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JUSTINIAN I THE GREAT - MACEDONIAN IMPERATOR OF KONSTANTINOPOLITANA NOVA ROMA

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The intention of this essay is to provide simple and easy to understand retrospective of periods from medieval Macedonian and Eastern Romeian Empires history and culture. It avoids substantial and detailed explanations that consider wider historical background of the events and persons described below, and is written primarily for those approaching the topic for the first time.

It also avoids complex explanatory comments or insightful footnotes on the citations from the sources. The explanatory notes are prevalently etymological.

The time-frame of this essay ranges from the rule of Justin I until the end of the rule of Justinian I the Great. The interpretations given here are meant to enhance our understanding and appreciation of the Macedonian and Romeian empires that were a superpowers of the medieval world. They are focused mainly on the Macedonian aspect of the story disregarding the wider historical or socio-political perspective.

All the dates and references to centuries are „AD“ except where indicated otherwise. Throughout this essay, Macedonia/Macedonians refer to the area of the mainland north of Mount Olymp. Macedonian peninsula refers to so-called 'Balkans.'

Latinized/Anglicized or Macedonic names are given in parenthesis, some names and technical terms are transliterated and these will be obvious when they appear. Other technical terms and titles (e.g. Romeo, drougarrios, etc.) have been transliterated directly from their original forms with as few changes as possible: thus drouggarios rather than 'droungarios, which is neither “Greek” nor Latin.

The terminology and concepts that are post factum inventions (like 'Balkans' or 'Byzantium') are largely ignored, if not altogether avoided. Such empirically wrong terms used by modern historiography were unknown to the medieval world and their continued use perpetuates misleading assumptions.

The modern-historiography 'privileged moments' are largely avoided too. For historians today one such a privileged moment (of places and monuments as 'Byzantine') is 'Byzantine Empire', actually the Romeian Empire of the 5th and 6th centuries. But when and why is so regarded? Was 'Byzantine Empire' regarded as 'Byzantine' already in Middle Ages? By whom?

The definitions, current meanings and related concepts of the words in English are taken from the Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus (Mac OsX version 1.0.2 for PowerPC) and/or Meriam-Webster online dictionary. For the words in Macedonian is used the online ENCYCLOPÆDIA MACEDONICA / MAKEDONSKA ENCIKLOPEDIJA vol. 1 & 2, and off.net online Macedonian dictionary.

The sources are listed in the References at the end of this essay.
List of contents:

Introduction (The Nova Roma empire) ................................................................. 7
Justin I and Justinian I from Macedonia ............................................................ 13
The emperor Justinian I the Great, his character and policy ................................. 15
The empress Theodora Augusta ........................................................................ 18
Games and factions at Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, the Nika rebellion .... 19
Justinian’s Army ................................................................................................... 21
Conquest of Africa - End of the Vandal Kingdom .............................................. 27
Conquest of Italy, end of the Ostrogoth (‘Eastern Goths’) kingdom ................. 29
Romeians seize a part of Spain from the Visigoth (‘Western Goth’) kingdom .... 32
Romeians held in check on the Eastern Frontier ................................................. 33
Justinian I the Great vs Khosroes the Great ...................................................... 35
Romeian frontier on Danube - Slavic tribes, Bulgars and Avars ...................... 36
Religious Character of the Imperial Despotism, Political Unity ....................... 40
Religious Unity, dissenters are punished ............................................................ 44
Pagan Philosophy Interdicted ............................................................................ 46
Legislative Unity - The Corpus Juris Civilis ...................................................... 47
Importance of Justinian's Legislation ................................................................. 48
Public Works ordered by Justinian I the Great ............................................... 49
Calamities of the Empire .................................................................................. 51
Justinian fully-deserved surname ‘Great’ ......................................................... 52
The Romeian Empire after Justinian, contraction of its frontiers .................. 54
Romeian government in Italy after Justinian, the Imperial Exarchate of Ravenna ... 55
References ........................................................................................................... 58
Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma\textsuperscript{1}, the jewel on the crown of the most enduring Euroasian empire, stood as the bridgehead, the prize for which Europe and Asia had and will fight as long as this world exists. This is the post where the worlds are joined and separated in the same time, the most frequented crossroad in the human history, where different epochs, nations and cultures melted and collided. Here, within the ancient involucre of foregone myths and forgotten gods, where the past, present and future are mixed, a 1000-years Christian Empire has been erected. Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma in the VI century was the Holy See of the Romeian Empire of Justinian I the Great.

