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Vittorio Klostermann
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Legal Pluralism and Social Change in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

A Conference in Honor of John Haldon

Herausgegeben von
Wolfram Brandes,
Helmut Reimitz,
Jack Tannous



Vittorio Klostermann
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Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ACO | Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum |
| AE | L'Année épigraphique |
| Aeg. | Aegyptus |
| APF | Archiv für Papyrusforschung |
| B., Bas. | Basilicorum libri LX, edd. H.J. SCHELTEMA/N. VAN DER WAL/ D. HOLWERDA, series A, I–VIII, Groningen 1953/1988 |
| BASP | The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists |
| BBA | Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten |
| BBOM | Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs |
| BBS | Berliner Byzantinistische Studien |
| BHG | F. HALKIN, Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca I–III (Subsidia Hagiographica 8a). Bruxelles 1957; DERS., Novum Auctarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae Graecae (Subsidia Hagiographica 65), Bruxelles 1984 |
| BMGS | Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies |
| BS | Basilicorum libri LX, edd. H.J. SCHELTEMA/N. VAN DER WAL/ D. HOLWERDA, series B (scholia), I–IX, Groningen 1953/1988 |
| BSAC | Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte |
| Bsl | Byzantinoslavica |
| BT | see B., Bas. |
| Bull. ép. | Bulletin épigraphique (in the Revue des études grecques) |
| Byz | Byzantion |
| BZ | Byzantinische Zeitschrift |
| C | Codex Iustinianus, ed. P. KRÜGER |
| CAVT | J.-C. HAELEWYCK, Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti (CC), Turnhout 1998 |
| CC | Corpus Christianorum |
| CCSG | Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca |
| CCSL | Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina |
| CdÉ | Chronique d'Égypte |
| CFHB | Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae |
| CPG | M. GEERARD, Clavis patrum Graecorum, I–V. Turnhout 1983– 1987; Supplementum, cura et studio M. GEERARD/J. NORET (CCSG), Turnhout 1998 |
| CPh | Classical Philology |
| CPL | A.E. GAAR/E. DEKKERS, Clavis patrum Latinorum (CCSL), Steen- brugge 1995 |
| CSCO | Corpus scriptorum christianorum Orientalium |
| CSHB | Corpus scriptorium historiae Byzantinae |
| CTh | Codex Theodosianus, ed. TH. MOMMSEN |
| D., Dig. | Digesta, ed. TH. MOMMSEN |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| DCHAE | Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας |
| DOP | Dumbarton Oaks Papers |
| DO Seals IV | Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, IV: The East, ed. by E. McGEER/J. NESBITT/N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, Washington, D. C. 2001 |
| DOT | Dumbarton Oaks Texts |
| EI ² | The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2. Aufl., I–XII, Leiden / London 1986/2004 |
| EI ³ | The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 3. Aufl. Leiden 2007 ff. |
| FBRG | Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte |
| FM | Fontes Minores |
| GCS | Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte |
| HZ | Historische Zeitschrift |
| JA | Journal asiatique |
| JCoPtS | Journal of Coptic Studies |
| JJP | Journal of Juristic Papyrology |
| JÖB | Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik |
| JTS | Journal of Theological Studies |
| LACL ³ | Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur, hg. von S. DÖPP/W. GEERLINGS, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 2002 |
| LexMa | Lexikon des Mittelalters, I–IX, München 1980/1998 |
| LSJ | H. G. LIDDELL / R. SCOTT / H. STUART JONES, A Greek-English Lexicon, Oxford ⁹ 1925–1940 |
| LThK ³ | Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 3. Aufl.; I–XI, Freiburg 1993/2001 |
| MAMA | Monumenta Asiae Minores antiqua |
| MANSI | G. D. MANSI, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, I–LIII. Paris / Leipzig 1901/1927 |
| MBM | Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia |
| MGH LL | Monumenta Germaniae historica, Leges |
| MGH SS | Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum |
| MGH SS | Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum |
| Mitt. DAI Rom | Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung |
| ODB | Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, ed. A. KAZHDAN et al., Oxford 1991 |
| OLA | Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta |
| PAPhS | Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society |
| PG | J.-P. MIGNE, Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, I–CLXI, Paris 1857/1866 |
| PL | J.-P. MIGNE, Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina, I–CCXXVII, Paris 1844/1855 |

