which emperor the text refers to, which once again implies that they were used for practical rather than ideological reasons.¹³⁵

Interestingly enough, Basil I is also one of the emperors who are never referred to by any epithets, despite the fact that his descendant and namesake occupied the throne when the *Patria* was composed.¹³⁶ There are likewise two paragraphs in which an emperor named Anastasius, recognised by Berger as Anastasius I, is mentioned, but whose identity is never specified, neither by use of an epithet or by the circumstances.¹³⁷ It would be reasonable to assume that the sources on which the portrayal of Basil I were based had been written before the accession of Basil II, thus lacking any reason to be

¹³³ *Patria* II, §§ 23, 27; *Patria* III, §§ 26, 79, 124, 207.

¹³⁴ *Patria* I, § 60; *Patria* III, § 213; Whittow (1996), 358f.

¹³⁵ *Patria* II, §§ 24, 35, 39, 41, 48, 53f, 64f, 69, 85, 88f, 92, 98, 109; *Patria* III, §§ 2, 15, 25, 28, 42-44, 63, 71, 73, 74, 125f, 131, 150, 155, 166, 170f, 185, 187, 194.

¹³⁶ *Patria* III, §§ 24, 27, 29, 29a, 86, 159, 162, 182, 186, 200, 206.

¹³⁷ *Patria* II, §§ 22, 86; Berger (1988), 392.

more specific as regards the identity of the emperor, and it seems likely that similar circumstances caused the lack of clarification in the paragraphs referring to Anastasius. However, the editor would reasonably have been able to introduce clarifying epithets when composing the *Patria*, which means that these examples can be regarded as implying that the editor had not concerned herself with the use of epithets at all, but merely copied the references to the emperors word for word from the sources. Such an interpretation would naturally undermine Dagron's conclusions further, but we cannot fully substantiate such a claim without examining the sources in question. The emperor has a peripheral role in the paragraphs referring to Anastasius and it is entirely plausible that the lack of useful means to identify the emperor was simply overlooked by mistake. The references to Basil I are more troublesome in this respect, since he is consequently referred to without any epithets, but since the emperor he would have to be distinguished from was the reigning emperor at the time, we cannot assume that the same principles for identification would have been applied in these paragraphs as in those concerning other emperors. For instance, it might have been considered common knowledge that the edifices ascribed to an emperor named Basil were significantly older than Basil II, which would have made further clarification superfluous. Based solely on these few exceptions we can consequently not conclude with any certainty that the issue of epithets were disregarded in the editing process.

Nevertheless, we can safely conclude, firstly, that the epithets without obvious ideological significance are almost always used exclusively when there is a need to distinguish one emperor from another, secondly, that no effort appears to have been made to achieve a measure of consistency as regards the use of these epithets and, thirdly, that they could be freely combined with epithets that clearly portray the emperor in question in a favourable light. We can consequently not assume that there is any ideological purpose behind the use of them and there is no reason to believe that they were used as a means to debase the emperors.

3.2 Rivals for glory: Magistrates, dignitaries and other individuals of note

Before we proceed to discuss the general ideological tendencies of the *Patria* as regards the emperors who appear in the narrative, we must consider the portrayal of their subjects. The intended scope of this paper will not allow more than a brief survey, but since the portrayal of the emperors must be evaluated in relation to the contrast provided by the achievements and qualities ascribed to these individuals, we cannot pass over them entirely. We have already considered the ideological relevance of those assisting Constantine during the foundation of the city and those assisting Justinian with the construction of Hagia Sophia in the chapters concerning these emperors. We have concluded that the two emperors clearly dominate the accounts of *Patria* I and IV respectively, even though the subordinates assisting them are portrayed in a favourable light as well. There are similarly a number of paragraphs in the second and third books of the *Patria* recounting the names of several individuals who assisted the reigning emperors with important construction projects, but still primarily crediting the emperors for the successful completion of these projects.¹³⁸ The text does however also mention a large number of magistrates, dignitaries and other individuals of note, many of which are appearing to act in a context much less dependent on the reigning emperor.

The most noteworthy aspect of this is a multitude of achievements in the field of construction. Individuals who were not part of the immediate imperial family, most of them identified as magisters, patricians or both, are given credit for a total of three palaces, four cisterns, five baths, three hospices, eight homes for the elderly, one praetorium, 14 monasteries and 28 churches, two of which are integrated parts of one of the monasteries.¹³⁹ In addition to this, individuals of non-imperial backgrounds are also reported to have enlarged, embellished and enriched one additional monastery, contributed to the sumptuousness of Hagia Sophia and erected several statues and monuments, namely a statue of Theodosius II, a marble statue with unknown motif, a monolith and an unspecified number of statues in the Golden Gate, as well as a cross

¹³⁸ *Patria* II, § 58; *Patria* III, §§ 37, 47, 91, 111, 133, 138.