Above: a coin of Justinian I the Great from VI century. In Latin: “IVSTINIANUS” (Justinianus); from Macedonin “Vistinition” - the ‘truthworthy’ in plain Macedonian\textsuperscript{2}

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\textsuperscript{1} i.e. "The City of Konstantin Nova Roma"; Anglicized: Constantinople.

\textsuperscript{2} Archaic Macedonian “Uistina” - ‘truth’; “Vistina” in plain modern Macedonian. After the Latinization this Macedonic noun/name became the term that describes “Just/justice”.
After the dissolution of its western counterpart in the V century, the east (now ex-Roman) empire, retook again its stolen grandeur and glorious past of the southeastern golden era and classical Europe civilization. It can hardly be called ‘Roman’ at all, even less “Byzantine.” As eastern classical-styled monarchy, in any sense of the word, the Romeian civilization of the VI century was anything but Roman or “Byzantine”. Its citizens referred to themselves in first person as ‘Romeo’, plural ‘Romei’ (which is not Latin nor in any other idiom, but pure Macedonic!), a term which subsumed at once their identity as Orthodox Christians, the ‘Chosen People’ who, in the eyes of God had succeeded to the place of Macedonians, Romans, and Jews from the time of Christ. And as ‘Romei’ they considered themselves citizens of a universal world empire, protected and guided by God. Thus, under the Iconoclast monarchs of the Macedonian dynasties, the Romeian Empire had become largely Macedonized and predominantly orthodox.

Above: on the obverse of the coin (on the left) it can be readen “Ihsus Xristus Nica”, and on the adverse (on the right) “Basilios ce Constantinis tu Basilis Romeo”

This reawakening had its roots deep in the glorious Macedonic past, and with its brilliance threw new light over the early medieval ‘dark ages.’ The previous period, from Filip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great to Augustus, created the civilization with which that of Romeian Empire was continuous - its marked feature is that it was a culture shared widely by the men of a world where intercourse was general. Alexander III of Macedon had broken down the separate “independence” of the previous Mediterranean city-states, and by doing so had destroyed much of its cherished individuality. Long before the invention of the gun-powder and cannons, the wall-closure dwarfism was annihilated by the greatness of the Macedonian Empire and scientifically organized great armies of ancient Macedon, before which the city-state strength was an incomparably small thing. The embarrassment of men's sheltering behind the city walls availed little before the relentless

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3 The Romeian Empire and its citizens never heard or knew for such a nomination in their time. This modern nomination was inserted by the German historian Hieronimus Wolf only in the 16th century, more than a hundred years after the fall of the Constantinople under the Turks.
Macedonic individualists who marched through the fields of history. As the result of the Alexander’s cosmopolitan conquest and overthrow of the backwatter moulds of human thought - the ‘ecumenical’ all-embracing idea and the god-king were born. This Romeian sovereign did not ultimately derived his legitimacy from the suffrages of his fellow countrymen, nor from the ancient religious institutions, but rather from the possession of a daemonic energy which was more than the potency of any ordinary mortal. With the vent of Alexander the Great these separate concepts united, and the later medieval Romeian ‘Kosmopolitan Avtokrator’ (Latin: Rex Pontifex Maximus) of the eastern world will be the result. Unlike the Roman imperators, but in the similar fashion like ancient Macedonian kings who were both religious and state rulers, the Romeian Emperor was the ‘Christ’ and the Holy King, supreme ruler with claims of spiritual power over heaven and hell, a credo which legitimated his undisputed and limitless earthly power.

