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H. P. L’ORANGE

STUDIES ON THE ICONOGRAPHY OF COSMIC KINGSHIP IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

OSLO 1953
H. ASCHEHOUG & CO. (W. NYGAARD)

LONDON
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WIESBADEN
OTTO HARRASSOWITZ

PARIS
SOCIÉTÉ D’ÉDITION "LES BELLES LETTRES"

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
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PREFACE

The origin of this book is a series of lectures given between September 16th—October 2nd of 1946 at a congress dedicated to the study of the period of the great migrations (400—800 A. D.) at "The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture" in Oslo. The subjects of these lectures were — in a popular form and with an abundance of illustrations forming a great part of the picture material of the present work — published in Norwegian in my book "Keiseren på Himmeltroen" (Dreyers Forlag, Oslo, 1949). During the following years the subjects were further developed and extended. My sojourn as a research scholar at "The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection" during my stay in U. S. A. as a visiting professor of the Harvard University in the spring 1950 has been of quite special significance for the whole work. I wish to express my gratitude to "The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection" for the time spent in its magnificent library in close collaboration with the distinguished Dumbarton Oaks colleagues. So many scholars in Europe and U. S. A. have in different ways contributed to my work. I am indebted to A. Alföldi, L. Amundsen, M. V. Anastos, K. Barr, A. Boethius, Gl. Downey, E. Dyggve, S. Eitrem, H. Fett, A. M. Friend, A. Grabar, K. Hanell, E. Kantorowicz, E. Kitzinger, G. Morgenstierne, P. A. Underwood. I specially wish to thank Professor Barr for having read and corrected my text. I am indebted to K. Kleve who worked out the register and assisted me in reading the prints.

Finally, I wish to thank the Direction of "The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture" for publishing my work, for kind support during the printing of the book and generosity in illustrating it.

H. P. L'Orange.
# CONTENTS

| 1. The Cosmic City of the Ancient East | 9 |
| 2. Khusrau's Cosmic Hall | 18 |
| 3. Nero's Cosmic Hall | 28 |
| 4. The Astral Symbols of Power | 35 |
| 5. The Astral Transformation of the Sassanian Throne | 37 |
| 6. Jahve's Cherub Throne | 48 |
| 7. Astral Thrones, Temples and Palaces in the Ancient Near East | 51 |
| 8. The Astral Ascension of the Sassanian King | 64 |
| 9. The Astral Movement of the Achaemenian Throne | 80 |
| 10. The Solar Significance is the Same by the Elevation of the Persian King and of the Byzantine Emperor | 88 |
| 11. The Cosmic Clipeus and the Solar *Imago Clipeata* | 90 |
| 12. The Solar Significance of the Elevation on a Shield | 103 |
| 13. The Solar Elevation of the Throne in Byzantine Court Ritual | 110 |
| 14. Lucifer | 114 |
| a. Khusrau—Lucifer | 114 |
| b. Alexander—Lucifer | 118 |
| 15. The Ancient Eastern Throne in the Christian Iconography | 124 |
| a. Throne-Chariot and *Majestas Domini* | 124 |
| b. Throne-Canopy and Ciborium | 134 |
| 16. The Gesture of Power. Cosmocrator's Sign | 139 |
| a. The Emperor's "Huge Hand" | 139 |
| b. The Oriental Origin of the Gesture of the Raised Right Hand | 153 |
| c. Jahve's "High Hand" | 159 |
| d. Τερακτίας θεοῦ in the Greek World | 162 |
| e. ἔμπνουσθαι | 164 |
| f. Christ Pantocrator | 165 |
| 17. The Gesture of Thought. The Sign of Logos | 171 |
| a. The Speaking Christ | 171 |
| b. The Speaking Hand in the Christian and the Sabazios Cult | 184 |
| c. Christ the Philosopher | 188 |
| d. Christus Logos | 192 |
1. THE COSMIC CITY OF THE ANCIENT EAST

Explaining how the ideal city in the ideal state is to be laid out, Plato in "The Laws" (745 sq.) shows us a "cosmic" city. The legislator, we learn, shall build a temple for Hestia, Zeus and Athene on the Acropolis of the city, draw a circuit-wall (a circle?) around it, and starting from this circuit-wall (circle?), divide the city itself and the whole country into 12 parts (κύκλον περιβάλλοντα, ἀρ' οὖ τά δώδεκα μέρη τέμνειν τήν τε πόλιν κύτην καὶ πάσαν τήν χώραν, 745 b). By this division of the area into 12 parts cosmic laws and proportions penetrate the city. The inhabitants themselves are put under these cosmic laws. The number of the families is 5040, which is divisible by 12 times 12, thus allowing a division into 12 tribes, each with 12 clans. "Now we must think", says Plato, "of each part as being holy, as a gift from God, which follows the movement of the months and the revolution of the All. So the whole state is directed by its relationship to the All and this sanctifies its separate parts . . ." (ἐκάστην δὴ τὴν μοίραν διακοσμοῖς χρεῶν ὡς οὕσαν ἱερῶν, θεοῦ δῶρον, ἔπομένην τοῖς μησίν καὶ τῇ τοῦ παντὸς περιόδῳ. διὰ καὶ πάσαν πόλιν ἄγει μὲν τὸ σύμφωνον ἱερῶν κύτας . . ., 771 b).

In order to understand the cosmic conception incarnated in certain city types of the Ancient East, we should bear in mind these words of Plato, even if when we move towards the Orient we have to give them a somewhat different accentuation.¹ Eastern fairy tales often speak of building plans disposed according to cosmic numbers: sections and rooms of buildings are placed and

¹ G. Downey has noticed a passage in Malalas suggesting that Plato’s precepts actually were followed to some extent, and even in the East. According to Malalas, Mr. Downey writes me, "the population of Antigonia, the new capital which Antigonus I founded in Syria, was 5,300 'men' (Malalas, p. 201, lines 12–16, Bonn ed.). This recalls the figure which Plato gives, 5,040 for the number of landholders and heads of households in the ideal city (Laws 737 E, 740 d–e), and it is interesting to find this suggestion that the Diadochi were sufficiently interested in Plato’s doctrines to carry them out, at least approximately, in their new foundations."
divided in relation to the number of months and days in the year. The cosmic pattern is especially clear in the royal residences of circular form. A number of Median, Parthian, Sassanian and Abbasid cities might here be cited.

Herodotus tells of the royal city of the Medes, Ecbatana, built by Deioces: "they built vast and substantial walls ... rising up one circuit-wall (circle?) within another (τείχεα μεγάλα τε καὶ καρτερά ... ἐτερον ἑτέρῳ κύκλῳ ἑνεστεωτὰ). This fortification was so contrived, that each circuit-wall (circle?) was higher than the preceding by the battlements only ... The circuit-walls (circles?) are seven in number: within the last and highest is the royal palace and treasuries (τὰ βασιλεία ... καὶ οἱ θησαυροὶ). The most extensive of these walls is very nearly equal to the circumference of Athens in length. The battlements of the first circuit-wall (circle?) is white; of the second, black; of the third, purple; of the fourth, blue; of the fifth, scarlet ... the two last are coated respectively with silver and gold." The seven walls rising up one within another — recalling the seven tiers of the cosmic temple towers of Babylon and Assyria — obviously are an image of the seven cosmic spheres, in the middle of which the Sun-King is seated; the golden wall around the royal palace reflects the brilliance of the sun, the silver wall next to it apparently that of the moon. The cosmic significance of this kingly city is clear, even if the κύκλοι of Herodotus do not signify "circles" but simply "circuit-walls".

The evidences of so many other royal foundations of this Eastern tradition seem, however, to indicate that Ecbatana was a circular city. In the Parthian Darabjird (fig. 1—2) the wall and fosse form an exact circle with an inner wall marking a concentric circle; the whole area was divided into 8 equal sectors by radial axis streets ending in wall gates, 4 of which were situated at the 4 main points of the compass. Firuzabad (fig. 3), in the very heart of Persis, originally the fortified residence of the new Sassanian dynasty, before

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1 We recognise a cosmic lay-out in the large Oeconomias baths in the imperial palace in Constantinople, with their 7 cells and 12 halls (T. P. Richter, Quellen zur byzantin. Kunstgeschichte p. 256. F. Cumont, Zodiauc, Daremburg—Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquités 5, 1059 sq.). The "Thousand and One Nights" tells of palaces divided into 12 sections, each comprising 30 dwellings.

2 See, for instance, K. A. C. Creswell, Early Muslim Architecture p. 18 sqq. Herod. 1,98.


Fig. 1—2. Darabjird. After E. N. Flandin—P. Coste, Voyage en Perse.
its transference to Ctesiphon, is of the same circular type. In the 12th century Ibn al Balkhi says of it: "The city is like a circle traced with a compass". There was a gate at each of the main points of the compass and, undoubtedly, an axial street-cross connecting them. Istakhri writes of it in the 10th century: "It has four gates: in the east Bab Mihr, in the west Bab Bahram, in the north Bab Hormizd, and in the south Bab Ardestir." 1 Residential cities such as Darabjird and Firuzabad must have been the prototype of the most famous of all the cosmic "round cities" of the East: Baghdad, "al-Madina al Mudauwara" "The Round City" of Mansur (fig. 4), founded 762, at a moment chosen by Naubakht, the official astrologer of the caliph. 2 A double wall circumscribed the city with two concentric circles. Each wall was surrounded by its fosse having four gates corresponding to the axial street-cross. In the centre of the circle lay the palace of the caliph. All these kingly cities were fortified cities, maintaining the primeval ground-plan of the Oriental military camp — as shown, for instance, in Assyrian reliefs from the Balawat gates and the Kalach palace (fig. 5). 3 It is circular, in contradiction to the Roman rectangular camp.

1 After the quotation by R. Ghirshman l.c.
3 A. Billerbeck—F. Delitzsch, Die Palasstore Salmanassars 2. von Balawat, Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischer Sprachwiss. 6, 1909, pl. A, C1, D1, M1. — Fortified cities of circular form in the direction towards Central Asia: S. P. Tolstov, Ancient Khorezm (Russian) 1948 pl. 34 p. 99 sq.
In such royal cities the cosmic reflection is clear. The kingdom in the Ancient Near East mirrored the rule of the sun in the heavens (p. 22). The king amongst his vassals and satraps was a reflection of the heavenly hierarchy. The king was “The Axis and Pole of the World”. In Babylonian cult the king was “The Sun of Babylon”. “The King of the Universe”, “The King of the four Quadrants of the World”, and these titles were repeated in ever new adaptations right up to the Sassanian period when the king was the “frater Solis et Lunae” (p. 33, 36, 43). Is there not a striking correspondence between these cosmic titles of the king and his place in his cosmic city? Wall and fosse are traced mathematically with the compass, as an image of the heavens, a projection of the upper hemisphere on earth. Two axis streets, one running north-south and the other east-west divide the city into four quadrants which reflect the four quarters of the world. At the very point of intersection, in the very axis of the world wheel, the palace is situated, here sits the king, “The Axis and Pole of the World”, “The King of the four Quadrants of the World”, here resides “The King of the Universe”, as the very moving universal power. The city is a sort of οὐρανόπολις.

Under the influence of this ancient tradition of the king’s cosmic city, and the domination of its unsurpassable incarnation in Mansur’s Baghdad, the greatest and most splendid urban centre of the early Middle Ages, the
focus of world trade and intellectual life, cities and castles of the “Round City” type grew up throughout the East.¹ We may only mention Harun al-Rashid’s Hiraqla (fig. 6) and the third Fatimide Caliph Isma’il’s Sabra (Mansuriya).² The Arab military and commercial expansion seems to have brought its plan to the Western world, which had itself used the circular form for holy places and buildings,³ thus being well disposed for accepting the new city and fortress plan. We meet it in the recently discovered military camps of the Viking empires of the North. The great Danish Viking castles Trelleborg (fig. 9) and Aggersborg (fig. 7), from the 10th—11th centuries, show the same severe geometrical plan as the cosmic city of the East: a concentric system of mighty walls and ditches confine a mathematically circular area; two gate- and axis-streets

² K. A. C. Creswell l. c. p. 21 sqq.; 165 sqq. and fig. 154. F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld l. c. 1 p. 161 sqq.; 2 p 162.
³ On the ἱμων ἔλος as the Achean mood in Homer and its survivals, further on the circular form of Scandinavian moods see A. H. Alcock, Archaeological Journal 78, 1921, p. 299 sqq.; 315 sqq.; 341 sqq. “At a very early period the circle was the sacred figure of the Latin peoples, as it was of the Homeric Greeks. Superseded largely amongst the Latins by the square, the circle yet remained with them throughout history in the plan of certain of their temples and of many of their tombs. In a modified form it remained with them also to the end of their imperial history in the circus and the amphitheatre.” Cf. p. 112.
Fig. 8. Norwegian 13th century design of Holy Jerusalem.

intersecting each other at right angles in the centre of the circle, divide it into 4 quadrants.¹ To the imagination of the Middle Ages this ground-plan constitutes a sort of ideal city — as shown in a Norwegian 13th century design of Holy Jerusalem (fig. 8).²

¹ P. Nørlund, Trelleborg, in Nordiske Fortidsminder 4, 1, 1948. C. G. Schultz, Vikingeleiren ved Limfjorden, in Fra Nationalmuseets Arbeidsmark 1949, p. 91 sqq. As the recent examination of Aggersborg has shown, the geometrical lay-out of Trelleborg is not a unique phenomenon in the North, but represents a fortification type from this time. Thus O. Höfler’s theory (Die Trelleborg auf Seeland und der Runenstein von Rök, Anzeiger der phil. hist. Klasse der Österreich. Ak. d. Wiss., 1948, Nr. 1, p. 9 sqq.) can hardly be maintained, that, what he considers to be a unique “mathematicity” (“Mathematizität”) of Trelleborg, must have sprung from the likewise unique “mathematicity” of the warrior organisation dealt with in the runic inscription of the Rök Stone.
About the time of the Arab expansion wondrous tales of revolving castles arise in Western lore. The earliest instance of turning castles or fortresses, writes L. J. Weston, is probably that recorded in "The Voyage of Maelduin", an early Celtic text which may originate from the 8th century. "They sight another island, which was not large, and a fiery rampart was round about it, and that rampart used to revolve round the island." And in "Perlesvaus": "Il aprochent le chastel et voient qu'il toornoie tout environ plus tost que vent ne cort". And in "Diu Crone":

Dar umbe gienc ein tiefer grabe .
Dar inne ein tiefez wazzer ran;
Dà was ein groz wunder an,
Daz ez die mure umbe treip .
Sie lief alsô snelle
Umb und umbe, als ein welle .
Reht als ein mül, diu då melt,
alsô diu äventiure zelt.

Are such revolving castles of Western lore not inspired by the wheel-shaped cities of the East? Do they not in the world of myth and poesy correspond to the new Eastern type of castle — Trelleborg, Aggersborg — which now in the world of reality forces its way to the west? Are they not the legendary accompaniment of the invasion of this new, exotic and overwhelming fortress type?

1 J. L. Weston, in Mélanges M. Wilmotte 1910, 2, p. 888.
2 Ed. Potvin 1 p. 195. J. L. Weston l. c.
3 Ed. Scholl p. 159 v. 12954 sqq. J. L. Weston l. c. Compare the verses in La Mule sans frein, ed. Méon 1 p. 15 v. 440 sqq. The revolving palace of Orgeluse in the Grail Legend reveals the same conception, and, according to F. Kamper, Das Lichtland der Seelen und der heilige Gral p. 91 sq., is derived from the palace of Prester John (p. 18 sqq.). As King Arthur's Round Table was to certain of the early romance writers, Layamon and Béroul among them, a turning table:

"la Table Reonde
qui toornoie comme le monde",

so Miss Weston puts this famous legend motif in relation to the revolving castles cited above. It seems to her probable that the root idea is solar, and connected with the supposed rotation of the Sun, l. c. p. 883 sqq.
Fig. 9. Trelleborg. Air phot., after Nørlund.
2. KHUSRAU'S COSMIC HALL

Along with these wondrously revolving castles a related motif captures the imagination of the medieval west: tales are told of a marvellous royal hall, a rotunda domed like the heavens and revolving about its own axis. Here we are able to state with certainty the Eastern origin of the motif. The crusaders had brought it with them from the East.

The crusaders tell of the revolving rotunda in their legends of Prester John. In the picture of this fabulous king the Ancient Eastern conception of a divine saviour-king is still alive. His kingdom lies in celestial glory somewhere in Mesopotamia, India or the limitless and indeterminable East. Here stands his tower palace, built up in seven great tiers, just like the huge seven-storied temple tower in old Babylon, and other temple towers, "Zikkurats", in Babylonia and Assyria. These ancient temple towers live on in John's palace, just as the ideas from the theocracy of the Ancient East recur in his kingdom. The Zikkurats originally had a cosmic significance, they were an image of the seven spheres of the world and were the Sun-God's own seat. This significance, as we shall see, is still fully alive in the tower palace of the Priest-King. Here is a description of it:

We wander through the seven sections of the palace which towers up on the banks of the Tigris. There is an increase in magnificence and

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1 In this and the subsequent chapter I have combined results which have in part been published in some of my earlier works: Domus Aurea — der Sonnenpalast (Serta Eitremiana, 1942) p. 68 sqq.; From the Collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3, 1942, p. 255 sqq.; Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture (1947) p. 61 sqq.
Khusrau’s Cosmic Hall

significance as we ascend. We are standing on the sixth floor, “and here there is a special palace for Prester John and his learned doctors where councils are held. And it can revolve like a wheel (potest volvi ad modum rotae) and it bears a roof which is vaulted like the heavens and there are many precious stones shining in the night with the brightness of day”. In the seventh section, Chorus Sanctae Trinitatis, “there is a chapel of marvellous beauty, more beautiful than the others, where mass is held every day for the Holy Trinity before sunrise, and Prester John always attends this mass, for he rises in the morning just after midnight. And this chapel has an immensely high dome, and it is round like the star-spangled sky, and revolves like the firmament (est rotonda ad modum coeli stellati et transit circumeundo ad modum firmamenti), and it is paved with ivory, and the altar is made of ivory and precious stones”. Here too is Prester John’s dormitory, “of surpassing beauty and large, vaulted, and star-spangled like the firmament; and there is a Sun and a Moon with seven planetary spheres each pursuing its course as in heaven and this is cunningly contrived.1 Likewise over this seventh and last palace there are twenty towers of wondrous height and golden beauty, which cover and crown the whole palace. And in this last palace there are twenty-three more palaces or rooms which can revolve like a wheel (quae possunt circumvolvi ad modum rotae).”

The revolving halls in the castle of the Priest-King are the distant memory — projected into the realms of the fantastic — of a historical reality: of the cosmic throne-room of the Ancient Eastern king. It is mentioned as a historic fact in the account of the Emperor Heraclius’ capture of the Persian residence of Ganzaca (Ganjak) in the year 624 A.D.2 Our best authority, Theophanes, had complete and trust-worthy sources at his disposal. Kedrenos who has preserved Theophanes’ account, relates that Heraclius saw in Ganzaca “Khusrau’s own image in the domed roof of the palace, as though enthroned

1 Compare the dormitorium of Adele of Blois: the floor was decorated with a mappa mundi, the ceiling with a picture of the starry sky — the room thus being the cosmos (R. Eisler, Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt 2 p. 614 Note 1. F. Kammers i. c. p. 92).

in Heaven, and around it the Sun and the Moon and the Stars” (τὸ τε ἐκτύπωμα 
αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ τοῦ πελατίου σφαιροειδεί στέγη ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καθήμενον, καὶ περὶ 
τοῦτο ήλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ ἄστρα). A corresponding description is given by the patriarch 
Nicephorus (+ 829) who records that Khusrau in his self-apotheosis erected 
his image in the roof not of his throne room, but of a fire sanctuary, with 
Sun and Moon and stars around him, as though enthroned in heaven (ἐφ’ ἐνὸς 
δὲ τούτων [sc. τῶν πυρείων] εὑρήται ὡς Χοσρόης ἑκτὸν θεοποιήσες ἐν τῇ 
τοῦτοι στέγῃ ἑκτὸν καθήμενον ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀνεστήλωσεν, ἄστραπάκα [ἄστρα?] καὶ 
ήλιον καὶ σελήνην συγκατασκευάζει). The revolving movement has been handed 
down in the Martyrologium of St. Ado (+ 874) and in an Exaltatio Sanctae Crucis 
which in its original form must have served as a source for Ado. In both we are 
told that the building “seemed to revolve on its axis with the help of horses 
pulling with a circular motion in a subterranean room” (subterraneo specu 
equis in circuitu trahentibus, circumacta turris fabricata moveri videbatur). 
Later on we constantly meet this motif in the descriptions of Khusrau’s 
throne-room. The memory of it has also survived the middle ages, we 
find it in the encyclopedias of the Renaissance such as Zwingier’s Theatrum 
Vitae Humanae, and even in the great epic of the Thirty Years War, Grimmels-
hausen’s “Abenteuerlicher Simplicissimus”. Here the Secretarius of the Hanau 
Commander mentions in a learned speech the Sassanian King Shapur’s 
“gläsernes Werk, welches so weit und groß war, daß Sapor in demselben 
auf dessen Centro sitzen und unter seinen Füssen das Gestirn auf- und 
niedergehen sehen konnte”.

Independently of these Western versions the Persian-Arabian tradition 
has preserved the memory of such revolving motions in the palace of the 
Great King. Tabari tells of an architect in the Sassanian service who said

2 St. Ado’s Martyrologium, Patrologia latina (Migne 123) p. 356. In the reign of Khusrau, 
when Phocas was Roman emperor, a Persian invasion of the Roman provinces took place. 
Jerusalem was sacked, and the holy cross taken to Persia. Fecerat namque Chosroë 
ex eorum turrim argenteam, in qua interlucentibus gemmis thronum extruxerat aureum, ibique 
solis quadrigam et lunae vel stellarum imaginem collocaverat, atque per occultas fistulas 
aque meatus adduxerat, ut quasi Deus pluviam desuper videretur infundere. Et dum 
subterraneo specu equis in circuitu trahentibus, circumacta turris fabricata moveri videbatur, 
quasi quodam modo rugitum tonitru, juxta possibilitatem artificis, mentiebatur. In hoc 
itaque loco sedem sibi paraverat, atque juxta eam, quasi collega Dei sibi crucem Dominicam 
posuit, filioque suo regno tradito, ipse in fano hujuosemodi residebat. Mortuo vero Phoca,
himself able to build palaces revolving with the Sun. "Had I known for sure that you would give me my full wages and treat me as I deserved", he says to Yazdegerd, "I would have constructed a building revolving exactly with the Sun."1

Primarily, however, the marvellous orbit is connected with the royal throne. Firdausi relates that the throne of Khusrau Parvëz — the famous Taqdês — revolved according to the seasons and zodiacal signs.2 One may compare Islam's idea of God's throne as, according to M. Horten, it still lives on till now: "Er... ist eine Kuppel (Baldachin) oberhalb des Weltalls, gestützt von vier Säulen... Die in ihm angebrachten Burgen (des Zodiakus) sind zwölf. Die Mondstationen hat Gott aber in den Thronsessel gelegt. Indem er diesen erschuf, erschuf er zugleich die Tage; denn er ließ den Thronsessel sich im Kreise bewegen und durch seine Umdrehung je einen der Tage entstehen, die in ihrer Siebenzahl alle gleich sind..."3

In addition to the circular course of Khusrau's throne itself, it is surrounded by cosmic movements corresponding exactly to the revolving throne-room and probably affording another version of this phenomenon. The fixed stars, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the seven planets and the Moon, each running through its phase, revolve like jewels about the throne. It was possible, we learn, to cast horoscopes and read off the hours of the day from these heavenly bodies, and to tell how far the heavens had wandered across the earth.4 The same account is given by the Arabian Tha'âlibî from Neshapur: above the throne is a dome of gold and lapis-lazuli, in which the heavens and the stars, the signs of the zodiac and the seven planets move in such a way that one could tell the time by them.5 This throne of Khusrau is only a renovation of the old Achaemenian throne destroyed by Alexander.6 It belongs to a tradition leading back to the Achaemenian rulers in Babylon.

Heraclius imperator creatur, vir strenuus et armis exercitatus. Qui adversus Persas bellum agressus, occiso Chosroe, quem in turre jam dicta sedentem invenit, Persas in ditionem recepti, lignumque gloriosimae crucis exinde repedans secum tulit, et Hierosolymam, unde sublatum fuerat, cum magna veneratione restituit.

1 Tabari, Geschichte der Perser und Araber (translation by Th. Nöldeke) p. 79 sqq.
3 M. Horten, Die religiöse Gedankenwelt des Volkes im heutigen Islam, Lief. 1 p. 68 sqq.
4 E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 109 sq.
5 E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 2 sqq.
6 E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 1 sqq.
Thus legend and history conceive the heavens and the cosmic orbit as a significant feature of Oriental royal palaces. The Persians explicitly called the royal αὐλή heavens. Πέρας δὲ τὰς βασιλείους σκηνὰς καὶ αὐλὰς, ὅν τὰ καλύμματα κυκλοτερῆ, οὔρανοὶ [ἐκάλου]. As we have seen, there is mentioned not only a movement around the throne, but also a movement of the throne itself. Both movements, as we shall see, are determined by the same ideas. It is of course difficult to imagine the throne room itself in movement. One may envisage an artificial planetarium, moving against a fixed background (analogous to the arrangement of the movable constellations in the aviary described by Varro p. 30). Both in the case of this apparent movement of the throne-room and the real movement of the throne itself, it is natural to remind ourselves of the importance of moving palaces, temples, etc. in the sacred tradition of the Near East (p. 51 sqq.).

The ideas actuating the symbolical movements in the throne-room constitute essential features of the astral religion of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, and had been passed on to the Persians from the Chaldeans. The world was imagined a system of magically cohesive parts, and all earthly things a function and reflection of the universe. The controlling forces are the heavenly bodies in their movements and mutual constellations. In these celestial phenomena everything that occurs on earth is encompassed; we may speak of a cosmic fatalism. In the first place the Sun, thereafter the Moon and the five planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury) are such cosmically controlling forces, κοσμοκράτορες, as the Greeks translated this Eastern conception. The kingdom on earth is a function and reflection of the rule of the Sun in the heavens. The king amongst his vassals and satraps is a picture of the heavenly hierarchy: just as the stars surround the Sun in the firmament, so the great lords surround the king in his palace. In Babylonian theology the king is the image of the Sun-God Marduk and officially called "The Sun of Babylon", "The King of the Universe", "The King of the four Quadrants of the World". As Sun he is an all-determining astral power, cosmocrator. In his hand rests the fate of all his subjects. At the New Year’s festival in Babylon which is an image of the universal New Year, he distributes the various official offices. The King "spins out" — like the three fatal sisters — the fates of men. This

1 Hesych., s. v. ὀὐρανός.
Khusrau's Cosmic Hall

is expressed by the Persian prince Tiridates to Nero when the latter crowns him King of Armenia (in Rome in the year 66 A.D.): the conception of the Oriental king is transferred to the Roman emperor. On doing obeisance to Nero, Tiridates greets him as Mithra, the royal god of the Iranians, declaring: "I shall be whatever you spin for me, for you are both my Moira and my Tyche" (καὶ ἔσομαι τοῦτο ὅτι ἂν σὺ ἐπικλώσῃς. σὺ γάρ μοι καὶ μοίρα εἰ καὶ τύχη).¹

It is therefore natural that the throne-room of the Great King should be an image of the universe and of the universal dominion of the stars. This is effected by introducing the cosmic movements, whether of the hall or of the throne, into the royal ritual. The cosmic movements of the throne is represented in Achaemenian art and is the object of a special investigation below (p. 81 sqq.).

Khusrau's heaven must have been situated in the great domed hall which forms the central and dominating part of the traditional Sassanian palace. Already in the first Sassanian palace, that of Ardashir in Firuzabad, this domed hall dominated the whole lay-out: it rested upon the axis of the great barrel-vaulted ivan, that is the axis which controlled both the building and its surrounding gardens.² From the time of Ardashir this plan of an ivan communicating with a domed room constituted the essential and central part in the lay-out of the Sassanian palace, the ivan functioning as an ante-room to the domed room which was the audience room of the king.³

A certain ambiguity in our literary tradition at times placing Khusrau's heavens in the throne room, at another time in a fire temple (p. 20), must be due to affinities existing between the sanctuary of the god of heaven and that of his representation and reflection on earth.⁴ As proved by archaeological evidence, a dominating type of fire temples and throne-rooms was a square domed building; and the dome must have had the same heavenly function in temple and palace. Because of these affinities between throne room and fire temple the architectural remains may be ambiguous in the same way as literature: it is not always ascertained whether palace or temple is being dealt with. As to the form of Khusrau's heaven this ambiguity is irrelevant.

² O. Reuter in Pope l. c. 1 p. 533 sqq.
³ O. Reuter l. c. The famous palace of Taq-i-Kisrâ (Ctesiphon) has a different lay-out.
⁴ Cf. the affinities between the imperial and Christian basilica, E. Dyggve, Ravennatum palatium sacrum, passim; Dødekkult, "Keiserkult og basilica, passim.
Reuter's reconstruction of the main, square and domed building in the Qasr-i-Shirin (fig. 10), perhaps built for Khusrau 2, may give an idea of a typical form of the Sassanian throne room (even if actually representing a fire temple).\(^1\) It strikingly resembles a domed building engraved in the central field of a late Sassanian bronze tray in Berlin\(^2\) (fig. 11). The Moon crescent (with an inner star?) crowning the central dome was the distinguishing, symbolically significant mark of late Sassanian throne buildings, as represented, for instance, on the Kazvin and the Klimova plates (figs. 17, 19), and constituted an

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\(^1\) O. Reuter l.c. p. 540.

\(^2\) Pope l.c. 4 pl. 237 and 1 figs. 160, 161 a—b. Cf. L. I. Ringbom l.c. p. 78 sqq.
essential part of the late Sassanian throne formula (figs. 22, 23). The building is placed on a pair of great unfolded wings equally characteristic of late Sassanian royalty: we are concerned with a heavenly palace. Thus the ideas of the king in his heaven met with in Khusrau’s throne room seem crystallized in this picture, which Phyllis Ackerman, perhaps too restrictedly, declares an almost
contemporary representation of Khusrau's palace with the Taqdes itself. A kind of astral mythologisation has, at any rate, transferred the forms of reality into realms of an ideal imagination. In the same way we shall see

1 Ph. Ackerman, Bull. Am. Inst. Iranian Art and Arch. 5, 1937, p. 106 sqq.; and in Pope l. c. 1 p. 775 sqq., 878 sq.; 3 p. 2635. O. Reuter l. c. p. 555 suggests that the building represents a fire temple. The crescent on the top of it is as compatible with a temple as with a palace. Yaqut, based on the authority of Misar ibn Muhallil from the 10th century, tells of the famous fire temple in Ganzaca (Yacut's Geograph. Wörterbuch, ed. Wüstenfeld 3, 1868, p. 353 sqq.): "On the top of its dome is a silver crescent which is a talisman".
the Sassanian throne and the Sassanian king himself "mythologized" and transferred to the stars.

With the domed building in the Qasr-i-Shirin and on the Berlin bronze tray we may compare the representation in a relief on the Roman Arch of Septimius Severus of a remarkable building in one of the Parthian cities conquered by Septimius Severus (fig. 12): again a square building with a mighty dome towering up above the surrounding buildings; the strangely spheric form of the dome recalls the σφαιροειδής στέγη of Khusrau's palace in Ganzaca.

1 L'Orange, in Serta Eitremiana l.c. p. 74 sq.
3. NERO'S COSMIC HALL

As the successor of the Great King in the East, Alexander took his place on the Persian throne “beneath the golden vault of heaven”.¹ After him Hellenistic-Roman rulers are often glorified by an astral apotheosis which reminds us of the Great King in his star chamber. We may recall, for instance, the representation of Demetrius Poliorcetes with stars on his head and enthroned on the Oecumene, “his friends as stars and he himself as the Sun” (οἱ φίλοι μὲν ἀστέρες, ἡλιός δὲ ἐκεῖνος)²; or the comparison of Brutus with the “Sun of Asia” (sol Asiae), his companions with “propitious stars” (stellae salubres);³ or Nero in the sun-chariot on the purple awning, stretched across the Pompeian theatre in Rome during the festivals for Tiridates — “and around him shone golden stars” (περὶ δὲ ἀστερεῖς χρυσοῖ ἐπέλαμπον).⁴

Hellenism had developed the astrology of the East into a scientific, religious-philosophic system, which in Roman times had conquered the classical world. Even the empire was permeated with these Eastern ideas. The royal cosmocrator makes his entry into the Palatine. As a striking expression of this theology the revolving rotunda now invades the imperial palace. Suetonius describes a similar rotunda in the Domus Aurea built by Nero in the last years of his reign (started in the year 64 A.D.) hardly a generation before Suetonius’ account.⁵ In his description of the palace Suetonius does not dwell on each room in turn, except when dealing with the great main hall amongst

¹ Plut., Al. 37. Cf. Diodor 17,66.
² Athen. 6,253 D. Duris from Samos, F. H. G. II 477.
the palace cenationes. Cenatio really means dining-room, but as triclinium, also meaning dining-room, became the standard expression for the imperial throne-room, it is not excluded that our cenatio in the Domus Aurea likewise served as a ceremonial room. The hall is described as a rotunda, revolving about its own axis day and night “just like the world”. Praecipua cenationum rotunda, quae perpetuo diebus ac noctibus vice mundi circumageretur. Is Gnetchi’s supposition that the Neronian medallion reproduced in fig. 13 represents a section of the Domus aurea, justified, one would put the domed central part of it in relation to this cenatio praecipua rotunda, and compare the whole building with that of Qasr-i-Shīrīn (fig. 10) and those represented on the Berlin tray (fig. 11) and in the relief on the arch of Septimius Severus (fig. 12).