¹³⁹ *Patria* II, §§ 36, 70-72; *Patria* III, §§ 6f, 14, 16, 21-23, 30, 33, 36, 45, 49f, 56, 60, 62, 65, 68, 72, 76, 83, 87, 90, 94f, 96-99, 101f, 105f, 110, 116f, 119-121, 141, 146, 160f, 167, 172, 174, 179, 192-193a, 195-198, 208.

used to embellish a church.¹⁴⁰ For 26 of the 66 buildings mentioned we are explicitly told that they were not originally built for these purposes, but came into being through conversion of existing buildings. The text also informs us that three of the monasteries were built on land donated by the emperor for that purpose and that one of the hospices were built at the request of the emperor and presumably funded by the imperial treasury. Nevertheless, the contribution to the physical development of the city ascribed to these individuals cannot be considered insignificant.

There are also a number of buildings ascribed to other members of the imperial families than the emperors themselves, namely one palace, one bath, one indeterminate building complex, two homes for the elderly, nine monasteries and eight churches.¹⁴¹ Most of these individuals are however intimately associated with the emperor. For instance, 15 of the 23 edifices mentioned were built by empresses, including Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great who was titled Augusta. Only five of the buildings were built by individuals who are not identified solely by their kinship with one or several emperors, but also through their status as magistrates or dignitaries. In addition to this, the text mentions five buildings for which it gives credit jointly to an emperor and an empress.¹⁴² Even though these achievements are not as numerous as those ascribed to individuals who were not part of the imperial family, they cannot be regarded as insignificant either.

Nevertheless, if we count only the churches ascribed to the emperors throughout the text, we would end up with a number close to 80. If this is compared to the 23 buildings of various sorts ascribed to other imperial family members and, more importantly, the 66 buildings ascribed to other individuals of note, it is clear that the achievements in the field of construction ascribed to emperors can hardly be regarded as being overshadowed by those ascribed to their subjects. Moreover, the credit for the latter are distributed amongst a much larger number of individuals. No one outside of the imperial family is given credit for the original construction of more than two separate buildings, which conveys the impression that only emperors were able to undertake construction projects on such a large scale, thus underlining the notion of their exalted

¹⁴⁰ *Patria* II, §§ 57, 58a, 60; *Patria* III, §§ 168, 179, 184, 208.

¹⁴¹ *Patria* II, § 26; *Patria* III, §§ 4f, 41, 57, 59, 81f, 107f, 153, 155, 185, 207.

¹⁴² *Patria* III, §§ 1-3, 67.

status in Byzantine society. We must however also note that although the achievements in the field of construction ascribed to individuals of non-imperial backgrounds cannot be said to overshadow those of the emperors, especially not on an individual basis, the text does still ascribe a sizable part of the credit for the physical development of the imperial city to such individuals. If there had been an ideological purpose to glorify the emperors, almost all of the references to the achievements of their subjects could easily have been omitted. The apparent imperial dominance in the field of construction should consequently not be interpreted as part of an ideological message to this effect.

Individuals who act seemingly independently of the reigning emperors are however not only portrayed through references to the buildings they constructed, but also through accounts of other deeds and individual characteristics. The ideological implications of these accounts vary significantly from one individual to the other and could in a number of instances be considered complex. We have already touched upon a few examples in chapter two. The account of Belisarius' military victories and unjust treatment by Justinian clearly portrays the general in a favourable light, while the references to the attempted rebellion against the pious Leo I by Aspar and Ardabur, as well as the references to evil deeds of the latter, express a distinctly unfavourable sentiment on their characters. The paragraph recounting the deeds of the magistrate Illus can be characterised as ideologically complex; on one hand, we are told that he performed his magisterial duties with great honour, on the other, that he was also a tyrant who rebelled against the legitimate emperor.¹⁴³

There are several other examples. We are told that the strategus Mananes was honoured with a statue after his vigorous victory against the Scythians, that the patriarch Modestus zealously urged Heraclius with his prayers to restore the true cross to Jerusalem and that the patrician Lausus held many magistracies and honours.¹⁴⁴ The text also relates that Gainas, another patrician, attempted to overthrow the emperor Arcadius, that a member of the imperial bodyguard named Toxaras was one of the murderers of Michael III and that the heretic Acatus, who participated at the ecumenical council of 451, betrayed the people of Chalcedon to the Persians in response to the defeat of the

¹⁴³ *Patria* II, §§ 17, 71, 99; *Patria* III, §§ 33, 43.

¹⁴⁴ *Patria* II, §§ 36, 92, 97.

monophysite faction.¹⁴⁵ One paragraph states that the patrician Antiochus held many magistracies with honour before he was exposed as a deceiver who had enriched himself unjustly, while another one refers to the 7th-century patriarch Sergius as *βέβηλος* ‘godless’, which is doubtless a reference to his subsequent condemnation as a heretic on account of his support for the doctrine of monothelitism, but also credits him with the construction of a church and recounts that he contributed to Hagia Sophia by building additional oratories and donating many treasures.¹⁴⁶

We can thus conclude that the ideologically relevant characteristics of these individuals, judging from their portrayal in the *Patria*, range from war hero to traitorous heretic. Moreover, for several of these individuals we are informed of both their commendable qualities and their despicable shortcomings, which results in ideologically complex portrayals. Considering these variegated ideological implications, the text does not appear to adopt any clear ideological stance towards these individuals of non-imperial backgrounds if they are examined as a collective. This also corresponds well to the results of the comparison between the number of edifices ascribed to such individuals and to the emperors respectively. If the contrast between the portrayal of the emperors and the portrayal of their subjects is to have any ideological impact, this must consequently be on a strictly individual basis, which has already been considered in chapter two.