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| PLRE I | A. H. M. JONES/J. R. MARTINDALE/J. MORRIS, <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, I</i> (A.D. 260–395), Cambridge 1971 |
| PLRE II | J. R. MARTINDALE, <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, II</i> (A.D. 395–527), Cambridge 1980 |
| PLRE III | J. R. MARTINDALE, <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, III</i> (A.D. 527–641), Cambridge 1992 |
| PmbZ | Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. Erste Abteilung (641–867), I–VI. Nach Vorarbeiten von FRIEDHELM WINKELMANN erstellt von R.-J. LILIE/C. LUDWIG/TH. PRATSCH/I. ROCHOW, unter Mitarbeit von W. BRANDES/J. R. MARTINDALE/B. ZIELKE, Berlin/New York 1999/2002 |
| PNAS | Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences |
| PO | Patrologia Orientalis |
| REB | Revue des études byzantines |
| REprot. | Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, 3. Auflage, I–XXII, Leipzig 1896/1909 |
| RGG ⁴ | Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 4. Auflage, I–VIII, Tübingen 1998/2005 |
| RHC Hist. Occ. | Historiens occidentaux |
| SBS | Studies in Byzantine Sigillography |
| SC | Sources chrétiennes |
| SEG | Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum |
| Sett. | Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo |
| SLA | Studies in Late Antiquity |
| TAPA | Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association |
| TIB | Tabula Imperii Byzantini |
| TM | Travaux et Mémoires |
| VV | Vizantijskij Vremennik |
| ZDMG | Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft |
| ZKG | Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte |
| ZPE | Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik |
| ZRVI | Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta |
| ZSRG | Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung |
| ZV | G. ZACOS/A. VEGLERY, <i>Byzantine Lead Seals, I</i> , Basel 1972 |

This volume presents a collection of essays which began as contributions to a conference held in honor of John Haldon in the spring of 2018. It was at the end of John's last term teaching in the history department at Princeton University and his transition into what some colleagues in the same situation have called "emeritage".¹ We don't know if John himself has used the pun blending *emeritus* – well deserved – with (h)ermitage the Greek *eremos*, or late Latin *eremita* – solitary, but with his love of punning, it is not unlikely though. The irony of the pun, however, fits very well with John's *emeritage* as a scholar, teacher and pioneer of Byzantine studies. Without the *stabilitas loci* connected to his teaching and other duties at Princeton (not least his wonderful long-term directorship of the graduate program of the History Department, he continued and even intensified his work bringing together different academic cultures, methods, and disciplines. As always he did this in many contexts and roles – as a prolific scholar, as mentor of younger researchers, as gifted organizer and *spiritus rector* of international networks, as member of numerous editorial and advisory boards and, not least, as president of the International Association of Byzantine Studies. In his various – individual and collective – projects, networks, and publications, John has also further developed his very own approach of combining meticulous work on texts and material evidence with a holistic approach to social history that has connected the study of the Byzantine world to new methodological perspectives and ever wider horizons for comparison with other political systems and structures across Eurasia and Northern Africa, from late antiquity to early modern times.

It is impossible to reflect all of John's perspectives and horizons in one conference or volume, and so we have chosen to take stock of his approach by focusing on the history of legal cultures as a window into social and political change and vice versa in the first millennium. Recent research on law and society in the Roman world has highlighted how strongly late Roman legal culture was characterized by the multiplicity and co-existence of different legal orders and different sources of authority and legitimacy. While Roman law exerted some hegemony as a meta-legal system in the Roman and late Roman empire, ample alternatives were used to create binding norms: religion, oral custom and

1 This would not necessarily need a reference, but as John has even footnoted his shopping lists (we owe this information to his wife Val) we feel that it is appropriate to refer to Herwig Wolfram, University of Vienna, as one example who repeatedly called his new status after retirement *emeritage*.