At the same time at which this cosmic hall was built, Nero in a number of official images is represented as Apollo-Helios, or he acts in persona, in the theatre and circus, as this god. In the astrological conception this Nero-Helios is cosmocrator like the kings of the East. Thus, as we have just seen, the Persian prince Tiridates did obeisance to him as the royal God of Fate (66 A.D.). In the very guise of Sun-Cosmocrator Nero appears to us in the huge statue in the vestibule of the Golden House. And here the image of Nero is especially expressive: for this Nero-Cosmocrator is in itself the moving principle in the revolving rotunda of the palace. He is, as Cicero says of the Sun, “Leader, prince and controller of the heavenly lights, the soul of the world and its directive force” (dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio). From his more elevated sphere the Emperor God sets the lower spheres in motion, and directs the whole of the sub-lunar world, thus affecting, according to the astrological doctrine, the life of man and spinning like the Great King

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1 F. Gnetchi, Medaglioni Romani 3, pl. 142, 4. The same architectural picture, somewhat reduced, is repeated on coins from the years 64—66 A.D., the very time when the Domus Aurea was being built, H. Mattingly, Coins of the Roman Empire Brit. Mus. pl. 43, 5—7 and p. 236. Gnetchi’s identification has been doubted by Boëthius l.c. p. 445 Note 1.
2 Sources adduced L’Orange l.c. p. 68 sq.; From the Collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3, 1942, p. 255 sq.; Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture p. 61 sq.
3 Cic., De rep. 6, 17.
of the East at the New Year’s festival, the fate of mortals.¹ The emperor is the cosmic God of Fate: Moira, Tyche, as Tirdates named Nero, fatorum arbiter, as an emperor is called in an inscription.²

This imperial ideology received under Nero a poetic form as well, which forms the most striking parallel to the rotunda. Lucan, in a poetic image, attributes to Nero exactly the same cosmic position.³ The poet exhorts the emperor to choose his seat exactly in the middle of the universe, lest the

¹ In the villa architecture of the late republic we find the motif of the cosmic rotunda: Varro (De agricultura 3, 5, 17) describes an aviary with a dome and movable constellations i.e. the firmament beneath which the birds fly. “On the inside of the dome in the lower half of the hemisphere Lucifer revolves by day and Hesperus by night, moving in such a way that they give the hour of the day or night”. The cosmic motif which in the Domus Aurea represented a manifestation of imperial power, is in the aviary of Varro obviously without deeper significance, a mere play or architectural whim. The rotunda of the Domus Aurea is not a caprice of the architect, any more than the statue of Nero-Helios or Lucanus’ cosmic Nero: it is the significant expression of the imperial theocracy, of Nero cosmocrator. Literary sources, objects A. Boëthius (Eranos 44, 1946, p. 442 sqq.), nowise support a religious interpretation of this sort. What are we to say then of the Nero colossalus which is mentioned in the vestibule of the palace and on basis of the literary sources can be reconstructed as a representation of Nero-Helios? This colossalus is an overwhelming expression of the divinity of the imperial resident. Boëthius rightly emphasizes the character of the palace as a villa rustica. Were it, however, merely a villa rustica (which is incompatible with Suetonius’ description of the vestibule), the gilded Nero-Helios-colossalus at the entrance would become meaningless and out of all proportion. If, on the contrary, the colossalus stands at the entrance to a divine palace, with a cosmic hall in the interior, it rises organically, with the right proportions and the right expression, at the entrance to the palace. The statue in the vestibule expresses the same as the rotunda: Nero cosmocrator. This Nero “fills the house and gladdens it with his mighty spirit” (ille penates implet et ingenti genio iuvat), as Statius says of Domitian in his new palace on the Palatine (Silvae 4, 2, 25 sq.).

Impossible in my opinion is the assumption of Boëthius (Annual Brit. School of Athens 46, p. 28) that the colossalus did not represent the emperor as Helios. It would be impossible to change the Nero-colossalus (ipsius effigies, Suet., Nero 31) into a Helios-colossalus (Plin. 34, 45; Suet., Vesp. 18), if the colossalus did not originally belong to the statuary type of Helios i.e. originally represent the emperor as Helios — a representation which was not only characteristic of the apotheosis of Nero (Dio Cass. 63, 6, 2; L’Orange, Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture p. 61 sq.), but of that of the ancient world ruler in general, from Alexander to Constantine, one may recall, for instance, the Helios-colossalus of Gallienus in Rome and that of Constantine in Constantinople (L’Orange l.c. p. 35 sqq.). Such a remodelling of the head and retaining of the statuary type is extremely characteristic of Roman imperial statuary.

The atrium or vestibulum of Nero-Helios belongs — as I have already pointed out (Serta Eitremiana 1942, p. 92 sqq., apparently not noticed by Boëthius, l.c. p. 28) — as entrance
Nero's Cosmic Hall

cosmic system should lose its equilibrium. Let him not choose a star in one of the gates of heaven! "If you rest on a single side of the immeasurable ether, the axis of the world will not stand the weight. Maintain the equilibrium of the firmament in the middle circle of the universe!" Librati pondera caeli orbe tene medio! This middle circle is the cosmic region of the Sun: in the middle of the planetary system filling the space between the fixed stars and the orbit of the Moon. Below Mars, says Cicero, "the Sun occupies approximately

hall (cf. the atrium, tribunalium treated by E. Dyggve, Ravennatum palatium sacrum, passim) to the palatium sacrum which of course also comprehended the praecipua cenationum rotunda (as culminating part of the triclinium? Cf. Dyggve l.c. passim). Besides this officiel palatium sacrum, the Domus Aurea has had its extensive private parts — as must be generally assumed of all the imperial palaces and as clearly shown, for instance, in the palace of Diocletian in Spalato — and these parts seem to be characterised by the words of Martialis (12, 57, 21) rus in urbe. After Caesar's and Augustus' house had been sanctified by fastigia, the imperial residence was always holy. The imperial palace is designated a temple, the reception hall is the Holy of Holies where the sovereign thrones like the statue of a God in his adyton (A. Alföldi, Röm. Mitt. 50, 1935, p. 127 sqq.). The Domus Aurea cannot in my opinion be excluded from this development. Describing the great banquet given by Domitian to senators and knights in his new palace on the Palatine, Statius, who was one of the guests, says that it was like "resting with Jupiter in the midst of the stars" (medis videor discumbere in astris cum Jove, Silvae 4, 2). This cosmic simile crops up in various forms in descriptions by Statius and Martialis (cf. e.g. Martialis, Epigr. 8, 36, 11 sq., par domus est caele; l. c. 7, 56, astra polumque pie cepisti mente, Rabiri, Parrhasiam mira qui struis arte domum; l. c. 9, 91, 1 sq., ad cenam si me diversa vocaret in astra hinc invitator Caesaris inde lóvis): also here we are confronted with the idea of the imperial cosmocrator in his cosmic hall. It is in the atmosphere. Cumont has treated a terracotta picture of an emperor, probably Trajan, as cosmocrator, with the zodiac revolving about him (Mélanges Radet 1940, p. 408 sqq.); cf. the emperor in the cosmic clipeus (p. 97). Thus the cosmocrator's cosmic hall in the Domus Aurea is not an isolated occurrence, but belongs to an organically coherent chain of ideas.

A. Alföldi has recently tried to trace the prototype of our rotunda back to the great banquet halls of the Eastern kings, and sees in our banqueting cosmocrator a dionysiac renewal of the royal ὅλημα, the reveling king of the East (La Nouvelle Clio 10, 1950, p 560 sqq.). Such a dionysiac cosmocrator, however, in a minor degree than the solar cosmocrator, seems to correspond to the genius loci of the palace: the Nero-Helios colossus, and less fitting into the general Helios-Apollon-apotheosis so clearly stressed by Nero in the very time when the Domus Aurea was built.

To the atrium, vestibulum, aula: cf. W. Otto on the πύλες, "Hohe Pforte", "Tor der Audienzen" of the Oriental and Hellenistic royal palaces (Hermes 55, 1920 p. 222 sqq.; 56, 1921 p. 104 sqq.).

2 Dessau 2998.

Fig. 14. *Volvens sidera Mithra*. Relief in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Trier.
the middle of the heavens" (mediām fere regionem).\(^1\) How closely this picture of Nero conforms to the oriental idea of the Great King, as "the Axis and Pole of the World".\(^2\)

Let us look a little more closely at this idea of the emperor as cosmic God of Fate. Already in Plato the Moirai appear to us cosmic goddesses.\(^3\) With their hands they interfere in the web of the spheres, which revolves, we are told, on the knees of Necessity. Each Moira seizes the edge of the sphere and governs its motion in order to keep the whole concentric system in its allotted orbit. In this very action Mithra is represented in a provincial Roman relief (fig. 14).\(^4\) The God — the volvens sidera Mithra — seizes the zodiacal wheel and hurls it into revolving motion, thus setting the whole system of the spheres in motion. To the Roman world Mithra in his cave has the same significance: the cave is the world bounded by the firmament of fixed stars. The god fills this world cavity just as the emperor his cosmic hall. Like Mithra also the Roman emperor takes the zodiac in his hand\(^5\) (fig. 15).

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\(^1\) Cic., De rep. 6, 17.  
\(^2\) E. Herzfeld, Iran in the Ancient East p. 320.  
\(^3\) Plat., Pol. 10, 616 sq.  
\(^4\) See p. 96.  
\(^5\) J. Maurice, Numismatique Constantinienne 2, pl. 8, 19.
The emperor represented in the zodiacal ring or in the cosmic clipeus (p. 97) — the clipeus is an *imago mundi* — is intended to express the same. The emperor himself is cosmocrator turning the planetary spheres on the "knees of Necessity". This imperial ideology, inherited to Byzance, still haunts the court flattery of late centuries. Is there not, for instance, a survival of it in the adulation surrounding Napoleon? In a court calendar from the year 1813 (fig. 16) he sits enthroned in the vestments of a Roman imperator with the eagle of Jupiter at his side over a celestial arch in the sky; above him shines his world-controlling star, just as it shone over deified Alexander or Cæsar; and around him revolves the circle of the zodiac as it revolved around the ancient god of heaven — in fact as the celestial rotunda revolted about Nero in his throne room.
4. THE ASTRAL SYMBOLS OF POWER

The ideas at the back of the revolving throne room assume increasing importance throughout the Empire and achieve a prominent place in the imperial symbolism. In the facade of Septimius Severus' palace on the Palatine the emperor was represented between the planetary gods, as though in the middle of cosmos, as Lord of the seven celestial spheres. And in the palace itself he presided as a judge in a cosmic hall: its roof was covered by a picture of the heavens on which it was possible to read horoscopes, though not the emperors', for he was above the powers of fate. Note that the emperor acts as a judge in this hall (ἐδικαζόμενος): he translates the symbolism of the astral painting into a living reality. In his judgments he becomes the fate of men. From Septimius Severus' own time we have an indication of a striking oriental parallel to this astral hall of justice. Philostratus tells us about the Arsacid royal court of justice in Babylon: a vaulted hall with the gods of the stars painted on the dome.

This ruler theology gave rise in the course of late Roman times to allegories and symbols of power having ever since followed in the wake of king and emperor and being in fact not even today entirely dead. In Eusebius' panegyric in celebration of the 30th year of Constantine's reign, the emperor in his throne-room is compared with God enthroned on the ἀγνοείς οὐράνιος, and after his decease pictures show the emperor thus enthroned. This representation of the imperial cosmocrator enthroned on the vault of heaven is older than Constantine.

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3 Euseb., Triak. 1, 1.
4 Euseb., Vita Const. 4, 69.
5 E.g. Diocletian's and Maximian's throne on the vault of heaven in a relief on the arch of Saloniki: K. F. Kinch, L'Arc de Triomphe de Salonique pl. VI. The idea of heaven as the throne of God is deeply-rooted both in Greece and the Ancient East, e.g. Hesiod, Theog. 125 sqq.; Isaiah 66, 1; Mathew 5, 34 sq.; Acts 7, 49. Cf. R. Eisler, Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt 1, 76 note 1.
The symbolism is the same when — just as Septimius Severus was shown between the planetary deities — the emperors of late antiquity are represented between the Sun and the Moon, as is the case, for instance, on the Roman arch of Constantine. These sun-moon symbols, originally distinguishing the Eastern king, make the emperor appear a particeps siderum, frater Solis et Lunae, as the Sassanian kings officially called themselves. Already in Achaemenian times the Persian king was represented symbolically related to Sun and Moon (p. 81 sqq. and fig. 58). On seals (fig. 20 b) and coins (fig. 21 c) his bust is placed between Sun and Moon or constellations of these heavenly bodies, which also occur in his tiara, in the head ornament of the royal horse (fig. 41 a, b) etc.

From the Roman emperor the sun-moon symbol was inherited by the medieval rulers of the West. Frederick 2 has a star and Moon in his seal, Richard Coeur-de-Lion, the Sun and Moon, the coronation mantle is frequently decorated with the Sun, Moon and stars, etc. As in such medieval symbols, the idea of cosmic kingship — of the planetary harmony of the imperial government, one might say — seems to be echoed in the words of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, that the imperial reign is to resemble "the harmony and motion which the Creator gave to this Universe" (τοῦ δημιουργοῦ τὴν περὶ τὸῦ πᾶν ἀρμονίαν καὶ κίνησιν).

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2 Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 5, 3.  
3 F. Kampers i. c.  
4 Already the Roman triumphator had worn Jupiter's star cloak (as the Babylonian king wore that of Marduk), and this had in turn been inherited by the emperors. R. Eisler i. c. p. 3 sqq.; 39 sqq.; 57 sqq.; 290. F. Kampers i. c. 8 sqq.  
5 De Caerimoniis, preface.
5. THE ASTRAL TRANSFORMATION
OF THE SASSANIAN THRONE

Our point of departure is the typical representation of the king enthroned, as seen, for instance, on two late Sassanian silver plates: the one recently found in the district of Kazvin¹ (fig. 17), the other now in the Hermitage² (fig. 18) (compare also the enthroned king figs. 52, 53, 55). The king sits enthroned in his characteristic ceremonial attitude described by the historians as “leaning on his sword”³: that is, with both hands holding the sword which he places vertically and centrally in front of himself. His vestment has a remarkable bejewelled trimmng peculiar to the king and therefore of special interest to us: two bands run downwards slightly converging, on either side of his chest, into a horizontal band crossing under his arms somewhat like a high-waisted belt.⁴ He sits on a throne of elongated κλήνη-form and with characteristic accumulation of cushions on his left-hand side. On both sides of the king stand his attendant vassals, in severe ceremonial attitude, reverently turning their heads toward the king. On the Kazvin plate the cosmic significance of the throne is clearly indicated: on both sides of the domed throne canopy, lifted high on supporting lions, birds, in the cosmic number of seven, are placed in a sequence of ascending vaults and circles; and the top of the towering throne-building is crowned by a huge crescent Moon.

In a sort of mythical transformation king and vassals are again facing us in a silver plate from Klimova, now in the Hermitage (fig. 19), a late Sassanian work, probably from the first half of the seventh century.⁵ The entire upper

² J. O. Orbeli—C. Trever, Orfèvrerie Sassanide pl. 13. A. U. Pope l. c. 4 pl. 239 A.
³ Hamza, quoted by A. Christensen, L’Iran sous les Sassanides² p. 308. F. Sarre l. c. pl. 144; and in A. U. Pope l. c. p. 595. Note 2. E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 14 fig. 10; p. 113 fig. 18.
⁴ Compare F. Sarre l. c. pl. 106—108, 98, 143.
section of the tower-like two-storied throne structure is inscribed in a huge crescent Moon. In the middle of it a male figure is enthroned in oriental fashion with his feet tucked up underneath him. And once more the Moon symbol appears: in the two horns of the new Moon peeping out from behind his shoulders. This suggests at first that the figure is the Moon-God himself. On closer inspection, however, this proves impossible; for the figure is as closely related to the representation of the Sassanian King as it is unlike that of the Moon-God.\(^1\) The horns of the Moon behind the figure's shoulders are in no wise an obstacle to such an interpretation; on the contrary, they are a characteristic feature in the image of Sassanian royalty. "By putting on lunar horns they change into a female Moon" (impositis sibi cornibus effeminantur in lunam) — in these words the contemporary Peter Chrysologus draws the odious picture of the kings of the Sassanian empire.\(^2\)

All the salient features of our enthroned figure are, in fact, the traditional and permanent characteristics of Sassanian royalty. Already the throne, in its elongated \(\chi\lambda\iota\nu\gamma\delta\)-form, with its thick hourglass legs and the characteristic accumulation of cushions on the left-hand side of the figure, is typical of this king effigy;\(^3\) it is thus said of Khusrau in an audience scene that "he sat leaning on three gold-embroidered cushions".\(^4\) But above all the figure itself bears all the typical features of the Sassanian king; he wears the bejewelled chest trimming peculiar to the king, the Sassanian coiffure, the bejewelled helmet such as found on Persian kings on countless Parthian and Sassanian coins (e.g. fig. 20 b),\(^5\) but which vassals and satraps also have worn.\(^6\) The very form of presentation too, the ceremonal attitude,

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3. F. Sarre l. c. pl. 110, 111.  

4. Tabari, Geschichte der Perser und Araber (translated by Th. Nöldeke) p. 367, cf. 248. When an axe is placed on the pillows, it is natural to recall the role played by the royal axe in Achaemenian throne scenes, F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld, Iranische Felsreliefs 16; 143.

5. The jewel work visible in the larger reproduction in Herzfeld l. c. pl. to p. 4. Cf. tiara Cat. of Greek Coins, Brit. Mus., Parthia (B. V. Head) pl. 8, 1—9; 10, 1—7; 11; 29, 15 sq.; 34, 1 sq.; 36; Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia (G. F. Hill) 35, 10 sqq.; 36, 1 sqq.; 37, 3 sqq. W. H. Valentine, Sassanian Coins, passim. F. Sarre l. c. pl. 143, 1.

6. Satraps or vassals with similar helmet: Cat. Coins. Brit. Mus., Lycaonia, Isauria, Cilicia (G. F. Hill) pl. 17, 9; 26, 3; 29, 11, 12, 13. Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia (G. F. Hill) pl. 45, 4—7, 12, 46, 4, 11 sq., 15; 47, 5, 7; (with the emperors head on the obverse and the vassal king's on the reverse): 14, 1—6; 16, 10 sq.; 17, 1—3. See also the nobles around the Sassanian king on the rock relief in Kazerun: F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 213, fig. 101.
Fig. 17. Sassanian silver plate from Kazvin, Teheran.

the way in which he is "leaning on his sword" is characteristic of the Sassanian king; compare the king's grasp of it on the plate fig. 18. The axe in addition to the sword is a characteristic royal attribute of the late Sassanian empire. Ancient descriptions represent Azarmidukht, the ruling daughter of Khusrau 2, seated on the throne with sword and battle
Fig. 18. Sassanian silver plate in the Hermitage.

axe. Since our figure is beardless, it might perhaps be identified with this ruling queen. Thus — if we are to render unto the Moon what is the Moon’s and to the king what is the king’s — then only the lunar horns

1 Quotations in full by F. Sarre in A. U. Pope l.c. I p. 505 sq. and Note 2.
2 Khusrau’s grandchild Yazdegerd 3. appears beardless on the coins and may possibly be represented.
will be left for the god, and not even these, for, as we saw, the god was forced to hand them over to the king. The Sassanian kings, Peter Chrysologus tells us, are seated on their thrones with the celestial orb beneath their feet, in the belief that they are treading on the very dome of heaven, thus falsely assuming the place of God; with their head crowned with rays they appear in the guise of the Sun (*radiato capite ... solis ... in figura*) or putting on lunar horns they change into a female Moon (*impositis sibi cornibus effeminantur in Lunam*) or assume other astral forms, thereby losing their
human shape (varias . . siderum sumunt formas ut hominis perdant . . figuram). It is the mythical transformation of the Sassanian cosmic throne. The astral assimilation of another oriental throne, that of David, may be compared with it: “His throne shall be like the Sun before mine eyes; as the Moon it shall stand fast” (ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος ἐναντίον μου καὶ ὡς ἡ σελήνη κατηρτισμένη εἰς τὸν αἰώνα), sings the psalmist.¹

Just as clearly as this upper figure belongs to the iconography of the Sassanian king, so the figure below refers to that of his vassals. He stands in the lower storey of the throne, which is canopied by a dome supported by four columns, the arched front being decorated with bosses and stars. He is wearing exactly the same costume as the vassals surrounding the king on the Sassanian plates figs. 17, 18: a bejewelled helmet; torques; a very characteristic suit, apparently a sort of riding dress, tight-fitting to the chest and waist, girdled, widely projecting over hips and thighs, a front-piece before the belly, knee-high boots — even such a special motif as the millepede ornament down the middle of the chest is the same. Like the vassals figs. 17, 18 our figure is not distinguished by the bejewelled chest trimming of the king. There can be no doubt of the identity of this figure on the three plates: it is the king’s vassal armed with bow and arrow,² who appears in the lower storey of the throne. It seems to me that the correspondance between the Klimova, the Kazvin and Hermitage representations, especially the identical king-vassal combination, definitely fixes the Klimova throne within the distinctly limited precincts of Sassanian royal iconography. As will be seen, the Klimova throne shows the typical disposition of the throne of the Ancient Near East: in an upper storey appears the king, in a lower, his servant (compare e. g. fig. 60 and p. 80 sq.).

This royal throne is placed on wheels and drawn by four hunch-backed oxen, zebus, driven forward in pairs by flying Cupids. Zebus belong to the Moon, and are pictured on Sassanian seals between Sun and Moon (fig. 20 c). The throne is supposed to be flying in the air, as is also indicated by the upward movement of the animals. We must thus imagine this wondrous astral throne whirling on its way like a star in space. We see the king as

¹ Psalmi 88, 37 sq.
² Formerly I regarded this figure as identical with the one above, but in this case apotheosized as Sol (Serta Etremiana I. c. p. 82 sqq.). A similar Sun-Moon-apotheosis would not only agree with the royal titles, but also correspond to Peter Chrysologus’ description of the Persian king enthroned. However, as Persian throne scenes traditionally show the servant or vassal in a lower storey of the throne structure, and as the figure wears the vassal’s vestments and lacks the royal jewelled harness, the solution suggested in the text is to be preferred.
his titles denominate him: "Companion of the Stars, Brother of the Sun and Moon", "Thou raised up as high as the Sun", "Thou ascended with the Sun". It is the ήλων οὐναντέλων και τῇ νυκτὶ χαριζόμενος ὄμματα¹ — to put the words which Khusrau uses of himself — who rises before us. We see the astral king who takes his shape from the gods: θεός . . δὲ ἐκ θεῶν χαρακτηριζόται² — once more quoting words used by Khusrau of himself, closely corresponding to Petrus Chrysologus' caractéristique of the Sassanian kings: varias . . siderum sumunt formas, ut hominis perdant . . figuram. Also his crown ornaments: sky, Sun and Moon emblems in ever changing selection,

¹ Theophylactes Simokattes, Hist. 4, 8, 5.
² Menandros Protektor, Exc. de leg., ed. de Boor 176.
designate him king of the stars. The cosmic ideas expressed in such ornaments, such terms and titles, and symbolically represented in the real Sassanian throne, are on the Klimova plate developed explicitly, emancipated from reality in a pure mythological picture. It is not to be objected that the vassal could not follow the king in his apotheosis. It is, on the contrary, typical for this astral apotheosis that the vassal follows his ruler. We may compare with our representation the painting of Demetrius Poliorcetes, mentioned in Athenaeus: οἱ φίλοι μὲν ἄστέρες, ἦλιος δὲ ἐκείνος; or the comparison of Brutus with Sol Asiae, his suite with stellae salubres (p. 28).

Often the representation of the king in his cosmic chariot is abbreviated to his bust soaring over wheels between a pair of zebras or winged horses (figs. 40 a—b). The astral character of the zebu is, as seen, indicated by the sun-moon symbol (fig. 20 c). The same astral symbol frames the king on coins and seals, furthermore 3 stars are often placed on his chest (fig. 20 b). When his bust is mounted on a pair of wings, as we often find it on seal stones

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1 See, for instance, P. Horn—G. Steindorff, Sassanidische Siegelsteine, Königl. Museen zu Berlin, Mitt. aus den oriental. Sammlungen 1891 pl. 1 nos. 1046, 1043, 1044, 1045. Cf. Pope l. c. 4 pl. 178 E. Naturally the wings — l'attribut invariable de la royauté of late Sassanian times (M. Dieulafoy, L'art ancien de la Perse, 5 p. 165) — are only compatible with a royal image, and so are also the astral symbols so often accompanying the portraits on the Sassanian seals. Thus we may conclude, contrary to G. Steindorff l. c. p. 1, that the portraits on the Sassanian seals always represent kings. When Kyros dreams of Darius having wings (Ἑρώντα ἐπὶ τῶν ὀμων πτερωγας, Herod. 1, 209), this appears to him an omen of Darius' kingly pretensions.
(fig. 21 a), an astral mythologisation of the same type as met with in the Klimova throne, evidently comes to the fore. In a Sassanian stucco relief (fig. 21 b)¹ a female bust is put on a pair of wings showing the characteristic form of this attribute of late Sassanian royalty (cf. the wings in the crown fig. 21 c). Are we dealing with a representation of one of the ruling daughters of Khusrau?²

I recognize this cosmic throne chariot in a symbolic figure constantly repeated and varied in Sassanian seals, on casques and in stucco ornaments.³

¹ Pope l. c. 4 pl. 178 E.
² The figure represented wears a bejewelled breast collar very similar to that of the queens, cf. fig. 21 c.
³ P. Horn—G. Steindorff l. c. pl. 5 sq. nos. 749, 859, 906, 1549—1557, 1559—1562, 1565—1577. von der Osten, Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. E. T. Newell p. 144. E. Herzfeld, Paikuli p. 78. Ph. Ackerman in Pope l. c. p. 805 sqq., figs. 278 a–o, 279 a; 4 pl. 255 F.
Fig. 23. Variations of the Sassanian throne formula. After, and with the numbers of, Horn—Steindorff l.c.

We can set up a typologically coherent series which begins with the Klimova throne and thence through a degenerating succession ends in the mentioned figure in the seals. The main features of the Klimova throne fig. 22 a are still to be traced in the simplified picture in the especially important seal fig. 22 b: only the bust of the king fills the crescent, only a sort of scaffold remains of the whole lower storey, only two wheels at the bottom indicate the chariot and only two zebu heads the oxen quadriga. The seal fig. 22 c
Fig. 24. Fragments of architectural ornament, stucco:

shows the reduction of this simplified picture to a sort of hieroglyphic formula: a crowning Moon crescent on a scaffold mounted with horns, soaring on a pair of mighty wings and framed by Sun and Moon. This formula allows numerous variations (figs. 22 d—m and 23 a—p), such as when the wings are changed into the long ribbons of the kingly diadem, the Moon crescent is filled with a star etc. But as an invariable, essential and dominating feature the crowning Moon crescent on the high scaffold is maintained. We seem to be confronted with a late hieroglyphic symbol of the Sassanian cosmic throne, varied perhaps individually by the different kings, as was the case with the Sassanian crown. It seems to be the sign of their heavenly rule and cosmocratic power, and, accordingly, of their khwarənah and royal legitimacy. Often the figure seems adapted to an almost monogrammatic pattern, as, for instance, in stucco ornaments from Ctesiphon and Dāmghān ¹ (fig. 24 a—c). The royal crown itself often shows a form related to our throne formula: over a pair of great wings the moon crescent is lifted on a stake and filled by the Sun or a star.² This hieroglyphical throne formula from Persia has wandered far both to North and East and may give important indications of Sassanian influences in the early middle ages.³

¹ Pope l. c. 4 pl. 174 A—C.
² E. g. Pope l. c. 3 figs. p. 2234 sq.
6. JAHVE'S CHERUB THRONE

The astral throne of the Klimova plate is inspired by reality. It preserves — in mythical guise — traditional features of the royal throne of the Ancient Eastern empires.

The throne chariot is typical for the Ancient Near East. We know that the Great Kings daily availed themselves of thrones mounted on wheels and drawn by slaves. As an example we reproduce Heuzey’s reconstruction of a chariot throne, based on Assyrian palace reliefs¹ (fig. 25). Certain fundamental characteristics which the Jahve throne in the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel has in common with the Klimova throne, must derive from the same throne tradition of the Ancient East. In the time of Ezekiel and Daniel it must have been the ceremonial throne of the Great King in Babylon which dominated this tradition. During the centuries not only have Babylonians and Persians looked to this ceremonial throne in the centre of the world, but so also have the subject nations. And it is perhaps not a mere coincidence that we do not meet Jahve’s throne in a clearly visible form until the Babylonian exile — in Ezekiel and later on in Daniel. There is a lapse of more than a thousand years between the Jahve throne of these visions and the Sassanian throne on our silver dish: and yet in both cases we meet the same main characteristics. This can only be explained by continuity of tradition.

Like the Sassanian throne Jahve’s throne is mounted on wheels; consequently it is a chariot throne. "His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ φλόξ πυρός, οἱ τρόχοι αὐτοῦ πῦρ φλέγον) says Daniel (7, 9 sq.). In Ezekiel’s vision not only has Jahve’s throne wheels in common with the Sassanian throne, but also the two-storied structure, with

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Fig. 25. Heuzey's reconstruction of a chariot throne, based on palace reliefs.

a lower section for the servants and a higher one for the divinity itself. "Now as I beheld the living creatures", says Ezekiel (1, 15 sq.), "behold one wheel upon the earth by the four living creatures" (τροχός εἰς ἑπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐχόμενος τῶν ζώων τοῖς τέσσαριν). "And the likeness of the firmament (στερεώματα) upon the heads of the living creatures, was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above" (1, 22). "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it... This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (1, 26 sqq.). "Then I looked, and, behold, on the firmament that was above the head of the Cherubim there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne (ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος τοῦ ὑπὲρ
κεφαλῆς τῶν χερουβίν ὡς λίθος σχηματιζομένη ὑμοίωμα θρόνου ἐπὶ αὐτῶν): And he spoke unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the Cherubim (ἐπιστεῖθε εἰς τὸ μέσον τῶν τροχῶν τῶν ὑποκάτω τῶν χερουβίν) (10, 1 sqq.). In the wheels works the power of the Cherubim; these are the "living creatures", the ζώα who drive the throne chariot. "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went...and the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels" 1 (1, 20).

On his Cherub-throne Jahve flies through space. "And he rode upon a Cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 18, 10; cf. 104, 3). 2 We must once more compare our Sassanian Moon-King, who on his astral throne soars through space. The Jahve throne is also an astral throne: the Cherubim are astral beings, their 4 faces are the main signs of the zodiac. They — as well as the word Cherub itself — point to the centre of the world: Babylon.

1 The Jahve throne is to be compared with the Cherub vehicle in the temple of Jerusalem, 1. Chron. 28, 8, see H. Schmidt, Kerubenthron und Lade (Studien zur Religion und Literatur des A. u. N. Testamentes, von H. Gunkel dargebracht) p. 120 sqq. — The throne chariot of Salomo: A. Wünsche, Salomos Thron und Hippodrom, Ex Oriente Lux 2, 1906, p. 120 sqq.; G. Salzberger, Salomos Tempelbau und Thron in der semitischen Sagenliteratur. A. Alföldi, Die Geschichte des Throntabernakels, La Nouvelle Clio 10, 1950, p. 547 sqq.; the throne chariot I. c. p. 542 sqq.

2 LXX (ed. A. Rahlfs) 17, 11; cf. 103, 3.
7. ASTRAL THRONEs, TEMPLES AND PALACES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

At the back of Jahve's flight on Cherubim there is a fundamental religious conception peculiar to the Ancient Near East: the idea of the god as soaring on and carried by his servants. The god stands or sits enthroned on an attendant being—a animal, a human or some fabulous creature, a ζωον similar to the Cherubim of Jahve. It is significant that these ζωον often have wings like Cherubim. In all such cases it is obvious that we have to do with creatures of air, wind and heaven or with astral beings. As astral beings they are also often distinguishable in other ways, for instance by a star-rosette. The throne, consequently, is imagined as flying through space. We meet an infinite number of Babylonian-Assyrian, Aramaic and Hittite gods of this type. Here are just a few examples.

One of the Hittite rock reliefs in Yazilikaya in Asia Minor (fig. 26) represents to the left the celestial god standing on the bowed necks of his servants, opposite to him the mother of the gods on a panther, behind her a male divinity on a panther, and two goddesses on a double eagle. In Kargamish a god sits enthroned on a pedestal borne by lions, the lions being led by a human figure with a griffin's head (fig. 27). On the Assyrian rock relief in Maltaya on the Tigris (fig. 28) Ashur is standing on two fabulous creatures, behind him Belit sits enthroned on a lion and four other gods are standing respectively on a winged ox, a dragon, a horse, a winged ox, and at last Ishtar on a lion. Note on the base of Belit's throne two more attendant creatures, both with wings, and over them, on the side of the throne, human servants supporting the arm rests. Most of the gods are crowned with a star. The well known deities from the Syrian Doliche may be quoted as examples.

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2 Below p. 158 note 1.
from Roman times of the Eastern god carried by his ζήνη. On a relief from the newly unearthed Jupiter Dolichenus' shrine on the Aventine\(^1\) (fig. 29) the god is standing on his ox and facing him "Juno Dolichenosa" on her hind, while above the flaming altar between them Jupiter's eagle is bearing aloft the busts of Isis and Serapis, the whole ensemble being bordered by the Dioscuri, representatives of the two hemispheres of the universe.\(^2\) From the Near East the supporting attendants follow their gods to the mythology of Egypt and the classical world. Thus in Egyptian art we meet the Syrian Kadesh on the lion, otherwise surrounded by typical Egyptian gods.\(^3\) These carrying

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2. F. Cumont, Le symbolisme funéraire des Romains p. 67 sqq.
3. H. Gressmann l. c. p. 270 sqq.; 276; cf. 307. The Egyptian Horus standing on the crocodile has an essentially different significance: the god is not flying on a serving demon, but standing in triumph on the conquered beast.
Fig. 27. God enthroned on his ṣēk in Kargamish.
servants are so essentially attached to the Eastern gods that, for instance, Jahve is named "he that sitteth on the Cherubim" (ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν χερουβίων).\(^1\)

It is not always a "living creature" who carries the god through space. We also find the magic chariot. Even in the middle ages the legend of the Persian King Kaikäüs' magic machine moving through space, survives in the East (p. 78 sq.). On the oldest coin from Gaza, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the reverse pictures Jao (Jahve) sitting on a winged chariot\(^2\) (fig. 30 a). The oriental currents spreading over the Mediterranean in archaic times introduce it in the mythology of the Western world. So Triptolemos and Dionysos appear on a similar vehicle on vases from the 6th and 5th century (fig. 30 b).\(^3\)

In the remoter East this idea of gods carried through space was given a particularly rich and imaginative form. In India the temple takes the form of the heavenly vehicle or soaring palace of the gods, and as such is often placed on rows of lions, elephants or demons. In the great rock temple from the 8th century A.D. in Ellora, called by the name of Siva's celestial palace, Kailasa, the central building is supported on a frieze of elephants (fig. 31).