3.3 Masters of the Imperial City: Summarising analysis

As the analysis in chapter two has shown, the ideological implications of the portrayals of the different emperors vary significantly from one individual to the other. We can however distinguish some general tendencies. Leaving the matter of ideological messages for the time being, we can somewhat arbitrarily divide the portrayals of the emperors into a few different categories based on the ideology expressed in the text. These categories will be accounted for in ideological order, ranging from the most favourable accounts to the most unfavourable ones. Firstly, due to his exceedingly prominent position in the text,

¹⁴⁵ *Patria* II, § 89a; *Patria* III, §§ 100, 109.

¹⁴⁶ *Patria* III, §§ 70, 208; Berger (1988), 711.

Constantine the Great would have to be given a category of his own. The greatness of his achievements as the founder of the city is implicitly expressed through the multitude of edifices ascribed to him and he is portrayed as a conscientious ruler, a just lawgiver, a victorious general and, most importantly, as a vigorous and committed champion of Christianity. In addition to this, the emperor is credited with saintly qualities on a few occasions, which together with his nearly ubiquitous presence throughout the text clearly sets him apart from all other individuals mentioned, including his successors on the imperial throne.

Secondly, we can distinguish a large group of emperors who are all portrayed in a consistently favourable light, even though many of them are mentioned only in a few paragraphs. The two most remarkable of these are clearly Marcian and Irene, both of whom are praised for their piety and credited with a large number of commendable achievements. Leo I is also identified by his piety, portrayed as equitable ruler and given credit for a fair amount of construction projects. The episodes mentioning the murders of Aspar and Ardabur also appear amicably disposed towards Leo, at least predominately so. Neither Theodosius I nor Justin II are explicitly praised for any particular qualities, but the impressive amount of buildings, mostly churches, ascribed to them as well as the occasional associations with holy relics nevertheless reflects favourably upon their characters. Similarly, the portrayals of Michael III, Tiberius I and Maurice have been characterised as mildly favourable due to the building activity each emperor is credited with. The same conclusion has been reached concerning Heraclius and Theophilus, whose achievements in the field of construction appear quite modest, but who are instead clearly portrayed as a victorious defender of the empire and a righteous vindicator of the law respectively. The recounted achievements of Zeno are even less impressive, but the text does appear to favour him in the accounts of both rebellions against his rule. Justin I and Basil II are merely credited with the construction of one building each, while no such activities are ascribed to Philippicus at all, but all three emperors are referred to with flattering epithets. Arcadius, Leo VI, John I, Constantine VII and Romanus I are all given credit for the construction of churches and the first three also appear to have displayed a particular enthusiasm for such activities, while Valens and Tiberius II are briefly credited

with the construction of the great aqueduct and the renovation of the sea walls respectively.

Even though some of these emperors are only mentioned in a few paragraphs and only credited with minor achievements, their common denominator is that whenever any of them is mentioned in an ideologically significant context, it always to his, or her, advantage, if only vaguely so. There is no compromising information at all about any of them, which is what separates them from the next category of emperors, namely those who are given an overwhelmingly favourable portrayal, but who also appears under distinctly demeaning circumstances in at least one paragraph. Four emperors can be placed in this category: Theodosius II, Justinian I, Anastasius I and Basil I. Theodosius is given credit for a wide range of construction projects, including the Theodosian Walls, and the text also relates that it was he who led the people in prayer when God's displeasure with the heretics living in the city manifested itself in an earthquake, but two paragraphs recount that his jealousy led him to punish innocent men, one of them with death. The same vice is ascribed to Justinian in the episodes where he blinds and impoverishes the heroic general Belisarius and attempts to kill the master-builder Ignatius, which form a glaring contrast to the accounts of his righteousness, piety and divine favour, the latter two being intimately related to his remarkable efforts in the field of construction, with Hagia Sophia as its crowning achievement. Anastasius is likewise credited with the construction of a considerable number of churches and his sincere interest in them is underlined on several occasions, which is hard to reconcile with the paragraph recounting how the emperor was struck down by the wrath of God. Basil is similarly given credit for having constructed a large number of different buildings, many of them churches that are mentioned in several paragraphs each, and one paragraph refers to the prophecy that foretold his accession, but he is also explicitly accused of having murdered his predecessor on two separate occasions and one additional paragraph at least implies it, even though there are curiously no direct words of condemnation to be found anywhere in the text.