Romeian Empire with its holy see Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma was not just the result of the past, it was a new beginning. Constantine I the Great marked this turning point in the history of Mediterranean region. Born in the then Roman province of Macedonia, a fact of which he was fully aware when establishing the Diocese of Macedonia (Latin: Dioecesis Macedoniae), Constantine embodied and resurrected through himself the great achievements and magnificent glory of ancient Macedonian kings, and combined it with the new universal religion, Christianity.

The Koine/Septuagint language was the second enormous achievement and legacy of Alexander the Great. This Macedonic stratagem is just another monument of the Macedonian genius through the milenniums and permanent memorial of the conquering power of the Macedonian language.

Regarding the said, and the use of Macedonic-invented Septuagint Uncial script in the Eastern Romeian Empire, there's a striking testimony of this imperishable continuity of Macedonian language, which is situated in the Syrian desert. In the place called today ‘Qasr Ibn Wardan’ (The Palace of Wardan), northeast from Hamma, there are splendid remains of VI century basilica and fortress built by Justinian I the Great. Above the two of the portals on the Justinian’s basilica is written СЕПТЕМБР and НОЕМВР (September and November). Nothing unusual one will say. But, the particularity of the names of these two months is that they are not in Roman, nor in any other language, but exclusively and unquestionably in perfect Macedonian, written exactly in the same way as they are written and pronounced in today modern Macedonian - 15 centuries later. The only "difference" is the change of the letters N and I, which in today Macedonian Cyrillic script are Н and И respectively, thus СЕПТЕМВРИ and НОЕМВРИ. The conclusion is inescapable - 15 centuries ago the Romeians were using the same, or, if not completely the same then very similar Macedonian language to the language that the Macedonians are using today. It is in this Macedonic Septuagint-Koine speaking world that Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma (Constantinople) was founded, and the efforts of Roman emperors to foster the spread of Latin within the Roman provinces in occupied Macedonian peninsula were foredoomed to failure. Actually, Justinian I the Great was the last Romeian emperor that spoke the learned administrative idiom, Latin.
Above and on the next page: Scriptures in stone on the 6th century basilica built in Syria by Justinian I the Great in AD 564
Why is this testimony so important? Because the possession of a common language is, in fact, the basis of a nationality, just as the possession of a common government is the basis of a nation. The claims of a nationality must be decided on linguistic grounds, those of a nation on political grounds, while racial unity is determined by kinship in blood and physiological traits. Although the invention of the nations and nationalities is argued to be the 18-19 centuries invention, this and many other testimonies of the Macedonic script and language show that the basis of the distinguished Macedonian nationality was forged already in the time of Filip II and Alexander the Great. Their achievements and everlasting glory represent probably the highest peak in the whole Macedonian history, and Alexander’s heredity was justifiably remembered by the 19th century Macedonian bard and scholar, Georgi Pulevski, in his 1879 song „For the Macedonians“:
Our fatherland is this place so dear to Macedonians
It was a kingdom under King Filip
An old empire of Alexander the Tsar.
Our Macedonian Tsar known in the whole wide universe as Alexander the Great.
He left his empire in the Balkan Peninsula
To all Macedonic highlanders...  

Above: an illustration of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma from XV century