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\(^1\) Psalms 79, 2; 98, 1; 1 Sam. 4, 4; 2. Sam. 6, 2.
\(^2\) Gressmann l.c. 362.
\(^3\) Gressmann l.c. 363 and p. 104.
Fig. 29. Relief from the Aventine.

Fig. 30. a. Coin from Gaza. b. Detail from a Greek vase painting.
Fig. 31. From the central building of Kailasa, Ellora.

Fig. 32. The sun temple in Konarak.
In the Siva temples in Mamallapuram from the 7th century A. D. the pillars are supported by attendant animals.\(^1\) Hindu temples, such as those in Konarak and Vijayanagar, have huge wheels hewn in relief in the temple plinth. The Sun temple in Konarak from the 13th century\(^2\) (figs. 32, 33) expresses the idea of the god’s chariot, \textit{vimāna}, not only by the wheels, but also by the statues of horses and elephants having just been unyoked. The richly carved temple chariot in Mysore\(^3\) (fig. 34) dating from the 17th or 18th century,

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\(^1\) O. Fischer, Die Kunst des Ostens, Propyläenkunstgeschichte fig. 206 and pl. VII, cf. figs. 159; 211, 1.

\(^2\) Fischer l. c. fig. 240.

\(^3\) Fischer l. c. fig. 256.
Fig. 34. The temple chariot in Mysore.
is still drawn by a yoke of elephants in the annual processions, and so is Jagannath's temple chariot with Krishna's image in Puri (fig. 35). The old Indian temple name *Ratha* (with the same root as *rota*, *rad* etc.) is an indication of how important a part of certain Indian temple types the wheel in reality was. The gods whirled through space on rolling and flying vehicles of this kind. The motif also constantly appears in the legends and fairy-tales of the East.

Already ancient literature was familiar with the moving palaces of the East. In India or Meroë Pseudo-Callisthenes' Alexander inspects Queen Candice's
palace, a heavenly or solar palace, the walls of which are gleaming with gold and made of transparent stone. The throne room was built without foundations on the ground, but instead resting on huge square beams, and drawn on wheels by 20 elephants (ἐπὶ τροχῶν συμφώνη ὑπὸ εἴκοσιν ἑλεφάντων).¹ In Valerius Polemius' version this throne-room was a cosmic hall decorated with astral pictures.² With this rolling throne-room of Candice we may compare the temple chariot on an East-Roman diptych from the 5th century in the British Museum³ (fig. 36). The colossal statue of an Imperial divus is sitting enthroned in a temple-like sanctuary with two columns in the front; the whole building is placed on a raised structure resting on wheels, and drawn by a quadriga of elephants, with mahouts on their backs. The emperor appears in his pompa funerālis; in the background rises his rogus. The eagles flying up from the rogus, the horse quadriga galloping into the heavens with the transfigured deceased, the Wind Gods bearing the imperial divus through the ether into the heavenly spheres beneath the signs of the zodiac, and finally the emperor being accepted amongst the celestial divi — everything is an expression of his ascension to the stars. We are reminded of the funeral

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¹ Pseudocall. 3, 22.
² Valerius Polemius, Res gestae Alexandri (ed. B. Kuebler) 3, 37: Triclinium quoque ibidem videt alio de saxi genere, cui cum sint ignae quaedam maculae vel inustiones, — haud secus
Fig. 37. “Custodians” in Persepolis.
temple chariot of Alexander which has probably derived from the sacred chariot of the Persian kings.\(^1\)

As seen, not only the gods and their thrones, but also their habitation — the temple and palace — soared, in the conception of the remoter East, in the spheres, borne up aloft by animals and demons. Also the Persian-Arabian tradition and Byzantine legends derived therefrom know of such heavenly palaces. We only recall the Persian king Kaikāš who had an entire city built and carried by demons in space. The wealth of variants of such legends in the days of Firdausi and Tabari proves their high age.\(^2\) Indeed, is not in reality the same conception expressed already in the temple and palace buildings of the Ancient Near East? Here, too, supporting ζοζα are placed in the static key points of the sacred edifices, from Sumerian and right down to Persian times. We have only to mention the long series of lion and bull portals in the holy buildings of Persia, Assyria, Babylonia and the kingdoms of the Sumerians and Hittites. Are not these buildings in reality soaring above their animal "custodians" which are hewn into the base of the portals (fig. 37)? And are not these ministering creatures, whereever we may meet them on orthostat plates, at the base of columns and in capital plinths (fig. 38), in reality endowed with the same function? Is not the whole sacred edifice drawn into the astral space and built into the heavenly cosmos by these symbolical supporters? And have not these attendant beings been imagined in such a cosmic function by contemporaries? Is it not only to a foreign spiritual world, such as ours, that they appear as mere ornamentation and empty decoration? And finally, is it not from this dominant conception of serving and carrying ζοζα that the great cycle of Caryatides and Atlantes

\(^{1}\) H. P. L'Orange


\(^{1}\) A. Alföldi l. c. p. 551 sq.

\(^{2}\) G. Millet, L'ascension d'Alexandre, Syria 4, 1923, p. 111 sq.
Fig. 38. Capital plinth in Persepolis.

in the art of the West originates? The plethora of ideas and artistic impulses which came from the East in the centuries before the middle of the first millennium B.C. has washed such phantom forms up on the shores of the West.¹

8. THE ASTRAL ASCENSION OF THE SASSANIAN KING

An East-Byzantine textile in the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, from the end of the 7th century at the latest, repeats in its patterns heraldic apotheosis formulae of two types. The one is the victorious auriga — not the Sun! — in his quadriga (fig. 39 a), as shown by the characteristic leather harness, typical of the auriga in Roman and Byzantine circus pictures. The heraldic style demands symmetry, consequently the auriga is holding two whips instead of one, just as the ascending king on the same textile holds two sceptres (fig. 39 b) and the ascending Alexander two stakes (figs. 54, 86—88). From both sides Cupids with victory wreaths are flying towards the auriga. The halo round the victor's head and the heavenward gallop of the quadriga are both expressions of apotheosis. The elevation of the victorious charioteer was a wide-spread motif in Roman sepulchral art: it had become a symbol of the immortality of the soul.²

The other design (fig. 39 b) on the same cloth has been taken over from Sassanian art. Despite some changes of the original motif, easily explained in a Byzantine work, there can be no doubt that the ascension of the Sassanian king is represented.³ The crown with jewelled fillet, with battlements, celestial sphere and moon crescent, preserve essential features of the Sassanian head ornament (cf. figs. 17, 18); the large ear-rings are likewise typical. The horses rear up, galloping off into space. The idea of the auriga and the Sassanian king thus correspond to one another in the expression of apotheosis.

Also the silver dish from Klimova (fig. 19) showed the ascending king in his celestial chariot, but here in a Moon-apotheosis, as also in seals (fig. 40 b, c),

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² F. Cumont, Le symbolisme funéraire des Romains p. 458 sqq.
³ J. Lessing, l. c. pl. 2 a.
impositis sibi cornibus, as Peter Chrysologus describes him, and with the Moon’s span of oxen pulling the chariot. The ascending king in Sun apotheosis — Solis in figura, to stick to Peter Chrysologus’ description once more — is represented in a seal in Berlin¹ (fig. 40 a). The king’s bust, with diadem, is crowned with a halo of exactly the same shape as about the head of the deified auriga (fig. 39 a). The chariot is abbreviated in a way typical of ascension images, only the wheels being shown (cf. figs. 40 b, 90, 92); the winged horses are galloping into space.

These winged horses, which according to the astral mythology pull the chariot of the ascending Sun-king through space, are in real life the statuary supporters of the royal throne (fig. 18, 52). Also other animals, essentially bound up with the Sun and the Sun-king’s solar elevation — the griffin, eagle and lion — work as supporters under his throne (figs. 53, 55, 17). Well known is the solar signification of the lion. A few words only as to how the horse, the griffin and the eagle are connected with the solar ascension or elevation to the stars!

¹ E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 108 sqq. and fig. 14. The Pahlavi legend mentions the owner of the seal.
Both the wingless and the winged horse pull the Sun Chariot and in a peculiar way belong to the Sun apotheosis. Already in Achaemenian Persia a chariot drawn by white horses and sacred to the Sun preceded the Persian king in his procession.\(^1\) On textiles of Sassanian type horses are represented crowned with the diadem and astral symbols of Sassanian royalty: a star in the crescent moon (figs. 41 a, b).\(^2\) The Asiatic monarchs seem to have believed

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that their protecting divinity could take them up in his chariot and bear them off with him on his course. "The chariot of fire" and "the horses of fire" which carried Elijah up to heaven, are like the Sun Chariot bearing the divine man. With the overwhelming influence of the East in the 3rd century A.D. the Western ruler in a similar way mounts the Sun chariot (p. 144 sq.) — Nero had already done so.²

Philostratus, who constantly projects Near-Eastern ideas into the life of the remoter East, tells that the griffin lives in India and is the sacred animal of Helios, a yoke of four being harnessed to his chariot.³ On an altar in

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the Museo Capitolino in Rome the Syrian Sun-God Malachbel, crowned by Victoria, mounts a similar griffin-drawn vehicle\(^1\) (fig. 42). Apollo takes over the griffin from the Eastern god; with a quadriga of griffins he returns from the Hyperboreans.\(^2\) As the sacred animal of Sun-Apollo the griffin has been widely used in the sepulchral art of the West, for instance, on the sarcophagi. Thus griffins are represented carrying the dead through space.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Pindar, Fragm. 122. Apollo also is occasionally represented thus in art: F. Cumont l. c. p. 94.

\(^3\) F. Cumont l. c. p. 94 sq. — We may recall the heavenly griffin chariot of Christ in Dante (Purg. 29, 107 sqq.):

\[\textit{Un carro, in su due ruote, trionfale,} \\
\textit{Ch'al collo d'un grifon tirato venne . . .}\]
Even in the more recent Persian-Arabian literature a considerable number of legends about giant birds carrying human beings have been preserved—we need only mention the bird Roc and Sinbad. Firdausi tells that Kaikāūs built an artificial throne and had it yoked to four eagles, which, when mutton was stuck on two lances as bait, rose into the air to catch it, thus elevating the throne (p. 78 sq.).¹ Nöldeke traces this motif back to Talmudic literature,² and Herzfeld rediscovers it in the Babylonian Etana legend,³ already depicted on seal cylinders in the third millennium B.C. Etana, who is being borne aloft by the eagle, uses no bait to drive the eagle on, but the eagle's own young. An Arabian Nimrod legend has also been compared: wanting to visit the god of Abraham in heaven, Nimrod places himself in a box carried up to heaven by eagles. It is from the whole of this primeval oriental complex that Pseudo-callisthenes' account of Alexander's ascension has originated (p. 118 sqq.).

Thus naturally the eagle becomes in the imagery of the East a symbol of the flight of the soul towards the stars, of the resurrection of the dead, of apotheosis: the eagle is not only theophrorus but also psychophorus.⁴ As examples we here reproduce a Sassanian silver plate⁵ (fig. 44) and an Arabian graffito bowl⁶ (fig. 45), both picturing a huge bird which carries a divine or human being into the spheres, the carried figure being secured by ropes to the body of the bird. In an Arabian silk pattern⁷ (fig. 46) the carried figure holds a rope laid around the neck of the bird.

Under the influence of the Orient the eagle also in the Hellenistic-Roman world becomes a god- and soul-bearing ζωον. It carries not only the Eastern Sol and Sarapis (fig. 29), but also Jupiter himself.⁸ The Greek myth springing from Eastern source of Ganymede carried to heaven by the eagle of Zeus

Le membra d'oro avea, quanto era uccello,  
E bianche l'altre di vermiglio miste.  
Non che Roma di carro così bello  
Rallegrasse Africano ovvero Augusto.  
Ma quel del sol saria pover con ello.

⁴ F. Cumont l. c. p. 35 sqq.
⁵ Pope l. c. 1 fig. 306 p. 882.
⁶ Pope l. c. 5 pl. 585 A.
⁷ Pope l. c. 3 fig. 649 p. 2014.
⁸ F. Cumont l. c. p. 81.
becomes a symbol of the ascension of the soul to the stars, analogous to what happened in the Orient.\(^1\) In this sense Ganymede is represented in the claws of the eagle beneath the bust of the deceased on the Roman Sarcophagi (fig. 73). But even divorced from Ganymede the eagle becomes an expression of the ascension to the celestial spheres. The apotheosis of the Roman emperor is expressed by the eagle bearing him to heaven. Direct models in the Oriental kingdoms have been adduced.\(^2\) There is a striking likeness between the ascension of an Alexander or a Kaikâüs and the apotheosis Septimius Severus dreamt of: four eagles carried him heavenwards in a bejewelled chariot.\(^3\) Even in Christian legends eagles may come down during sleep and lift souls up to the heavenly paradise.\(^4\) On tombs the eagle is depicted as a psychophorus, a symbol of the elevation to heaven, that is of immortality.\(^5\) This interpretation has survived far down into the middle ages, possibly strengthened by new oriental currents of ideas. So we

\(^1\) F. Cumont, Le symbolisme funéraire des Romains p. 97 sqq. E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 126 sqq.; 133 sqq.

\(^2\) F. Cumont, L’aigle funéraire l. c. p. 72 sqq.

\(^3\) Script. hist. aug., Severus 22: Signa mortis eius haec fuerunt: ipse somniavit quattuor aquilis et gemmato curru praevolante nescio qua ingenti humana specie ad caelum esse raptum.

\(^4\) c. 17 in Lipsius et Bonnet, Acta Apostol. apocrypha (1891) 2, 85 sqq.

find it in the Arabian roof decorations from the 12th century in the Christian Cappella Palatina in Palermo¹ (fig. 47): a giant bird carries heavenwards a halo-crowned man sitting in a rope which is laid around the bird’s neck in the same way as in the Arabian silk pattern studied above (fig. 46); the busts of two halo-crowned angels in the upper part of the wings of the bird have taken the place of the solar griffins in the silk pattern. The old symbol of elevation to the stars has here become an expression of the Christian resurrection. Probably with the same significance the motif has penetrated

further to the North and West. On two capitals in the Cathedral of Lund in Sweden (fig. 48)\(^1\) two huge birds are flying towards the heaven while a human being embracing their wings follow them in their flight. A capital with the representation of men clinging to great flying birds originates from All the Holies' monastery in the same city (fig. 49).

When finding the Sassanian throne resting on such solar or heavenly animals — (winged) horses, griffins, eagles and lions — we must bear in mind their peculiar function in the religion and mythology of the East: they are carrying the god or godman through the heavenly spheres. We have given a series of typical examples of such Eastern gods standing or sitting enthroned on their supporting ζεύξ (figs. 26—29). Let us here only recall Jahve "that sitteth on the Cherubim". As the Sassanian throne is a horse-, a griffin-, a lion- or eagle-throne, so is that of Jahve a Cherubim-throne. "And he rode upon Cherubim and did fly". So also the heavenly king rides on his throne-animals and flies. The winged horses and griffins are not only harnessed to the throne, they are also saddled as the Great King's mount. On Sassanian textiles\(^2\) the king is represented on his winged horse seizing the cub from a furious lioness, a typical Sassanian motif\(^3\) (fig. 50);

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\(^1\) I am indebted to E. H. Arbman for the phot. underlying figs. 48 and 49, and for the permission to publish them.

\(^2\) F. Sarre l.c. p. 99. O. v. Falke l.c. 1 p. 83 sqq.

\(^3\) Compare silver cup in British Museum, O. v. Falke l.c. fig. 108; A. U. Pope l.c. 4 pl. 231 A and B.
or riding on the griffin\(^1\) in combat with a winged and horned monster, against which the Persian kings from Achaemenian times onwards had been fighting a sort of symbolic struggle\(^2\) (fig. 51). Like the heavenly zebras, winged horses and griffins often occur on Sassanian seals, occasionally in a frame of astral symbols.\(^3\) The representation of the royal bust above a pair of wings (fig. 21a)

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\(^1\) J. Lessing l. c. pl. 26. F. Sarre l. c. pl. 98. L. Bréhier, La sculpture et les arts mineurs 86, places the textile in the first half of the 10th cent., but traces its origin back to the Sassanian art of the 5th and 6th centuries. O. v. Falke l. c. sqq. places it in the 7th century.

\(^2\) E. g. M. Dieulafoy l. c. 3, pl. 17. O. v. Falke l. c. 83 sqq. A. M. Pope l. c. 4, pl. 95; 123 L, M. A bearded man between griffins occurs on textiles from late- or post-Sassanian times and, according to E. Riefstahl (in the volume in memory of Crum, in print) must be supposed to represent Khusrau setting out on a heavenly journey. I am grateful to Mrs. Riefstahl for photo, cf. J. D. Cooney, Late Egyptian and Coptic Art, Brooklyn Museum pl. 50. The griffin-rider of the East is met with in the medieval Norwegian "King's Mirror" where mention is made of the little book of "Wonders of India", wide-spread in 13th century Europe. The "son" is amazed to read in this book "that small men can tame the great winged dragons, living there in the mountains or in the wastes . . . so that they can even ride them at will like horses" (cf. fig. 51).

\(^3\) Examples by P. Horn—G. Steindorff l. c. on pl. IV sq.
Fig. 52. Sassanian golden dish, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
must spring from the same conception of the king’s heavenly elevation. —
In the West, too, riding on a winged horse or griffin, became an expression
of apotheosis, cf. for instance, the heavenly rider on the famous cameo in
the Bibliothèque Nationale.

At last an example of each of these heavenly animal-thrones shall be
given: the Sassanian king on his horse-, griffin-, eagle- and lion-throne.

On a famous golden dish in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the inlaid
circular rock crystal in the centre bears the picture of the king enthroned (fig. 52).
Here winged horses stand as supporters under the throne (as also in a silver
plate in the Hermitage studied above, fig. 18 cf. 25). In his royal robes, with crown,
diadem and jewelled breast-piece, the king sits before us, in the ceremonial
posture “leaning on his sword”, on the wide carpeted Sassanian throne, with
an accumulation of cushions on his left hand side (p. 37). Is not this golden dish
a sort of clipeus caelestis (cf. p. 90 sqq.)? Are the rosettes and pointed squares
projecting from the ground and filling the great orbit around the central crystal,
not an image of the heavens? And is the crystal itself not the Sun? Is the
king above his winged horses not the Sun-god himself in his chariot?

On a silver dish in the British Museum (fig. 53) the king, in the chief scene
of the inner circle, is sitting enthroned, in ceremonial posture, handing a ruler
ring to the vassal before his throne. A Cupid flying towards him with an
unbound diadem gives to the scene a certain mythical note. The representation
of the throne seems in a peculiar way to fit into a picture of this kind. Are
not the griffins beneath the throne curiously placed? They are pointing up
as though about to fly, as is the case with the animals in ascension pictures
(cf. e.g. fig. 54, 39, 40 a). And is not the way in which the throne has been
placed on the griffins striking? Elsewhere (e.g. fig. 52) the throne rests with
all its weight on the animals’ heads, but here it is fastened to their neck by an
intervening link, rather like a yoke. It is as though the idea of the ascending
king, latent in the animals supporting the throne, has overcome material

1 F. Cumont l. c. p. 92 f.
2 M. Dieulafoy l. c. 5 pl. 22. J. Smirnow, Argenterie Orientale pl. 24. E. Babelon, Guide
Cabinet des Medailles no. 379. F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld l. c. 214. F. Sarre l. c. pl. 144. A. U. Pope,
l. c. 4, pl. 203.
3 J. Smirnow l. c. pl. 16. F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld, Iranische Felsreliefs p. 218 fig. 107. Sassanian
throne legs with bronze griffins: A. U. Pope l. c. pl. 240 B—C. The vine-like tree furthest
to the right is a typical part of such throne pictures (cf. fig. 89), A. Alföldi, La Nouvelle Clio
10, 1950.
Fig. 53. Sassanian silver dish, British Museum.

reality, as though the griffins were setting off on their heavenly flight. So we actually see them, galloping into the sky with the ascending king, on seal stones. Also pictures of Alexander carried to heaven on a pair of griffins may be compared (fig. 54).
Fig. 54. Alexander's ascension. Detail of floor mosaic in the Cathedral of Otranto.
On the two outsides of a boat-shaped silver vessel in the Walter’s Art Gallery in Baltimore the very same ceremonial scene is repeated (fig. 55). The king, in the same scheme as on the golden dish in the Bibliothèque Nationale, is seated on the wide carpeted Sassanian throne, two vassals surrounding him, the one stretching a crown towards him, the other illuminating him with a torch. The throne is supported by two eagles, with their wings unfolded in flight. We recall the throne of Kaikāūs yoked to four flying eagles. K. Barr has kindly translated the essential part of the description of Kaikāūs’ flying throne in Firdausi (letting the rhetorical ornaments apart): “Tempted to hybris by the demons, Kaikāūs conceived the idea of flying to heaven. He ordered young eagles to be taken from their nests and brought them up by fowl and lamb’s meat. When they had got the strength of lions, Kaikāūs had a throne made of Aloeewood and gold. Long lances were fastened on its sides, on the ends of which hind-quarters of lamb were hung and four of the strong young eagles were harnessed to the throne. Kaikāūs took his

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1 I express my gratitude to the Director of the Walter’s Art Gallery E. S. King for the permission to publish this unknown piece. I am indebted to the Curator Dorothy E. Miner for valuable information during my study of the vessel.
seat upon it with a goblet of wine before him, and the fast flying eagles
being hungry made for the meat each of them and lifting the throne from
the plain carried it up to the clouds." ¹

On the silver plate from Kazvin dealt with above (p. 37 fig. 17), the king,
in the same scheme as on the golden dish in the Bibliothèque Nationale,
is seated on the wide Sassanian throne with an accumulation of cushions
on his left hand side. The throne is placed in a cosmic building which is
founded upon columns placed on the backs of lions.

On the Kazvin plate it is obvious that the building rests on four columns
of which only the two in the front are shown. Consequently, there must also
be four lions. That must also apply to the animals in the horse-, griffin-, and
eagle-thrones: only the two animals in the front are represented, in
reality there are four of them. Thus we have to do with horse-, griffin-,
eagle- and lion-quadrigas, carrying the heavenly throne of the king.

¹ Cf. Shahname, trad. J. Mohl II p. 44 vv. 464 sqq.
9. THE ASTRAL MOVEMENT OF THE ACHAEMENIAN THRONE

From the monuments, in correspondence with literary evidences (p. 19 sqq.), we learn that a real movement of the throne belonged to the ceremonial of the Persian king: a cosmic expressive movement taking place in the throne room is the ritual reality underlying such mythological conceptions as that of the Klimova Moon-king moving as a star in space.

In the Assyrian Maltaya relief (fig. 28) we have been struck by a remarkable adaptation of the motif of the supporting servant; at the side of the goddess Belit's throne the supporters were placed under the arm-rest. In the throne of the Assyrian and Babylonian king — as represented, for instance, in the palace reliefs of Sargon and Senacherib — the supporters appear once more, sometimes carrying the arm rest, at other times the seat, and also placed as legs under the throne\(^1\) (figs. 25, 56). Note how these supporters, occasionally placed in rows one above the other, are carrying on head and arms, and especially how their arms are raised aloft in a tense carrying position. A ritual act is the basis of such throne pictures: the solemn carrying of the king in a ceremonial procession. This fact is sublimated, we may say, in the characteristic Eastern idea of the god soaring on his servants.

Rows of carrying servants of this kind, supporting the god or the king on their raised arms, are typical of the Ancient Near East. They are met with, for instance, in a Hittite monument in Iftitun in Asia Minor\(^2\) (fig. 57). Three

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\(^2\) M. Sokolowski—G. Perrot, Rev. Archéol. 1885. F. Sarre, Reise in Phrygien, Archäolog. epigraph. Mitt. 19, 1, 1896, pl. 1. E. Meyer, Reich und Kultur der Hettiter pl. 13 and p. 114 sqq. E. Herzfeld l.c. p. 11 sq. A relief from Tell Halaf (Analecta Orientalia 26, 1948 fig. 46 b) is to be compared with the Iftitun monument. E. Meyer sees the origin of this picture type in the Egyptian representation of the air god Shu supporting the goddess of heaven, and that
winged solar discs are carried by human figures which are partly placed in two rows above one another. The figures in the lower row, not reaching up so far as the solar disc and in reality only being able to support the figures in the upper row, also raise their arms upwards in a carrying position. It is characteristic of Ancient Eastern art that a crowd of people grouped in depth is split up into rows of figures arranged in zones one above the other. The supporters on the Iflatun monument must thus be regarded as standing behind, not above each other.

Such rows of supporters stand under the throne of the Achaemenian king as shown in the royal tomb and palace reliefs in Persepolis¹ (figs. 58—60). We witness a solemn ceremony. On both sides of the throne stand the representatives of the Persian nobility, assisting at the solemnities; they are placed in rows above one another, while in reality they must be imagined as grouped in depth behind each other. The king, in the wide costume of the Medes, with the cidasiris on his head and a bow in his left hand, is standing on a three-tiered platform, placed on a huge stand, in the inscription referred to as a throne (gāthu). Under the platform the servants stand in a tense carrying posture, arranged in two rows above one another, just as seen on the Assyrian thrones and the monument in Iflatun. Once again the figures must be imagined as standing

¹ Pharaoh supporting heaven itself (H. Gressmann l.c. 265). But in the Hittite relief it is the moving sun and not the fixed sky which is supported; cf. the disc of the sun supported by the walking scorpion man on a Mesopotamian seal cylinder from the 7th century (H. Schäfer—W. Andrae l.c. 548, 6). If there is an Egyptian prototype, then in the East it has been transformed in accordance with the idea of the god flying on his servant demon (like Jahwe “that sitteth upon the Cherubim”).

behind one another in depth; only an arrangement with two ranks would guarantee the stability of the throne being carried along. It is of special importance to realize that the feet of the throne hang in the air, without touching the ground like the lower figures. Thus, the whole throne structure is carried on the arms of the supporting figures. These are all turning to the right and putting their left foot forward, thus marching in step off to the right; the throne is moving in this direction. The bearers themselves — as told in the inscription accompanying one of these reliefs — are representatives of the Persian tribes, of the satrapies and vassal states on which the throne is founded. "If you wonder how many lands King Darius ruled over, then

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1 Cf. e.g. F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld l.c. p. 143 sq.; Herzfeld, der Thron des Khosro l.c. p. 5.
2 F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld explicitly states this fact, l.c. 17. Our fig. 58 is taken from below, so that the lower part of the feet of the throne is hidden behind the projecting ledge, which also covers the throne supporters almost to the knee. But in the middle fig. to p. 318 in A. V. W. Jackson, Persia Past and Present, and on our corresponding throne picture in the palace of Persepolis fig. 60 the feet are not hidden and the suspended position of the throne is clear.
Fig. 58. Front relief on royal tomb, Persepolis.
look at the picture of those supporting my throne, and you will know them."
The individual character of the various tribes is shown in their costume and
equipment¹ (cf. fig. 59).

Like the Sassanian king on the Klimova plate, so the Achaemenian king
on the tomb relief is placed in a world of astral symbols. He stands turning
towards the Sun and the Moon, both pictured in front of him in the direction
of the moving throne: the Sun as a winged solar disc joined to the bust of
Ahuramazda, and the Moon as the disc of the full Moon, with the crescent
of the new Moon inlaid. The ritual movement must be seen in relation to
these gods on the firmament, just as the king’s gesture of prayer and the
fire altar in front of him apply to them. Firdausi’s description of the cosmic
orientation of the Sassanian throne can be compared: it changed its front
corresponding to the movement of the Sun through the various signs of

¹ F. Sarre—E. Herzfeld 1. c. p. 18 sqq.
The zodiac. We witness a solemn act by which the Great King adjusts himself to the movements of the heavens, thus manifesting his own astral power. Just as Sun, Moon and planets in completing their orbits determine the fate of the universe, so the movements of the royal throne reveal the fatal power of the Great King; he is analogous to the heavenly bodies, the Cosmocrator — he "spins" men's fates, to quote again the words of Tiridates to Nero Cosmocrator (p. 23). Let us remember once more the functions of the king at the New Year festival (Naurōz = New Day), when he allots state offices just as the Sun God distributes the various spheres of influence for the coming cosmic year. He is part of the all moving orbit of the stars, "Companion of the Stars, brother of the Sun and Moon", and already from ancient times wears Sun and Moon in his tiara.1 In Sassanian times he appears, as seen, identical with these heavenly powers. In this connection it is natural to remember that the ritual sun-like orbit was widespread in the ancient world and can be traced from Egypt to Greece and Rome.2 This sun magic survived in the movement of the chariots around spina in the circus maximus in Rome and in the hippodrome in Constantinople.

A cosmic throne-movement of this kind belongs in fact to the festival ritual of the Persian Naurōz celebrations. Palace reliefs in Persepolis, for instance in the "Hall of the Hundred Columns" and in the "Central Building" (fig.60), illustrate this ceremony with the bringing of tribute from all parts of the kingdom,3 the king himself appearing on the same throne structure, supported by the same representatives of the Persian tribes, and in the same movement as on the sepulchral reliefs. We see, for instance, Darius sitting on the upper platform of the throne with Xerxes standing behind him, while under the platform three rows of supporters are moving with the throne towards right.

It is superfluous to emphasize that the demonstrative repetition of this throne scene in the very focal point of the royal representation — at the dominant position both in the palace and the mausoleum of the king — clearly proves the fundamental significance of this expression of his astral nature and cosmocratic power. While the palace reliefs with the enthroned

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2 W. B. Kristensen, Kringloop en Totaliteit, Mededeelingen Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen 1938, p. 257 sq.
3 E. Herzfeld l. c. p. 4 sq.
Fig. 60. Palace relief in Persepolis.
king represent him at the Naurūz feast, the tomb reliefs with the standing king carried on his gāthu probably represent him at his enthronement: his "elevation" to kingship.

In the Sassanian legends about the Naurūz feast, reported by Albiruni, the bearing of the enthroned king plays a role strikingly confirming our cosmic interpretation of the Achaemenian throne picture. The king is lifted on the necks of his supporters and becomes a new Sun. The mythic Persian king, Jamshid, we learn, sat on a golden throne and was thus carried away by the men on their necks. "When then the rays of the sun fell on him and people saw him, they did homage to him and were full of joy and made that day a feast day" (the Naurūz). "He rose on that day like the sun, the light beaming forth from him, as though he shone like the sun. Now people were astonished at the rising of two suns" (p. 202).

10. THE SOLAR SIGNIFICANCE THE SAME BY THE ELEVATION
OF THE PERSIAN KING AND OF THE BYZANTINE EMPEROR

The elevation of the Persian Sun king at the Naurōz feast — as surely
also at his enthronement — strikingly resembles that of the Byzantine Sun
emperor at his coronation. When reading Corippus’ encomium on the elevation
of the Emperor Justinus Minor,1 we must bear Albiruni’s description of the
elevation of Jamshid (p. 87) in mind: “Four selected youths raised on high
an enormous shield, elevated by their hands he himself stood above his
servants.”

manibusque levatus
ipse ministrorum supra stetit

“And the mighty Prince stood upon the shield, having the appearance of
the Sun; a sublime light shone forth from the city, and this one propitious
day marvelled that two Suns should arise together.”

Adstitit in clypeo princeps fortissimus illo
Solis habens specimen; lux alta fulsit ab urbe.
Mirata est pariter geminos consurgere soles
una favens eademque dies.

As is here clearly expressed, the raising on a shield of the Byzantine
emperor has been given a cosmic significance. “Raised on high” upon the
cлиpeus and standing “above his servants” he appears as a new Sun, exactly
as the enthroned Jamshid carried “by the men on their necks” was a new
Sun. Down through the middle ages this conception of the emperor on
the shield as a new Sun lives on. In the 13th century Manuel Holobolos

1 Corippus, De laudibus Justini Aug. Min. 2, 137 sqq.
in a passage, to which E. Kantorowicz has called my attention, speaks of the raising on shield as an elevation from earth to heaven (γῆθεν... ἐν μετεώροις λόφοις), an ascension to the stars, and greets the emperor on the shield as a “great Sun”:

σὲ τὸν μέγαν ἥλιον βραχὺς κατέχει δίσυνος
οὗτος ὁ γῆθεν ἀναβας ἐν μετεώροις λόφοις.

We put the question: Why is the emperor elevated on the clipeus a new Sun?

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1 Manuel Holobolo in J. Fr. Boissonade, Anecdota Graeca 5 p. 163. Cf. l. c. 5 p. 161:

Ἄριστος ὁ μέγας ἥλιος, ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης,
ὁ χορηθεὶς εἰς σπῆλαιον διπερ βραχὺν εἰς δίσυνος.
11. THE COSMIC CLIPEUS AND THE SOLAR IMAGO CLIPEATA

The Ancient World conceived the ἄσπις, the clipeus — that is the circular shield with a border around the middle disk — as an image of the revolving All, the cosmos. From Aischylos (Sept. 489) and down to late literature this shield is compared with the rotating wheel, the ever apt symbol of the Universe, one speaks of the shield of heaven, of the clipeus caelestis (Sil. 4, 463), the clipeus sidereus (Virg. Aen. 12, 167), the altisonus caeli clipeus (Enn. scaen. 216), of Sol in suo clipeo (Tertull. Apoll. 16). Ovidius speaks of the imago mundi of the shield of Achilleus's (Met. 13, 110).¹

Also the monuments of art show this cosmic significance of the clipeus. Alexander's shield on the gold medallion from Abukir — which, if a forgery, derives from a true antique prototype — pictures the heavens: along the border is the wheel of the zodiac, in the middle Sun, Moon and stars.² In Hellenistic-Roman times the Homeric shield of Achilleus was regarded a clipeus caelestis of the same type as the medallion from Abukir.³ On wall paintings from Pompeii, Thetis, in the forge of Hephaistos, gazes on the shield of her son (fig. 61). The shield's ornaments are still distinct: a zodiacal border and in the middle a dragon, the animal sign of the heavenly pole. She makes a gesture of consternation: for here she sees his astral apotheosis presupposing his early death. The clipeus caelestis in sepulchral art has exactly the same symbolic function (p. 98 sqq.). Its cosmic character is often expressed by the zodiac on its border, as shown on a great number of Roman sarcophagi, for instance, a sarcophagus in Pisa's Campo Santo and one in Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 62). The significance of the clipeus is the same if, as here, the middle disk disappears and only the border of the shield remains: thus, it is transformed to the wheel of the world, "the immortal circle of God", as cosmos was named by the Hermetics.⁴

This symbol of the clipeus — the clipeus as *imago mundi*, as "the immortal circle of God" — springs from the cosmic imagination of the Ancient East. The well known Sun symbol of Egypt: the winged solar disk, undergoes a
significant transformation in the East: the disk, in Egypt having the plain and simple form of the natural sun, is on Assyrian and Achaemenian monuments divided into an inner circle and a plastically projecting rim, thus assuming the form of a clipeus (figs. 63, 64). The image of the sun is in this way transformed into an image of the world circle, the cosmos. This is clearly expressed in Achaemenian seals where the clipeus as an image of the revolving All, turns about as the common axis of three galloping oxen (fig. 64 b). In the middle of this world ring stands Ahuramazda — as shown, for instance, in a relief from Persepolis\(^1\) (fig. 63) — with his right hand stretched out in the magic gesture of omnipotence so deeply rooted in Eastern religion (p. 158). Already here the central disk of the clipeus has disappeared, only the border remaining.