The next category is constituted by the emperors whose portrayals can neither be characterised as favourable nor as unfavourable, either because the emperor does not appear in any ideologically significant contexts, or because the possible ideological

implications of the paragraphs in which he does appear are too ambiguous to allow any conclusions of satisfactory certainty. Of the emperors who are mentioned in the text, Constantius II, Constantine III, Constantine IV, Leontius, Michael I and Romanus II can be regarded to match these criteria, but we could also include those emperors who are not mentioned at all here as well, namely Jovian, Leo II, Constans II, Heraclonas, Anastasius II, Theodosius III, Nicephorus I, Stauracius, Leo V, Michael II, Alexander and Nicephorus II.

In the fifth category we shall place the emperors who are portrayed in a predominantly unfavourable light, but who are also occasionally referred to in considerably more conciliatory terms. Four emperors will be placed in this category: Basiliscus, Phocas, Justinian II and Constantine VI. As we have seen, there appears to be a vague bias in favour of Zeno in the accounts of Basiliscus' rebellion, but there is also one paragraph referring to the latter's accession without even mentioning the underlying conflict. As regards the rebellion of Phocas, the text makes it clear that his reign was lawless and the account of how he summarily executed Maurice's entire family and refused to let them be buried conveys a tangible sense of his cruelty. Other paragraphs refer to him in a mildly depreciatory manner, but there are also at least two episodes in which he is portrayed in a somewhat favourable light, erecting pillars decorated with mosaic and taking part in addressing the inhuman living conditions in the old Praetorium. Justinian is referred to as a tyrant in two paragraphs, but the account of his return to power is seemingly unbiased and he is also credited with the construction of a church and two palace halls. Constantine VI is depicted as a rebel against his mother, the virtuous Irene, in one paragraph, but he is also given credit for erecting a statue in her honour and for participating in some of her construction projects.

The few commendable deeds ascribed to Phocas, Justinian II and Constantine VI can hardly be regarded as outweighing the explicitly insulting epithets or reprehensible deeds with which they are associated, but the inclusion of the neutrally or even favourably inclined paragraphs indicate an ideological ambivalence as regards these emperors, which separates them distinctly from those of the final category: Julian the Apostate, Leo III and Constantine V. These emperors are consistently and thoroughly debased in the text, with no room for any ambivalence. Of the heinous acts ascribed to

these emperors, the burning of pious, orthodox Christians stands out as especially characteristic for rulers of such abominable natures and they are all linked to the destruction of venerated images in different ways; Julian buried the Christianised statue of Tyche, Leo removed a miracle-working statue of Christ and Constantine burned holy icons. There is also a remarkable consistency in the portrayal of these emperors. On the few occasions when the recounted deeds of Leo III or Constantine V are not obviously reprehensible, the text still refers to them in a denigratory manner, using the insulting baptismal name of the former or the derisive sobriquets of the latter, thus ensuring that there can be no ideological confusion as regards their characters.

Having thus summarised the ideological tendencies identified in chapter two, we must proceed to discuss the issue of ideological messages. It will be argued that the text of the *Patria* alone gives us little reason to believe that it was composed to convey any ideological messages at all, but we must first consider and reject some other possibilities. First of all, we shall inquire into the possibility of ideological messages regarding specific individuals. For most of the emperors mentioned in chapter two, such a message would have no discernable relevance. The portrayal of every emperor can naturally contribute to an ideological message regarding emperors in general, but other than this the ideological relevance of the individual emperors would reasonably have to be either as members of a dynasty with living descendants, or as symbols or representatives for issues of relevance to the Byzantine society of the late 10th century. The possibilities of ideological messages related to the reigning Macedonian dynasty or to the one issue of perpetual relevance to the Byzantines, religion, will consequently be discussed below. Considering the subject-matter of the text, the city of Constantinople, we would however have to allow for the possibility of ideological messages honouring individual emperors who have contributed to the development of the city in some extraordinary way.

The text mentions at least three achievements of such magnitude, namely the founding of the city itself and the construction of two unique edifices that were of monumental importance even to the contemporaries of the *Patria*: Hagia Sophia and the Theodosian Walls. The matter of possible ideological messages regarding the emperors who are given credit for these achievements has already been addressed in chapter two. On account of the ideological complexities in the portrayals of Theodosius II and

Justinian I, we have excluded the possibility that the ideology expressed regarding these emperors should be considered as constituting an ideological message, whereas the portrayal of Constantine the Great was somewhat more complicated in this respect. As we have seen above, Constantine occupies a central position in the text and the portrayal of him is overwhelmingly favourable and devoid of explicitly depreciatory remarks. Nevertheless, considering the multitude of paragraphs in which the emperor appears, the explicit praise for him or his achievements is extremely scarce, which combined with the apparent indifference of the text towards the repeated associations with paganism led us to the conclusion that ideological implications as regards Constantine in all likelihood should be characterised as a reflective ideology, even if the possibility of an ideological message cannot be completely disregarded.