tradition, non-written rules, moral values, regional customs, the idea of consensus, procedures of judicial and extra-judicial nature, among others. Their respective salience and their relationships, overlaps, and interdependencies created a complex and quite flexible matrix that was adopted in various ways in different local and regional contexts of the vast territories of the Roman Empire already before the fourth century. But with the transformation of the Roman world, the dissolution of the Western Roman empire, the Justinianic reforms, the establishment of post-Roman kingdoms in the West, the emergence of the Islamic empire, and the *renovatio* of a Roman empire that would not die in the Eastern Mediterranean, we observe an intensification of urgent and intelligent experimentation with these Roman legal structures that resulted in quite different legal landscapes and legal cultures in the territories of the ancient Roman world. The contributions to this volume present various case studies of these fundamental changes from Iberia to the Slavic world, of Central Eurasia and the Middle East, from different times and regions, from Iberia to the Slavic world, of Central Eurasia and the Middle East, from different times and regions, and fit well with John's own research. As Chris Wickham observes, "John has always operated on many fronts at once".² The volume also takes stock of this aspect of John's work. While they are all case studies on pluralisms and social change, they all bring into focus how communities had to organize and/or reorganize themselves as social and political groups to respond or adapt to quickly changing circumstances, from environmental conditions to religious and social, ideological and political changes and challenges.

Apart from Princeton's History Department, the conference was generously supported by the Program in Hellenic Studies, the Committee for the Study of Late Antiquity, the Program of the Ancient World, the Program in Medieval Studies, the Department of Art & Archaeology, the Department of Classics, the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, and the Humanities Council.

As for the present volume, we are very grateful to the directors of the Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory at Frankfurt whose staunch support for this book made it possible to appear in one of the Institute's most important series. We would also like to thank the wonderful editorial team of the Max Planck Institute, in particular Otto Danwerth and Karin Reichstein.

Wolfram Brandes
Helmut Reimitz
Jack Tannous

2 See Chris Wickham's contribution in this volume, 19–21.

John Haldon – From Birmingham (England) to Princeton

One of my treasured memories of John Haldon goes back to the time when I was living in Harrow, in north-west London, and he did his best to interest me in the kinds of real ale available at the pub on Harrow Hill; from what I know of him at Princeton this is a passion he was able to continue there. I have known John for many years, and I happened to be spending a semester at Princeton in the Hellenic Studies programme exactly when he arrived to take up his position. We had many conversations about his move and about Princeton, and it has been striking to see the new directions his work has taken since his arrival there, to read his Carl Newell Jackson lectures of 2016, published as *The Empire that Would Not Die*, and to see the ways in which his scope broadened in the context of the new opportunities on offer at Princeton.

To understand John Haldon in this way, one needs to know something about his background and the contour of Byzantine studies in Britain. John is proud to come from the north-east of England and did not become a Byzantine historian after being a classicist at Oxbridge, like many British Byzantinists, including myself, in the past. Instead, he studied at the University of Birmingham with the inimitable Anthony Bryer, and also in Athens during his PhD, and he spent several formative periods in a still-divided Germany. In 1979 he began teaching at Birmingham in the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies founded by Bryer, as he was always known, eventually becoming its Director and subsequently the Head of the School of Historical Studies. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this trajectory. There used to be an ideological tension existing about the routes to a career in Byzantine studies between former classicists and those like John who had come through history (and indeed also those who had started as art historians). John is firmly a historian. Moreover, like Munich and Frankfurt, where he spent time in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, Birmingham provided an environment that very much suited his political – he might rather say ideological – position. Bryer was larger than life, ex-Balliol College, Oxford, where he had studied history, colourful and in many ways old-school (though also committed at Birmingham to a far broader kind of Byzantine studies than existed in Oxford), and

Birmingham was also the academic home of the Marxist classicist George Thomson (d. 1987); the Marxist historian Rodney Hilton (d. 2002) taught there for thirty-six years, and E. P. Thompson (d. 1993), whose wife Dorothy was a historian at Birmingham, was nearby at Warwick. Bryer's annual Byzantine conferences, always called symposia, brought the subject of Byzantium to an audience much wider than the purely academic.

In style and thinking John and Bryer were chalk and cheese. Bryer was the most untheoretical of historians, John one of the most attuned to theory and methodology;¹ he was also interested in technology, military history and making things. But John's colleagues in history at Birmingham also included Chris Wickham, medieval historian and also the editor of a volume with the title *Marxist History Writing for the Twenty-First Century*, published by the British Academy (2007). As John's review articles about Chris Wickham's major book, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*,² show, Chris Wickham covered a period of historical change closely similar to one of John's own central periods and John's reviews are a tribute to the importance of their long connection. They also display John's thinking about the value and the difficulties inherent in comparative history, and the centrality of the issue of modes of production and the theory of the state. John does justice to the importance of the book and to Chris Wickham's achievement, but there was not enough coverage for John's taste on pre-modern state formation or the causal factors behind social change; he also raises questions about the book's comparative approach, and while he himself has practised comparative history this is a methodology that also troubled him in the work of sociologists like Michael Mann and Garry Runciman (below). His are thoughtful discussions by a friend that provide at the same time a good clue to John's own thinking.