\(^1\) A. U. Pope I. c. 4 pl. 96. Also in the Far East, and up to our times, the gods are placed in the world ring.
The king, as a reflection of the world god, constantly appears *together with* and *below* his heavenly prototype. Thus he is seen in the palace reliefs in Persepolis (e.g. fig. 58) and on a great number of Achaemenian seals (e.g. figs. 65 a—c), often as a distinct repetition of the divine model. Of special interest is here a remarkable duplication of the figure in the ring (fig. 65 b): above soars Ahuramazda himself, in the middle of the world ring, his right hand stretched out in the gesture of omnipotence (p. 158); below him the Great King, also in the world ring, which has here thrown off the wings, and also in the gesture of omnipotence. In this double-picture we find an expression of the true Eastern conception of the relationship between heaven and earth, of the reflection of cosmos in the sublunar world, of heavenly kingship in earthly, of the sovereignty of the Sun in that of the Great King. Two cosmocratores, *two Suns*, stand before us (p. 87 sq.). Accordingly, the king in the ring is the symbolic, almost hieroglyphical expression of the cosmocratic power of the Eastern king and forms a striking iconographic parallel to the king in the centre of his round city (p. 13), the king in his revolving throne room¹ (p. 22).

Thus, already the Ancient East has seen the world in the image of a circle or a *clipeus*, and has placed the cosmocrator, god and king, in its centre. The *imago clipeata* of the classical peoples springs from this old root,² as

¹ The circular monument of Nemrud-Dagh, with Antiochos between gods and astral signs, may here be called in mind (K. Humann—O. Puchstein, Reisen in Kleinasiens und Nordsyrien). The king in the ring is repeated down to Sassanian times. The cosmic character of the ring on Sassanian coins (e.g. fig. 21 c) is stressed by sun-moon-symbols placed at three points of the circle and by the royal crown (with identical or related symbols) at the fourth one.

² Cf. B. Segall, in Museum of Historic Art, Princeton University 4, no. 2, 1945, p. 4 sq.
Fig. 66. Terracotta clipei from the Erotes Tomb in Eretria, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

does also the cosmocratic theology it represented. Indeed, they first place the god in a clipeus, then the apotheosized earthly ruler, then the apotheosized dead man.

First some examples of the god in the clipeus! On a series of small terracotta clipei from the Erotes Tomb in Eretria, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (fig. 66), the radiant head of Helios, now and then surrounded by stars, is put in the centre of the disk — it is the Sol in suo clipeo,¹ to use the words of Tertullianus, that is the Sun in the middle of the heavens. A sculpture in the Villa Albani shows Jupiter enthroned in an enormous

¹ Tertull., Apol. 16. Compare Roscher’s Mythol. Lex s. v. Helios p. 1998; B. Segall l. c. fig. 4
Fig. 67. Jupiter in the cosmos. Villa Albani, Rome.
world ring having the form of the zodiac\(^1\) (fig. 67). On a Mithraic relief in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Trier\(^2\) which we studied above (fig. 14 and p. 33), Mithra in the middle of the zodiacal wheel whirls it into its revolving motion—an exact illumination of Claudianus’ reference to him as the *volvens sidera Mithra*.\(^3\) In a relief from Transjordan in Cincinnati (fig. 68), Kybele or some pretentious city goddess is placed in the middle of the *clipeus caelestis*. Its

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border carrying the zodiacal signs represents the heaven of the fixed stars, while a star from the lower heavens: the Moon, appears in the middle disk. We may compare the representation of Christ as cosmocrator in the *clipeus caelestis* on a diptych from the sixth century¹ (fig. 69): its border represents the heaven of the fixed stars, the inner disk, carrying the signs of the Sun, the Moon and a planet, represents the lower spheres. The clipeus expresses the cosmocrator words of the Gospel: “Into my hands is put all power in heaven and on earth”. (Compare fig. 140.)

When the *imago* of the living emperor is placed in the clipeus, the idea of the imperial cosmocrator, the Sun-emperor, comes to the fore. The symbolism of the Alexander shield is latent in the imperial *imago clipeata*, as it may have been already in the golden shield of Hasdrubal bearing his *imago*.² The Roman emperors dedicated their *imaginex clipeatae* in the temples,³ as had the magnates of the Republic those of their ancestors. Caligula institutes an annual ceremony in which a troupe of young nobles singing the ritual chants accompany the *imago clipeata* of the emperor to the very temple of Jupiter.⁴ The idea at the back of these imperial portraits is clearly expressed in a little bronze portrait of Caracalla⁵ in the form of an *imago clipeata* (fig. 70): the rays of the Sun surround his head, he is, adapting the previously cited words of Tertullianus, *Sol in suo clipeo*.

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¹ R. Delbrück, Die Consulardiptychen 48.
³ References in Darenberg—Saglio, Dict. Antiquités, s. v. clipeus, E. Saglio, p. 1259.
⁴ Suet. Cal. 16.
⁵ O. Brendel I. c. p. 275.
Fig. 70. Bronze portrait of Caracalla, Berlin.

When the portrait of the dead is placed in the clipeus, the dead appears as elevated to the stars. First heroes and great men receive this honour, but gradually any dead. Appius Claudius dedicates imagines clipeatae of his ancestors in the temple of Bellona, M. Aemilius in Basilica Aemilia, and Scipio wears the imagines of his father and his ancestor on his own clipeus. The heroon in Kalydon gives good examples of such heroic imagines clipeatae (ἐικόνες ἐν ὀπλῳ). In imperial sepulchral art, on sarcophagi, in tomb paintings etc., the imagines clipeatae are current all over the empire — always as an expression of apotheosis. The celestial character of the clipeus is often indicated by the zodiacal wheel on the border (fig. 62). The dead in his clipeus caelestis is elevated as a new star high above the elemental gods or demons, representatives of the sublunary world. Victories, genii, demons, or Atlantes, are raising the shield, often supporting it on head and

3 Sil. Ital., Punic. 17, 397.  
Fig. 71. Painting in Palmyrene tomb.
Fig. 72. Roman Sarcophagus from the 3rd century A.D., Museo Nazionale, Naples.

Fig. 73. Roman Sarcophagus from the 3rd century A.D., Palazzetto, Rome. Detail: central part of the front relief.
outstretched arms,¹ as seen, for instance, on tomb paintings in Palmyra (fig. 71) and on a sarcophagus in Naples (fig. 72).

The idea of the elevation on the cosmic clipeus and the crystallisation of this idea in art has in an amazingly severe way dominated the Roman-Byzantine tradition. Compare a pagan Roman and a Christian Byzantine work of this clipeus tradition! On a sarcophagus from the early 3rd century in the Palazzetto in Rome (fig. 73),² the clipeus with the apotheosized dead is lifted high by two Victories; under the clipeus Ganymede in the eagle’s claws indicate the elevation to the stars (p. 69 sq.). All the essential significant and compositional features of this pagan image are, in Christian reinterpretation, repeated in a late Byzantine painting in New York (fig. 74): instead of the

¹ E. Dyggve, in: From the Collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek 2, 1938, p. 199 sqq.
² I am indebted to R. Bianchi Bandinelli for the photo.
apotheosized dead, Christ-Emmanuel is placed in the cosmic clipeus, instead of the two Victories, the two archangels are lifting it, and instead of the Eagle-Ganymede symbol under the clipeus, the winged Cherub indicates the elevation to heaven. When the ascending Elias is placed in the cosmic clipeus, carried by angels to heaven — as on a Russian icon in Sewickley (fig. 75) — we may again compare the *imago clipeata* carried by Victories or Erotes to heaven on Roman sarcophagi.¹

¹ The same force of tradition dominates another clipeus composition. A. Grabar has compared the strikingly corresponding figures of Victoria on a diptych from 480 (R. Delbrück l c. pl. 6 V) and the Virgin on a painting in Bawit from the early middle ages (A. Grabar, Martyrium 2, p. 175 sq. pl. 54, 1): the iconographic tradition of the heavenly clipeus has forced the Victoria supporting the *imago clipeata* of the consul Basilius on her left knee, and the Virgin supporting the *imago clipeata* of Christ, into exactly the same scheme.
12. THE SOLAR SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELEVATION ON A SHIELD

When the emperor himself, not only his *imago*, is placed on the *clipeus*, the meaning obviously must be the same: the emperor on the shield is the emperor on the world, the cosmocrator, the new sun. Fortunately this conclusion is confirmed by Corippus and Manuel Holobolos explicitly describing the emperor on the shield as a new sun (p. 88 sq.).

That the basic conception of the *imago in clipeo* on the one hand and of the man *in clipeo* on the other, is in reality the same, is confirmed by the very act of elevation, essential to both: beneath the emperor on the clipeus stand his carrying men, beneath the *imago clipeata* carrying Victories, Atlantes, etc. (figs. 71, 72). Both the emperor and the dead are being elevated to the stars. In fact, in some cases the clipeus on which the emperor is standing is clearly declared as being the *imago mundi*. A. Grabar has called my attention to an important miniature showing the anointing of David by Nathan¹ (fig. 76): here David is represented as a Byzantine emperor lifted on shield — and two great stars indicate the cosmic function of the shield. Thus the lifting on the shield is an explicit manifestation of the ideas implicitly contained in the *imago clipeata*.

The elevation on a shield being part of the Byzantine coronation, it may be stressed that also other parts of these ceremonies are given a cosmic interpretation. On a medaillon — or rather a barbarian imitation of a medaillon — from the late 6th century² the coronation of an emperor is framed by cosmic symbols and divinities: the heavenly signs of the Sun and Moon frame the

¹ Vaticanus Graecus 752, Fol. 82, Psalm 26. E. D. De Wald, The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint 3, 2 pl. 23.
² N. P. Kondakov, Russian Treasures, Study of antiquities, of the period of the Grand Dukes (9.—15. centuries), Imperial Archaeological Commission 1896, I, Pl. XIX 19 and p. 190. A. Grabar will deal with the medallion in the Dumbarton Oaks Papers.
head of the emperor, and, under these signs, the Sungod and the Moon-
goddess themselves are turning to the emperor, the Sungod offering him a
crown (or torques), while God's hand over him stretches a crown (or torques)
towards his head.

Thus in the imperial *imago clipeata* as in the elevation of the emperor
on a shield the Ancient Eastern idea of the king elevated to a new Sun is still
alive. To illustrate this idea we may start with monuments from an early
Eastern period, as for instance, that of Iblatun (fig. 57): the Sun symbol is
here carried aloft on the outstretched arms of the servants.\(^1\) In the same

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\(^1\) As on a great number of Assyrian and Achaemenian seals: A. U. Pope l. c. 4 pl. 124.
way the king himself as a new Sun is carried aloft on the outstretched arms of his men on the Persepolis reliefs with the representation of the Naurōz and probably also of the enthronement. On Achaemenian seals winged demons carry Ahuramazda holding in his right hand the ring of the world, the symbol of cosmocrator; with their wings the demons are lifting the king — below the god — in the world clipeus (fig. 65 c). Two suns are rising. On Assyrian seal cylinders a demonic bearer supports the sun symbol on head and outstretched arms, the Sun disk having already been transformed into the world ring (fig. 77 a). Cumont has followed this motif into Roman art (fig. 77 b): the *interpretatio romana* firstly transforms the Assyrian bearer into the man with the Phrygian cap, the very type accepted as that of the Oriental in the
Graeco-Roman world; secondly transforms the world ring with the wings into the classical *clipeus*, the *imago mundi*. We have here a sort of iconographical bilingualism, enabling us to identify the conceptions underlying both versions.

On this cosmic clipeus, in this world ring, stands the Byzantine emperor at his enthronement. He himself is Sun and cosmocrator and as such lifted by his servants up towards heaven in the manner of the Ancient East. On illustrated manuscripts Byzantine emperors (figs. 78, 79) and oldtestamental kings (fig. 80) at their elevation to rule stand on a clipeus of exactly the same form as that just viewed on the Roman relief (fig. 77 b). And standing on the world clipeus which servants are lifting on high, they often stretch out their right hand in the gesture of omnipotence, as did the Achaemenian king in the

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world ring (fig. 65 b) and the Roman emperors from the time of the orientalisation of Western religion in the 3rd century and onwards (p. 153). It was the cult of the Oriental Sol Invictus, with his outstretched right hand, that brought the gesture into the Roman imperial ritual. It was in identity with this Sol that the emperor raised his right hand in the gesture of omnipotence. Therefore the gesture expresses exactly the same as the lifting on shield itself: the emperor is cosmocrator, a new Sun.

On a marble roundel in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (fig. 81), as also on a closely related roundel in Venice, both probably from about 1200, the Byzantine emperor with the labarum in his right hand, the cross-globe in his left stands on a clipeus; the border of the clipeus is adorned with gems, it is a clipeus gemmatus. The carrying servants are not represented. The shield implicitly contains the idea of the elevation on the cosmic clipeus. Therefore Christ or the Virgin may stand upon it as well, as shown, for instance, in representations of the Virgin at the Russian feast of Pokrov. Thus

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the standing on a shield has become the expression of omnipotence; the shield itself an attribute of the cosmocrator, a sign of imperial legitimacy, an imperial symbol and insigne like the labarum and the cross globe in his hand. We may compare how in the Consularia constantinopolitana and elsewhere the imperial enthronement is plainly expressed in the words levatus est (sc. supra clipeum)."  

The clipeus in the Dumbarton Oaks and the Venice roundels express the same idea: *levatus est*. *Levatus est* as a new Sun and cosmocrator, on the world shield, the emperor is surrounded by a mighty *clipeus caelestis*. The light seems to beam forth from him through the radiating lines, and heavenly stars — indicated by the quadrifoils covering the ground — to surround him in the cosmos.

Here we have only established the fact that the ceremony of the elevation on a clipeus in Byzantium — at least at the time of Corippus, but probably long before — has been given the cosmic significance peculiar to the *imagines clipeatae*; not, on the contrary, that the ceremony originated in this clipeus complex and has been created as manifestation of the emperor as *Sol in suo clipeo*.

*Sol*, however, gradually disappears to the advantage of *Sol Justitiae* and the Christian *lux mundi*, and we anticipate Christ and the imperial *Χριστομυθησ* behind Corippus' *gemini Soles* (p. 88). Christ, too, is lifted towards heaven in the cosmic clipeus, which often, like the imperial clipeus, is adorned with stars (cf. fig. 69 and fig. 76). On illustrations of the Septuagint, behind old-testamental kings being lifted on shield, Christ himself is shown lifted to heaven. The words in Corippus which immediately follow his description of the radiant Sun emperor on the shield (p. 88), more than to the Sun emperor, are adressed to the Christ emperor:

\[Mea carmina, numen, \\
mensuram transgressa suam mirabere forsan, \\
quod dixi geminos pariter consurgere soles... \\
Mens iusti plus sole nitet: non mergitur undis, \\
on cedit tenebris, non fusca obtexitur umbra, \\
Lux operum aeterno lucet splendore bonorum.\]

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13. THE SOLAR ELEVATION OF THE THRONE IN BYZANTINE COURT RITUAL

As seen, the Persian throne was carried by the representatives of the Persian tribes in a solemn procession by which the Great King adjusted himself to the movement of the heavens, thus manifesting his own astral power (p. 85). Has also a symbolic ascension belonged to the royal ritual, as the solar ζωή supporting the throne might suggest (p. 72 sqq.)? We remember that Heraclius in Ganzaca saw the image of Khusrau enthroned "as in heaven" in the dome of the Palace, an elevation actually corresponding to the titles of the Sassanian king: "thou raised up as high as the Sun", "thou ascended with the Sun".1 "Thus ye soar high above the stars of heaven, beyond the limits of the earth"2 — this phrase in Diodor addressed by the Greeks to the kings of the Persians has more than a mere allegorical significance.

An account of the elevation of the Byzantine throne has been handed down to us. The Lombard Liutprant, who went to Constantinople as the Ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor in the 10th century, gives an account of the solemn audience in which he was confronted with the Byzantine emperor seated on his Solomonic throne in Constantine's throne-room Magnaura. His account is sober and detailed, and confirmed, even in such fantastic particulars as the singing and roaring metal animals in front of the throne, by similar accounts by other emissaries to the court of the Byzantine Emperor.3 Before the audience Liutprant had made inquiries about all the details of the ritual so as not to become a prey to fear or surprise: On Liutprant's entering artificial birds in a gilt tree of bronze in front of the throne began to sing and lions in front of the throne to roar. "The Emperor's throne was so ingeniously constructed, that one moment it seemed low, and next

1 A. Christensen, L'Empire des Sassanides, Kgl. Danske Videnskabsselskabs Skrifter, 7 Series, Hist. and Phil. Sect. 1, 1, 1907, p. 88. C. Clemen l. c. p. 193. The royal ascension in Egypt was compared to the rising of the sun, as communicated by W. B. Kristensen.
2 Diod. 16, 92. 3 O. Treitinger, Die oström. Kaiser- und Reichsidee p. 199.
moment higher, and immediately afterwards raised right up. When I had prostrated myself for the third time and looked up again, I saw the one I had just seen enthroned at a moderate height above the earth, raised up almost to the roof of the throne-room, and wearing different clothes.”

Liutprant makes a few conjectures as to how this is done, but admits his not comprehending it. “On this occasion the emperor made no personal pronouncement. Had he wished to do so, the great distance would have made it inconvenient.”

This elevation of the throne in Magnaura may be compared with the remarkable Prokypsis ceremony. At Christmas and Epiphany celebrations the imperial family, apparently after nightfall, ascend a high wooden stand supported on pillars and specially constructed for the occasion, the so-called Prokypsis, from which the ceremony takes its name. After the vela have been drawn aside, the emperor reveals himself, standing high above the masses, wearing different robes from those he wore on mounting the platform, and sparkling in the glare of torches with all the splendour of gold and precious stones. The hymns which accompany the ceremony laud the emperor as Sun and the empress as Moon, and the vela are described as clouds hiding the light of heaven. In such words, for instance, Nikolaos Eirenikos as late as the 13th century composes his festival song to an imperial Prokypsis.

“Rend thyself, o cloud”, he shouts to the vela, “rend thyself, why hidest thou the Light of Heaven? Why shustest thou out the brightness of the Moon?” And repeatedly he exhorts the Sun-emperor, the light of the Romans, to rise up:

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Ἡλια γίγα βασιλεὺς, ἀκάματε φωσφόρε,
τῆς οἰκουμένης όρθακόμε καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων λύχνε
ἀνάτειλον, ἀνάτειλον, τί τοῦ λυστοῦ βραδύνεις;
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1 Liutprant, Antapodosis 6, 5. Imperatoris vero solium huiusmodi erat arte compositum, ut in momento humile, excelsius modo, quam mox videretur sublime... Tercio itaque pronus imperatorem adorans, caput sustuli, et quem prius moderata mensura a terra elevatum sede vidi, mox aliis indutum vestibus penes domus laquear sedere prospexi. — Compare the tales of the elevation of the Salomonian throne in Jerusalem, p. 50, note 1.


3 Quoted from Treitinger’s selection of Prokypsis hymns l.c. p. 112 sq. There are a number of other examples of similar Sun-Moon images in Prokypsis hymns in Heisenberg l.c. p. 102 sqq. and Treitinger l.c. p. 112 sqq.
The ceremony reminds one of the appearance of the emperor in the Heliakon of the imperial Palace and in the Kathisma at the circus, the high structure of the imperial box ever more dominating the hippodrome.\(^1\) Both on his appearing in the Heliakon and in the Kathisma, the emperor — in the same way as at the Prokypsis — was greeted with acclamations comparing him with the rising Sun.\(^2\) In the hippodrome the whole ceremony has a particularly significant background, the circus being an image of cosmos and placed directly under the Sun.\(^3\) The elevation of the throne in the Magnaura has evidently the same solar origin.

The solar ritual in Byzantium must have had its roots in the emperor's elevation to Sol Invictus — the Sun God of the East who in the 3rd century conquered Rome. Also earlier, under Eastern influence, emperors had ascended the Sun chariot, for instance, Nero in the picture on the owning of the Pompeius theatre (p. 28) and Marcus Aurelius in a famous

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1 O. Treitinger l.c. p. 112 sqq.; 171 sq. Important studies on the Heliakon will be published by P. A. Underwood.
2 O. Treitinger l.c. p. 119.
relief from Ephesus. But not until the radical orientalisation of the Roman world in the 3rd century this ascension type is accepted by the state coinage, the Sun emperor being now represented not in the classical but in the oriental pattern, dropping the reins and stretching out his right hand in the magic gesture of benediction (p. 139 sqq.). In a subsequent chapter we shall follow this ascending emperor from his first appearing in the Eastern part of the Empire until his acceptance in Rome (p. 143 sqq.). The Medieval tradition maintains fundamental features of this type, thus Saxon emperors are depicted according to the old pattern (fig. 82).

Once more we have to consider that in the Christian Byzantium Sol is tending towards the Sol Justitiae, and the solar μύησες towards the μύησες of Christ (p. 109). Manuel Holobolos explicitly states that the appearance of the emperor at the Prokyps is an imitation of Christ.

A remarkable type on late Byzantine coins shows the emperor, with crown and sceptre, between great, unfolded wings (fig. 40d). Such an imperatore "angelificato" which may have sprung from the assimilation of the emperor to the well known type of the Χριστός Αγγελος or to that of the Archangels, at the very time of this coinage stands before us at the Prokyps ceremony. Manuel Holobolos praises Michael Palaeologos at a Prokyps: "Like a third angel the Emperor Michael has now joined the two Archangels of the Lord, Michael and Gabriel; may he preserve the empire under the protection of their wings. Like a crowned angel, put (o emperor) the salvation of the Romans under your wings ." Angelus as an imperial surname, by the crusaders was given the significance of Angelus totius orbis or Angelus Dei and interpreted as an expression of super-human arrogance. Have the ideas of the heavenly ascension of the emperor still had the force of manifesting themselves in such a unique picture type as that of the winged emperor? And does this type give a late Byzantine parallel to the Sassanian image of the royal bust soaring on a pair of wings?

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1 To the emperor on the Sun-chariot: F. Cumont, L’aigle funéraire l. c. p. 95 sqq. Herberdey, Österr. Jahresh. 8, 1904, Beibl. p. 55. E. Strong l. c. pl. 11, p. 9 and 147. O. Brendel, Antike 12, 1935, pl. 15. 2 O. Brendel l. c. 3 Holobolos l. c. 5, 160.
4 T. Bertelé, who has recently treated this picture type, L’imperatore alato nella numismatica Bizantina, has kindly allowed me to reproduce phot. fig. 40 d.
5 T. Bertelé l. c. p. 49 sq. 6 T. Bertelé l. c. p. 48 sqq.
7 T. Bertelé l. c. p. 102 Note 97.
14. LUCIFER

a. Khusrau—Lucifer.

In the Christian world the cosmocrator symbols are drawn towards the new Lord of the world, Christ παράβασιλεύς, τοι σύμπαντος καθήγεμών κόσμου, dominus mundi,¹ who says: "Into my hands is put all power in heaven and on earth." It is Christ who sits enthroned on the ἀψίδες οὐράνων, Christ who is surrounded by Sun and Moon, Christ who ascends to heaven in the cosmic clipeus or on the astral throne (p. 125 sqq.), Christ who stretches out his right hand in the gesture of omnipotence (p. 168 sqq.). As well known, an infinity of pictures represent him on the ἀψίδες οὐράνων, as examples we may only mention Christ on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus from the paleochristian epoch and Christ in the ceiling mosaic in the Baptistry in Florence from the advanced middle ages (fig.83); in this medieval picture the sphere of the fixed stars, the spheres of the seven planets and the arch of the earth are clearly differentiated parts of the ἀψίδες οὐράνων. In the cupola of the church of Megale Panagia in Athens, Christ Pantocrator is pictured in the centre of the cupola and below him the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy, below these again the firmament and the signs of the zodiac, and finally the orbit of the earth with all the powers of nature. Also in the Christian iconography the cosmic scenery can be reduced to Sun and Moon. Originally these celestial bodies designate Christ as Pantocrator. Later on they are given another interpretation. When Sun and Moon now flank Christ crucified, they are conceived as expression of the mourning cosmos, the sorrowing Sun and Moon. The eclipse of the Sun and the earthquake at the death of Christ seemed to express cosmic sympathy and compassion, breathing a new significance into the old picture.²

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¹ This type of Christ: κοσμοκράτωρ, πολοκράτωρ, is recently dealt with by J. Kollwitz, Das Bildnis von Christus dem König, Theologie und Glaube 1947/48 p 95 sqq.
² L’Orange—v. Gerkan, Der Spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinbogens p. 180 sq.
Fig. 83. Christ in the cosmos. Detail of the ceiling mosaic in the Baptistry, Firenze.
Fig. 84. Khusrau in the cosmos. Miniature in the Gotha MS. of the Saxon world chronicle.

Only as the earthly representative of Christ the imperial χριστομυθής in Constantinople, and, to a minor degree, also Western dei gratia emperors and kings, may still share in these formulae of cosmocratic power (p. 36). However, the astral symbols of their rule gradually lose their significance and expressiveness, and seem to become pale in the light of a new day—a dreamlike memory of the heavenly rulers of old.

The astral hall in the service of man is a profanation of the Christian cosmos and its creator, thus becoming an odium. The Stephanus legend records a pagan who after the destruction of such a room in his possession—cubiculum holovitrum, in quo omnis disciplina stellarum ac mathesis mechanica est arte constructa—recovers from his illness and is converted a Christian. Khusrau in his cosmic hall is therefore branded as a Lucifer. The Gotha manuscript of the Saxon world chronicle (fig. 84) shows us this Khusrau—Lucifer of the Christian middle ages. The king is sitting on a lower star-spangled sphere, a higher sphere, also star-spangled, frames

1 Acta Sanctorum (Bolland.) 20 i. Januarii II p. 273 54.
the figure like a dome; above this sphere on both sides of Khusrau the Sun and Moon are seen. The picture conforms accurately to the historians' descriptions of Khusrau on his cosmic throne and of his image "in the domed roof of the palace, as though enthroned in Heaven, and around it the Sun and Moon and stars" (p. 19 sq.). Note Khusrau having the cross at his side, and a dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost, resting on his shoulder (cf. p. 20 note 2). He would make himself "like the most High". "With lies they put themselves
in the place of God" (Dei vices metiuntur), says Petrus Chrysologus of the Sassanian kings with words strikingly similar to those used by Isaiah of the heavenly king of Babylon: he "will be like the most High". Just as the king of Babylon was the great Lucifer to the Jewish prophets, so was the Sassanian king to the Church Fathers and Christian middle ages. At his fall the old mockery which hailed the fall of the king of Babylon rings out once more. Let us read attentively the text by Isaiah recalling what we know of the cosmic palace and heavenly ascension of the Eastern king. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (πῶς ἔξερες ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὃ ἐστιν ὀμορφός) . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God (εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναβησόμεθα, ἐπάνω τῶν άστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ θάνω ἄν θρόνον μου) . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit".2

Medieval art represents the same astral elevation and the same fall from heaven of the new Lucifer. On a Gothic altar piece (antemensal) in the Bergen Museum (fig. 85),3 here chosen as an example, Khusrau-Lucifer in one scene is pictured between the Sun and Moon, with Christ’s cross at his side, in another being killed by the emperor Heraclius. “Thou shalt be brought down to hell to the sides of the pit”.

The king enthroned amongst the spheres becomes a symbol of super-human arrogance. Anna Comnena mocks Tancred’s ambitious dreams of Eastern conquest with the words: “Inflated with vain haughtiness he boasted that he would put his throne above the stars, and threatened to rupture the walls of Babylon with his spear . . . he himself was Ninos, the Great Assyrian . . .” 4

b. Alexander—Lucifer.

The ascension of Alexander in Pseudo-callisthenes is supposed to have taken place in the extreme Orient, near the end of the world. "Alexander gave orders to catch two of the birds in that place; they were the largest and strongest ones, and tame, for they did not flee at sight of man. Some of the soldiers sat down on their shoulders, and the birds flew up into the air with them. Alexander ordered them to seize two of the birds, and to

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1 Above p.38 note 2.  
2 Isaiah 14, 12 sqq.  
3 H. Fett has called my attention to this typical Khusrau cycle. Another example is given by the famous fresco of Taddeo Gaddi in S. Croce in Florence.  
4 Anna Comnena, Alex. 14, 2.
give them no food for three days. On the third day he commanded them to make a piece of wood shaped like a yoke and place it on the neck of the birds. Then he came himself and took a stick about one ell long with a liver stuck to the end of it. The birds at once flying up to eat the liver, Alexander with them rose high up into the air. But he suffered greatly from the cold draught caused by the birds. Then a man-like winged creature came towards him and said 'Alexander, thou who understandest not the things on earth, how wouldst thou understand the things of heaven? Return straightway to the earth'. And Alexander himself, who returned according to the advice of high providence, came down to earth again, far from his camp, seven day's march away.' It is not coincidentally that Alexander's ascension is placed in the East. As seen (p. 69 sqq.), an abundance of legends, similar to that of Alexander's ascension, has from primeval times flourished and still survive in the East.

The type of Alexander's ascension in art, as exemplified by a well known relief in S. Marco, Venice (fig. 86), is in a peculiar way contrary to Pseudocallisthenes' ascension.

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1 The text is preserved in somewhat divergent versions. The quotation follows C. Müller's edition.
2 G. Millet, L'ascension d'Alexandre, Syria 4, 1923, p. 111 sqq.
description, and on the other hand in all contrasting points corresponding to the type of Sassanian ascension. Thus Alexander uses griffins and not birds, a chariot and not a yoke (ξύλον ὄμολον ζυγὸ), and thus features of the Sassanian royal ornaments occasionally appear in his costume.¹ The griffins replacing the birds also form a striking feature of the motif's literary history, cf. Leo of Naples' Latin version from the second half of the 10th century. In order to understand this interchange, we must realize the iconographic compulsion exercised by the Sassanian type when an ascension theme was to be expressed. The Sassanian ascension, as the standing formula of the Great King's apotheosis in art, had created a fixed iconographic tradition magnetically attracting the conception of Alexander's heavenly flight. This has developed from pictorial types of the king soaring on heavenly animals and should be specially compared with the late- or post-Sassanian representation on textiles of a man soaring between griffins, probably Khusrau (Kaikāūs?) on his heavenly flight (p. 73 note 2).

What significance did the middle ages attach to this picture so common in Christian vestments and places of worship?²: As long as the Sassanian royal tradition, or memories of it, was alive, our Alexander ascending in his griffin-drawn chariot was bound to appear an Eastern Sun-king. And, as just seen (p. 118), this Sun-king was a new Lucifer to the Christian world. The oldest specimens of our picture type known to me, and here published for the first time: a relief fragment in the museum of Thebes in Greece (fig. 87)³

¹ On the marble relief in S. Marco, Alexander wears the bejewelled helmet of the Persian king (cf. fig. 19), as already seen by J. Durand, Annales Archéolog. 25, 1865, p. 146. On the relief in Thebes fig. 87 Alexander's garments show traces of the bejewelled harness of the Persian king (p. 37).
² J. Durand l. c. p. 150 sqq. A. L. Meissner, Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen 68, 1882, p. 177 sqq. G. Millet l. c. p. 84.
³ Relief-fragment, museum in Thebes. Marble. Length 0,55 m., height 0,35 m. The flat silhouette style and the low relief are characteristic of the 7th to the 10th century. Preserved: the upper part of Alexander holding two stakes with carcasses of animals (the right one completely
and another in the Castel S. Angelo in Rome (fig. 88), stylistically belong to the last centuries of the first millennium A. D. and thus give a clear indication that the type originally incarnated the idea of Alexander Lucifer. On textiles the motif may perhaps be traced back to the 7th century.

Are we not right in then assuming that the type was created in the Byzantine world under the actual impression of the tremendous collapse of the Sassanian Empire during the wars against Byzantium and Islam? Lucifer is cast down from the heaven which he dared to enter. Alexander in the Sassanian ascension is the scorn of the West of the fallen star. Here once more Israel's song of scorn over the king of Babylon is heard: "How art thou fallen from Heaven, o Lucifer..." During the centuries the picture has lost this historical significance, only its moralistic sense being felt. It characterises in the typical way of the Christian middle ages the elationis vitium of the diabolus. Verum est enim quod scriptum est: ante ruinam exaltatur cor.

defaced); the head with the right wing (between Alexander and the preserved stake) of the left griffin; a little of the left wing of the right griffin; the yoke placed about the neck of the left griffin. (As shown from the animal's ear, it represents a griffin, not a bird.) For the photograph I am indebted to E. Dyggve, who called my attention to the relief.

1 Relief fragment in Castel S. Angelo, Inv. No. 641. Marble. Length 0.95 m., height 0.36 m. The flat silhouette style and the low relief are characteristic of the 7th to the 10th century. Preserved: Alexander holding two stakes with carcasses of animals; on both flanks small human figures in vine leaves (the one on the right almost completely defaced), presumable Cupids in vine (compare fig. 89).

2 As E. Riefstahl will show, cf. p. 73 note 2.
Alexander's ascension speaks the words of Augustinus: *Ipsum quippe extolli, jam dejici est.*$^1$ As a fitting text to it we might quote von Logau's moralizing "Sinngedicht" on "Hoffart" (= Hochfahrt) from the 17th century.$^2$

Als Lucifer fuhr gar zu hoch  
da fuhr er ab ins höllenloch  
was gar zu hoch wird umgekehrt,  
und hochfahrt wird zur niederfahrt.