Leaving the individual portrayals aside, we shall proceed to determine whether the text can be said to convey any ideological messages as regards emperors in a collective sense. Firstly, we shall attempt to refute Dagron's suggestion that the *Patria* serves to debase the Byzantine emperors, with the exceptions of Constantine the Great and Justinian I, from which we can infer the notion that the text conveys an ideological message to that effect. The first argument against such a theory is naturally that the ideology expressed in the text is not unfavourably inclined towards the emperors in general. Far from being reduced to chronological indicators, the emperors are given credit for the lion's share of the building activity accounted for in the text, which clearly identifies the imperial throne as the driving force behind the development of the city. In comparison with other individuals who are credited with such activities, the emperors, accompanied by a few empresses, clearly stand out as the only ones who are able to conduct construction projects on a larger scale, which further sets them apart from their subjects. Moreover, only emperors and empresses are explicitly referred to as pious or given credit for doing charitable works, bringing relics to the city or upholding the law. The episode in which Theodosius II leads the people in prayer in order to stop an earthquake and then expels the heretics who caused it from the city also reaffirms the notion of the emperor as the principal defender of the faith.

Furthermore, when examining the ideological content of the paragraphs in which the individual emperors are portrayed, we have found that the unfavourable ideological implications are focused to a great extent on three specific emperors whose wickedness we can assume was taken for granted by the contemporary Byzantines. Four additional emperors are given inconsistently unfavourable portrayals, which can be compared to the 22 emperors who are portrayed in a consistently favourable light and the four whose portrayals have been characterised as inconsistently favourable. If we instead compare the number of favourably and unfavourably inclined paragraphs, the result is quite similar: Julian the Apostate, Leo III and Constantine V are mentioned in a total of 16 paragraphs, which also is the exact number of paragraphs mentioning either Marcian or Irene, who are only two of the many emperors portrayed in a distinctly and consistently favourable light. Moreover, as regards the epithets by which the emperors are often identified, we have concluded that the sole reason behind the use of epithets without obvious ideological significance in all likelihood is to distinguish one emperor from others with the same name and not to present depreciatory caricatures of the emperors in question. Considering the circumstances accounted for above, we must conclude that there is no ideological message debasing the emperors as a collective in the text.

We must however also conclude that the opposite possibility, that the text conveys an ideological message intended to glorify or praise the emperors, is equally implausible. Although the general ideological tendencies of the text are favourably inclined towards a clear majority of the emperors, the paragraphs that express explicit praise for them are comparatively few. As with the portrayal of Constantine the Great, there would have been ample opportunities to emphasise the greatness of the imperial achievements or stress the importance of the emperors for the development of the city, but on most occasions the favourable ideological tendencies are only implicitly expressed. We have also seen that although the construction projects carried out by individuals who were not part of the imperial family cannot rival those of the emperors, accounts of such projects still amount to considerable part of episodes in the text. If the *Patria* had been composed with the intention of glorifying the emperors and praising them for their contribution to the development of the city, we could have expected most, if not all, of the references to the achievements of their subjects to have been omitted.

Similarly, there would be no conceivable reason for the editor to complicate the remarkably favourable portrayals of Theodosius II, Anastasius I, Justinian I and Basil I by including episodes ascribing despicable characteristics or deeds to these emperors, if the text was intended to convey a praiseful ideological message. It can consequently be concluded that the text does not appear to express any ideological message concerning the emperors in a general sense.

The next possibility we must consider is that of an ideological message glorifying the reigning Macedonian dynasty. It is not unreasonable to assume that there is a connection between the flattering epithets ascribed to Basil II and the fact that he was the reigning emperor when the *Patria* was composed, but since Basil is only mentioned in a single paragraph it is quite clear that the text was not composed in order to glorify him alone. If we place this paragraph in a larger context and consider the ideological implications of all references to members of the dynasty, there is however still insufficient evidence to conclude that the ideology expressed constitutes an ideological message. The Macedonian emperors mentioned in the text, Basil I, Leo VI, Constantine VII and Basil II, as well as the two other emperors who were closely associated with the dynasty, Romanus I and John I, are all portrayed in a predominantly favourable light and given credit for a fair amount of edifices, especially churches, but their collective achievements still pale in comparison with those of the emperors of late antiquity. By way of example, we can note that a total of ten new churches are ascribed to Basil I and his successors, whereas, for instance, Justin II is credited with the construction of nine new churches on his own.