Further from John's interests, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham founded by Richard Hoggart in 1964, was also home to Stuart Hall, a key figure in British cultural studies. This was the environment in which

- 1 A memorable paper by Haldon in 1985, key for the understanding of his approach to history, was his "Jargon" vs. "the Facts"? Byzantine History-writing and Contemporary Debates, *BMGS* 9 (1985), 95–132; his kind of theory is political and social theory, and the theory of state and social formations, rather than the literary theory of some current scholars of Byzantine literature (though discourse makes an appearance in some of his more recent publications).
- 2 C. WICKHAM, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean*, 400–488, Oxford 2005; see J. HALDON, *Framing the Early Middle Ages, Historical Materialism* 19,1 (2011), 47–72, with HALDON, *Framing Transformation, Transforming the Framework. Some Remarks on C. WICKHAM, Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800* (Oxford 2005), *Millennium* 5 (2008), 327–351.

Anthony Bryer set up the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, with its annual symposia held with the university's extra-mural department, and it was the environment in which John studied, and from 1979 taught, until his move to Princeton in 2005. Complemented by the theoretical and ideological stimulus of his time in Germany – when he was also looking after his son Simon – John's formation was unusual for a Byzantine historian in Britain at the time, and its influence is evident throughout his publications. I am sure that in his youth he liked to think of himself as iconoclastic, especially among traditional Byzantinists; indeed, it is something on which he prided himself. As he also notes in his article “Jargon” vs. “the Facts”, many European Byzantinists were the descendants of the positivist scholarship of the founders of Byzantine philological scholarship.³ As John noted then and later, Byzantine studies was an under-theorized field ripe for shaking up. By 2016 that iconoclastic young historian had become the President of the International Association of Byzantine Studies.

Princeton University, with its patrician associations and its wealth, was at first sight a somewhat unlikely place for someone who liked to insist on his working-class credentials. It is striking therefore to see how John's career developed in his Princeton years and how he responded to that environment, while at the same time how often he still returns to his central questions. John is a historian with an enormous range, who also has a strong central set of beliefs and concerns which he is constantly debating and refining, and which remain the driving forces behind everything he writes. His focus moved in interesting directions after his move to Princeton, and he has written on a huge variety of subjects, but it is fascinating and inspiring to see how again and again he returns to the basic issues about Byzantium that have motivated him from the beginning. At the same time, as I hope to demonstrate, a chronological view of his publications over a span of nearly five decades reveals not only new subjects and methodologies, such as his current work on the environment, but also some interesting refinements and shifts of emphasis in his writing on familiar themes.⁴

John has always seen Byzantium in a wider historical perspective, and has recently described his interests as embracing “state systems and structures across

3 HALDON, “Jargon” vs. “the Facts”?, 123.

4 His first publication was *Solenarion: the Byzantine Crossbow?*, *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 12,2 (1970), 155–157, followed by *Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Century*, *BMGS* 1 (1975), 11–47; his memorable contribution on the nature of Greek fire came out in 1977: J. HALDON / M. BYRNE, *A Possible Solution to the Problem of Greek Fire*, *BZ* 70 (1977), 91–99, on which compare his *Greek Fire Revisited: Recent and Current Research*, in: E. JEFFREYS (ed.), *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization in Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, Cambridge 2006, 290–325.

the European as well as Islamic worlds from late ancient to early modern times,” and “the causal relationship between change in respect of politics, social structure and the use and allocation of resources on the one hand and shifts in environmental and climatic conditions on the other.”⁵ These formulations reflect the influences and opportunities he found at Princeton: they led to his involvement in the study of environment and climate, specifically in relation to Eurasia, 300 to 1900 CE, and his survey of the site of Avkat (Euchaita) in Turkey, which took a very broad approach and used new digital techniques and mapping to aim at a complete longitudinal picture of a site.⁶ Top among the project’s listed aims was that of creating a material culture sequence from the Neolithic to Ottoman times; also prominent was the aim of bringing new technologies fully to bear in ways that had not been pursued before. Euchaita (Avkat) happens to be known in texts too (witness John’s volume on the texts relating to the two Saints Theodore, Theodore the Recruit and Theodore the General),⁷ but for him the textual evidence was just one (small) element in a comprehensive synchronic and diachronic exploration. As for climate and environment, John’s own publications – coming at an increasingly fast rate – now include a large number of highly technical studies published in scientific journals, and based on the latest new data and methodologies, again directly connecting with the opportunities at Princeton and often involving collaborative publication,⁸ and profit-