Alexander-Lucifer in Christian art is a sort of negative, or reverse, to a positive, or obverse, in earlier art. Christian tradition provides several examples of a similar inversion of the ascension motif. The Apostle Legends relate that Anti-Christ by way of magic intends to imitate the miracles of Christ in order to deceive mankind; so he causes himself to be borne aloft by demons, thereby giving the impression of his ascending to heaven.

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$^1$ Aug., De civitate Dei 14, 13.

$^2$ P. von Logau, Sinngedichte 2, 89, 54. Even before the Alexander and the Sassanian ascension were compared, the idea of Alexander's ascension as a Lucifer symbol has been expressed: A. L. Meissner, l. c. p. 185; G. Supka, Zeitschr. für Christl. Kunst 24, 1911, p. 307 sqq.; G. Millet l. c. p. 84.
Simon Magus is carried heavenwards by demons, while his golden garment like a halo radiates around him. Through Peter’s incantation the demons are forced to drop him and Simon Magus rushes to earth. Pagan tradition, moreover, is also familiar with similar inversions. The night before the god-emporer Caligula was murdered, he dreamt, according to Suetonius, that he was standing in heaven by Jupiter’s throne, but the god kicked him with his right big-toe, so that he fell down to the earth.\(^1\)

There are, however, examples, of Alexander’s ascension without this reversal of motif. On a Byzantine ivory casket in Darmstadt (fig. 89),\(^2\) for instance, the ascending Alexander is crowned like one having reached his goal; and he is surrounded by a peculiar type of palace architecture which in the imagination of the middle ages was bound up with glorification.\(^3\) Has not the Byzantine divine empire in such pictures attracted the motif and, as it were, adjusted it to a positive self expression? Is our Alexander not the ascending Lucifer or Helios, as whom the emperor was hailed — Ἡλίας βασιλεὺς, αὐξάτωλον (p. 111) — in Constantinople?\(^4\) Are we not dealing with an apotheosis similar to that witnessed in the throne-ritual in Magnaura, in the Prokypsis ceremony, and in the acclamation in the circus?

\(^1\) Suet., Cal. 57.


\(^4\) Sources adduced by O. Treitinger l. c. p. 119.
15. THE ANCIENT EASTERN THRONE IN THE CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

a. Throne-Chariot and Majestas Domini.

A fundamental feature of the Ancient Eastern throne, as repeatedly stressed, is its being carried by ζωξ. Even in the Sumerian kingdom the royal throne stood on a platform supported by animals, and, as seen (p. 51 sqq.), the succeeding centuries yield an infinity of examples of this practice.¹ We only recall Jahve’s Cherub- and the Sassanian horse-, griffin-, eagle- and lion-throne (p. 75 sqq.). The Achaemenian gāthu had four corner supports in the form of hybrid ζωξ (fig. 58). The form crystallizes into a stereotype still existing in the East. As an example may be mentioned the Takht i marmar in the throne room in Teheran: the stand is supported by lions and demonic creatures.² In the more remote East, too, such throne-stands supported by attendant beings belong to kings and gods. On a relief in Calcutta, from the 2nd century B.C., 8 Apsarases are dancing on the stand to the music of 8 string players, while a row of supporters beneath hold the platform aloft.³ While in the case of the Achaemenian throne we were dealing with an earthly throne only symbolically fitting in to the celestial motions, we are here concerned with a heavenly throne soaring in the upper air, and are viewing the dance of the spirits of the air in the heavens of Indra.

This tradition is dominated by the throne of the Great King. The Persepolis reliefs picture it in the Achaemenian period (fig. 58). The throne-stand, upon which, as in an upper storey, the king, standing or sitting, is carried, has four corner supports, of which only the two in the frontal plane are visible (cf. p. 81 sq.). These supports are worked through with animal forms: with lion’s

¹ J. M. Upton—Ph. Ackerman in A. U. Pope l. c. 3 p. 2635.
³ O. Fischer, Die Kunst des Ostens l. c. IV pl. 1.
feet and with colossal heads of hybrid lion-ox monsters with gaping jaws. Once more Ezekiel's vision of Jahve's throne suggests a comparison (cf. p. 48 sqq.). Jahve reveals himself above a moving throne of the same two-storied structure: a lower region for the serving ζωά and a higher one for God himself. These ζωά are the tetramorph Cherubim: hybrid creatures and four in number like the throne supports of the Great King. "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the right side: they four also had the face of an eagle." 1 "And their feet were straight feet: and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass." 2 As already mentioned, the Cherubim are inspired by the religious imagination of Babylon, they are heavenly beings — connected with stars, air or winds — supporting the throne.

The pictures of Christ on the Cherub throne are inspired by the throne vision in Ezekiel and St. John, the apocalyptic throne of St. John having been mainly derived from the Old Testament throne of Ezekiel. This Old Testament throne is, however, as seen, bound up with the temporal throne of the Great King. Through this continuity the Ancient Eastern throne motifs here dealt with — in the first place, the ζωά and the wheels — have found their way into the iconography of the enthroned Christ.

In the Syriac Rabula Codex from 586 A.D. — behind which A.M. Friend will show us the monumental prototype: a mosaic from the middle of the 5th century in Sion church in Jerusalem — Christ, standing in the cosmic shield supported by angels, and framed by two angels offering him crowns, is being lifted towards the heavens on the throne chariot of Ezekiel 3 (fig. 90): the four wheels are visible and so are the moving tetramorphs with eye-spangled wings. Below, the Virgin, the apostles and two angels are attending the miracle of the ascending Saviour. Christ’s ascension as narrated in the Acts and St. Luke 4 provides no base for representing him on the Old Testamental throne. But as this throne is the heavenly chariot borne aloft by heavenly ζωά, it spontaneously presents itself to the

1 Ez. 1, 10. Cf. Revelation 4, 6 sq. E. Kautzsch emphasizes in his commentary to the O. T. the Babylonian background to Ezekiel’s fabulous creatures (1, 872).
2 Ez. 1, 7.
4 Acta 1, 8 sqq. (Cf. Luc. 24, 51): ἐπήρη, καὶ νεφίλη, ὑψέλαθεν αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.
Fig. 90. Ascension of Christ. Rabula Codex, Florence.
Eastern mind as an expression of ascension to heaven. In the same way Byzantine exegesis apply the Psalm 18, 11 (17, 11) to the ascension: Ἄνεβη Κύριος ἐπὶ χερουβίν.\(^1\)

On apse frescos from the 6th to the 8th century in Bawit,\(^2\) in part closely related to the Rabula ascension, Christ, in the nimbus or the cosmic shield, sits enthroned on the Cherub throne chariot, sometimes with fire flaming around the wheels and ζωξ beneath him. We witness, however, a certain disintegration of the throne chariot, a more or less advanced decomposition of the whole into its separate parts. On the fresco fig. 91 the throne chariot is still an integral unit. But the ζωξ, instead of being put below God, as in Ezekiel and the Rabula codex, are now placed at both sides of Christ. Thus their connection with the wheels is broken, and their significance of being moving forces less felt. In the fresco fig. 92 the Cherub chariot is still more disintegrated: the chariot itself — as in pictures of the ascending king (fig. 40 a–c) — is reduced to the wheels, and the ζωξ spread in the form of an Andrew-cross around Christ, but still connected with the shield by the six eye-spangled wings.

Already from the 4th century Church Fathers, as Irenaeus, had interpreted the four ζωξ as symbols of the Evangelists.\(^3\) The official Byzantine theology did not recognize as early as the West the Apocalypse as a canonic scripture and, accordingly, neglected the apocalyptic ζωξ, so that this interpretation chiefly belongs to the West. Here already in the late 4th century, for instance, in the apse mosaic of S. Pudenziana in Rome, Christ’s heavenly throne chariot has disappeared, only leaving the moving ζωξ, here interpreted as Evangelist symbols, to accompany Christ.\(^4\) Is it under the influence of this interpretation and its crystallisation in a new image type that a disintegration of Christ’s throne chariot as that stated in Bawit takes place? Are the ζωξ here too

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4 L. Bréhier l.c. p. 12, thinks this picture type inspired by the monastic art of the East. Would not a Western prototype fit better into the theological differentiation between West and East?
already Evangelist symbols? As they — in all reproductions accessible to me — are not holding books, I would prefer to interpret them in the sense of the Coptic prayer: as the fiery λειτουργός of Christ. As a literary parallel to such perseverance of the old conception of the heavenly chariot in the art of Bawit, ecclesiastical poesy and liturgical texts from Egypt and Abyssinia might be quoted. The ζῶδα here are named explicitly as those “who support the chariot of God”, “who are carrying the most holy bolster”, “who are the chariot of God”. “And at the sides of the throne there are four living beings to carry him on their heads.”¹ In the mosaics of the apse of Hosios David in Thessalonica,² as also in later mosaics in the rock churches of Cappadocia,³ the ζῶδα protrude from the nimbus of Christ very much in the same way as in Bawit; in Thessalonica, however, they are holding the books of the Evangelists.

Even in later times the Cherubs and the wheels may be placed under the throne or the cisleus, as seems to have been especially frequent in the Eastern, Greek-Russian tradition: so they are still organic parts of the Ezekiel

² Ch. Diehl l.c. pl. 14 b. A. Grabar, Martyrion pl. 40, i.
³ G. de Jerphanion, Eglises rupestres de Cappadoce pl. 186, 2.
throne, still the four mystical χρυσ carrying the throne of God. As example we reproduce a miniature of the 14th century Silvester codex in the Moscow Library of Typography\(^1\) (fig. 93). The godman in a flying flaming chariot also presents himself to the Western mind, as shown in Taddeo Gaddis painting of Holy Francis (fig. 94).

The rudimental remains of the heavenly throne chariot: the Cherubs and the wheels, in later centuries frequently appear framing the throne or the clipeus in which God is standing or seated, for instance, in the Judgment mosaic in the Torcello Cathedral.\(^2\) The persistance of the wheel after the disappearance of the chariot is especially striking. As an example we might mention Dimitri Merežkovskij’s description of occult sects in Russia in later times (the epilogue to Antichrist). In various conversations, so we read, “Tichon got to hear that the Lord had appeared in the first year of Czar Alexei Michailovitch’s reign on Mount Gorodina in the parish of Jegorev.

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2. Ch. Diehl, La peinture byzantine pl. 31.
Fig. 93. Christ in his heavenly chariot. Miniature of the 14th century Silvester codex, Moscow Library of Typography.
He had 'come rolling on a flaming wheel' followed by angels and archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim. It had been seen by many people." At their ecstatic gatherings the members of the sect sing:

The Seventh Heaven is opened at last,
The golden wheel rolls out,
The golden flaming wheel.

Thus, through the intermediary of the Ezekiel throne, the Ancient Eastern conception of God soaring on his supporting $\zeta\phi\alpha\xi$ still survives in Christian iconography, projected into an essentially new spiritual world and filled with substantially new contents of religious thought. The $\zeta\phi\alpha\xi$ on whom the heavenly
families and the earthly rulers of the Ancient East were enthroned — sitting or standing — are transformed into “the four ἄσωματα ἔκφα, the fiery λευτοργοί” of the coptic prayers,¹ or interpreted as the four Evangelists. Thus the dominating Maiestas-Domini-type of the Christian era endlessly repeated throughout the centuries — Christ enthroned in heavenly splendour and the Evangelist symbols soaring around him — has sprung from the throne picture of the Ancient East.²

Moreover, already the well-known picture type of Christ being borne aloft by angels, Cherubim and Seraphim³ (fig. 95) originates from the cycle of Ancient Eastern motifs studied here. Angelic supporters, carrying the clipeus with the Lamb, the bust of Christ etc. often stand in the carrying position of the Eastern servant.⁴ The striking predilection for placing servants under the symbols of faith may be assumed to have the same root. The Cross, Christian the Gospel etc. are often carried or supported by an eagle or some other “living being”.⁵ In Medieval pulpits, for instance, the Gospel Symbols are placed as a support beneath the book rest, most frequently the eagle.⁶ In this way the Gospel is borne aloft on its ministering heavenly creature, like the divinity itself in the ancient tradition of the East.

In Byzantine Pantocrator Domes, as in S. Sophia in Constantinople, S. Sophia in Kiew, the eastern dome of S. Marco in Venice, the bust of Christ Pantocrator is placed in a clipeus in the centre of the dome, with a row of archangels, prophets or saints standing guard around it; in the four pendentives supporting the dome the four Cherubim or the four Evangelists act as pillars supporting the celestial vision.⁷ Is it not striking that of the whole hierarchy of Christian saints just the Evangelists, just the

¹ References by A. Baumstark l.c. p. 259.
² Cf. K. Künstle, Ikonographie der Christlichen Kunst p. 611 sq.
⁴ E. g. E. Dyggve, From the Collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 2, 1938 p. 205 fig. 18.
⁵ E. g. Dalton l.c. p. 150 fig. 86; Dyggve l.c. p. 199 sqq.
⁶ Dyggve l.c. p. 199 sqq.
Fig. 95. Mosaic in the dome of Hagia Sophia in Thessalonica.

figures identified with the supporting ζωζ under God's throne, should act as "corner supports" for the Pantocrator dome? Is it only because of their number that the Cherubim-Evangelists have got this place? Or are we not to recognize the old symbolic pattern of Christ enthroned on his mystical ζωζ — as for instance on the Rabula codex (fig. 90) — in this composition? As in the codex the Pantocrator in the world shield and surrounded by angels is supported by the mystical ζωζ (which, however, are here not interpreted as Evangelists), so in the dome the Pantocrator in the same shield and surrounded by the same angels seems supported by the four Cherubim-Evangelists.
b. **Throne-Canopy and Ciborium.**

On the royal tomb reliefs in Persepolis the throne moved under the signs of the Sun and the Moon (fig. 58). In the palace reliefs too, the throne and its movement were placed under cosmic signs (fig. 60). The bust of Ahuramazda in the world ring soars above the canopy of the throne. From the roof of this canopy, supported by four slim colonettes, a richly ornamented cloth sweeps down: in the middle of the main field of this cloth, above the king’s head, the winged solar disc is represented once or twice, in the middle of animal friezes and framed by rosette borders (fig. 96). The animal friezes with their bulls and lions, both of which have their significance in the system of astral signs, are subordinated to the dominant disc. The Sun image, set in crystal, which, according to Curtius Rufus, radiated from the tent of the Persian king,¹ may here be compared, and the astral symbols framing the Sassanian throne (p. 21 sqq.) also be born in mind.

Literature makes frequent mention of this throne canopy as an important part of the Achaemenian throne. A purple cloth was stretched on four golden columns inlaid with precious stones, according to Heraclides of Cuma.² The astral signs on this cloth, explain the heavenly function of the canopy. When having conquered Persia Alexander seated himself on Darius’ throne, “beneath the golden heaven” (οπό τόν χρυσούν οὐρανίσχον), says Plutarch.³ The King of the Persians, we are told by John Chrysostom, “had made as a column a platane of gold with the heaven above, and he himself sat in the shade of it.”⁴ At the time of Khusrau the canopy is a fixed dome giving its name to the throne: Täqđes (that which resembles a vault, a dome, an arch). The Kazvin disc gives an idea of this vaulted canopy in late Sassanian times (fig. 17). The astral picture has now developed into the subtle system of circling stars making it possible to cast horoscopes and read the time (p. 21 sqq.).

The king’s throne canopy is derived from that of the gods. In a Babylonian temple rite mention is made of a “heaven of gold” in “Marduk’s treasure”, to cover Ezida, Nabû’s Holy of Holies.⁵ Art represents the gods enthroned

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¹ Curtius Rufus, Hist. Alex. 3, 3 (7), 8. ² Athen. 12, 514 B.
under a similar heaven. On a Babylonian relief from the 9th century in the British Museum (fig. 97) Shamash sits enthroned below a cosmic canopy: it rises above the heavenly ocean, in the waves of which four stars are swimming, embracing beneath its roof Sun, Moon and Venus.

Just as the cosmic hall of the Great King was met with in the Roman imperial palace, so his heavenly throne canopy — having sprung from the same ideas about the royal cosmocrator — invades the imperial representation. The whole development is paralleled by the orientalisation of the Empire, and may have come to an end in the course of the critical 3rd century. The magistrate’s chair has had to give way to the autocrat’s throne. Above this throne — we do not know exactly when — a canopy is raised.²

Both in its external form and in its celestial function, the Byzantine throne canopy clearly reveals its origin in the throne tradition of the East. Corippus describes the imperial throne canopy in the 6th century.³ The throne magnificently decorated with gems, gold and purple, is surrounded by four gorgeous columns, over which are stretched four arches. The arches support the sparkling golden dome which imitates the vault of heaven (simulans convexi climata caeli). Constantine Porphyrogenitus shows us the Emperor standing or enthroned under a similar canopy: a κυμητον.⁴ Such a ciborium was placed in the great Consistorium of the imperial palace, in the Chrysotriclinium

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1 Schäfer-Andrae l.c. pl. 488. Gressmann l.c. 322.
3 Cor., In laud. Just. 3, 191 sqq. A. Alfoldi l.c.
Fig. 97. Detail of a relief from the temple of Shamash at Sippar. British Museum.

and in other rooms of the imperial representation. On diptychs, miniatures etc. of late antiquity and early middle ages emperors and kings are often represented beneath a similar vault\(^1\) (fig. 98). When soaring eagles surround the dome\(^2\), one's thoughts are led to the apotheosis in the spheres and the celestial significance of the vault.

As shown by Alföldi, the throne canopy has migrated from the imperial palace to the realm of Christian cult, where as a *ciborium* it covers the High Altar, and thus takes the same place as in emperor worship.\(^3\) Of such church *ciboria* from the early middle ages a large number of well preserved specimens have survived (fig. 99), as well as an infinite quantity of fragments scattered about in the churches, monasteries and local museums of the

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\(^1\) Examples quoted by A. Alföldi l. c. p. 130 note 1.

\(^2\) R. Delbrück, Consulardiptychen pl. 51, 52. Ch. Diehl, La peinture byzantine pl. 70.

Fig. 98. Throne-kiborion, 6th century. Diptych, Vienna.

Mediterranean. It is up to modern research in the history of art and ideas to make use of this great material, and, not least, to interpret the symbol language of the ornaments, still seeming to reflect the astral ideas of the Ancient World. Here we can still trace the threads in the closely woven web linking medieval Europe to the East-West universe of the Ancient World.
Fig. 99. Ciborium from S. Prospero in Perugia. Palazzo dell'Università, Perugia.
16. THE GESTURE OF POWER. COSMOCRATOR'S SIGN

a. The Emperor's "Huge Hand".

The ancient world had its own sign of salvation, a divine gesture distinct from the sign of benediction authorised by the Church some time during the middle ages (p. 171 sqq.). This older sign of salvation is clearly described in a remarkable scene having its historically significant place midway between antiquity and the middle ages. When the Sassanian king Kavades had conquered Amida, Procopius relates, he also wanted to take Edessa and Konstantine. In the vicinity of Edessa he asks his magicians whether he will take the town, at the same time stretching his right hand towards it. The magicians reply that now he cannot take Edessa by force, for by stretching out his right hand towards the town he has given it "the sign of salvation" (σωτηρίας ξύμβολον).¹

Here it is clearly expressed that the outstretched right hand of the king has magic powers. The passage sheds light on the panegyrical descriptions of the Roman emperor's right hand with its power of salvation. Behind the allegories we must see the physical gesture, the magically outstretched right hand. Constantine performed the act of ruling, Eusebius relates, stretching out his saving right hand to all in need (σωτήριον δεξιὰν ἄπασιν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἐκτείνας).² The same idea was entertained as to the saviour gods. Julian the Apostate says of Aesculapius that "he stretched his saving right hand out to the whole world" (ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ὄψει τὴν γῆν τὴν σωτηρίον ἕκυτοῦ δεξιάν).³ The thought of supernatural might and power is always present when the emperor's "vast right hand" is praised, for example, by court poets such

¹ Procop., De pers. 2, 13, 8 sq. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ Καβάθης Ἀμίδαν ἐλεῖν, Ἐδεσσάν τε καὶ Κωνσταντίναν ἐξελεῖν ἔθελεν. ἀλλ' Ἕδεσσάς μὲν ἄγχος γενόμενος τῶν μάγων ἀνέσπευδότοι ἐκ οἵ τινι ἁλώσιμος ἡ πόλις ἔσται, δεξίας τῇ δεξίᾳ χειρὶ τὸ γυρίον αὐτοῖς. οἱ δὲ αὐτῶ τὴν πόλιν ἀλώσεσθαι οὐδεμιᾷ μηχανῇ ἔλεγον, τεκμαρώμενοι δὲ δὴ τὴν δεξίαν αὐτῆς χειρὰ προτεῖναι, οἵ τινες ἁλώσιμος ταύτῃ οὐδὲ ἄλλου ὀτούσιν χαλέπου ἡμοῖον, ἀλλὰ σωτηρίας διδόντος.
² Hist. eccl. 10, 9, 4.
³ Contra Gal. 1, 200 B (Loeb 3 p. 375).
as Martial and Statius, who refer to the emperor's *magna manus*, his *ingens manus*, his *divina manus*, his *alta dextra*, his *dextra elata*, his *felix dextra qua nihil est in orbe maius*.¹

How literally this "saving right hand" must be understood, is shown — in conformity with the quoted passage in Procopius — in pictorial art. In an earlier investigation we have interpreted the gesture in the historical relief cycle on the Arch of Constantine.² New material and new combinations now permit us to arrive at much more far-reaching conclusions. The outstretched right hand was, as we shall see, a primeval magical sign of power in the East. The God and his servant make this sign for the salvation — as a *σύμβολον σωτηρίας* — of their peoples and protégés, but can also do it destructively, that is in the case of their enemies. Thus it may be both benediction and curse. It is the expression of the irresistible power and might of the divinity and his chosen being. From the East it spreads, as we shall see, into the life of the West, and still in early Byzantium has not lost its magic power, even if it has no more its original terrifying force, as shown, for instance, in the cited passage in Procopius where only the saving power of the gesture seems to be felt. Procopius' interpretation of the statue of Justinian on the Augustaem in Constantinople, however, clearly maintains the apotropeic power of the emperor's outstretched right hand. "Stretching forth his right hand towards the Orient (προτεινόμενος δὲ χεῖρα τὴν δεξιὰν ἐς τὰ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἡλιον) and spreading out his fingers, he commands the barbarians in that quarter to remain at home and to proceed no further."³

The special significance of the gesture in the contemporary Persia is stressed by the historians. As seen above, Procopius speaks of it as an expression of the saving force of the king. Arab and Persian literature connects it with his

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² Sol Invictus Imperator, Symb. Osl. 14, 1935, p. 86 sqq. A. Alfoldi's treatment of this imperial gesture RM. 50, 1935 p. 107 sq sq. was at that time unknown to me.
³ Procopius, De Aedif. 1, 2, 12. J. Kollwitz, Oströmische Plastik p. 9. Differently from Kollwitz, I think that the magical force of the imperial gesture was still generally felt in the century of Procopius.
omnipotence. "Ardashir Bahman", Albiruni tells us, "was called Longimanus, because his command was omnipotent, wherever he liked, as if he were only to stretch out his hand to set things right."  

Let us first consider the emperor in this gesture. The emperor with his right hand outstretched is first of all represented on coins and medallions, that is in the official images which the state itself minted and imperial propaganda inspired and controlled. Of the extensive material here only examples can be given. The gesture is especially significant when introduced into the obverse image of the emperor, as is done for the first time in the case of Geta² (fig. 100 a): the raised right hand is disproportionately large, recalling the imperial hand in literature, his ingens manus. Elagabalus is depicted in the same gesture both on Edessene and on official Roman coins,³ Gordian III in autonomous coinage.⁴ The type occurs more frequently from the time of Gallienus on, e. g. in portraits of Gallienus,⁵ Postumus⁶ (fig. 100 d), Claudius Gothicus,⁷ Aurelianus⁸ (fig. 100 b), Probus,⁹ Carausius,¹⁰ Diocletianus, Maximianus Herculius,¹¹ Maximinus Daza¹², and Constantius Chlorus.¹³ On the whole, the gesture does not dominate the imperial effigy until the time of Constantine (fig. 100 e, h, i, j); this applies equally to coinage and monumental art. A great number of averse effigies of Constantine and

¹ Albiruni, Athâr ul-bâkiya (transl. by C. E. Sachau), The Chronology of Ancient Nations p. 44.
⁵ A. Alföldi l. c. p. 108. R. Delbrück l. c. pl. 18, 82.
⁸ Cohen VI p. 180 No. 36. H. P. L'Orange l. c. pl. 5 b. F. Gnecci, I medaglioni romani pl. 156, 11.
his sons on coins and medallions might be adduced. After Constantine the raised right hand is repeated as a typical gesture of majesty right down to the middle ages, e.g. on coins of Valens, Honorius, Theodoric (fig. 100 l) and on barbarian imitations of late antique medallions, giving, as it seems, a quite special significance to the raised right hand.

These obverse pictures are unusually expressive. That the outstretched arm should be squeezed into the scant space available shows how imperative it was to show the emperor in this gesture. It is just the same when significant attributes, for instance Jupiter's thunder-bolt in the emperor's hand, are forced into the picture. In both cases a similar crowding of the picture can only take place in order to characterize the emperor in his most essential being and activity. The sign of salvation is just such a characteristic. From the outstretched divine hand supernatural powers emanate, repelling all hostile and evil forces.

Imperial images on the reverse of coins also often show him with his right hand outstretched. The gesture was probably first conceived as a sign of salvation in Severan times, when the gods of the East, with Serapis and Sol Invictus at their head, appeared in this posture. It is thus not till Severan times that the gesture is introduced in the obverse picture of the emperor (Geta). Especially important is a reverse type, first appearing in the 3rd century, showing the emperor in his triumphal chariot: while in earlier times

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1 J. Maurice, Numismatique Constantinienne I pl. 8, 10; 9, 3; 15, 3 (Constans); II 4, 9 (Constantius II Caes); II, 7, 14; III, 3, 5. F. Gneccchi, I Medaglioni Romani I pl. 7, 8, 9, 12; 8, 2 13, 15; 10, 2 (Constans), 3 (Constans) 4 (Constans); 10, 8 (Constantius II); 11, 1 (Constantius II); II, 137, 5 (Constantius II).

2 F. Gneccchi, I c. I pl. 15, 1; 16, 1, 3; 18, 2.

3 F. Gneccchi c. I, 36, 15.


5 H. Shetelig has called my attention to Nordic medallions as the one reproduced in Fornvännen 1936 p. 58.

6 When the mounted emperor is shown on the reverse of coins even in pre-Severan times with outstretched hand, usually in adventus scenes, we are dealing with a greeting.
Fig. 101. a, consecration coin of Constantius 1, after Maurice, N. C. 1 pl. 22, 8. b, Caracalla on coin from Cilbani in Lydia, after Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus. pl. 7, 10. c, representation of a statue of Constantine standing above the gateway of the city wall, after Maurice, N.C. 1 pl. 23, 14. d, e, medallion of Constantius 2, averse and reverse, after Gnecchi, M. R. 1, pl. 11, 1.

depicted in profile, most frequently with a twig in his right hand,¹ he is in the new type shown frontally, with his right hand raised and a globe in his left (fig. 101 e; cf. the emperor in the Sun chariot on consecration coins, fig. 101 a) — a conscious adaptation to Sol charioteer (fig. 106 k). On a

¹ E. g. H. Mattingly, Coins Roman Empire Brit. Mus. I, 13, 3—6: 15, 6 sq.; 30, 9 sq.; 34, 6, II, 2, 3; 19, 1 sqq.; 22, 6; 25, 3; 26, 1, 6; 27, 1; 64, 9; 65, 7; 66, 6 sq. III, 11, 17; 12, 3; 13, 16; 27, 6; 31, 1; 34, 10. H. Mattingly—E. A. Sydenham I. c. Ill 8, 149. IV 2, 1, 4; 2, 7; 6, 7; 4, 1, 6; 5, 11; 8, 5, 8; II, 1.
coin from Asia Minor already Caracalla appears in this solar type\(^1\) (fig. 101 b), and on a Sidonian coin Alexander Severus.\(^2\) From the East the type penetrates the Roman state coins. On medallions Probus appears in the new type,\(^3\) only common from the time of Constantine. This emperor,\(^4\) then Constantius II\(^5\) (fig. 101 e), Constans,\(^6\) Valens,\(^7\) Honorius\(^8\) are represented in the type, sometimes drawn by a yoke of horses, sometimes by elephants. The emperor ascends the Sun chariot as a heaven-soaring cosmocrator (cf. p. 112 sq.). Other reverse pictures, too, show the emperor with his right hand outstretched, e.g. the seated divus Claudius Gothicus on Constantinian ancestral coins\(^9\), the enthroned imperial couple Valens and Valentinian\(^10\) (fig. 100 m), and the standing Theodosius\(^11\) on gold medallions.

The emperor in this gesture of power and benediction appears not only on coins, but also in monumental art, for instance, in triumphal reliefs and statues, and also in miniatures. On the Arch of Constantine the emperors appear with the right hand outstretched. In the archways four imperial busts are preserved, all but one with the right hand raised\(^12\) (fig. 102). On the pedestals 4 signa are reproduced carrying an imperial imago, all with their right hand outstretched.\(^13\) In the siege of Verona, in the historical cycle, Constantine, in super-human stature\(^14\) (fig. 103), stretches his right hand over his fighting army with a magic of victory similar to that of Moses when raising his hands during the battle against the Amalechites. A relief scene on the Arcadius column in Constantinople and an illustration to the chronograph of 354\(^15\) give further examples of the emperor in this gesture. Huge equestrian statues in monumental squares in Constantinople raise their right hands in the same manner, so does Theodosius' equestrian statue on his triumphal column at Taurus,\(^16\) and that of Justinian on the Augusteum\(^17\) (fig. 104).

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2. Cat. l.c. Phoenicia, pl. 25, 11 and p. 199.
12. L’Orange—v. Gerkan, Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinbogens p. 138 sqqu. and pl. 33 a, 34 a, c.
13. I.c. p. 116 sq. pl. 25 c; 26 a; 32, 6, 7.
14. I.c. p. 61 pl. 4 a; 8 a.
16. J. Kollwitz, l.c. p. 7 sqqu.
Fig. 102. Bust of emperor. Arch of Constantine, Rome.

Fig. 103. Constantine at the siege of Verona. Detail from relief, Arch of Constantine, Rome.
The supernatural redeeming power in the emperor’s outstretched right hand presupposes higher powers and abilities dwelling in him. Through the emperor, manifesting his power in this gesture, divine interference in human affairs takes place. Actually it is the gods themselves who in this gesture intervene in the sphere of mortals. But not all the gods. It is from the orientalized world of gods of the third century A.D. the gesture has been transferred to the emperor.

Let us see how these Eastern gods are depicted on Roman coins! The great Eastern gods, in distinct contrast to the National-Roman ones, are often represented in the gesture of salvation from Severan times onwards. Serapis is, for instance, depicted in this type on the coinage of Gallienus¹ and Postumus.² On anonymous Roman coins from the 4th century his bust appears on the obverse with his right hand outstretched³ (fig. 105), just like the imperial one. But above all the magic gesture is characteristic of Sol Invictus. In the numerous type variants of this god, the outstretched right hand is the striking and inevitable common feature.⁴ It characterizes

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² A. Alföldi l.c. pl. XI, 15.
³ A. Alföldi, A festival of Isis in Rome under the Christian Emperors of the 4th century (Diss. Pannonicae Serie 2 fasc. 7) pl. VIII 29—36, 39—43; XVII 9.
⁴ See the material referred to Symb. Osl. 14, 1935 p. 89 sqq. The few exceptions to this typifying of the Sun picture in post-Severan times (l. c. p. 92 note 5) are irrelevant. In pre-Severan times Sol never appears on Roman coins in the gesture of benediction, cf. e.g. the Sun on the heavenly chariot, Mattingly—Sydenham l.c. II pl. XIII 244.
him whether naked or clothed, whether standing, walking or hastening forward, with the weight on the right or the left foot, facing right or left, with varying attributes and in varying situations — always the right hand is raised in the gesture of omnipotence and salvation (fig. 106 d—j). In fact, even the various types of Sol in the heavenly chariot (e.g. fig. 106 k) — whether he is mounting into the chariot¹ or already standing in it, whether he is clothed or naked, whatever attributes he may have, whether depicted in profile or full face² — he always raises his right hand, despite the fact that when driving he should be holding the reins in his right hand. The charioteer accordingly drops the reins and raises his right hand in the mighty gesture now disrupting the logically correct representation of the driving Sun-god as classical art had shaped the type and a fixed tradition handed it down³. It is now the Sun of the East, the "star-turning" god (cf. fig. 14), who faces us. In the magic sign of his ingens dextra he rules and moves the Cosmos, sends the spheres spinning in their eternal orbits, thus affecting everything that happens in our earthly sphere. It is the gesture of the cosmocurator.

Also in monumental art, in miniatures etc. Sol Invictus appears in this gesture. Once more the Arch of Constantine offers the best examples. The central divinity in the decoration of the arch — Sol Invictus — is everywhere depicted with his right hand raised.⁴ Whether he speeds in his heavenly chariot over Constantine's troops entering Rome⁵ (fig. 107), or is shown in

¹ Mattingly—Sydenham l. c. IV, 1 pl. 6, 2.
² Mattingly—Sydenham V, 2 pl. I, 13 and pl. V 1, 9 sq.
³ E. g. Mattingly, Coins Rom. Emp. Brit. Mus. Ill 54, I sq.; Mattingly—Sydenham l. c. II pl. XIII 244; Gneccchi l. c. II pl. 42, 8, 9 (Aelius Caes.).
⁴ L'Orange—von Gerkan, Der späantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens p. 174 sqq.
⁵ L'Orange—v. Gerkan l. c. p. 163 sqq.; pl. 38 a.
The Gesture of Power. Cosmocrator's Sign

Fig. 106. a, b, Licinius, averse and reverse, after Hirsch, Cat. 1922 pl. 53, 1729. c, d, Constantine, averse and reverse, after Gnechi, M. R. 1, Pl. 8, 2. e–k, Sol Invictus, after Maurice, N. C. 1 pl. 17, 16; Hirsch, Cat. 1913 pl. 35, 1464; Maurice, N. C. 1 pl. 1, 1; Maurice, N. C. 3 pl. 2, 18; Maurice, N. C. 3 pl. 6, 15; Mattingly–Sydenham, Roman Imp. Coinage 5, 1 pl. 8, 123; Maurice, N. C. 3 pl. 6, 14. l, Coin from Pessinus, after Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus. pl. 4, 6. m, Coin from Phoenician Tripolis, after Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus. pl. 43, 12.
Fig. 107. Sol Invictus in his chariot, Arch of Constantine, Rome.

repose in the archway\(^1\) (fig. 108), in every case he has his right hand raised in the same gesture. So also on the reliefs showing Sol Invictus as Constantine's *deus militaris* carried by his troops and guards.\(^2\) In a similar way he is pictured on Roman sarcophagi from the 3rd century e. g. on those of the Prometheus group, further on altars, on votive reliefs,\(^3\) Mithreian monuments\(^4\) etc. On the Prometheus sarcophagi in the Museo Capitolino in Rome (fig. 109 a) and the

\(^{1}\) L'Orange—v. Gerkan I. c. p. 139; pl. 33 c, d.