The notion that the emperors of late antiquity were both wealthier and more powerful than their 9th and 10th century counterparts was reasonably as uncontroversial to the contemporary Byzantines as it is to the modern reader, but if the episodes concerning the Macedonian emperors were intended to constitute a glorifying ideological message, we could have expected at least a measure of additional emphasis on the greatness of their achievements. There would have been ample opportunities to accentuate the military, economic and cultural revival that was overseen by these emperors, but the only tangible difference between the paragraphs ascribing commendable achievements to the Macedonian emperors and the ones ascribing such achievements to other emperors is that

the latter are considerably more numerous. Furthermore, the repeated references to the murder of Michael III at the hands of Basil I can only be regarded as reflecting distinctly unfavourably on the origins of the illustrious dynasty. If there was an ideological message intended to glorify the Macedonian emperors, we could have expected such references to be removed, which would have been easily accomplished in the editing process. Similarly, when the text refers to the prophecy foretelling Basil's accession, it does so only in passing, seemingly assuming that the intended readers were familiar with the story and thus passing over an excellent and quite obvious opportunity to reiterate an episode that bestows additional glory upon the dynasty.

Finally, we must examine and refute the possibility that the text conveys an ideological message in favour of the orthodox Christian emperors. Firstly, however, it must be recognised that there are a few compelling arguments in favour of such a theory to be found in the previous analysis. The only three emperors who are consistently debased are arguably the ones who represented the most reprehensible religious policies if viewed from the orthodox perspective of the late 10th century; Julian reinstated paganism as official religious policy, Leo III introduced the doctrine of iconoclasm and Constantine V was its most energetic proponent. On the other side of the ideological spectrum, the three emperors who are given the most favourable portrayals can be seen as representing the greatest triumphs of orthodox Christianity; Constantine the Great was the first emperor to embrace the religion, Marcian presided over the ecumenical council of Chalcedon, a pivotal event in the process of defining orthodoxy, and Irene is credited with the abolition of iconoclasm. Moreover, in the paragraphs regarding Julian and Leo III, there are indications which might be interpreted as implying a reluctance to credit these emperors with works of construction. If there is an ideological message of religious nature, such an interpretation could also explain why the text gives credit for the first church of Hagia Sophia only to Constantine the Great and not to his Arian successor, Constantius II. It could similarly be argued that the briefness of the paragraph stating that Valens had built the great aqueduct might be due to the emperor's Arian sympathies.

Nevertheless, there are also considerable discrepancies between the ideological tendencies of the text and the expected manifestations of a pro-orthodox ideological message. If we venture beyond the extremes of the ideological spectrum we can note that

amongst the other emperors who are portrayed in a consistently favourable light there are one iconoclast, Theophilus, and two supporters of Monothelitism, Heraclius and Philippicus. In addition to this, three of the four emperors who are portrayed in a predominately unfavourable manner, namely Constantine VI, Phocas and Justinian II, have impeccable orthodox credentials. The latter even presided over the Quinisext ecumenical council, which confirmed the orthodoxy of the Chalcedonian doctrine. The ideological elements of the text can consequently not be regarded as being consistently structured by religious lines. If there had been an ideological message of religious nature in the text, we could also have expected at least a brief reference to the final abolition of iconoclasm in 843. Furthermore, we can reasonably assume that the paragraph in which Anastasius I is struck down by the wrath of God implicitly refers to his Monophysite sympathies, which clearly contradicts the otherwise quite favourable portrayal of the emperor. If the paragraph recounting Anastasius' shameful death was included with the explicit purpose of debasing the emperor on account of his heretical beliefs, we could have expected the paragraphs portraying him as a committed and enthusiastic builder of churches to be conveniently omitted.

The religious misdeeds of Julian, Leo III and Constantine V are, of course, considerably more serious than those of Heraclius, Philippicus and Theophilus, while Constantine the Great, Marcian and Irene likewise are more intimately associated with orthodoxy than Phocas, Justinian II and Constantine VI. These circumstances should however not be taken as an argument in favour of the theory that the text conveys an ideological message of religious nature, but rather as an indication of the exact opposite. By the end of the 10th century, Leo III and Constantine V had been abused in iconophile propaganda for almost two centuries and there is little reason to believe that any sources of different opinion had survived the final abolition of the iconoclast doctrine. By the time the *Patria* was composed, the practise of debasing these emperors in literature could in all likelihood be regarded as having passed from the field of moral obligation to that of literary convention, which, of course, is not to say that the Byzantines were not sincerely appalled by the deeds they were accused of, nor that it was considered less than relevant to recount them. Nevertheless, when attempting to identify ideological messages concerning a religious doctrine by examining the attitudes towards the individuals who

can be regarded as representing that doctrine, we could reasonably expect an analysis of the attitude towards those individuals whose wickedness was not already considered as self-evident by the contemporaries to yield more accurate information about the ideological message as regards the doctrine itself. If the text had been unfavourably disposed towards all heretics, even a moderate iconoclast like Theophilus, or proponents of the relatively innocuous doctrine of Monothelitism such as Heraclius and Philippicus, this could only have been ascribed to an ideological message to that effect, whereas we could expect a distinct bias against such divisive and thoroughly reviled rulers as Julian, Leo III and Constantine V even if the editor simply copied the text of her sources without any ideological intentions. The same argument could naturally be made as regards the pre-eminence of the emperors most closely associated with orthodoxy. In a text of such complex origins as the *Patria*, we must however avoid applying the criteria of consistency too categorically and the possibility of an ideological message of religious nature can consequently not be entirely disregarded, but it can be considered as unlikely if a more plausible theory can be presented.