5 For instance, J. HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565–1204*, London 1999 and his popular book *The Byzantine Wars. Battles and Campaigns of the Byzantine Era*, Stroud 2001; logistics: especially J. F. HALDON (ed.), *General Issues in the Study of Medieval Logistics. Sources, Problems and Methodologies*, Leiden 2006, with introduction and conclusion drawing on the contribution of new technologies, including GIS.

6 On which see his remarks on Euchaita, in: PH. NIEWÖHNER (ed.), *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: from Late Antiquity to the Coming of the Turks*, Oxford 2016, 375–388, with J. HALDON/H. ELTON/J. NEWHARD (eds.), *Archaeology and Urban Settlement in Late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Euchaita-Avkat-Beyözü and its Environment*, Cambridge 2018.

7 J. HALDON, *A Tale of Two Saints. The Martyrdoms and Miracles of Saints Theodore “the Recruit” and Theodore “the General”*, translated with commentary (Translated Texts for Byzantinists 2). Liverpool 2016. Studies of relevant individual texts have been a regular feature of John’s publications since 1992, when he published *The Writings of Anastasius of Sinai: a Key Source for Seventh-century East Mediterranean History*, in: AV. CAMERON/L. I. CONRAD (eds.), *The Early Medieval Near East: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, Princeton 1992, 107–147, key for his book: *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1990, 2nd revised edn. Cambridge 1997.

8 For example recently J. HALDON/A. ROSEN, *Society and Environment in the East Mediterranean ca 300–1800 CE. Problems of Resilience, Adaptation and Transformation*, Introductory Essay, *Human Ecology* 46 (2018), 275–290; J. HALDON

ing from his directorship of the climate change and history initiative, which includes Nicola Di Cosmo of the Institute of Advanced Study. John is interested in methodologies and sources here as in everything he does (and now with the idea of “consilience”) and it is easy to see the connections of this work with *The Empire that Would Not Die*.

It is hard to keep track of John’s publications because they keep coming, but overall, before his environmental turn, several themes have stood out, especially the nature of the state, its means of production and mode of extraction, and warfare, and more recently logistics; there are far more than I can cover here. He is highly prolific, and has also published several books for a wider readership.⁹ But the approach that links all his publications has been and still is that of Marxist analysis, now reframed as historical materialism (also the explanatory framework of his two large books on the iconoclast era with Leslie Brubaker).¹⁰ The environmental turn and neo-Darwinian biological models now provide useful new underpinning to materialist views of history, and he seems prepared to give more weight to ideology than before. Certain themes have preoccupied him over many years, especially the changes in Byzantine state and society in the seventh and eighth centuries, a theme with close affinity to those of his early German connections, especially with Friedhelm Winkelmann and Wolfram Brandes, the latter also a collaborator on more than one occasion. Latterly, John has often been the only Byzantinist to engage with the debates led by Walter Scheidel and others on empires and states (a debate from which Byzantium is usually absent: see below); it was natural also to find him contributing the chapter on Byzantium in a volume on fiscality in pre-modern states edited by Andrew Monson and Walter Scheidel, this time in a comparative perspective

et al., History meets Palaeoscience: Consilience and Collaboration in Studying Past Societal Responses to Environmental Change, *PNAS Latest Articles* 115 (13), March 2018; J. HALDON, Some Thoughts on Climate Change, Local Environment and Grain Production in Byzantine Northern Anatolia, in: A. IZDEBSKI / M. MULRYAN (eds.), *Environment and Society in the Long Late Antiquity* (Late Antique Archaeology 12), Leiden 2018, 18–24; for the new prominence of such factors in scholarship on late antiquity see e.g. K. HARPER, *The Fate of Rome. Climate, Disease and the End of an Empire*, Princeton 2017, reviewed by J. HALDON et al., Plague, Climate Change and the End of an Empire: a Response to Kyle Harper’s *The Fate of Rome*, *History Compass* 16,12 (2018), in three parts; W. SCHEIDEL (ed.), *The Science of Roman History. Biology, Climate and the Future of the Past*, Princeton 2018; J. PREISER-KAPPELLER / A. IZDEBSKI (eds.), *A Companion to the Environmental History of Byzantium*, Leiden (in press).