\(^{2}\) L'Orange—v. Gerkan I. c. p. 55 sqq.; pl. 7 b, 29 c, 30 a, 32 b—c.

\(^{3}\) Cat. Brit. School, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Sala già della Tensa Nr. 7.

\(^{4}\) F. Cumont, Mystères de Mithra I 123; 2, 202 fig. 29.
Museo Nazionale in Naples (fig. 109 b), here reproduced as examples, Sol is galloping with his quadriga above the elemental spirits and the spinning goddesses of fate, with his right hand stretched out towards the stars in their orbits. In the 4th and 5th centuries the same type is depicted, for instance, on the silver dish
from Parabiago\textsuperscript{1} and on the pedestal of the Arcadius column in Constantinople,\textsuperscript{2} later in medieval miniatures,\textsuperscript{3} in fact becoming so fixed as to be repeated even in the late middle ages, for instance, in one of Antelami’s tympanon-reliefs on the baptistry in Parma.\textsuperscript{4}

Both in the case of the emperor and of the god, it is not until Severan times that official Roman art depicts them in the gesture of the raised hand.\textsuperscript{5} From this time on the emperor and his divinity, whether it be Serapis or Sol, are in a remarkable way united and unified in the gesture. On the Arch of Constantine the emperor and Sol repeat it in the same way. On coins the attributes of the imperial bust, the accompanying inscription, the image types on the reverse, clearly indicate the innate union of emperor and Sol. When the raised hand type first appears in the imperial effigy on a Roman coin (fig. 100 a), the accompanying inscription contains the word “invictus”, the divine Eastern epithet above all bound up with the Oriental Sol.\textsuperscript{6} The emperor with outstretched right hand is frequently crowned with the radiant crown, at the same time holding a globe in his left — all typical Sun-attributes. To an obverse showing Aurelian with his right hand outstretched corresponds a reverse with the imperial couple united under the head of the Sun-god\textsuperscript{7} (fig. 100 b, c); to the obverse Maximinus Daza with globe, radiant crown and raised right hand, on the reverse Sol Invictus with globe, radiant crown and raised right hand.\textsuperscript{8} Constantine, more frequently than the other emperors shown in the gesture of the raised hand, especially clearly displays his relationship with Sol. He places, for instance, his bust, with globe and raised right hand, beside

\textsuperscript{2} Freshfield, Archaeologia 72, 1922 pl. XX. R. Delbrück, Consulardiptychen, Textb. fig. p. 14. J. Kollwitz, Oströmische Plastik, Beilage 6. See also miniatures e.g. J. Strzygowsky l. c. pl. 23.
\textsuperscript{4} Symb. Osl. I. c. fig. 13.
\textsuperscript{5} Doubtful earlier example: Alföldi, Röm. Mitt. 50, 1935, p. 107 and pl. 13, 15.
\textsuperscript{6} Inscription: \textit{Severi invicti aug. pili fili.} F. Cumont has shown that this epithet (invictus, \textit{invictus}, \textit{invictus}) is connected with the Oriental astral gods, especially Sol, and from these has passed into the Roman imperial title (Mystères de Mithra I p. 46 sqq., 287 sqq.; Sol, Daremberg—Saglio 1. c. IV, 2, p. 1383, 1385. Cf. H. Usener, Sol Invictus, Rheinisches Museum 60, 1905 p. 469. H. Cohen IV, p. 28 No. 230—235; VIII p. 394. M. Bernhart, Handbuch der Münzkunde, Textb. p. 186). Commodus, with his Oriental trend, had already used the \textit{invictus} title, Cumont l. c. p. 287 sq. Usener l. c. p. 468 sq.
\textsuperscript{7} Cohen VI p. 180 nr. 36.
\textsuperscript{8} Cohen VII pl. 159 sq. nr. 174. Maurice l. c. I p. 398.
the Sun-bust, surrounding them with the inscription Comis Constantini Aug.¹ (fig. 100 i). The type of the emperor with raised right hand on the triumphal chariot shows an especially clear adaptation to the chariot-driving Sun of late antiquity.²

This assimilation expresses the idea that the might of the emperor reposes in the Sun, and that it is in identity with this god that he stretches out his right hand in the sign of power and salvation. The emperor's hand, too, is stretched out towards cosmos, he is one with the universal power of fate; he is the cosmocrator. The gesture is thus charged with the same ideas of cosmic power as those seen crystallized in his cosmic palace hall, his heavenly throne, his astral insignia, the zodiac he holds in his hand. The raised right hand — penetrating together with the Sun and Serapis cult and all the orientalized religion of the 3rd century — is worked in as the standing imperial sign of power and benediction, inseparably bound up with the divine person of the emperor. In this sense the sign outlives both Sol and Serapis and survives far down into Christian times.


As noted, it is not till Severan times that Roman art depicts the emperor in the gesture of the raised right hand — at the same time at which the great gods of the Orient, in the same sign, establish their rule in Rome. The gesture is a symptom of orientalized Rome itself. For in the East it had its origin, and the benedictory gods can here be traced back far beyond Severan times.

The Sun type which according to numismatic and archaeological evidence must be considered the main type and in Rome must have been represented in a dominant cult statue³ (fig. 106 d—f), was created in the East.⁴ Our sources take us to Semitic Syria, in fact to the immediate vicinity of Emesa, whence the Oriental sun cult radiated into the Roman world. In Phoenician Tripoliś, by the altar of Zeus Hagios, so often depicted on Severan local coins, our

¹ Maurice l. c. I pl. 8, 10, and p. 100; II pl. 7, 14 and p. 236 sqq. XIII. Cohen VII p. 265 No. 316.
² We must here also compare the emperor's assimilation to the Sun in literature, e.g. Eusebius, V. C. I 43; II 2. Cf. Symb. Osl. 14, 1935 p. 104; 114.
⁴ Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Lycaonia, Isauria, Cilicia (Hill) pl. 14, 5 and p. 83 (Hierapolis); Galatia, Cappadocia, Syria (Wroth) pl. 4, 6 and p. 20 (Pessinus).
very type of Sun was to be seen, and on the other side of the altar Luna¹ (fig. 106 m). In Hierapolis a similar Sun type crops up on local coins from Antoninian times². On local Cretan coins from the time of Vespasian a god appears, with radiant crown, with a sceptre in his left hand and his right one raised.³ Already in the time of Trajan the riding Sun is depicted in this gesture in Alexandrian coinage⁴: in his left hand the god holds his sceptre, his right one outstretched (fig. 110): As in the representation of the Sun in his heavenly chariot, the right hand has again dropped the reins — contrary both to the traditional type and to the logic of riding itself. All such logical and traditional considerations had to give way to the new point of magic expression lying in the outstretched hand.

Of a similar kind and equally striking is the change of type experienced by Bryaxis’ Serapis. The famous cult statue which supported its right hand on the arm-rest of the throne (or on Cerberus’ head, or, possibly, held it just above Cerberus),⁵ on the coins of Roman times raises it in the

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¹ Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Phoenicia (Hill) pl. 27, 14 and p. 215 sqq.; pl. 43, 11, 12 and p. 214 sqq.; pl. 28, 3, 4 and p. 222; p. CXXI sq. E. Babelon, Les perses Achémenides, Cypre et Phénicie pl. 34, 17 (Caracalla). J. Babelon, Collection de Luynes (Asie Mineure et Phénicie) pl. CXV 3201 sq. (Julia Domna); pl. CXV 3203 sqq. (Caracalla).
³ Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Crete and Aegean Islands (Wroth) pl. 1, 8.
⁴ Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Alexandria (Poole) pl. 2, 413.
⁵ The Bryaxis statue in its shrine, with the right hand leaning on the arm-rest or the head of Cerberus (“over Cerberus”, says the author): Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Alexandria pl. 28, 872 and 1252.
Fig. 111. Alexandrian coins, after Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus. pl. 13, 621; 13, 1749; 15, 284; 15, 2211; 29, 876.

sign of salvation\(^1\) (fig. 111 a, b). It is a change parallel to the development of the type of standing Serapis. The standing Serapis with raised right hand, from Severan times the most common type of Serapis on Roman coins, was already at that time old in Serapis' home city. Fused with Helios as Helios-Serapis the type appears on Alexandrian coins from the time of Domitian, with radiant crown and modius, sceptre in its left hand, its right one raised\(^2\) (fig. 111 c). The type without Sun attributes, surrounded by Ares and Nike, is represented on a garlanded base — undoubtedly a cult statue in a temple\(^3\) (fig. 111 d). A similar Serapis turns in benediction to Hadrian on

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\(^1\) Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Alexandria 13, 621 (Julia Mamaea) and 1749 (Hadrian). An example from Trajan's time shows the hand only just raised above the arm-rest, l.c. pl. 13, 447. Sitting Serapis with hand raised horizontally above Cerberus on coins from Asia Minor: Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Phrygia (Head) pl. 32, 9.

\(^2\) Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Alexandria pl. 15, 284. Helios—Serapis in the gesture of benediction also on the other Oriental coins, e.g. Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Ionia (Head) Pl. 20, 2 (Alexander Severus).

\(^3\) Cat. Greek Coins Brit. Mus., Alexandria pl. 15, 2211 (Gallienus).
a coin showing the emperor in the god's temple\(^1\) (fig. 111 e). The type is also preserved in a bronze statuette from the Nile delta in the Constantine Sinadino collection in Alexandria.\(^2\) As was the case with the main type of Sol in this gesture, so also with the main type of Serapis: here, too, the original model was an Eastern cult statue.

In the East, however, it is not Sol and Serapis alone who make the gesture of the raised right, but also other gods, and in some cases those of the West too. On Alexandrian coins from the 3rd century, Roma\(^3\) (fig. 112 a, b) and Alexandria\(^4\) raise their right hands. likewise Homonoia, with Cornucopiae in her left arm, raises her right in blessing (fig. 112 d). She appears in this gesture already at the time of Commodus, and still more frequently in subsequent times\(^5\). Asiatic gods such as Sandan on the lion\(^6\) or the riding Men\(^7\) are on local coins constantly depicted with outstretched right hands.

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4. Compare the gesture of Constantinopolis on the Magnus diptych, R. Delbrück, Consular-diptychen.
Thus numismatic evidence proves the gesture of the raised right hand to have originated in Oriental cults. Not only from Severan times on, but throughout the whole Roman period, the divinity here raises his right hand in benediction. In fact, this feature, so characteristically determining the appearance of the god, has here an even more extensive application — it can be traced through Hellenism back to the Ancient Orient. Right from primeval times the idea of the redeeming power in the outstretched right hand of the god or divine person has belonged to the religious and cult tradition of the East. In this magically effective position the god and the divine person appear both in art and literature.

According to Cumont the gesture originated in the religious ritual of the Semites, where it had — as it still has to this very day in the East — apotropeic powers, was a magic blessing.¹ « L'élévation de la main droite est un geste rituel des Sémites. Il est très souvent figuré sur les monuments et on le trouve prêté aussi bien aux dieux qu'à leurs adorateurs. Il apparaît déjà sur les bas-reliefs et les scéaux babyloniens. On le rencontre en Phénicie et en Syrie, sur les stèles de Byblos, de Neirab et d'Oumm-el-Awamid et plus tard sur plusieurs monuments palmyrénien. Les Phéniciens le transportèrent à Carthage et on en peut citer en Afrique une quantité d'exemples. Il est même reproduit en Égypte sur un bas-relief hellénistique figurant un sacrifice à Astarté Hathor... Le geste de lever la main est proprement une menace, et il a pris ainsi très naturellement une signification apotropaique: la main droite ouverte a conservé ce caractère jusqu'à nos jours dans tous les pays sémitiques, en Asie comme en Afrique. Lorsqu'il est fait par le dieu, il protège ses serviteurs contre toutes les influences malignes et les esprits mauvais et devient ainsi un signe tutélaire, un symbole de bénéédiction. Quand c'est le fidèle qui le fait, il renforce ainsi sa prière ou son incantation et l'action de la main s'ajoute à celle des paroles consacrées pour écarter de lui tous les maux.²

¹ According to a Seleucidian inscription, a copy of an older text, the priest raises his hand when he recites a certain incantation in honour of Anu (F. Thureau-Dangin, Rev. d'Assyriologie 20, 1923, p. 110). L.W. King has interpreted a series of prayers and incantations on Assyrian clay tablets, which were termed by the Assyrians themselves "prayers of the lifting of the hand" (L.W. King, Babylonian magic and sorcery being "the prayers of the lifting of the hand" p. XI sq.).
The Eastern examples cited by Cumont might easily be multiplied. It is enough to recall the Assyrian rock relief in Maltaya on the Tigris\(^1\) where a whole Olympus of benedictory gods appears (fig. 28). In Persian worship, too, the gesture has deep roots. As seen, Ahuramazda, as cosmocrator in the world ring, raises his right hand (fig. 63, p. 92), and so does his reflection on earth, the Achaemenian king (fig. 65 b). He or his satrap is depicted riding in his chariot, his right hand outstretched\(^2\) (fig. 113). Just as Jahve swears “by his right hand and by his mighty arm”,\(^3\) so Persian subjects take the oath by the king’s right hand, by “Mithras’ great light and the royal right hand” (σεβόμενος Μήθρος τε φῶς μέγα καὶ δεξίων βασιλείων).\(^4\)

We remember Procopius’ interpretation of the outstretched arm of the Sassanian king as a σύμβολον σωτηρίας (p. 139) and Alibriuni’s words of Ardashir named Longimanus “because his command was omnipotent” (p. 140 sq.); already Artaxerxes was named Longimanus, Μαξερχέω.\(^5\) Eastwards the sign can be followed as far as the Buddhist art of Central Asia, where, as noted by Sten Konow,\(^6\) the gesture has the same signification of apotropeic blessing. Buddha makes the sign even in our times.

Certainly under Eastern influence the gesture of the raised right hand has also penetrated the Egyptian cult.\(^7\) As a remarkable example Echnaton’s Ray-Aton may be mentioned (fig. 114): the rays of the sun emanate in benedictory

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\(^1\) V. Place, Ninive et L’Assyrie pl. 45 and p. 156 sqq. M. Jastrow, Bildermappe zur Religion Babylonien und Assyriens no. 98. H. Gressmann, Texte und Bilder zum A. T. 335. Both hands stretched out towards the supplicant: M. Jastrow l. c. e. g. nos. 26, 27, 39.


\(^3\) E. g. Isaiah 62, 8.

\(^4\) Plut., Al. 30, 4.

\(^5\) Plut., Artax. I. Strabo 15, 3, 21. I am indebted to K. Barr for important references.

\(^6\) Sten Konow, Ørken og Oase p. 169; cf. fig. p. 168.

\(^7\) E. g. F. W. von Bissing, Denkmäler ägyptischer Skulptur Taf. 88 sq.
hands, stretched towards the King and his family, sometimes also in hands carrying the sign of life (Ankh) — in both cases Aton's saving, sustaining, life-giving power showers down on the royal family. In the Carthaginian sphere — a Western emanation of the Eastern world — Stéphane Gsell has studied the gesture which also here has the Eastern signification of divine power and protection.¹

Fig. 114. Echnaton and his family under the hands of Aton.

c. Jahve's "High Hand".

Cumont's supposition, that the gesture has its roots in the religious ritual of the Semites, is strikingly confirmed by its importance in the Jewish scriptures. From Exodus and down to the late prophets Jahve is depicted, with all the emphasis of endless repetition, with the mighty raised right hand. Beneath it his believers stand "hidden in the shadow of his hand". We witness in these writings the supernatural power and demonic nature originally present in this gesture. We may therefore select a few passages from the Old Testament suggesting to us the significance of Jahve's high hand.

The irresistible divine power, which had rescued the fleeing Israelites from the power of Egypt, is incarnated in Jahve's "outstretched", "high" or "raised hand". The fleeing Jews are under the protection of a "raised", a "high hand", ἐν χειρὶ ὑψηλῇ (Exodus 14, 8). Moses speaks to Jahve of Israel "which" he says, "thou has brought forth out of Egypt with great power, and with a high arm", ἐν ἰσχύι μεγάλῃ καὶ ἐν τῷ βραχίονι σου τῷ υψηλῷ (Exodus 32, 11), "by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm and by great wonders", ἐν χειρὶ κραταίᾳ καὶ ἐν βραχίονι υψηλῷ καὶ ἐν ὀράμασιν μεγάλοις (Deut. 4, 34). And this expression is now repeated with slight variations right down to the late prophets. In the same way as the gesture is encountered in stereotyped, ritually petrified form on the monuments, so it recurs in writing in hieratically formalised expressions. In Jeremiah, for instance (32, 20 sq.),² the same words are used

about Israel’s marvellous escape: Jahve has led Israel out of Egypt “with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm and with great wonders”, ἐν χειρὶ κραταιᾷ καὶ ἐν βραχίονι υψηλῷ καὶ ἐν ὀρέμασιν μεγάλοις. The marked insistence on miracle and power shows the gesture in the true magical light. The psalmist sings: “Thou has an arm with power; strong is thy hand, raised up is thy right hand,” σὺς ὁ βραχίων μετὰ δυναστείας κραταιωθήτω ἡ χείρ σου, υψωθήτω ἡ δεξιά σου (Psalm 89, 14). One might compare the praises of the ingens manus, alta dextra etc., of the Roman emperor-god (p. 140). Omnipotence itself is manifested in Jahve’s outstretched right hand. “I have made the earth, the man and the beast”, says Jahve, “by my great power and by my outstretched arm”, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ τῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐπιχείρῳ μου τῷ υψηλῷ (Jer. 27, 5; 32, 17).

In the prophets’ rebuke to Israel, who have turned from their god, Jahve stands with his hand stretched out against his people. “I stretch out my hand and destroy thee”, ἐκτενῶ τὴν χειρὰ μου καὶ διαφθειρᾶ σε (Jer. 15, 6). “I myself will fight against you, with stretched out hand and strong arm”, ἐν χειρὶ ἐκτεταμένη τῇ ὑπάρχῃ τῇ κραταιᾷ (Jer. 21, 5). “And I shall stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desert and a wilderness”, καὶ ἐκτενῶ τὴν χειρὰ μου ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς (Ezek. 6, 14). “He (Jahve) has in his fierce anger drawn back his right hand from before the enemy” — that is to say, let the enemy advance unhindered — “and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire”, ἀπέστρεψεν . . . δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου ἐχθροῦ. “He stood with his right hand as an adversary and slew all that were pleasant to the eye”, ἐστερέωσεν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ ὡς ὑπεναντίος καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν πάντα τὰ ἐπιθυμήματα ὀρθάλμων μου (Lamentations 2, 3 sq.). With the same destructive power Jahve stretches out his hand also against Ammon, Edom and the Philistines. “Behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee and deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen”, ἐκτενῶ τὴν χειρὰ μου ἐπὶ σέ (Ezek. 25, 7). “I will also stretch out mine hand against Edom and will cut off man and beast”, καὶ ἐκτενῶ τὴν χειρὰ μου ἐπὶ τὴν Ἰδουμαίαν (Ezek. 25, 13). “Behold I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines and I will cut off the Cherethim”, ἐκτενῶ τὴν χειρὰ μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους . . (Ezek. 25, 16). “Against the wrath of my enemies thou stretchest out and thou savest me with thy right hand”, ἐπ’ ὀργὴν ἐχθρῶν μου ἐξέστεινες χειρὰ σου, καὶ ἔσωσεν με ἡ δεξιὰ σου (Psalm 138, 7).

In the formalised repetition of these expressions ritually fixed conceptions are once more clearly reflected (see also Psalm 88, 43; Isaiah 5, 25; 9, 12; 9, 17; 9, 21; 10, 4; Ezek. 44, 12; Zephaniah 1, 4; Zechariah 2, 13).

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1 LXX, 88, 8. 2 LXX, 34, 5; 39, 17. 3 LXX, 137, 7.
Jahve’s servants receive strength from their god to act with the same high hand, just as we saw the emperor did it. “My hand shall always be with him”, says Jahve about David, “and my arm shall give him strength... and I shall let him lay his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers”. “God hath broken in upon my enemies by mine hand”, says David after a victory over the Philistines (I Chron. 14, 11). “The hand of the Lord was on Elijah” (I Kings, 18, 46) and we are told of the power in Joshua’s (Jos. 8, 18 sq.; 10, 6) and especially in Moses’ outstretched hand. Sometimes it is by Moses’ outstretched hand, sometimes by his magic staff (ἡ βαξδος του θεου) that the power works. Before the crossing of the Red Sea Jahve says to Moses: “But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it”, καὶ ἐξετεινὼν τὴν χειρὰ σου ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν (Exodus 14, 16). After the crossing Jahve says to Moses: “stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea ἐξετεινὼν... τὴν χειρὰ ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared” (Exodus 14, 26 sq.). The song of praise now sung by Israel is dedicated to Jahve’s right hand: “Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power, thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy... thou stretchest out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them”, ἐξετεινὼς τὴν δεξιὰν σου, κατέπεν αὐτοῦς γῆ (Exodus 15, 6 sqq.). Moses with both hands raised during the battle against the Amalechites (Exodus 17, 8 sqq.) is filled with the same magical power.¹

Only the one having received Jahve’s initiation is in possession of this powerful hand. When Jeroboam stretched out his right hand against one of Jahve’s prophets, it withered, and he could not pull it in again (I Kings, 13, 4 sqq.). Note this passage proving how literally “the outstretched hand” is to be taken: Jeroboam could not pull his hand in again. There must have been definite laws for the transference of this magic power to the hands of God’s servants. At the initiation of priests a ritual “filling” of hands took place; and we learn, for instance, that Jonathan, the son of Saul, went to David in the forest and strengthened his hands in God, ἐκπατάωσεν τὰς χειρὰς αὐτοῦ ἐν Κυριῳ (I Sam. 23, 16 sq.). A hint of such initiations is perhaps afforded by the remarkable scene of King Joas’ visit to the dying Elisha. “And Elisha

¹ The power lies not only in “God’s staff” (ἡ βαξδος του θεου), with which Moses is provided, for then it would not be necessary to raise both hands.
said unto him: "Take bow and arrows". And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the King of Israel "Put thine hand upon the bow". And he put his hand upon it. And Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said: "Open the window eastward". And he opened it. Then Elisha said: "Shoot". And he shot. And he said: "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria", βέλος σωτηρίας τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ βέλος σωτηρίας ἐν Συρίᾳ: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, that thou have consumed them (2 Kings, 13.14, sqq.).

d. Τρέξιοι Θεοί in the Greek world.

In the archaic period, or perhaps already in prehistoric times, Eastern impulses have brought the sign of salvation into the religion of the West. Already in Homer, and later on in Greek art and literature, we come across ὑπερχείριοι and ὑπερδέξιοι Θεοί. The magically outstretched right hand to such a degree dominates the very conception of the god that it gives him his peculiar name. Hera ὑπερχείρια had her cult in Sparta, Zeus ὑπερδέξιος and Athena ὑπερδέξια at Lesbos, Apollon ὑπερδέξιος in the Peloponnesos. As this has been described by Chr. Blinksenberg, we need here only mention a few examples.

Above all, gods of healing and child-bearing are represented with outstretched right hand. Aesculapius cures Theopompos by stretching towards him his healing hand (ὁρέξει οἱ τῆν παμώνον χείρα) just as the god — and also his companion Hygieia — is shown on Greek votive reliefs. To sailors in distress at sea he appears in the same gesture (αὐτοίς πλέοντα καὶ θορυβουμένοις φανείς ὁ θεὸς χείρα ὁρέξεν), as also said of Serapis (χείρα ἀντάρας οὐρανόν τε κηρυμμένον ἐξέφερα). Artemis as Eileithyia eases the birth pains by holding her hands over the mother in labour (δισσίκες ὑπερέσχες χείρας). A ξόανον of

1 Cf. e. g. A.W. Persson, The Religion of Greece in prehistoric times p. 173 fig. 7–8 b and p. 47 sqq.
2 Chr. Blinksenberg, Apollon Hyperdexios, Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales II, 1, 1933/34. O. Weinreich, Antike Heilungswunder, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten p. 12 sq. Also the touching right hand of the god has this magical force, O. Weinreich l. c. p. 38 sqq.
3 O. Weinreich l. c. p. 1 sqq.
4 Suidas, s. v. Θεοπομπος.
5 O. Weinreich, l. c. p. 1 sq., 8 sq.
6 Aristeides, quoted after Blinksenberg l. c.
7 Aristeides, quoted after Blinksenberg l. c.
8 Phaidimos, Anthol. Pal. 6, 271. O. Weinreich l. c. p. 9 sqq.
Eileithyia in the goddess' temple in Aigion represented her in this characteristic gesture (τυχείς χερσὶ τῇ μὲν ἐς εὐθὺ ἑκτέταται, τῇ δὲ ἄνέχει δεξίᾳ), and thus she is also to be seen on vase paintings.

But not only gods within this special sphere of activity but also others, as Zeus, Apollo, Athene, Hermes, Hera and Hercules occasionally appear with magically protecting hand. Zeus, for instance, stands in front of the Io cow, his right hand outstretched: it is the moment of its miraculous metamorphosis. Apollo was worshipped as ὑπερδέξιος in the Peloponnese. With the battle cry: Apollo ὑπερδέξιος, Aratos advanced on Sicyon, and as ὑπερδέξιος, with his right hand magically outstretched, Apollo — invisible present in the middle of the battle — in the famous gable group of the Temple of Zeus in Olympia stands before us.

1 Pausanias 7, 23, 5.
2 O. Weinrich l. c. p. 9 sqq.
3 Blinkenberg l. c. p. 27 sqq.; Weinrich l. c. p. 13.
4 Weinreich l. c. p. 25 sqq.
I shall conclude this series of examples of ὑπερβείρης θεών with a reference to an archaic bronze-relief adequately translating into pictorial form a famous passage in Homer1 (fig. 115 a). When Priam is placed under the protection of Hermes during his hazardous expedition through the enemy camp, he feels that a god is holding his hand over him2:

ἀλλ' ἔτι τις καὶ ἔμειν ὠς ὑπερβείρης χεῖρα.

How concretely these words are to be taken is shown in the relief: beneath the magic protection of Hermes' outstretched right arm the old king passes unseen through the enemy camp reaching Achilles unhindered. We see Hermes as the ὑπερβείρης θεός, as also represented in a number of statuettes of the κρυφόρος, the protector of the cattle3 (fig. 115 b, cf. 115 c, d).

e. δεηοῦσθαί.

Are we to see the same gesture of a divine ὑπερβείρης in Alexander's stretching out his right hand towards his army, when, strongly wounded, he met it after an Indian battle (τῇν χεῖρα ἀνέτεινεν ἢ τῷ πλῆθος)4? Or is the gesture here plainly the δεηοῦσθαί, greeting? The soldiers responded shouting with joy, some raising their hands towards heaven, others towards Alexander (οἱ δὲ ἀνεβάλλοντας ἢ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀναστάλλοντες τὰς χεῖρας, οἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἀλέξανδρον). The stretching out of the right hand by the πρόθεσις of the dead seems to be a kind of apotropeic greeting. In vase paintings the mourners appear in this gesture surrounding the dead.5 Orestes complains of not having been present at the πρόθεσις of his father6:

οὗ γὰρ παρὸν ὡμοία σῶν, πάτερ, μόρον
ουθ' ἐξητείνα χείρ' ἐπ' ἐκφοβῷ νεκροῦ.

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1 A. Furtwängler, in Aufsätze E. Curtius gewidmet pl. IV and p. 184 sq.
2 ll. 24, 374. Cf. ὑπερβείρης χεῖρα (or χεῖρας) of Zeus and Apollo in Homer: ll. 4, 249; 5, 433; 9, 419 sq.; 686 sq.; (passages quoted according to Blinksberg l.c. 27).
3 The type is recently treated by D. K. Hill. Journal of the Walters Art Gallery 11, 1948, p. 19 sqq., see especially fig. 1, 2 and 6, 7. Miss Hill gives another interpretation of the statuettes.
5 W. Zschietzschmann, Athen. Mitt. 1928, p. 27. K. Friis Johansen, in Festskrift til Fr. Poulsen 1941 p. 73 and fig. 2 sq.
6 Aisch., Choeph. 9.
The gesture strengthens the spoken word of prayer. As in Assyria certain prayers were called "prayers of the lifting of the hand" (p. 157 note 1), τοις δεξιωσθείς in Greek simply signifies to pray. Not only the prayer, but every spoken word is magically strengthened by stretching out the right hand. When Cæsar before the battle at Pharsalos asked Crassianus' opinion as to the issue, Crassianus exclaimed stretching out his right hand (τὴν δεξιὰν προτείνας): "Cæsar, you are going to win a brilliant victory".¹

The δεξιώσθης of the ancient greeting also seems to have had the same root: the stretching out of the right hand — in itself an apotropeic gesture — expresses the same as the verbal greeting it accompanies: words as χαῖρε, salve, cf. our modern greetings, good day, salute, Heil etc. When the apotropeic words of the greeting are being spoken — or might have been spoken — the gesture of the outstretched right hand strengthens them so as to realize the good wishes expressed in the very verbal greeting.

f. Christ Pantocrator.

Under the overwhelming influence of the world empires of the East, the gesture of the raised right hand penetrated archaic Greece. Later on, with the withdrawal of the Oriental influence, the gesture seems to fall into disuse in the Graeco-Roman Pantheon, and not until Oriental religions in the 3rd century A.D. penetrated the Roman empire, the gesture of the magic right hand once more became a dominating motif in Western cult and religious iconography. From the Eastern gods, above all from Sol Invictus and Serapis, it penetrates, as seen, the official image of the emperor.

The gesture now also takes its place in Christian iconography.² As an example let us consider Christ raising Lazarus from death in a painting in the Catacombe di Callisto (fig. 116).³ Christ stands with a virga magica in his left hand, the sign of his miraculous saving power. His right hand is stretched out with the palm turned towards Lazarus. Just as through the staff, the

¹ Plut., Pomp. 71.
³ J. Wilpert l.c. pl. 46, 2.
power of salvation works through this sign: the entrance to the tomb opens, and out steps Lazarus with powerful strides. A Christ picture of this kind corresponds to the divine type of benedictory gods of 3rd century orientalized Rome\(^1\) (p. 147 sq.).

When Christianity had become the state religion, a certain adaptation of the ecclesiastical apparatus to traditional forms of worship took place. As the Christian basilica approaches the sacred architecture surrounding the god-emporer,\(^2\) so the Christian iconography takes over the imperial insignia and

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\(^1\) As we have seen the gesture has deep roots in the Jewish world, characterizing especially Jahve. The O. T. conception of God's mighty right hand lives on in the Gospels (e.g. Luke 1,51 and 66).

\(^2\) E. Dyggve, Ravennatum palatinum sacrum p. 54 s.q.; Dødekult, keiserkult og basilika p. 23 sqq. A. Alföldi l. c. p. 158.
Fig. 117. *Dominus legem dat*. Mosaic in S. Costanza, Rome.

Fig. 118. *Dominus legem dat*. Fragment of a monumental relief, Metropolitan Museum. Two of the surrounding disciples are acclaming the Saviour.
power symbols — and to these belongs, with the cosmic and astral signs, the outstretched hand. Christ in this gesture is now the all-powerful, the παράκτιος, the cosmocrator, pantocrator, the κύριος τοῦ κόσμου, and not the miraculous healer of the sick and raiser from the dead. Thus we meet him in the monumental pictures of the triumphant Church in late antique and early medieval art.¹

We here call attention to a specially important composition, which recurs in mosaics, paintings and sarcophagi since late Constantinian times, for instance, in an apse mosaic in Santa Costanza in Rome² (fig. 117): it is the traditio legis.³ Christ gives the world his law, the Gospel’s nova lex. Dominus legem dat is the legend on the Gospel scroll (in Santa Costanza erroneously restored as pacem dat). As law-giving dominus he stands before us, his right hand raised, in the compelling sign of omnipotence. And with this sign a note is struck sounding through the whole composition and echoed in all particulars of figures and forms. In his might and glory Christ stands on the mount of Paradise, a halo about his head. The figures are symmetrically grouped around and subordinated to him, as to the emperor in a stereotyped maiestas scheme of this age.⁴ From both sides the two apostle-princes approach. Peter’s pose is determined by the προσκύνησις, as the ceremony demanded of one who stood before the face of the emperor.⁵ Ceremony likewise demanded that one should receive with covered hands what the omnipotent handed out; and thus Peter is receiving the law with covered hands.⁶ On the other side of Christ Paul moves his hand in acclamation, the spontaneous human reaction to the gesture of the Saviour, expressing approval of the law, man’s subordination to omnipotence. The same scene is repeated on a number of sarcophagi⁷ and on a fragment of a monumental relief in the Metropolitan

⁴ L’Orange, Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture p 122 sqq.
⁵ A. Alföldi, Röm. Mitt. 49, 1934, 33, p. 49 sqq.
Museum, with Christ in a specially stressed and impressive gesture (fig. 118). It is significant that in these pictures of the *traditio legis* Christ is frequently shown on the world globe, for instance, in a mosaic in John's baptismal

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I am very much indebted to Dr. James J. Lorimer for the permission to publish this unique relief and express my thanks for important indications during my study of it to Dr. W. H. Forsyth. The dimensions and profile of the fragment seem to indicate that it belonged to an architectural relief, not to a sarcophagus. The thickness of the block — c. 0.16 m (upper border c. 0.12 m) — is remarkable. The length of the fragment, measured along the upper border is 1.335 m; but there must have been still two niches corresponding to four disciples to the right, and one niche corresponding to two disciples to the left, with belonging columns; thus, according to the dimensions of the niches and columns preserved, and adding some space for the columns at the corners we arrive at about 2.5 m for the whole relief. The profile of the relief is strange: the front at the top turns back to a depth of
chapels in Naples\textsuperscript{1} (fig. 119): he is the \textit{κύριος τοῦ κόσμου}. On one of the doors of S. Sabina in Rome the same Christ Pantocrator is framed by A and Ω, the sign of eternity: he is the \textit{novus rex aevorum}, revealing to us the new world law. In the famous apse mosaic in SS. Cosma e Damiano from the 6th century in Rome,\textsuperscript{2} we are no longer dealing with the \textit{traditio legis}. But the raised hand of the Pantocrator is the same.