This brings us back to the theory which will be argued to yield the most accurate results if compared to the results of the ideological analysis of the text, namely that the *Patria* is devoid of ideological messages regarding the emperors portrayed. Such a theory can explain the apparent consistency of many of the ideological tendencies in the text, as well as the occasional lack thereof, both of which have been identified in the analysis above. As we have noted, none of the sources available to the editor of the *Patria* would reasonably have been favourably inclined towards Julian the Apostate, Leo III or Constantine V, which means that even if the editor simply copied the text of her sources whenever she found a reference to a building, monument or location, the resulting text would probably still portray these emperors in a consistently unfavourable light. We could similarly expect emperors who carried out remarkable construction projects, ruled righteously or, most importantly, championed orthodoxy, to generate predominately favourable portrayals in the sources which were later employed by the editor of the *Patria*. If the *Patria* was not intended to convey any ideological message, we could thus expect the ideology expressed to reflect the general ideological tendencies of the available Byzantine literature and intellectual elite of the late 10th century. There is no

reason to believe that it does not. The notion that there is no ideological message to be found in the *Patria* would consequently not suggest that the editor did not generally agree with the ideology expressed throughout the text, but simply that she did not consider it necessary or part of her intended task to convey such sentiments through an ideological message.

As regards the ideological inconsistencies in the portrayals of several emperors, these also correspond well to what can be expected from a text devoid of ideological messages. All of four emperors who are portrayed in an inconsistently unfavourable light were violently removed from power, which means that it would have been of political interest to debase each one of them during the years immediately following his downfall. Nevertheless, all of them can be considered to have lost ideological relevance soon after they had been overthrown. After the deaths of Zeno and Heraclius and the depositions of Philippicus and Irene, there would be little political reason for anyone to either praise or demean their dethroned predecessors. If the editor of the *Patria* did not apply any ideological criteria when selecting the paragraphs regarding these emperors, we could consequently expect them to be either distinctly unfavourable or fairly neutral, a hypothesis which reflects the ideological tendencies of the actual text quite well. As regards the four emperors whose portrayals can be characterised as inconsistently favourable, the theory that there is no ideological message in the text would once again provide the most plausible explanation for the inclusion of distinctly depreciatory episodes in the otherwise favourable portrayals. If the editor would have had any kind of ideological intentions concerning these emperors, it would have made no sense at all to portray them as pious rulers and ambitious builders only to also include a few paragraphs conveying an explicitly demeaning impression of their characters. This is especially clear in the matters of Theodosius II and Justinian I, who are referred to in exceedingly flattering terms on several occasions. If the depreciatory episodes had been omitted, the portrayals of these two emperors would be amongst the most favourable in the text, surpassing even those of Marcian and Irene.

If the editor, on the other hand, composed the *Patria* with the sole intention of compiling all information of value and all anecdotes of interest on the subject of Constantinople, it would make perfect sense to include the depreciatory paragraphs

alongside the flattering ones, since all of them concern a building, monument or location in some way. The portrayal of Anastasius I can serve as an illustrative example of this. When mentioning the construction of a particular church it would clearly be of relevance to relate who the builder was as well as any other information concerning the construction that might be available, such as if the builder embellished it richly, deposited relics there or donated much property to it. If the sources at the editor's disposal ascribed such commendable activities to Anastasius, they would naturally have been included in the text. However, if the sources also recounted an episode explaining how the Magnaura received its name, such an anecdote would clearly merit inclusion in the text, even if it also served to debase an emperor who was otherwise portrayed in a favourable light. The matter of ideological consistency as regards the emperor thus appears to have been considered quite irrelevant. If any ideological concerns were taken into account when the *Patria* was composed, they would evidently have been of secondary importance to the manifest encyclopaedic ambitions of the text. We can consequently conclude that the identified ideological tendencies of the *Patria* suggest that it is devoid of ideological messages regarding the Byzantine emperors.

4. Conclusions

Through a systematic analysis of the text, we have concluded that the portrayals of the individual emperors encompass a wide range of ideological implications. A majority of the emperors who are mentioned in the text, 22 of 39, are portrayed in a consistently favourable light, even though some of them only appear in a single paragraph. The most remarkable of them is clearly Constantine the Great, who is credited with a multitude of edifices, portrayed as a righteous ruler as well as a committed champion of Christianity, and even displays saintly qualities on a few occasions. Marcian and Irene, both of whom are praised for their piety and given credit for a large number of commendable achievements, also stand out as portrayed in a particularly favourable light, as do Leo I, Theodosius I and Justin II, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree. By virtue of their achievements in the field of construction, other commendable activities or the flattering epithets ascribed to them, the portrayals of Valens, Arcadius, Zeno, Justin I, Tiberius I, Maurice, Heraclius, Tiberius II, Philippicus, Theophilus, Michael III, Leo VI, Constantine VII, Romanus I, John I and Basil II have also been characterised as consistently favourable. On the opposite side of the ideological spectrum, we have concluded that three emperors, Julian the Apostate, Leo III and Constantine V, are thoroughly and consistently reviled in the *Patria*, all of them characterised primarily by a penchant for burning pious, orthodox Christians and destroying venerated images.