- 9 J. HALDON, *Byzantium. A History*, Stroud 2000; IDEM, *The Byzantine Wars*.
- 10 L. BRUBAKER / J. F. HALDON (eds.), *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850): The Sources: An Annotated Survey*, Aldershot 2001; *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850: A History*, Cambridge 2015.

with western Europe.¹¹ He had discussed the state in the context of pre-industrial societies before, for instance in 1995 in his introduction to a volume edited by myself on states, resources and armies in late antiquity and early Islam.¹² His book on *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production*, published in 1993, after the fall of the Soviet system and the events in eastern Europe, was in part a riposte to neoconservative claims about the end of history and a defence of the continuing value of historical materialist views of history. I will return to these issues later.

The seventh century – a key hinge of social and political change

Let me start with John's Carl Newell Jackson lectures at Harvard, published in 2016 as *The Empire that Would Not Die. The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740*, a book that has already been the subject of a published group discussion.¹³ Here he returns to the theme of his earlier book on the seventh century in a way that illustrates the Princeton themes I have mentioned. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, published in 1990, which was influential on many including myself, painted a negative picture of Byzantium in the period and used it to explain social and cultural change. That book was groundbreaking, but it was also in a way a book of its time. The theme of the collapse of classical urbanism in the period was also a traditional subject for a historian with John's background. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* accompanied several important papers by John in which he grappled with subjects such as ideology and social change, the origin of the themes (not the work of Heraclius, according to him), issues about military lands, the supply and pay of soldiers, and the problems of taxation/extraction in the period. Again, John was interested in and published on some relevant seventh-century texts, not only Anastasius of Sinai but also the miracles of Artemios.¹⁴ The linkage of cultural/

11 A. MONSON/W. SCHEIDEL (eds.), Late Rome, Byzantium and Early Medieval Europe, in: *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, Cambridge 2015, 345–389.

12 J. HALDON, Introduction, in: Av. CAMERON (ed.), *States, Resources and Armies, The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III*, Princeton 1995, 1–25.

13 *The Empire that Would Not Die. The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740*, Cambridge (MA) 2016; compare *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*. Cambridge 1990, and see the discussion in *Journal of European Economic History* 2 (2017), 117–178, ed. P. TEDESCO, with essays by Y. STOURAITIS, M. CAMPOPIANO, S. COSENTINO and F. MONTINARO. I thank Y. Stouraitis for alerting me to this discussion.

14 *The Miracles of Artemios and Contemporary Attitudes: Context and Significance*, in: J. NESBITT/V. CRYSAFULLI, *The Miracles of Saint Artemios: Translation, Commentary and Analysis*, Washington, D.C. 1995, 33–73.

ideological (i. e. religious) change with negative social and economic factors is still a live topic for early Byzantium, for instance in Mischa Meier's book on contingencies and catastrophes in the sixth century.¹⁵ But as John has said himself the ground has shifted since the early 1990s and the seventh century now looks rather different.¹⁶

With *The Empire that Would Not Die* John returned to this familiar territory but in a new way. The book's introduction sets out the thinking behind it: how to explain the remarkable fact that when all had seemed lost, Byzantium not only survived but reinvented itself. Answering this question is not easy: if less so in other ways, the dark ages remain dark in terms of the scarcity of surviving information.¹⁷ John debates the working of complex systems and the agency of beliefs, now stating that they are "absolutely crucial elements in the functioning of any culture,"¹⁸ and giving a key role in what follows in the book to "the ideational."¹⁹ John is typically alert to complexity and responsive to current discussions. In relation to the provocative ideas of Anthony Kaldellis, he cautiously endorses the designation of "republican monarchy" for Byzantium, while still holding to its status as an empire, just as he calls Byzantium from the seventh century onwards a rump state or successor state, while also maintaining that it was kept alive for more than a millennium.²⁰ Finally, and crucially, *The Empire that Would Not Die* gives a considerable role to environmental factors.