4 From the 'Southeastern Europe Joint History', Workbook 2, pp. 105,106.
Justin I and Justinian I (527-565) of Macedonia

The VI century opened, in effect, with the death of emperor Anastasius and the accession to the throne of Macedonian soldier who replaced him - Justin I (ruled 518–527). Justin Iztok, a peasant born in a hamlet of Beriana, today the village of Ber near Skopje, modern capital of Macedonia. He was of modest origins, being shepherd, but then after he became a professional soldier. His courage and valor gradually raised him to the highest ranks in the army, and his success and honesty made of him a protégé of the emperor Anastasius. After 50 years of military career he climbed to the influential position of Comes Excubitorum - a commander of the palace guard, the only troops in the city. Taking an advantage of his high position at the time of emperor’s death, supported by his soldiers and by making gifts of money, Justin was able to secure for himself the election as emperor in 518. Thus, Justin ultimately managed to became Emperor (518-527), in spite of the fact that at the time of accession he was still illiterate and almost 70 years old. A career soldier with little knowledge of statecraft, Justin wisely surrounded himself with trusted advisors. The most prominent of these, of course, was his nephew - Plavion Petruš Sabbatij ‘Vaistinition’ (Latin: Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus), in English: the Blond Peter Sabbatian “Justinian”. It was the Justin’s sister Budimka (Latin: Vigilantia) blond son, whom he opted as his own, and invested him with the name Justinian (Latin: Iustinianus). This act associated him with the Empire. The blond Petruš grew a peasant like his uncle, but after Justin adopted him he was carefully taught and educated. On the throne, which Justin seized at Anastasius’s death, he preserved the habits of his early station, as he was untutored and lacked the talents of a statesman. His nine years’ rule as emperor was marked by few events of importance. This role was reserved for his educated nephew. Justin's reign is noteworthy for the resolution of the Acacian Schism between the opposed fractions of the Christian church. Orthodox by religious profession, he closed the long-standing dispute between the emperors and church authorities, and his nephew was therefore able to exercise autocratic authority both in church and state. The latter years of his reign were marked by strife among the Romeian Empire, the Ostrogoths, and the Persians. In 526, Antioch was destroyed by an earthquake, Justin's health began to decline and he formally named Justinian as co-emperor and, on 1 April 527 as his successor. On 1 August of that year, Justin died and was succeeded

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5 The Macedonian word/name Iztok/Istok [pronounced ‘eestock’] is associated with old Macedonic word for "East" or 'source' (composed of two syllables - "Iz" - from, and “Tok”- stream, flux); in modern Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian as “Istok”; Russian “Vostok”; Polish “Wschód”; Slovenian “Vzhod”; Slovakian “Východ”. Word ‘Iztok’ etymology was interpreted as a literal translation into the Latin word ‘orients’, the genitive ‘Orientis’ (from which the names Orientius, Orienciij). https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iztok
Some contemporary persons named Iztok: https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iztok#Znane_osebe

6 Also found in the Avestan texts as one of the six conceptions of Ahura Mazda as „Vaišṭa“ – ‘truth'. See more here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amesha_Spenta

7 “Plav” – 'blond' in plain Macedonian. See also Latin “flavescens” - yellowish or turning yellow; as verb “flavescere”; from “flavus” - 'yellow.'

8 see ‘Budim’, i.e. the city of Buda on the right bank of the Danube River, which with the city of Pešta on the left bank form today ‘Budapest’, the capital of Hungary (‘Budimpeshta’ in modern Hungarian) https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Budim; see also the city of Budva in Montenegro.
by Justinian. Justinian was a Macedonian name that he took to honour his uncle to whom he owed everything.

Above: a coin of Justin I and Justinian I (Ivstin et Ivstinian), VI century

Justin and his nephew Justinian represented the desperately needed shift in the Romeian backwatered policy, and turned the focus back to the restoration of their empire. They also healed temporarily the schism with the western church, repudiated Monophysitism, and removed Monophysite bishops from Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. Justinian I succeeded his uncle with great vigor, he was then forty-five years old.
The emperor Justinian I the Great, his character and policy

Born in AD 483 in Tauresium\(^9\), Macedonia, Justinian I made giant steps from his natal Macedonian village to the throne of the Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma (i.e. Constantinople). He received an excellent education, though it was said that he always spoke Macedonian with a bad accent. At the moment of his enthronement he was a mature man of Macedonian descent, with clear conception of his duties, and knew how to fulfill them. Two important facets of Justinian’s foreign policy were - his continuation of the age-old Macedonian struggle with Persia, and his attempt to conquer the former Roman provinces in the west from the devastation of barbarian invaders. His idea and task were arduous. First he needed to restore the order in minds of his suzerains torn by political and religious passions, and to insert in their hearts the notion of a “grand strategy” in the sense of the realization of a political-ideological program to reconstruct imperial dominion in the Mediterranean world, strengthen the frontiers, and perfect the system of political and administrative institutions.