0,03 – 0,04 m, then rising as a vertical finishing upper border. The vine not only decorates the upper part of the front, but also the top where the ground turns back, as far as to the finishing upper border. The front of this border indicates, as it seems, the plane of the bond in which our relief, with its strongly projecting arches and figures, was inserted. See J. J. Rorimer, The Autenticity of the Chalice of Antioch, in: memorial volume to Belle Greene (in print).

\textsuperscript{1} J. Wilpert l. c. III, 32.

\textsuperscript{2} J. Wilpert l. c III, 102 sq. From Christ the gesture is handed on to his servants, the apostles, saints, bishops (E. Fehrenbach l. c. II 1 col. 764 sqq.). Far into the middle ages it retains its power and often recurs in disguised form. As an example may be mentioned the account in Gregory of Tours of an Eastern king who with the help of St. Sergius won all his battles: he had fixed the martyr’s thumb on his right arm, and whenever, hard pressed by his enemies, trusting in the Saint, he raised this arm, the enemy retired (Greg. Tur., Hist. Franc. 7, 31. E. Lucius, Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults p. 237 sq.). Once more we are reminded of Moses in the battle against the Amalechites (p. 145). In a Byzantine account regarding a 9th century chapel in the imperial palace in Constantinople, a figure of the Virgin over the altar is described as “stretching out its immaculate hands over us and giving the Emperor success and courage against his enemies” (T. P. Richter, Quellen zur byzantin. Kunstgeschichte 357).
17. THE GESTURE OF THOUGHT. THE SIGN OF LOGOS

a. The Speaking Christ.

In the iconography of Christ the imperial gesture of omnipotence, inherited from the Oriental gods and rulers, had to yield to another gesture, which more than any has set its stamp upon the image of Christ and charged that image with its peculiar significance.

Starting once more from an antique gesture, we must ask our readers to bear with us on our way. The central figure in the early iconography of Christ — in fact the entire compositions in which it takes part — derives its peculiar life from this gesture. Only by revealing its special significance can this life be released and introduced into the picture. In dealing with similar gestures in antique art, we must bear in mind how decisive a role they played in the whole life of the Ancient World, and to what an extent they determined what we might call the classical style of life. Quintilian relates that already in heroic times the Greeks had a fully developed system of significant gestures and a separate doctrine concerning their correct use: a chironomia, a lex gestus.¹ To this very day, as we know, the descendants of the classical peoples have a particularly rich and varied system of gestures, which have preserved something of their old power and expressiveness.

The gesture, or the variants of one and the same gesture, with which we are now to deal, can be seen every day in Christian worship, in the sign of blessing of the Church: the benedictio latina in the Roman Catholic ritual, the benedictio græca in the Greek orthodox, and in closely related signs in Protestant and other Christian worship. As will be seen, all these signs, closely related in their external form, have the same classical origin. It is a gesture, or variations of a gesture, which has no connection with the benedictory signs — the sign of power and salvation — just dealt with. It developed from quite a different sphere of life and thought, emphasizing a totally different aspect in the conception of Christ. Even the significance of

¹ Quint., Inst. Orat. 1, 11, 17.
benediction does not originally belong to the gesture, and only the advanced middle ages have interpreted it in this sense. The paleochristian and early medieval Christ represented in the gesture had quite another significance. Our aim here is to revive this original significance. Only then will the Christ type we are going to deal with, regain its original expression.

The benedictory gesture of the Catholic Church — *benedictio latina* — is characterised by a position of the fingers such as in the famous statue of Peter in St. Peter's (fig. 120): the three first fingers (thumb, index and middle finger) are stretched out straight, while the two remaining (ring and little finger) are flexed against the palm of the hand; the thumb is not always straight but often, as in the case of the statue of Peter, touches the ring finger. During the middle ages and right back to early Christian art Christ, Saints, and representatives of Christ appear before us in this gesture. Byzantine coins give a coherent medieval series of such Christ pictures.1 As examples we reproduce coins from the reigns of Michael VII Ducas (1071—1078, fig. 121 a) and Justinian II (685—711, fig. 121 b, c). Note that this Christ everywhere holds the Gospels in his left hand. As a monumental example from early medieval art the mosaic of Christ enthroned on the cosmos on the triumphal arch in San Lorenzo fuori le Mura in Rome is reproduced (fig. 122), here with the cross instead of the Gospels. From San Lorenzo we go back to early Christian art. Of the numerous representations of our type of Christ on sarcophagus reliefs, in mosaics, paintings, miniatures, we have here selected as an example a famous sarcophagus fragment in the Roman Museo delle Terme depicting the Sermon on the Mount2 (fig. 123). Here too Christ holds the Gospel scroll in his left hand.

If we study the various classical monuments, it will soon be discovered that this gesture is by no means confined to the Christian cycle. In fact we find it as a profane gesture in an infinity of pictures from private and public life. As an example we reproduce one leaf of the Probianus diptych in Berlin3 (fig. 124). In the upper field sits Probianus, just appointed *vicarius Urbis Romae*, with his *codicilli* in his left hand and his right hand raised in our gesture. On either side of him stand stenographers with writing material in their hands. Probianus is speaking and the stenographers are writing. In the lower

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1 W. Wroth, Cat. Imp. Byzantine Coins Brit. Mus. II pl. 38, 16 sq., 20 sqq., 24; 41, 1—5, 9; 49, 16 sq.; 56, 5; 58, 1 sq.; 60, 1, 12; 62, 9; 63, 1—3, 68, 14.
3 R. Delbrück, Die Consulardiptychen 65.
Fig. 120  The Bronze Statue of Peter in S. Peter's, Rome.
Fig. 121 a–c. Christ on Byzantine coins.

Fig. 122. Christ between the apostle princes. Mosaic in S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura, Rome.
field two senators enter the presence of Probianus, apparently bringing
the congratulations of the Senate. Note that both of them are holding
in their left hands scrolls, their right hands raised in our gesture. Thus,
here too, the gesture accompanies speech.1 The scroll in the left hand
contains the written speech; the gesture of the right one expresses
the realisation of the written in the living word. In the classical world,
with its spontaneous expressive gesticulation, its chironomia, the
gesture of speech becomes the adequate expression of the spoken
word.

How the word lives in this gesture, classical stage pictures perhaps
show best. The actor appeals to us primarily through speech: the hand
raised in our gesture characterizes therefore the actor, and follows him
together with his mask. A glance at the illustrations of the Terence manu-
dscripts and a study of the infinity of varied and expressive gestures of
these stage pictures, gives one a strong impression of the oratorical sig-
nificance of the hand and finger position here considered.2 Figs. 125—126
merely afford examples of the countless theatrical pictures which might
here be adduced. It is significant that Prologus himself (fig. 125) constantly
appears in our gesture.

That we are in all these cases dealing with a speech gesture is confirmed
by classical literature. Apuleius recounts in one passage (Met. 2, 34) a certain

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1 All the three speakers on our diptych are turning the palm of the hand outwards.
Without any change of meaning the back of the hand can also be turned outwards: e. g. the boy
with the codicilli in the “Stilicho” diptych (R. Delbrück l. c. 63), the patricius in the “Patricius”
diptych (R. Delbrück l. c. 64).

2 Terentius, Codex vaticanus latinus 3868,66r (to Hecyra), 84v (to Phormio). Cf. also e. g.
4r, 8r, 9r, 10r, 12r, 20r, 21r, 29r, 33r, 48r, 51r, 60r, 70r, 84v.
Telephron's preparations for a speech: Leaning on the cushion he raised his right hand and "like the orators" (ad instar oratorum) presented his case "closing the last two fingers together and stretching out the others, supported by the thumb" (duobusque infimis conclusis digitis, ceteros eminentes porrigens, et infesto pollice). A particularly important variant of the fingers' normal position in benedictio latina occurred, as we saw (fig. 120), when the thumb is pressed against the ring finger, while the position of the other fingers is as described.¹ This very gesture is described by Fulgentius as a gesture of speech. The speaker makes ready

¹ E. Fehrenbach l. c. coll. 755 sq. traces the gesture on pagan and Christian monuments. J. Wilpert, Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms pl. 124, 155, 168, 170, 262.
for his speech "with two fingers stretched out like an i and pressing the third" — i.e. the ring-finger — "with the thumb" (compositus in dicendi modum, erectis in iotam duobus digitis, tertium pollicem comprimens, ita verbis exorsus est).

After getting the original significance of the gesture clarified, let us turn back to one of the early Christian monuments, for example, the relief in the Museo delle Terme representing the Sermon on the Mount² (fig. 123). Christ is sitting on the mountain surrounded by his disciples looking ecstatically up at their master. He is dressed in the philosophical pallium, holding — like the orating senators (fig. 124) — a scroll in his raised left hand, the right

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1 Fulgentius, Virgiliana continentia 143.

2 Other examples of the gesture in early Christian art, where its significance as a gesture of speech is immediately apparent: J. Wilpert, Mosaiken und Malereien III, 61 sq., 97, 177, 193; Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms 124, 1, 170, 242, 1; J. Kollwitz, Die Lipsanothek von Brescia pl. 5 and p. 29 sq.; F. Gerke, Christus in der spätantiken Plastik 28, 55, 87, 98; R. Delbrück i. c. 68; L. Bréhier i. c. pl. 23. When Christ makes exactly the same gesture in wonder scenes (e.g. R. Delbrück i. c. 70), its significance is naturally here too speech, not blessing. The correct understanding of the gesture — which, however, has not been generally accepted (s. e.g. Chr. Blinkenberg i. c. p. 126 sq., R. Wunsch, Arch. f. Religionswiss. 7, 1904 p. 105) — is to be found e. g. in J. Wilpert, Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms p. 116, 487 sq. and passim; Mosaiken und Malereien I p. 93, 121 sqq.; E. Fehrenbach i. c. II, 1, col. 746 sqq.; A. de Waal in F. X. Kraus Realencyclopädie der christl. Altertümer, 1 p. 601 sqq., s. v. Gestus.
stretched up in the gesture of speech. Accordingly it is not a mighty sign magnetizing the enraptured disciples, it is the Christian teaching filling them. Thus — and only thus — does the picture fit in with the Gospel text it illustrates, this text not mentioning blessing, but only the sermon. Christ sits down on the mountain, we are told, and the disciples come to him, "and" we read, "he opened his mouth, and taught them saying . ." (καὶ Ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἔδιδασκεν αὐτοῦς λέγων). As the text, so also the relief scene is concentrated in every way on the word, the teaching. Thus Christ carries the pallium — the dress of the philosopher, the teacher of truth. He holds the Gospel scroll — the document of the Christian doctrine. He raises his hand in the gesture of speech — in the word's own gesture. Above all, the Gospel scroll and the gesture of speech are logically bound up with one another. The Gospel scroll signifies the Christian doctrine, the gesture of speech signifies this doctrine expressed in living words. Thus scroll and gesture are ideologically correlated, and, as seen, almost inseparably bound up with the representation of the teaching Christ. Even in an age when the original significance of the gesture had been forgotten, this correlation is usually maintained — the fixed iconographic tradition was not to be broken.²

A position of the fingers similar to the variant fig. 120 of the benedictio latina, is to be found in the benediction of the Orthodox Church — the benedictio graeca — except that here also the little finger is raised. As an example we reproduce the picture of Christ in an apsis mosaic from the 9th century of the Church of St. Cecilia, Rome (fig. 127): with the right hand in the "benedictio graeca", scroll in the left. The origin of this variation, too, must be the same.³ Both in Christian and pre-Christian monuments, speaking figures are often characterized by this position of the fingers. As an example we may adduce illustrations in the Codex Rossanensis with Old Testamental kings and prophets expounding their words (fig. 128): the right hand is raised in gesture of speech — sometimes in the position of the benedictio latina, sometimes in that of benedictio graeca, but always with

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¹ Matt. 5, 1 sqq. Cf. Luc. 6, 20 sqq.
² As an example we can mention an ivory screen from the 12th century in Florence, L. Brébier, La sculpture et les arts mineurs byzantins pl. 37. Notice that only if the saints hold the holy scripture, the right hand is stretched out in the benedictio latina.
³ E. Fehrenbach l.c. col. 752 sqq. J. Wilpert, Mosaiken und Malereien I 121 sqq.
Fig. 127. Christ between the apostle princes and saints. Apse mosaic in Santa Cecilia, Rome.

Fig. 128. Detail from the Codex Rossanensis.
the same significance of speech. According to Quintilian, the position of
the fingers varies corresponding to the subject and intention of the speech.\(^1\)
The normal gesture approximates, however, very closely to our *benedictio
graeca*: the most common of all oratorical gestures, says Quintilian, consists
of putting the middle finger against the thumb and stretching out the three
other fingers (*gestus ille maxime communis quo medius digitus in pollicem
contrahitur explicitis tribus*).

It is natural in this connection to mention that originally both the “Greek”
and the “Latin” benediction were practised freely in both rituals. Therefore,
as far as the early middle ages are concerned, the “Greek” or “Latin”
variant of the gesture is no proof of confessional or ecclesiastical influence.
Thus it is, for instance, characteristic that Christ in the Catholic church of
St. Cecilia, Rome (fig. 127), raises his hand in the “*benedictio graeca*”. 
Innocent III (1179—1180) who *ex professo* dealt with the ecclesiastical benediction,
still only prescribed that three fingers should be raised, without
mentioning which, thus making no essential difference between the Roman
and Greek blessing.\(^2\) This freedom in the earlier middle ages is a natural
consequence of the common origin of both variants in the oratorical gesture
of antiquity permitting or rather demanding variation, cf. the prophesying
kings and prophets in the Codex Rossanensis (fig. 128).

All variants of the Christian gesture of benediction thus have the same
root: the speech gesture of antiquity. And this original significance has been
vividly felt well into the middle ages (p. 182). Hence the “benedictory” Christ
in old art assumes an entirely new significance. Not a mystically blessing Christ
stands before us, but a speaking and teaching one — to be compared with
Hermes Logios in classical art. When the attendant saints, such as Peter
and Paul in the mosaics in S. Cecilia (fig. 127) and in S. Lorenzo (fig. 122),
raise their hands in acclamation, this is an expression accurately adjusted
to such a central figure. For obviously only a speaking, not a benedictory
Christ, could be the object of such applause. And here again a fixed icono-
graphic tradition is created. Even after the gesture’s original significance had
been forgotten and a benedictory Christ made this sign, he was surrounded
by acclaiming saints.

\(^1\) *Institutio oratoria* 11, 3, 92 sqq.

fantastic interpretations of the *benedictio graeca* in later ages adduced by E. Fehrenbach
Such a Christus Logios becomes expressive to us, if seen against the background of what might be called the rhetorical "style of life" of antiquity. One must bear in mind the central position held by rhetoric in private and official life from school-days and right through the whole life of the citizen, if we are to realise the power of expression in this *gestus oratorius*. Not least we must remember what an important element these *orationes* represented in the Church. To antiquity in a quite special way the eloquent wording gives to the thought life and power. Knowledge and its effective expression are one — *iidem sapientes et eloquentes*. But this eloquence depends upon two factors: word and speech gesture. "Delivery", says Quintilian, "depends upon two things: voice and gesture" (l.c. 11, 3, 14). "Without the hands all delivery would be deficient and weak; the hands almost equal in expression the power of language itself (*paene ipsam verborum copiam consequuntur*). Other parts of the body assist the speaker, but these, I may almost say, speak themselves (*ipsae loquuntur*). Amidst the great diversity of tongues pervading all nations and peoples, the language of the hands appears to be a language common to all men" (*communis sermo* l.c. 11, 3, 84 sqq.). The hands in the gesture of speech is thus the word made visible. In the dumb speech of pictorial art they stand for the word, in fact for the thought itself. *Ipsae loquuntur*.

As anyone knowing the classical South will admit, this *chironomia* of antiquity is actually still at work among the Mediterranean peoples. Above all in the Latin world the Quintilian gestures survive in the characteristic gesticulation which accompanies a logically presented argument, gives point to a particular opinion, or analyses the factors in a case — not only at the

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1 Quint. l.c. 1 prooem. 13; cf. 18.
2 What power of expression was attributed to the gesture is made abundantly clear in Quintilian’s recapitulation of how it is modulated according to subject and intention. Here is a short extract from the lengthy exposition: "But with regard to the hand, that gesture is most common, in which the middle finger is drawn in towards the thumb, the other three fingers being open; it is suitable for *exordia*, moderately exerted, and with a gentle movement of the hand in either direction, while the head and shoulders bend almost imperceptibly towards that quarter to which the hand is stretched. In statements of facts it adds confirmation, but must then be somewhat more decided; in invective and refutation it must be spirited and impressive... The two middle fingers are also sometimes brought under the thumb, and this gesture is still more earnest than the former, and is accordingly unsuitable for *exordium* or narrative. But when three fingers are compressed under the thumb, the finger, which Cicero says that Crassus used with such excellent effect, is then fully extended..." (l.c. 11, 3, 92 sqq.).
bar or on the pulpit, but also in popular life. Fresh impressions of this bring home to us the significance of our type, and help us to recognize the oratorical expression of this Christ. The reasoning and logically arguing guide in the big and small things of life meets us here on a higher plane: before us stands the inspired teacher, the expounder of eternal truths. To understand our Christ type in the proper sense of the age, this idea must be constantly borne in mind. We may — with the necessary reservation — compare a 17th century portrait of a professor of theology from Basle (fig. 129). Note that here too the oratorical gesture is naturally linked up with the book — as was the case by Christ and saints of paleochristian times (fig. 130).

As late as the 6th century this significance was clearly understood. Paulus Silentiarius, in an important passage quoted by Wilpert, describes a similar Christ: with the holy scripture in his left hand Christ raises the fingers of his right “as though expounding the eternal word”.

\[ \text{δεικτής, ἀτε μυθον ἀειζώντα πυρκασκον, λαυν θημον ὣμον, ζαθεών ἑπιστορα μυθων.} \]

Here the concord of the book as the written, and the gesture of the right hand as the spoken word, is still felt. Naturally the same applies to saints represented with their right hand raised in the “benedictio” and with the Gospel in their left — they are in fact preachers, confessors, expounders of

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the Word. The bishops are depicted in the same way, corresponding to their ecclesiastical function. As an example we reproduce a fresco from the beginning of the 5th century, showing one of the teachers of the Church, perhaps Augustine¹ (fig. 130).

However, in the 9th century the change of interpretation is already there. In Johannes Diaconus’ description of pictures of Gregory the Great and his mother,² Gregory’s mother holds the Book of Psalms open in her left hand, while with two fingers of her right she makes the sign of the cross (duobus dexterae digitis signaculo crucis se munire velle praetendens, in sinistra vero patens psalterium retinens); Gregory holds the Gospel in his left hand, and raises his right in the sign of the cross (Evangelium in sinistra, modus crucis in dextra). These pictures were made before 604, and thus retained the original significance of the gesture. As rightly pointed out by Wilpert, to their age these pictures represented the teaching bishop, and the psalmreciting mother of a pope, while in the 9th century, the new reading already begins, Johannes Diaconus seeing the Christian sign of blessing in the gesture.³ To determine more accurately the time when this change of interpretation from confessor Christ to benedictory Christ took place, is a task approachable only on a broad iconographic and liturgico-historical basis. But in fixing this change-over one may well put a finger on a vital point in the transition from antiquity to the middle ages.

¹ J. Wilpert l. c. IV 140. G. Morgenstierne stresses the striking similarity between gestures such as that represented in fig. 129 and the Buddhistic “arguing gesture” (vitarka-mudrā) and refers to descriptions of the Buddhistic mudrā’s, e. g. A. Foucher, Étude sur l’iconographie bouddhique de l’Inde p. 68 sq. (Bibl. de l’École des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses 13, 1900).
² Johannes Diaconus, S. Gregorii Magni vita 4, 84 (Migne P. L. 75, 230 sq.). J. Wilpert l. c. 1 p. 122.
³ J. Wilpert l. c. 1, p. 120, cf. 1, p. 123.
b. The speaking hand in the Christian and the Sabazios cult.

In contrast to this explanation of the gesture as the sign of the word stands another: that the gesture is a magic benediction derived from pagan cults. Since Blinkenberg's "Archaeologische Studien" in 1904, this interpretation is often encountered, as, for instance, in Roscher's Mythologisches Lexikon (s. v. Sabazios col. 251 sq.), where Eisele writes: the gesture "ist ein spezifisches Kennzeichen des Sabazioskultes, das von hier vielleicht unmittelbar als die sogenannte benedictio latina in die liturgische Gewohnheit der christlichen Kirche überging." It is true that the gesture characterizes Sabazios, both the statuettes of the god and the amulets in the form of his hand (fig. 131). But it is no fact that the gesture is "ein spezifisches Kennzeichen" of the Sabazios cult. On the contrary, the gesture is, as seen, common to the whole Ancient World, and by no means confined to Sabazios.

Not only the followers of Sabazios made images of the hand of their God. To the Ancient World, as noted, the hand of God incarnated his saving power, and is therefore reproduced on the monuments, on altars, sepulchral and votive reliefs etc., all over the Orient and Mediterranean.¹ We all know what an important part God's hand plays in Christian art (e.g. fig. 132). The symbol is, however, as much in use in the non-Christian world. As an example the hand of God in the Roman military signa may be mentioned.² Both to the Christian and to the non-Christian the hand of God is a strong apotropaion. It is characteristic that ancient medical art called healing drugs "hands of God". Weinreich quotes examples from ancient to modern times of such Mediterranean names for drugs as ἔσσων κεῖσις, divinae manus.³ A healing herb still used during confinement in

² F. Cumont, Mem. Acc. Pont. I, 1, 1923, p. 72. The Roman triumphal monuments give a multitude of examples, e.g. L'Orange—von Gerkan, Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinbogens, Pl. 25, 3; 32 sqq.; 47 d.
certain parts of Greece is called χέρι τῆς Πάνωγις, "La mano fini adunque per divenire un semplice cenno mágico, un talismano che difendeva contro gli spiriti malefici e stormava la mala sorte."¹

The magic force of the Sabazios hands is strengthened by apotropeic symbols — the snake, lizard, etc. — covering the palm and fingers² (fig. 131). The fingers are grouped in the classical gesture of speech corresponding to the benedictio latina. Also statuettes of Sabazios often represent the god in this gesture, or variations of it,³ sometimes with a huge hand, ingens manus (p. 140); also the left hand may be raised in a variant of the speech gesture. The significance of the gesture is here obviously the same as in all the other monuments, Christian and pagan, where it is represented: it signifies the spoken word. It accompanies, we may imagine, the recitation of some holy formula, some magic incantation, "une incantation rituelle ou, pour mieux dire, magique", to use the words of Cumont.⁴ In the perception of antiquity the hand in the gesture of speech spontaneously is identical with speech itself. The hands themselves speak — ipsae loquentur⁵ (p. 181). The Sabazios hand in the

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¹ F. Cumont, l. c. p. 103.
³ E. g. Blinkenberg l. c., p. 75, fig. 34; p. 100, fig. 41.
⁴ F. Cumont, Le symbolisme funéraire des Romains p. 442, note 3.
⁵ Quint., l. c., 11, 3, 84 sqq.
Fig. 132.
gesture of speech is the holy formula itself. The amulette is the god’s own magically strong word. Maybe this word is a benediction, and the Sabazios hand, accordingly, signifies these benedictory words. But in itself the gesture is not a benediction, but plainly an expression of the spoken word.

We repeat: the gesture in itself is not benedictory, nor apotropeic, but a mere expression of speech. When men or heroes raise their right hands in this gesture against wild beasts, it is not the gesture itself, but the spoken word, the ritual or magic formula expressed in it, which gives them the upper hand. In this sense I also interpret the statue on the Forum of Madaura, of which Augustine speaks in one of his letters (cf. fig. 132).

When the hand of God in Christian art is represented apart and in the gesture of speech (e.g. fig. 132), its form, as pointed out by Blinkenberg, is in the main features the same as that of the Sabazios amulette hands. In both cults the hand signifies the word: but the Christian hand the Christian word, the Sabazios hand the Sabazios word. The similarity between this Christian and this Sabazios expression of faith does not spring, as has been assumed, from ritual affinities and influences between the two religions, but from a peculiar form of iconographic expression common to the whole Ancient World. The conception of God’s power being incarnated in his right hand was familiar to the whole of this world; and so was the speech gesture. Only in these general features is God’s hand the same in the Christian and the Sabazios cultual conception. There is no basis at all for the assumption, in itself most improbable, of a special interrelation between the rituals of the Sabazios and the Christian cult. Behind the speaking Christian hand is the teaching Christ, in the philosopher’s pallium and with the Gospel in the left hand; behind the speaking Sabazios’ hand the reciting Sabazios, in Phrygian vestments and surrounded by apotropeic attributes. The Sabazios hand has the force of a magic saving formula, the Christian that of the revelation of the Word, the Logos.

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2 The passus has been dealt with by H. Usener, Rhein. Mus. 28, 1873, p. 408 sqq.; R. Wünsch, Arch f. Rel. Wiss. 7, 1905, p. 195. In isto foro recordaret esse in duobus simulacris unum Martem nudum, alterum armatum, quorum daemonium infestissimum civibus porrectis tribus digitis contra colocata statua humana comprimeret.
3 Blinkenberg l. c. p. 124 sqq.
Eisele, Roscher’s Mytholog. Lex. (s. v. Sabazios), 4, 251 sq.
c. Christ the Philosopher.

Thus the hand in speech gesture signifies the spoken word. But only the speaker himself can give an idea of *which* word is spoken. We therefore must stress that in paleochristian iconography it is, primarily, Christ as a philosopher — Christ in philosophical attributes — who is raising his hand in the gesture of speech. It is the Christian philosophy, ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς φιλοσοφία, expressed in this figure. Let us regard it against the background of religious views of that time.

There is something typically antique in the Socratic doctrine that all evil doings are due to ignorance. In the conception of antiquity our nature can be completed and sanctified not only morally, but also in the Muses, by science and art. The sanctification through true knowledge — *la divinisation de l’âme par l’étude des sciences* — achieves its complete expression in Plato, who builds this thought into his psychology and metaphysics. Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists make it a fundamental principle in philosophy and religion of late antiquity. Instruction in philosophy is compared to an initiation into the mysteries. True knowledge, σοφία, γνώσις, raises Man up above earthly existence, and brings mortals into contact with the heavenly powers. The Muses as gods of art and science give their worshippers part of their own immortality. It is significant that late antiquity regards the Muses in a definite relation to the cosmic spheres — they initiate men during life on earth to immortality in their heavens.

It is against this background we must consider the philosopher and Muses scenes so common in the sepulchral art of late antiquity. They are an expression of the salvation of the soul through science and art. As an example we reproduce a sarcophagus from about the middle of the 3rd century in the Museo Torlonia in Rome (fig. 133). In the middle of the relief the main group is represented: the departed, seated, in tunica and philosopher’s pallium, reciting from the unrolled scroll; facing him a woman, listening reverently, a scroll in her left hand. In the foreground on both sides of the central group stand or sit six philosophers, eagerly listening, all in the pallium, with a

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2 F. Cumont *l. c.* p. 253 sqq.
philosopher's long hair and beard and carrying scrolls in their left hands; capsae and bundles of scrolls at their feet again emphasize their learning. The whole philosophers' collegium, including the departed in the middle, comprises seven persons: the deceased thus appears in a sort of apotheosis as one of the Seven Sages. Behind the philosophers stand the Muses, but only eight in number. The deceased lady in the central group completes their number. She is thus immortalized as the ninth of the Nine Muses, just as her consort became the seventh of the Seven Sages.
About that time we meet exactly the same type of philosopher on the oldest preserved Christian sarcophagi.\(^1\) On a loculus plate from the late 3rd century in the Museo dei Conservatori, Rome,\(^2\) here chosen as an example (fig. 134), the deceased Christian is sitting in the right-hand main field of the panel, in the traditional garb of the philosopher, reading aloud from the open scroll. Opposite him stands once more a woman intently listening. She has raised her right hand in the gesture of speech, her participation being expressed in a sort of disputatio. Again this central group is surrounded by a listening audience. The participation at times takes the form of applause, for the woman behind the seated philosopher is raising her right hand in acclamatio.\(^3\) The idea of philosophy sanctifying man, and saving the soul from death, has here become an expression of the Christians' own belief in salvation. But at the same time it is made clear that it is the Christian philosophy, ἡ νοσοῦσας φιλοσοφία, that has this salutary power. In stead of the Muses surrounding the pagan philosophers with their metaphysics of salvation and immortality, the raising of Lazarus as a symbol of the resurrection in Christ is placed in juxtaposition to our Christian philosopher.

It is originally the deceased inside the sarcophagus who is depicted as a Christian philosopher. But towards the end of the 3rd century Christ himself appears as a philosopher.\(^4\) Thus we see him, for example, in the above treated sarcophagus fragment in the Museo delle Terme (fig. 123): in the philosopher's pallium, with the scroll in his left hand and his right raised in the compelling gestus oratorius, the specific sign of the spoken word. With these three essential features — pallium, scroll, and speech gesture — an epoch-making type of Christ is created, repeated endlessly in later art. And even though the ideas expressed in this type have changed in the course of time — primarily with the new interpretation of the pallium and speech gesture — the outer form, thanks to an unbroken iconographic tradition, was maintained, so that we still may call to mind the pallium-clad Christ when we imagine Christ's external appearance.

When Christ appears as teacher and philosopher, the disciples and saints around him also become philosophers. They are dressed in the pallium, bear

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\(^1\) F. Gerke l.c. 246 sqq., 273 sqq.; 293, and passim; pl. 51—61; Christus in der spätantiken Plastik 7 sqq. J. Wilpert l.c. pl. 39, 2; 40, 3. J. Kollwitz, Röm. Quartalschr. 44, p. 49 sqq.

\(^2\) F. Gerke l.c. p. 246 sqq. and pl. 32, 2.

\(^3\) We know that such acclamations, continuing a classical tradition, saluted the Christian orations, H. Hagendahl, in Jönköpingsstudier (Svenska Humanistiska Förbundet 59) p. 91 sq.

\(^4\) F. Gerke l.c. p. 293.
scrolls in their left hands, and express their ardent participation in the teaching of Christ partly by the gesture of speech, *disputatio*, partly by applause, *acclamatio*. The real classical atmosphere permeating this Christian philosophers’ collegium, is accentuated in the remarkable type of picture where Christ himself appears as the seventh, instead of the thirteenth, member of the assembly.¹ In a fresco from the 4th century in Maius’ catacomb² (fig. 135), Christ and the six sages surrounding him are all characterized in the same way, by pallium, scroll and, with one exception, the right hand raised in the gesture of speech, of *disputatio*. As text to the scene one would put the words of Augustinus: *qui enim disputat, verum discernit a falso.*³ It is a Christian conversation, a *divina disputatio*, a *sacra conversazione*, but after the pattern of the Seven Sages. The idea of the philosophers’ collegium had finally crystallised in the figure 7, and this philosophical point is so important to the Christians, that the actual number of the disciples had to give way.⁴

¹ E. g. J. Wilpert, Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms pl. 170; 96. F. Saxl. l. c. p. 61 sqq. J. Kollwitz, Die Lipsanothek von Brescia pl. 2 and p. 19 sq.
² J. Wilpert l. c. pl. 170.
³ August., Contra Cresconium I, 1, 15, 19.
This philosophical Christ in art is a reflection of the early Christian theology, characterized by von Harnack as hellenized Christianity. Behind our Christian philosopher and behind our philosophical Christ stands the platonized Christianity met with in Church Fathers such as Justinus, Clemens, Origines and Augustine. Philosophy, according to Clemens, educates men to Christ. In Christ, according to him, we recognize the perfect law and the true philosophy. Greek philosophy was an eternal longing for truth. Christ was able to state: I am the truth. ¹ From such thoughts Origenes creates the theology we call Christian platonism.

Thus the Christ as conceived in St. John’s Gospel and developed by hellenized Christianity is brought to life in our picture: Christ as the living word. In the pallium, the scroll and the speaking right hand, can be sensed the very pulse-beat of this figure: the holy wisdom, Ἀγία Σοφία. The raised right hand — let us recall for the last time — is not a mystical sign of blessing, but a representation of the inspired and inspiring word.

d. Christus Logos.

Our philosopher-Christ in early Christian art is, as stated, a creation or emanation of the theology defined hellenized Christianity, Christian platonism. The image is repeated to this very day. But the expression has changed, as in a living face. We are only able to recapture a few fleeting glimpses of this shifting play of features.

In the course of time an important change in the divina disputatio takes place. The acclamation motif cropping up already on early Christian philosopher sarcophagi,² gradually gains ground, always at the expense of the disputation motif. Acclamation almost becomes obligatory in the presence of the speaking Christ. On 5th century sarcophagi (figs. 136, 137) the apostle-princes are standing in a strikingly marked and stereotyped acclaiming gesture on either side of the speaking Christ. From now on this accompaniment of homage is constantly swelling round the teaching Christ, now loudly, now more subdued.³ It is as though viewing St. Saturnus’ vision of paradise — the eternal flocks around Christ crying in unison without ceasing: holy, holy, holy! — the same cry of praise which sounds round God’s throne in the Revelation.⁴

¹ Strom. 1, 32, 4. ² E. g. F. Gerke L. c. pl. 32, 1 and 2; 33; 51, 2; 52, 1; 61, 1. ³ E. g. J. Wilpert, Mosaiken und Malereien pl. 40, 42–44, 102, 214, 252. ⁴ Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis 12, ed. Franchi 130.
Fig. 136. Christian sarcophagus from the 5th century A.D. Ravenna.

Fig. 137. Detail from a Christian sarcophagus from the 5th century, Ravenna.
Fig. 138. Terra-cotta plaque from the 5th century (or later). Dumbarton Oaks, Washington.