Moreover, we have characterised the portrayals of eight emperors as ideologically complex. Phocas, Justinian II and Constantine VI are all explicitly defamed in some paragraphs, but depicted in a mildly favourable manner in others. Similarly, the text appears unfavourably inclined towards Basiliscus' rebellion against Zeno, but also includes an episode that refers to his accession without mentioning any underlying conflict. Four emperors, Theodosius II, Justinian I, Basil I and Anastasius I, are portrayed in an overwhelmingly favourable light, but the text also includes a few paragraphs in which the first three are depicted as murderers and the fourth is struck down by divine vengeance, presumably on account of his heretical beliefs. In addition to this, there are six emperors who are mentioned exclusively in ideologically insignificant or ambiguous contexts, namely Constantius II, Constantine III, Constantine IV, Leontius, Michael I and

Romanus II. The remaining emperors who ruled between the foundation of the city and the compilation of the *Patria* are not mentioned at all in the text.

Considering the wide range of ideological implications, it would be unreasonable to speak of a consistent ideology encompassing all the emperors mentioned. We can however identify some general tendencies. Firstly, it is clear that the ideology conveyed in the text, despite Dagrón's claims to the contrary, is generally quite favourably inclined towards the emperors. A clear majority of the edifices mentioned are ascribed to emperors, which makes it appear entirely unreasonable to claim that they are reduced to chronological indicators. In addition to this, the paragraphs recounting the commendable achievements of emperors, or even explicitly praising them, are much more numerous than the demeaning ones and the latter are to a great extent focused on three emperors whose villainy would in all likelihood be taken for granted by the contemporary Byzantines. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that the epithets without obvious ideological implications ascribed to emperors were included for any other reasons than purely practical ones. We have also identified an ideological tendency of religious nature, noting that of the emperors mentioned in the text, the three who are arguably most closely associated with the triumphs of orthodox Christianity, Constantine the Great, Marcian and Irene, are also the ones who are given the most favourable portrayals, whereas the emperors who could be regarded as the most palpable symbols of reprehensible religious policies, Julian the Apostate, Leo III and Constantine V, are portrayed in the most unfavourable manner.

Nevertheless, we have concluded that the identified ideological tendencies of the *Patria* suggest that it is devoid of ideological messages as regards the Byzantine emperors. Even though the text can be characterised as favourably inclined towards the emperors in general, little or no effort appears to have been made to emphasise the greatness of their achievements, despite ample opportunities to do so, and there are a number of paragraphs portraying emperors in a depreciatory manner which could easily have been left out if there had been an intention to glorify them. We have also refuted the possibility of an ideological message in favour of orthodox Christianity because the criterion of consistency can only be successfully applied to the extremes of the ideological spectrum, whereas we can find relatively innocuous heretics amongst the

emperors portrayed in a consistently favourable light and emperors with impeccable orthodox credentials amongst the ones whose portrayals have been characterised as predominately unfavourable.

Moreover, we have disregarded the notion of an ideological message in favour of the reigning Macedonian dynasty on the grounds that no apparent effort has been made to emphasise their achievements, which are dwarfed by those of the emperors of late antiquity, and that the founder of the dynasty, Basil I, is clearly identified as the murderer of his predecessor Michael III on several occasions. On an individual level we have found three emperors, Constantine the Great, Theodosius II and Justinian I, who could be regarded as fulfilling the criterion of relevance on account of the spectacular contributions to the city with which they are credited. However, the relative scarcity of episodes expressing explicit praise for Constantine and the apparent indifference towards the repeated associations between him and paganism, as well as the ideologically complex portrayals of Theodosius and Justinian, has led us to conclude that the existence of such messages should be deemed unlikely, albeit with some uncertainty as regards Constantine.

By contrast to these theories, which we have found unable to explain the actual ideological content of the text, we have concluded that the theory suggesting that the *Patria* is devoid of ideological messages as regards the emperors is, in fact, capable of explaining both the consistencies of the text, reflecting the ideology prevalent in contemporary Byzantine society, and its inconsistencies, reflecting the variegated ideological content of its sources. The ideology expressed in the *Patria* corresponds well to the ideological implications we could expect from a text compiled with the sole purpose of gathering all information of value and all anecdotes of interest on the subject of Constantinople. Some ideological concerns may have been taken into account when the text was composed, but if so they were evidently of secondary importance to the manifest encyclopaedic ambitions. We can conclude with certainty that the ideology expressed in the text is favourably inclined towards the emperors in general, but on one point the conclusions of this study is in complete agreement with Dagron: *Patria Konstantinoupoleos* is not primarily about the Byzantine emperors; it is about the city of Constantinople.

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