Above: a monument of Justinian I the Great in Skopje, the actual capital city of his homeland Macedonia

Justinian’s guidelines were in great pat merit of his uncle Justin, as he longed to reunite the empire because of his simple philosophy of two-institutions stronghold - church and state. If both church and state perform their duties well, a "general harmony will result." It was in pursuit of this general harmony that Justinian concentrated all his efforts. Seconded by excellent generals and able

\(^9\) Today village of Taor in the vicinity of the modern capital of Macedonia, Skopje.
ministers he accomplished this program with unquestionable success. Justinian had already shown himself an eager student of all departments of knowledge, and when he became his uncle's colleague he quickly developed great powers of administration. His industry and grasp of affairs were the wonder of the Court. Unemotional and pitiless, he ruled his Empire with an unwearied diligence that left little time either for sleep or recreation. While deficient in the highest qualities of statesmanship he was able and ambitious, and was well served by the officers whom he gathered around him, and to whom the carrying out of his schemes was entrusted.

Justinian carried on wars in four directions, in the east against the Persians, in the south with the Vandals, in the west with the Ostrogoths and Visigoths, in the north with the Mongols. Although, unlike many earlier Romeian emperors, he did not personally lead the troops on the battlefield, but directed the operations from his imperial palace at Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. Most decisions were discussed in some sort of imperial council, whose members included the Magister Officiorum, two Magistri Militium Praesentales, the Urban Prefect of Constantinople, and the Praetorian Prefect from Macedonia. These men understood the complex realities of war. They could also oppose the emperor - the eastern Praetorian Prefect Jovan (eng. ‘John’) argued fiercely against the invasion of Africa in 533 (Procopius, Bella 3.10.7–17). Even in these debates, although there were clear differences between the soldiers and civilians, there was no conception of the army as a body separate from the government. Nonetheless, both generals and soldiers were devotedly loyal to the emperor if he faced a challenge, and this loyalty was felt because soldiers were always the emperor’s men, as suggested by a pre-battle speech given for a general by Procopius, comparable only to the famous oath of Alexander the Great to his Macedonian Falankas at Opis:

“As you came from the fields with your knapsacks and smocks, [Justinian] brought you together in Constantinople and has caused you to be so powerful that the Roman state now depends on you.” (Bella 4.16.13)

To avail this claim of devoted soldiers and loyalty to Justinian speaks the fact that the regions most favored for recruiting, apart from the immediate neighborhood around Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, were in his native Macedonia and Armenia, another Macedonic region par excellence. These troops were called ‘domestic’ (Latin: Domestikoi), and were the most reliable and elite units of the whole Romeian army. Identified chiefly by their province of origin, Macedonians, Paphlagonians, Armenians and so forth - they were brigaded in the “Western” (Macedonian peninsula proper) and “Eastern” (Asia Minor) divisions. The Domestikoi from central Macedonia were also known as Vardariotai, associated with the Macedonian region around Solun (Latin: Thessaloniki) and along the river Vardar in Macedonian inland.
Above: left - the type of shields of the *Comes Domesticorum* (homeland troops) in the West (Macedonia), and right - the decoration of the shields of the *Comes Domesticorum* in the East (Asia Minor), as described in *Notitiae Dignitatum*

Below: the type of shield of a higher rank officers (from the mosaic in the basilica of St.Vitale in Ravenna)
The empress Theodora Augusta

One of first acts of Justinian I the Great was to associate with him in power his wife Theodora. She was 15 years younger than Justinian and his opposite in nearly every way. She was social, witty, supremely self-confident, and never lost her head in a crisis. If Procopius, a writer of the time, is to be believed in his “Secret History,” a collection, made with perfidious care of all the scandalous rumors at the court, Theodora was the daughter of a wild beast-tamer, Akakios, whose office was to feed the bears at the Grand Circus in Constantinople. She led the life of a boisterous wandering actress, fallen into deep poverty, and was generally disliked among the elites in Constantinople, until, she won by magic charms Justinian's heart. He adored her, and she was his most important adviser.

When she became a Christian, she gave up her former life for spinning wool. In 522, she met Justinian, who was so enamored with her, that he changed the law so that actresses could marry into high society. The following year, he married her. There are two facts in all this: Theodora was of unimportant origin, like Justinian, and she was poor when he married her, two unpardonable defects in the eyes of the skeptical and keen aristocrats of Constantinople. Most actresses were also prostitutes, and whispers to that affect followed her all her life. Whatever her earlier life may have been, she appears, after her marriage, to have given no opportunity for scandal, and to have been forward in promoting charitable works.