John would probably say that this book is a reformulation of the earlier one rather than something different from it,²¹ but it certainly reads in a very different way. Agency, ideology/beliefs, in the sociological sense, elites and the environ-

15 M. MEIER, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians: Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, Göttingen 2003.

16 Despite being described in the 2016–17 Report of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, with reference to Syriac sources as "an arcane topic to most people." See for example the papers edited by C. ZUCKERMAN under the title *Constructing the Seventh Century*, *TM* 17 (2013), 1–930; IDEM, *Learning from the Enemy and More: Studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium*, *Millennium* 2 (2005), 79–136; P. BOOTH, *Crisis of Empire. Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity*, Berkeley 2013.

17 On "dark ages" see MONTINARO, *Journal of European Economic History* 2 (2017), 172: "One will mainly wonder, however, whether it is only by letting 'empire,' as we know it, die once and for all and be born again in the period covered by Haldon's book that we will shed some light on the darkness in which the medieval Byzantines still appear to be cloaked."

18 *The Empire that Would Not Die*, Introduction, 19.

19 Ibid., 23.

20 Ibid., 17, with n. 37; "rump state," 28; "more than a millennium," 17–18. Republic: see J. F. HALDON, *Res publica Byzantina? State Formation and Issues of Identity in Medieval East Rome*, *BMGS* 40,2 (2016), 4–16.

21 See *ibid.*, 2.

ment in particular now occupy central ground. John's many previous studies of fiscal and military organization in this period now pay off. The still-controversial officials known as the *kommerkiarioi* also return. But above all, we hear the voice of someone constantly engaging with, revising and reshaping his own core beliefs.

States, empires, state formations

John's conception of society and social change is rooted in his lifelong preoccupation with states and state formations.²² He describes his *State and the Tributary Mode of Production* of 1993 as an attempt to clarify some questions for himself about the Marxist concept of feudalism and the nature of preindustrial state forms, and as having been encouraged as a defence of historical materialist social analysis by the appearance of Michael Mann's *Sources of Social Power*.²³ *The State and the Tributary Mode* takes up again the theoretical discussion in "Jargon" vs. "the Facts"? of nearly a decade before in the light of Mann's challenge, and reveals perhaps better than anything else how and why the conception and definition of the state and the social relations of production are so fundamental to John's thinking. The book appeared only a short time after *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* and contains a section on Byzantium entitled "The Byzantine Paradigm", together with discussions of other empires including those of the Mughals and the Ottomans.²⁴ It is thus a clear sign of commitment to comparative history, and to the need to place Byzantium in the context of other cultures, whether or not they are contemporary.

The reasons for the transition from the ancient to the medieval world have indeed posed classic questions in Marxist history, but in the case of Byzantium, John was also still having to deal with some prevailing issues, including the dominance of George Ostrogorsky on the subjects of Byzantine feudalism, peasant communes and the like. Clearing the ground of this and other dead wood was still necessary, and in some countries still is even now. John was not the first western Byzantinist to try to do so, or to grapple with issues such as the

22 He returns to his conception of the state in J. F. HALDON, *Theories of Practice: Marxist History-writing and Complexity*, *Historical Materialism* 21,4 (2013), 36–70, discussing J. BANAJI, *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation*, Leiden 2010, at 58–64.

23 J. HALDON, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production*, London 1993, vii; M. MANN, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1: *A History of Power from the Beginnings to AD 1760*, Cambridge 1986. John discusses his own view on the tributary mode again in *Theories of Practice*.

24 *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production*, 109 (Ottomans: 158–188; Mughals: 218–241).

fate of cities or, in a later period, the nature of *pronoia*,²⁵ but he was unusual, certainly for a historian writing in English, in being able in the immediate aftermath of the breakdown of the Soviet Union to address these questions directly through a detailed knowledge of Soviet and eastern European scholarship. The book was at the opposite end of the spectrum from rightwing reactions at the time, and especially from the loud (and premature) assertions of a triumph of liberal democracy. As a historical materialist John also had much more at stake. *The State and Tributary Mode of Production* was a book for specialists – and for others who like him had to find a way of confronting their own assumptions and understanding what had happened. Not surprisingly, unlike others from the neoconservatives, such a book did not hit the headlines.