Is not this transition from a disputation to an acclamation scene strikingly parallel to the change of signification of the central figure itself: from teaching to benedictory Christ? Disputatio gives way to acclamatio: in ecclesiastical history this corresponds to the ever stricter authoritative and dogmatic limitation of the free theological science of early Christianity. Only Christ himself, or his substitute, appears in the gesture of speech, the saints around him do not discuss, but acclaim: the speech gesture accordingly loses more
and more of its original philosophical-discursive significance and becomes increasingly the sign of authority of the Christian dogma. And when the gesture in this way has become the Church's own supreme sign — the sign of the dogma, of the *verbum suum* —, then the way lies open to the new sacramental significance the gesture acquired during the middle ages as the gesture of ecclesiastical benediction.

Christ as the seventh on a terracotta plaque from the 5th century (or later) in Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 138)¹ may be compared with the same Christ in the Maius Catacomb from the 4th century (fig. 135). While in the Maius catacomb Christ is part of a kind of *collegium philosophicum*, on the terracotta plaque he sits enthroned on a *suggestum*, high above the crowd accumulated before him, strikingly similar to the emperor on the Rostra.² And while in the Maius Catacomb Christ is participating in a *divina disputatio* with his apostles who — as he himself — are raising their hand in speech gesture, on the terracotta plaque only Christ is speaking, the disciples reverently listening and the crowd in the foreground acclaiming. Furthermore, on the terra-cotta plaque the figure of Christ towers mightily up above the apostles, his whole apparition concentrated in and animated by the gesture of the raised right hand: not longer a philosophical-discursive gesture, but the gesture of the divine authority of the Word, the Logos (cf. fig. 139).

2. L’Orange—von Gerkan, Der späantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens pl. 5 a.
Fig. 140. The "hieroglyph" of Logos cosmocrator in the central point of the cross. Relief from the episcopal cathedra of the Cathedral of Torcello.
The new expression of this authoritative gesture corresponds to the conception of Christ as cosmocrator. From late Constantinian time Christ is enthroned like the emperor on his heavenly throne, he is surrounded by the symbols of the world dominion (p. 114), the scroll in his left hand becomes the law of omnipotence, by the speech gesture of his right it is proclaimed to Man and the Universe. The philosopher disappears in the majesty of the world-ruling Logos. The apostles surrounding Christ may give up both scroll and speech gesture and instead stretch out the golden wreath to the Almighty — the aurum coronarium brought as a gift to the imperial world ruler. The philosophical teacher scene is submerged in an homage scene: the worship of Christus Logos.

As a hieroglyphical expression of this Logos cosmocrator, the authoritatively speaking hand — the hand of the dogma, of the verbum suum, of the Logos — is represented between Sun and Moon, the traditional symbols of the world dominion (p. 36). Thus for instance, on a relief from the early middle ages in the episcopal cathedra of the cathedral at Torcello, the Logos hand between Sun and Moon is represented in the very central intersecting point of the cross (fig. 140; compare fig. 132). The Christian Logos is now the mens mundi and fatorum arbiter.

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1. J. Kollwitz l. c. note 290 a.
2. "La main de justice", which, as O. Wanscher informs me, probably has been in use at the French coronation ceremony from the time of Charlemagne to that of Napoleon, seems to have had the form of the Logos hand. O. Wanscher refers to illuminations in "Cotton MS. Tiberius B. VIII f. 35—85" in the Brit. Mus., ed. E. S. Dewick, The Coronation Book of Charles V of France; Th. Godefroy, Le ceremonial français; B. de Montfaucon, Les monuments de la monarchie française.
INDEX

A.
Abraham 69.
Abukir 90.
Abyssinia 128.
acclamatia 190, 191, 192, 194.
Achaemenian monuments etc. passim.
Achilleus 90, 164.
Ackerman, Ph. 19, 25, 26, 45, 124.
Acta Apostolorum 35, 125.
— apocrypha 70.
— Sanctorum 116.
Adel de Blois 19.
Ado, St. 20.
adventus scenes 143.
Aelius 148.
Aemilius, M. 98.
Aesculapius 139, 162.
Africa 157.
Aggersborg 14, 15, 16.
'Agia Sophia 192.
Ahuramazda 48, 84, 92, 93, 105, 134, 158.
Aigion 163.
Ainalov, D. 132.
Aischylos 90, 164.
Albiruni 87, 88, 141, 158.
Albizati, C. 152.
Alexander 21, 28, 30, 34, 59, 64, 69, 70, 76, 77, 90, 97, 118—122, 134, 164.
Alexandria, — Ian 154, 155, 156.
Alexei Mikhailovitch (czar) 129.
al-Madina al Mudaawara 12.
Amalechites 145, 161, 170.
Amelung, W. 67, 96.
Amida 139.
Ammianus Marcellinus 36.
Ammon 160.
Amundsen, L. 5.
Amyklai 63.
Anastos, M. V. 5.
Andrae, W. 51, 81, 135.
Andree, K. 184.
Andrew-cross 127.
Angelo, Castel S. 121.
Angelus totius orbis 113.
— Dei 113.
Διψάτε 152.
Angh 159.
Anna Comnena 118.
anointment of David 103, 104.
Antelami 152.
Anti-Christ 122, 129.
Antigonia 9.
Antigonus 9.
Antiopus 93.
Antoninius 154.
Anu 157.
Aphek 162.
Apocalypse 127, 192.
Apollo 63, 68, 162, 163, 164.
— Helios 29, 31, 68.
Apostle Legends 122.
apotheosis passim.
apostrapai 184.
Apsarases 124.
Δίψατε 154.
Apuleius 175.
Arabs, Arabian 14, 16, 20, 62, 140.
Aratos 163.
arbiter fatorum 30, 197.
Arbman, E. H. 72.
Arcadius column 145, 152.
Ardashir 23, 141, 158.
Ares 155.
Aristeides 162.
Armenia 23.
Arndt, P. 96.
Arrian 164.
Artemis Eileithyia 162, 163.
ascension passim.
Ashur 51.
Asia, Asiatic 156, 157.
— Central 12, 158.
— Minor 51, 145, 155.
Δίψατε 90.
Assyria, ian passim.
Astarte Hathor 157.
Athenaeus 28, 44, 134.
Athena 9, 162, 163.
Athens 114.
Atlantes 62, 98.
Aton 158, 159.
atrium 30, 31.
Augustine 122, 183, 187, 191, 192.
Augustus 31.
aula 31.
Aurelian 141, 143, 152.
Aurelius, Marcus 112.
auriga 64, 65.
aureum coronarium 197.
Aventine 52, 55.
Azarmidukht 39.

B.
Babelon, E. 75, 154, 156, 158.
Babylon, Babylonia, —Ian passim.
Baghdad 12, 13.
Bahrami, M. 37.
Bakmoteff Coll. (New York) 101.
Balawat gates 12.
Baltimore 78, 163.
Bandinelli, see Bianchi Bandinelli.
Barberini Coll. 195.
Barr, K. 5, 78, 158.
Basilica Aemilia 98.
Basiliius 102.
Basle 182.
Baumstark, A. 128, 132.
Index

Bawit 127, 128, 129.
Beaudouin, E. E. 12, 14.
Belit 51, 80.
Belloni 98.
benedictio Graeca 171, 178, 180.
— Latina 171, 172, 176, 178, 180, 184, 185.
Bergen 117, 118.
Berlin 24, 25, 27, 29, 47, 55, 73, 98, 163, 172, 176.
Bernhart, M. 152.
Bertaux, E. 119.
Bertelé, T. 113.
Bianchi Bandinelli, R. 101.
Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) 74, 75, 78, 79.
bilingualism, iconographical 106.
Billerbeck, A. 12.
birds 69, 71, 72, 118, 120.
Bissing, F. W. von 158.
Blinkenberg, Chr. 162, 163, 164, 177, 184, 185, 187.
Boëthius, A. 5, 28.
Boston 94.
Botta, P. E. 48, 80.
Bréhier, L. 73, 119, 123, 127, 178.
Brendel, O. 90, 97, 113.
British Museum 60, 75, 76, 135, 136, 197.
Brother of the Sun and Moon see frater Solis et Lunae.
Brussels 64, 65.
Brutus 28, 44.
Bryaxis 154.
Budapest 147.
Buddha 158, 183.
Buslaev, F. J. 129.
Byblos 157.
Byzantium, -ine passim.

C.

Caesar 31, 34, 165.
Calcutta 124.
Caligula 97, 123.
Callisthenes, see Pseudo-callisthenes.
Campo Santo (Pisa) 90.
Candice 59, 60.
Cappadocia 128.
Cappella Palatina (Palermo) 71.

Caracalla 97, 98, 144, 145, 154.
Carausius 141.
Carcopino, J. 63.
Carthago 157, 159.
Caryatides 62.
Cassius, Dio 23, 28, 30, 35.
Catacombe de Callisto 165, 166.
Cecilia, S. (Rome) 178, 179, 180, 195.
Cedrenus, G. 106.
cenatio 29, 31.
Cerberus 154, 155.
Chaldeans 22.
chariot passim.
Charlemagne 197.
χέρι πανάγιας 162.
χείρες θεόν 184.
Cherethim 160.
Cherubs, Cherubim 49—51, 54, 72, 81, 102, 124, 125, 127—9, 131—3.
χέρτα τῆς παναγίας 185.
chironomia 171, 175, 181.
Chosroes, see Khusrau.
Christ passim.
Christensen, A. 19, 37, 110.
Χριστομακαρίς 109, 116.
Christus Logios 181.
Chronicles 50, 161.
Chrysothriclinium 135.
Church Fathers 118, 127, 183, 192.
ciborum 134—8.
Cicero 29, 31, 181.
Cicinnati 96.
cidari 81.
Cibian 144.
circus 64, 85, 112, 123.
Claudianus 96.
Claudius, Appius 98.
Claudius Gothicus 141, 145.
Clédat, J. 127.
Clemen, C. 66, 110.
Clemens 192.
clipeus passim.
Codex Rossanensis 178—80.
— Vaticanus Graecus 103, 104, 187.
— — Latinus 112, 175.
Coetus 132.
Cohen, H. 141, 143, 152, 153.
collegium philosophicum 189, 191, 195.

Collezione Paleografica
Cologne, see Köln.
Commodus 152, 156.
Companion of the Stars, see particeps siderum.
consistorium 135.
Constans 143, 145.
Constantine, see Constantinus.
Constantine Senadino Collection (Alexandria) 156.
Constantinople passim.
Constantinopolis (goddess) 156.
Constantius 30, 33, 35, 36, 110, 139—41, 143—6, 148—53.
— II 143.
— Porphyrogenitus 36, 135.
Constantius I Chlorus 141, 144.
— II 143—5.
Consularia Constantinopolitana 108.
conversazione, sacra 191.
Cooney, J. D. 73.
Copenhagen 43.
Coptic prayer 128, 132.
Corippus 88, 193, 109, 135.
cornucopiae 156.
coronation, Byzantine 103.
— of Salomo 106.
Cosma e Damiano, SS. (Rome) 170.
cosmoocrator passim.
Coste, P. 10, 11.
Cotton MS. 197.
Crane, M. 19.
Crassianus 165.
Crassus 181.
Creswell, K. A. C. 10, 12, 14.
Cretae 154.
Croce, S. (Florence) 118.
crocodile 52.
Crone, diu 16.
Crusaders 18.
Ctesiphon 12, 23, 47.
Cumont, F. 10, 23, 31, 52, 62, 64, 67—70, 75, 96, 105, 106, 112, 113, 150, 152, 157
— 9, 168, 184, 185, 187, 188.
Cupids 42, 64, 75, 121.
Curtius, L. 163.
Curtius Rufus 134.
Cyurus 44.

**D.**
Dalton, O. M. 119, 132.
Dāmghān 47.
Dante 68.
Daniel 48.
Darabjird 10—12.
Daruius 44, 82, 85, 134.
Darmstadt 122, 123.
David 42, 103, 104, 161.
Deioces 10.
Delbrück, R. 62, 70, 97, 102, 136, 141, 152, 156, 172, 175, 177.
Delitzch, F. 12.
Demetrius Poliorketes 28, 44.
Δημογορίς 36.
demons 54, 78, 98.
desus militaris 150.
Deuteronomy 159.
De Wald, E. 103, 109.
Dewick, E. S. 197.
Dewing, H. B. 145.
Δεξιοκόηθι 164, 165.
Διάβολος, diabolus 121, 187.
Diadochi 9.
Diehl, Ch. 125, 127—9, 132, 136.
Dieulafoy, M. 44, 73, 75.
Dilthey, K. 184.
Dio Cassius, see Cassius, Dio.
Dioecetian 31, 35, 141.
Diodorus 28, 134.
Dionysos 54.
Dioscuri 52.
disputatio 190—92, 194, 195.
Dölger, F. J. 109, 140.
Doliche, Syrian 51.
dominus mundi, see παραβασίλευς.
Domitian 30, 31, 155.
Domus Aurea (built by Nero) 28—31.
Downey, G. 5, 9, 145.
dragon 51, 90.
Drexler, W. 38, 67, 68.
Drioton, E. 127.

**E.**
Durand, J. 120.
Duris from Samos 28.
Dussaud, R. 68.

**F.**
Eagle 65, 69, 70, 72, 75, 78, 79, 102, 124, 125, 132.
Ecbatana 10.
Echleton 158, 159.
Edessa 139, 141.
Edom 160.
εἰκόνας ἐν δύναμι 98.
Eileithyia, see Artemis.
Eisele 184, 187.
Eisler, R. 35, 63.
Elagabalus 141.
elephants 54, 60, 145.
elevation passim.
Elijah 67, 102, 161.
Elisha 161, 162.
Ellora 54, 56.
elloquentes 181.
Emesa 153.
Ennian 90.
enthronement 105, 106, 108.
Ephesus 113.
equilibrium 31.
Eretria 94.
Erotes 102.
Erotes Tomb (Eretria) 94.
Etna legend 69.
Euripides 67.
Eusebius 35, 139, 153.
Evangelists 127, 128, 132, 133.
Evangelium, see Gospel.
Exodus 159, 161.
exordium 181.
Ezekiel 48, 49, 125, 127, 128, 131, 160.
Exida 134.

**Fatum, fate 30, 35, 197.
God of Fate 29, 30.
Godess of fate 33, 151.**

**G.**
Gabriel (archangel) 113.
Gaddi, Taddeo 118, 129, 131.
Gagé, J. 112.
Galenos 184.
Galleria Antica e Moderna (Florence) 131.
Gallienus 141, 147, 155.
Ganymede 69, 70, 101, 102.
Ganazca (Ganjak) 19, 26, 27, 110.
gāthu 81, 87, 124.
Gaza 54, 55.
gemini soles 88, 93, 109.
genii 98.
Gerke, F. 168, 172, 177, 188, 190—92.
Gernler, L. 182.
gestus oratorius 181, 190.
Geta 141, 143.
Ghirshman, R. 10, 12.
Gnecci, F. 29, 141, 143—5, 148, 149.
gνοστι 188.
God of Fate, see fatum.
Godard, A. 10.
Index

Godefroy, Th. 197.
Golden House, see Domus Aurea.
Goldschmidt, A. 123.
Gordian III 141.
Gorodina 129.
Grabar, A. 5, 102, 103, 125, 127, 128, 136.
Graeven 123.
Grail legend 16.
Greece, Greek 14, 85, 110, 120, 128, 162, 165.
Gregory the Great 183.
Gregory of Tours 170.
Gressmann, H. 51, 52, 54, 80, 81, 134, 135, 158.
griffins 51, 67, 68, 72, 73, 75, 76, 79, 120, 121, 124.
Grimmelshausen 20.
Gruenel, V. 107.
Gsell, St. 159.
Gulistan palace (Teheran) 124.

H.
Hadrian 155.
Hagendahl, H. 190.
Hagia Sophia (Thessalonica) 133.
Hamza 37.
Hanell, K. 5.
Hann Coll. (Sewickley) 101.
Harnack, A. von 192.
Harum al Rashid 14.
Harvard University 5.
Hasdruval 97.
Hauptmann M. 125.
Head, B. V. 38, 155.
Heiman, A. 129.
Heisenberg, A. 111.
Helbig, W. 191.
Heliakon 112.
Helios 30, 67, 94, 123, 155.
Helios-Apollon, see Apollo-Helios.

hemispheres of the universe 52.
Hephaistos 90, 91.
Hera 162, 163.
Heraclides of Cuma 134.
Heraclius 19, 20, 110, 118.
Herberdey 113.
Hercules 163.
Hermes χρυσόφορος 163, 164.
— Logios 180.
Hermetics 90.
Hermitage 37, 40—42, 70, 75.
Herodotus 10, 48, 66, 134.
Herzfeld, E. 10, 12, 14, 19, 21, 33, 37, 38, 45, 64, 65, 67—70, 75, 80—82, 84, 85, 119, 123, 124.
Hesse, Johannes Witte de 18.
Hesiod 35.
Hesperus 30.
Hestia 9.
Hesychius 22.
Heuzey, L. 48, 49, 51, 80.
Hierapolis 154.
Hill, D.K. 164.
Hill, G. F. 38, 85, 141, 153, 154.
Hiob codex 187.
hippodrome, see circus.
Hiraqla 14.
Hirsch 143, 149.
Historisches museum (Basle) 182.
Hittites 51, 62, 80, 81.
Höffler, O. 15.
Hoffart (Hochfahr) 122.
Holobolos, see Manuel Holobolos.
Holy Ghost 117.
Homer 90, 162, 164.
Homonoia 156.
Honoria 143, 145.
Horatius 28.
Horn, P. 44—6, 73.
horses 44, 51, 60, 65—7, 72, 73, 75, 79, 124, 145.
Horten, M. 21.
Horus 52.
Hosios David (Thessalonica) 128.
Hummel, K. 93.
hybris 78.
Hygieia 162.
Hyperboreans 68.

I.
Ibn al Balkhi 12.
Iltatun 80—82, 104.
imago (imperial) 145.
— clicheata 93, 97, 98, 102—4, 109.
— mundi 34, 90, 91, 103, 106.
imperatore angelificato 113.
India 18, 54, 62, 73.
Indo-Aryan temple 62.
Indra 124.
Innecent III 180.
Io 163.
Ιππος τετράποδος 67.
Irenaeus 127.
Isaiah 35, 118, 158, 160.
Ishtar 51.
Istakhi 12.

J.
Jackson, A. V. W. 82.
Jacob 160.
Jagannah 59.
Jahn, O. 185.
Jahve 48, 50, 54, 72, 81, 124, 158—61, 166, 184.
Jamshid 87, 88.
Jao (Jahve) 54.
Jastrow, M. 158.
Jegorev 129.
Jeremiah 159, 160.
Jeremias, Chr. 22.
Jeroboam 161.
Jeraphanion, G. de 128.
Jerusalem 15, 20, 21, 50, 54, 111, 125.
Jews, see Israel.
Joas 161.
Johannes Diaconus 183.
Johansen, see Friis Johansen.
John, see Prester John.
John (evangelist) 125, 192.
John Chrysostom 134.
John's baptismal chapel (Naples) 169.
Jonathan 161.
Joshua 161.
Julia Domna 154.
Julia Mamaea 155.
Julian the Apostate 139.
Junius Bassus 114.
Juno Dolichenus 52.
Jupiter (god) 31, 34, 36, 52, 69, 94, 95, 97, 123, 143.
Jupiter (planet) 22.
Justinian 140, 145, 147.
Justinian II 172.
Justinus (Church Father) 192.
Justinus Minor 88.

K.
Kadesh 52.
Kalikäs 54, 62, 69, 70, 78, 120.
Kaisala 54, 56.
Kalach palace 12, 13.
Kalydon 98.
Kambyses 134.
Kampfer, F. 16, 18, 19, 36, 111.
Kantorowicz, E. 5, 89.
Kargamish 51, 53.
Kathisma 112.
Kautzsch, E. 125.
Kavades 139.
Kazarov, G. 187.
Kazeroun 38.
Kazvin 24, 37, 39, 42, 79, 134.
Kedrenos 19.
Khorezm 47.
Khusrau passim.
khwaranah 47.
χεβόλον 135, 137.
Kinch, K. F. 35.
King, E. S. 78.
King, L. W. 157.
Kings, Books of 161, 162.
King's Mirror 73.
Kitzinger, E. 5, 132.
Kleve, K. 5.
Klimova 24, 37, 41, 42, 45, 46, 48, 64, 80, 84.
Köln 73.
Körte, G. 184.
Kollwitz, J. 114, 136, 140, 145, 152, 168, 177, 190, 191, 197.
Konarak 56, 57.
Kondakov, N. P. 103.
Konow, S. 158.
Konstantine (city) 139.
κοσμοχράτορες 22.
Kraus, F. X. 195.
Krishna 59.
Kristensen, W. B. 85, 110.
Künstle, K. 132, 180.
Kunstgewerbeuseum (Berlin) 73.
Kybele 96.
κύκλος ιερός 14.
κύριος τοῦ κόσμου 168, 170.
Kyros, see Cyrus.

L.
Labarte 123.
laburum 107, 108.
Lamentations 160.
Langdon, S. 22.
Lateran 183.
Layard, A. H. 48, 80.
Lazarus 165, 166, 190.
Lehmann, K. 63, 96, 132.
ληστούργος 128, 132.
Leo (the ursurer) 106.
Leo of Naples 120.
Lesbos 162.
Lessing, J. 64, 73.
Le Strange, G. 12.
Levi, A. 152.
lex gestus 171.
lex nova 168.
Lichaeff, N. P. 107, 129.
Liciunus 149.
lion 51, 54, 65, 72, 75, 79, 124, 125.
Liutprant 110, 111.
lizard 185.
Loeschke, S. 96.
Logau, von 122.
Logos passim 171—197.
Longimanus 141, 158.
Lorenzo, San (Rome) 172, 174, 180.
Louvre 97.
Lucanus 30, 31.
Lucifer 30, 114, 118, 120—23.
Lucius, E. 170.
Luke (evangelist) 125, 166, 178.
Luna 13, 36, 41, 154.
Lund 72.
lux mundi 109.
Lydia 144.

M.
Macdonald, G. 156.
Madaura 187.
Maelduin 16.
magic machine (chariot) 54.
Magnaura 110—2, 123.
Magnus diptych 156.
Maiaestas Domini 124, 132, 168.
Maius' catacomb 191, 195.
Mαξαρέας, see Longimanus.
Malachbelos 67, 68.
Malalas 9.
Maltaya 51, 53, 80, 158.
Mamallapuram 57.
Mansur 12, 13.
Mansuriya 14.
Manuel Holobolos 88, 89, 103, 113.
manus divinae, see χειρες Theos.
Mao 38.
Marco, S. (Venice) 119, 120, 132.
Marduk 22, 36, 134.
Mars (god) 187.
Mars (planet) 22, 31.
Martialis 31, 140.
Mathew 35, 178.
Maurice, J. 33, 143—5, 149, 152, 153.
Mavrodinov, N. 71.
Maximinian 35, 141.
Maximinus Daza 141, 143, 152.
Medes, -ian 10, 81.
Meer, F. van der 127, 128.
Megale Panagia, church of (Athens) 114.
Meissner, A. L. 120, 122.
Men 156.
Menandros Protektor 43.
mens mundi 197.
Mercury 22.
Merezkovskij, Dimitri 129.
Merlin, A. 112.
Meroë 59.
Mesopotamia 18.
Metropolitan museum 47, 167, 168.
Meyer, E. 80.
Michael (archangel) 113.
Michael VII Ducas 172.
Michael Palaeologos 113.
Milani, L. A. 141.
Miner, D. E. 78.
Mis'al ibn Muhalhil 26.
Mithra 23, 32, 33, 96, 105, 150, 158.
modius 155.
modus crucis 183.
μοισχε, see fatum.
Montfaucon, B. de 197.
Moon passim.
Morgenstierne, G. 5, 183.
Index

O.

odium 116.
Oeconomía's baths (Constantinople) 10.
Oecumene 28.
διδασκαλίαν 31.
Old Testament 109, 125, 159, 166, 178.
Olympia 163.
orationes (in the Church) 181.
Orbeli, J. O. 37.
Orestes 164.
Oorgeluse 16.
Origines 192.
Osten, von der 45.
Otranto 77.
Otto II 112.
Oumm-el-Awamid 157.
Ovidius 90.
oxen 42, 44, 46, 51, 73, 92, 125.
οβρανῶτος 13.

P.

Palatine 28, 30, 31, 35.
palatium sacrum 31.
Palazzetto (Rome) 100, 101.
Palazzo dei Conservatori 150.
— dell’Università (Perugia) 138.
Palermo 71.
pallium 177, 178, 187, 188, 190, 192.
παμβασιλεῖς 114, 168.
Panthéon 165.
pantocratōr passim.
Pantocrator Domes, Byzantine 132, 133.
Parabiaq 152.
Paris 74, 75.
Parma 152.
Parthia, -ian 10, 38.
particeps siderum 36, 85.
Patricius diptychs 175.
Paul, St. 168, 180.
Paul, L. 31.
Paulus Silentarius 182.
Pausanias 163.
Pavlovskij, A. 71.
Peirce, H. 106.
Peloponnesos 162, 163.

Pennsylvania 47.
Perinth 96.
Perlesvaus 16.
Perpetua, St. 192.
Perrot, G. 80.
Persia, -ian passim.
Persepolis passim.
Persis 10.
Persson, A. W. 162.
Perugia 138.
Pessinus 149.
Peter St. 123, 168, 172, 173, 180.
Peter’s St. (Rome) 172.
Petrus Chrysologus 38, 41–3, 65, 118.
Phaidimos 162.
Pharaoh 81.
Pharsalos 165.
Philistines 160, 161.
Philo 127.
φιλοσοφία ἡ ζαυγή ἡ μεγάλη 188, 190.
Philostratus 35, 67.
Phocas 20.
Phrygian cap 105.
— vestments 187.
Picard, Ch. 112, 187.
Piganio, A. 112.
Pindar 68.
Pisa 90.
Place, V. 158.
planetarium 22.
Plato 9, 33, 188.
platonism, Christian 192.
Plinius 97, 98.
Plotinus 188.
Plutarch 28, 134, 158, 163, 165, 184.
Poinssot, L. 112.
pompa funerālis 60.
Pokrov, feast of 107.
Pompeii 90, 91.
Poole 154.
Pope, A. U. 12, 14, 19, 24, 26, 37, 38, 44, 45, 47, 66, 69, 72, 73, 75, 92, 104, 124.
Postumus 141, 143, 147.
Poulsen, F. 98.
Prester John 16, 18, 19, 62.
Priam 164.
Priest-King 18, 19.
Probianus diptychs 172, 175, 176.
Probus 141, 145, 153.
Procopius 139, 140, 158.
Prokypsis ceremony 111—13, 123.
Prologus 175, 176.
Prometheus 150, 151.
Prontoia 156.
Prospero, S. (Perugia) 138.
πρόθεσις 164.
προσκυνήμας 168.
PseudoCallisthenes 59, 60, 69, 118, 119.
psychophorus 69—71.
Puchstein, O. 93.
Prudenziana, S. (Rome) 127.
Puri 59.
πάλαι 31.

Q.
quadriga 46, 60, 64, 68, 79, 151.
Quasr-i-Shirin 24, 27, 29.
Quintilian 171, 180, 181, 185.

R.
ῥάβδος τοῦ Θεοῦ 161.
Rabirius 31.
Rabula Codex, Syriac 125—7, 133.
Rassam, H. 48.
Ratha 59.
Ravenna 193.
Red Sea 161.
Reitzenstein, R. 90.
resurrection 71.
Reuter, O. 10, 23, 24, 26.
Revelation, the, see Apocalypse.
rex novus aevorum 170.
Rheinisches Landesmuseum 32, 96.
Rhomaios, K. 98.
Richard Coer-de-Lion 36.
Riefstahl, E. 73, 121.
Ringbom, L. I. 18, 19, 24.
Roc 69.
Rodenwaldt, G. 145, 188.
Röck Stone 15.
rosis 60.
Roma (goddess) 156.
Rome, Roman passim.

Roman, J. 141.
Rorimer, J. J. 169, 170.
Rostra 195.
Round Table, King Arthur's 16.
Russia, -ian 102, 107, 128, 129.

S.
Sabazios 184, 185, 187.
Sabina, S. (Rome) 170.
Sabra 14.
Saglio, E. 90, 97.
Salomo 50, 106.
Salomonian throne 111.
Saloniki, see Thessalonica.
Salzberger, G. 50.
Samuel 54, 161.
Sanctus, -a, Santo, -a, see proper names.
Sandan 156.
Sapiences 181.
Sarapis, see Serapis.
Sarg 80.
Sarre, F. 10, 12, 14, 37, 38, 40, 72, 73, 75, 80—2, 84, 124.
Sassanides, Sassanian passim.
Saturn (planet) 22.
Saturnus, St. 192.
Saul 161.
Sauter, F. 140.
Saxi, F. 19—21, 37, 96, 105, 106, 191.
Saxon world chronicle 116.
Schäfer, H. 51, 81, 135.
Schmidt, H. 50, 63.
Schreiber, Th. 156, 164.
Schütte, R. 106.
Schultz, C. G. 14, 15.
Scipio 98.
scroll 189, 190.
Semitic 157, 159.
Segall, B. 93, 94.
Seleucides 157.
Senacherib 80.
Septizimion façade 35.
Septuaginta 109.
Seraphim 131, 132.
Serapis 52, 69, 143, 147, 148, 152—6, 162, 165.
Sergius, St. 170.
Seven Sages, the 189, 181.
Severus, Alexander 145, 155.
Severus, Septimius 26, 27, 29, 35, 36, 70.
sermo communis 181.
Sermon on the Mount 172, 177.
Sewickley 101, 102.
Shahname 21, 69, 79.
Shamash 135.
Shapur 20.
Shetelig, H. 143.
Shu 80.
Sicyon 163.
Sidon 145.
signa 145, 184.
signaculum crucis 183.
sikkara 62.
Silius 90, 98.
Silvester codex 129, 130.
Simon Magus 123.
Simplicissimus 20.
Sinbad 69.
Sion church (Jerusalem) 125.
Sippah 136.
Siva 54, 57.
Smerdis 134.
Smirnow, J. 37, 75.
snake 185.
socratic doctrine 188.
Sokolowski, M. 80.
Sol passim.
— Asiae 28, 44.
— Justitiae 109, 113.
Solomonian throne, see Solomonian throne.
σοφία 188.
Sophia, S. (Constantinople & Kiew) 132.
Spatano 31.
Sparta 162.
spinä 85.
Staatliche Museen (Berlin) 47.
Statius 30, 31, 140.
Steindorf, G. 44—6, 73.
Stellae salutares 28, 44.
Stephanus legend 116.
στέρεωτη 49.
Stilicho diptych 175.
Strabo 158.
Strzygowski, J. 123, 145, 152, 184.
Stylites 106.
Suetonius 23, 28, 30, 97, 123.
Suidas 162.
Index

Tabelle 20

Tabari 20, 21, 38, 62.
Takhir i marmar 124.
Talmud 69.
Tancred 118.
Taqdès 21, 26, 134.
Taq-i-Kisrā (palace) 23.
Taurus 145.
Taylor, R. 106.
Teheran 39, 124.
Telephon 176.
Tell Halaf 80.
Terence 175, 176.
Tertullian 90, 94, 97.
Tha'alibi from Neshapur 21.
Thébes (Greece) 120.
Theodoric 143.
Theodosius 145.
Theophanes 19.
Theophorus 69.
Theophylaktes Simokattes 43.
Theopompos 162.
Thessalonica 35, 128, 133.
Thetis 90, 91.
Thieles, C. 152.
Thousand and One Nights 10.
Throne chariot passim.
Thureau-Dangin, F. 157.
Tiaa 36, 85.
Tichon 129.
Tigris 158.
Tiridates 23, 28, 29, 85.
Tolnay, Ch. 132.
Tolstov, S. P. 12, 47.
Torcello Cathedral 129, 196, 197.
torques 42, 104.
traditio legis 168—70.
Trajan 31, 154, 155.
Transjordan 96.
Treitinger, O. 110—12, 123.

Trelleborg 14—17.
Treu, G. 163.
Trever, C. 37.
tribunalium 31.
triclinium 29, 31, 60.
Trier 32, 96.
Tripolis (Phoenix) 149, 153.
Triptolemos 54.
tva, see jatum.

U.
Underwood, P. A. 5, 112.
University Library of Budapest 147.
Upton, J. M. 124.
Ursula, S. 73.
Usener, H. 152, 153, 185, 187.

V.
Valens 143, 145.
Valentine, w. H. 38.
Valentinian 143, 145.
Valerius Polermius 60.
Varro 22, 30.
vela 111.
Venice 107, 109, 119.
Venus (planet) 22, 135.
verbum suum 195, 197.
Verona 145, 146.
Vespasian 154.
vicarius Urbis Romae 172.
Victoria, Victories 68, 98, 101, 102, 103.
Victoria and Albert Museum 70.
Vienna 129, 137.
Vijayanagar 57.
Villa Albani 94, 95.
vīmāna 57.
virga magica 165.
Virgilius 90.
Virgin, the 102, 107, 125, 170.
vitarka-mudrā 183.
vitium elationis 121.
Voetter, O. 141.

W.
Waal, A. de 177.
Walter's Art Gallery (Baltimore) 78, 163.

Wanscher, O. 197.
Webb, P. H. 141.
Weber, W. 156.
Weinreich, O. 28, 140, 162, 163, 184.
Weitzenkorn, K. 109.
Werenfels, J. R. 182.
Weston, L. J. 16.
Wilpert, J. 165, 168, 170, 172, 176—8, 182, 183, 190—92.
Winthrop, G. L. 92.
Witte de Hese, see Hese.
Wolston, H. A. 127.
Woolley, C. L. 51.
Wonders of India 73.
Wroth, W. 153, 154, 172.
Wünsche, A. 50.
Wuilleumier, P. 112.
Wulff, O. 168, 191.
Wunsch, R. 177, 187.

X.
Xenophon 48, 66.
Xerxes 85.

Y.
Ya'qūb 26.
Yazdegerd 21, 40.
Yazilikaya 51, 52.
τερπεδείοι θεοί 162, 163.
Υπερχείριοι θεοί 162, 164.

Z.
Zarncke, F. 18.
zebus, see oxen.
Zechariah 160.
Zephaniah 160.
Zeus 9, 69, 163, 164.
— Hagios 153.
— θερεψιως 162.
zikkurat (temple tower) 10, 18, 62.
Zimmer, H. 22.
ζώα 49—53, 62, 69, 72, 110, 124, 125, 127—9, 131—3.
zodiac 21, 31, 33, 34, 50, 60, 85, 90, 96—8, 114, 153.
Zschietzschmann, W. 164.
Zwinger 20.
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