She was of small stature, somewhat pale, with brilliant, alert eyes, which lent charm to her features. According to the “Secret History” even, her bearing on the throne was always dignified. She loved to display herself, but had a strong mind, and counseled wisely. More than once in the preamble to his laws, Justinian repeated that he had consulted "his revered wife." She bore the title of ‘Augusta’, and was truly an empress.
The games and factions at Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma - The Nika rebellion

The empire's capital Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma was torn by factions. Political passions banished from the arena of the state they found a refuge in the hippodrome. There each political and religious party had its favorites and its distinctive colors, borrowed from paganism: the Blues, who had taken the colors of Poseidon, the Greens, who wore Aphrodite's, and the Purple - the color of the emperor. Under the emperor Anastasius the Greens had been in favor, they sat nearest to the prince at the theatre.

But under Justin, Justinian’s uncle, who had despoiled Anastasius' and his nephews Hypatius and Pompeius of the Purple (color of the emperors), the Blues regained the vantage and displayed it throughout the city with that insolence which the assurance of impunity lent them. In the circus one day, in 532, the Greens complained violently to the emperor, and, not obtaining justice, they rose in arms. Their warcry, Nika, (“Victory!”), was heard on all sides. The prefect's mansion was burned, Hypatius was proclaimed emperor by the crowd. Justinian at first, following the vices of some of his ministers, was caught in awe and thought of panicky retreating at safe. But his wife, the empress Theodora, forced him to stand his ground and take a determined action. Backed by faithful generals
Belisarius and Mundus, he then reacted swiftly and gained the upper hand by a successful disposal of troops, which promptly enclosed the insurgents and their ‘emperor’ in the Great Circus. They were helped by Narses, the chamberlain, who was sent to bribe the leaders of the Blues and sow disaffection between the allied factions. In the meantime the reinforcements gathered and the soldiers then entered and killed them all. Thirty-five thousand persons are said to have been massacred. This harsh lesson smothered, but did not extinguished the passions for good. Fourteen years later blood was again shed for a like reason.

On the establishment of quiet impetus in the capital Justinian regained the self-determination of an emperor, to such a degree that he began his imperial wars of re-conquest. The circumstances and rapid decadence of the barbarian kingdoms in Africa, Italy, and Spain encouraged his bold plans.
Justinian’s Army

Romeian Empire army in the VI century was disposed in 7 Field Armies and a large number of smaller regional divisions along and behind the frontier regions of the empire. The former were known as Comitatenses, were each commanded by a Magister Militium, “Master of the Soldiers”, and were organized into divisions for the East, Armenia, Thrakia, Macedonia, Africa, and West (Italy), with two further “praesental” divisions (i.e. they were “in the presence” of the emperor) based south and north of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, respectively in Asia Minor and in Thrakia, to defend the capital. The troops making up the frontier divisions and permanent garrisons were known as Limitanei, mostly composed of older legionary units, together with their attached auxiliaries, augmented by auxiliary and legionary cavalry forces brigaded together to provide local static and mobile reserves. By the end of Justinian’s reign there were over 25 such commands based in both the frontier provinces of the empire and inland, from Scythia to the northwest of the Macedonian peninsula through the Middle East and Egypt to Mauritania in northwest Africa. An important new field command, the Quaestura Exercitus, had been introduced during the reign of Justinian. It was equivalent to that of a Magister Militium, placed under the authority of an officer entitled Quaestor, with authority over troops based in the Danube frontier zone (the provinces of Scythia and Moesia II), but including also the Asia Minor coastal province of Caria and the Aegean islands.

![Approximative appearance of the Romeian horsemen and foot soldier](image)

The empire’s naval forces were relatively limited in the late VI century. A series of small flotillas was maintained along the Danube, another fleet was based at Ravenna and there was a squadron at Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. For the expedition to Africa in 533 the Romeian state was able to
assemble some 500 vessels of varying capacity as transports, together with 92 single-decked warships or *Dromones* with crews totaling 2000 marines.