It was also a powerful riposte to the challenges posed to historical materialism by the then recent works of Michael Mann and W. G. Runciman,²⁶ and John carefully presented his argument in a comparative perspective, choosing the late medieval and early modern Mughal and Ottoman states as comparators for Europe and Byzantium. In going back to it now I see how important the book is in terms of John's trajectory. Scrutinising the claims of historical materialist history against the challenge from sociologists was as crucial for him as confronting the implications of the momentous recent political events, and he often returns to the challenge in later publications. His section on Byzantium here follows on from a wider discussion in the same chapter, in which in a passage that is telling for his conception of social history he explains capitalism and feudalism as "ideal sets of social relations of production," and more precisely as "modes of production which serve as heuristic categories for the elucidation of the actual workings of historically-attested social relation."²⁷ As he wrote in his Introduction, "The crucial factor is the nature of the social relations of production which states evolve."²⁸ He sums up his position by distinguishing himself from the doctrinaire positions of Soviet scholarship on the fraught and contested example of early Byzantium, while arguing that Byzantium was indeed a tributary state; if that made it feudal he was then (perhaps rashly) prepared to use the word. Byzantium was also significantly different from contemporary western Europe, a theme he would address much later in relation to Chris Wickham's book (see above).²⁹ What counted above all were the modes

25 *The State and Tributary Mode of Production*, 298, n. 103.

26 Vol. 2 of W. G. RUNCIMAN, *A Treatise on Social Theory*, Cambridge, had been published in 1989; see also HALDON, *Theories of Practice*.

27 *Theories of Practice*, 103.

28 *Ibid.*, 3.

29 *The State and Tributary Mode of Production*, 130, 138–139.

of production and extraction; understanding those has been central throughout John's work.

Much has changed in scholarship on the crucial seventh century since *The State and the Tributary Mode* was published, as John sets out himself in *The Empire that Would Not Die*: this includes a vast increase in archaeological information, new work on the politics and theology of the seventh century and an overall increase in scholarship on the period, which includes publications on hagiography, homiletic, canon and secular law, administration, seals and environmental history;³⁰ on a broader front, there has also been a very distinct change in historians' attitude to texts. Early Islam has also been drawn increasingly into work on late antiquity/early Byzantium;³¹ and John could have added the challenge from recent work on the sixth and seventh-century economies and a renewed emphasis on marketization, gold, and monetarization, to all of which he has also responded.³²

John is still thinking about how best to describe the Byzantine state – state formation, empire, rump-state or successor state.³³ Anthony Kaldellis's counter-intuitive claim that Byzantium was a republic has to be answered – John accepts

30 *The Empire that Would Not Die*, 2.

31 John was part of the initial group behind the series of workshops and publications, *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (above, n. 12), and later took on an editorial role; see J. F. HALDON (ed.), *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, *The Byzantine and Near East* VI, Princeton 2004, with J. F. HALDON (ed.), *Money, Power and Politics in Early Islamic Syria. A Review of Current Debates*, Farnham 2010, taking up the theme of social elites and their role in social change that runs through much of his work (see also below). His introduction points to the enormous amount of recent new work on "Greater Syria" around the time of the Arab conquests, and the many questions that remain; see also HALDON, *The Resources of Late Antiquity*, in: C. F. ROBINSON (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam 1. The Formation of the Early Islamic World, Sixth to Eleventh Centuries*, Cambridge 2010, 18–71. For Islam as part of the late antique and early Byzantine worlds see e. g. P. SARRIS, *Empires of Faith. The Fall of Rome to the Rise of Islam, 500–700*, Oxford 2011; G. FOWDEN, *Before and After Muhammad. The First Millenium Refocused*, Princeton 2014; G. FISHER (ed.), *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, Oxford 2015.

32 See e. g. C. MORRISON (ed.), *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, Washington, D. C. 2012; P. F. BANG, *The Roman Bazaar. A Comparative Study of Trade and Markets in a Tributary Empire*, Cambridge 2008; see below for Haldon's reactions to Jairus Banaji's argument for the importance of gold in the sixth century.

33 See HALDON, *Res publica Byzantina?*, 5; he sets out what he means by state at 7–15, with much bibliographical detail. See also J. HALDON, *Comparative State Formation: Rome and Neighboring Worlds*, in: S. FITZGERALD JOHNSON (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, Oxford/New York 2012, 1111–1147.