As well as the regular field armies and the frontier divisions, the empire also employed substantial numbers of federate or allied forces. There is good evidence for the establishment of new mounted units along tritional lines - five units of Vandal cavalry (presumably lancers) were established from among the prisoners taken during Belisarius’ African campaign; similarly, units of Persian and Armenian cavalry are found, as well as of Ostrogothic cavalry (posted to the eastern front). Other units, of heavy cavalry - *Cataphractes* and *Clibanarii*, as well as the light cavalry/archers, seem to have been formed during the V and early VI century.

Lastly, the emperors had a number of guards units based in their proximity, the most important of which were the *Scholae Palatinae* and the *Excubitores*. The former, organized into seven divisions (or *scholae*) each of 500 soldiers, were cavalry, and had originally been the elite cavalry shock units, in the very same fashion and tradition as the ancient Macedonian *Royal Companions*, feared cavalry of Filip II and Alexander the Great.

The second subdivision, per *Themata* (i.e. Regions), vary according to the sources, both within the Romeian material and in the Arab or other evidence. Thus Leo’s “Tactica,” repeating the formulation in the “Strategikon” of Mauricius, describes each regional army corps (*Themata*) as
consisting of three Tourmai, each under a Tourmarches; each Tourma was then divided into three Drouggos, and each Drouggos into a number of Banda or Tagmata.

The principles upon which Romeian military strategy was based were basically those of the IV century: a first line of defense consisting of a linear frontier established by fortified strongholds, major fortresses and a connecting network of minor fortified positions; and a second line made up of a mobile reserve of field units grouped into a number of subdivisions scattered in garrison towns and fortresses across the provinces behind the frontier. But, by the end of Justinian’s reign the gap between the different functions of the “frontier” and “field” forces had been narrowed, as field army units became permanently garrisoned in or near provincial towns and cities, serving in many cases as reinforcement to the frontier garrisons rather than as a mobile reserve. Of course, the concept of a frontier as a line along a clearly marked political divide does not adequately account for the situation along most of the Romeian Empire frontiers. It was narrower in some parts than others (for example, it was very broad along the desert “frontier” in Syria and quite a “borderline” along the big rivers, like Danube in the north).

Nevertheless, the nature of much of the medieval warfare of the middle years of the VI century, during the reign of Justinian, demanded armies that could move rapidly, confront equally mobile enemies, bring them to battle or harass them, and then move again to take up new dispositions elsewhere. The increased emphasis upon cavalry was, therefore, a V and especially a VI century response to a change in the empire’s overall strategic situation, a response which may well have increased in pace from the middle years of the VI century.

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10 From Macedonian “Drug” - other one, and/or “Drugar” - ‘companion, friend’ in plain Macedonian.
Yet, while the emphasis in the tactical formations and battlefield situations discussed in the “Strategikon” is placed upon the cavalry, the chapter dealing with combating barbarian and foreign peoples makes it quite clear that infantry continue to play an important role.

Further, from the time of Justinian I arms production has been a state monopoly, and the bearing of arms had long before this been prohibited to private citizens. Weapons and military equipment were kept in state armories, guarded by soldiers or watchmen. By the same token, and according to Procopius in the VI century, soldiers were normally permitted to carry only a sword in civilian contexts, and the sources record one or two incidents suggesting that such prohibitions were generally respected throughout the Romeian period. The clear insistence upon a separation of warlike from non-warlike dress, activities and behavior highlights the very special position awarded to soldiers and to warfare within the Romeian order of things. Partly inherited from western Roman civil legal tradition, partly from the Christian view of warfare, it served to reinforce the distinction made between war - regrettable but necessary - and peace, ideally the “normal” state of affairs. Also, the Romeian tradition of distinctive military dress, with units defined by uniform and color, and shield decorations, as well as by regimental standards or their equivalent, seems to have continued to the end of the empire.

When Justinian I came to the throne, his troops were fighting the endless war against the Persian armies on the river Euphrates. After campaigns in which the Romeian generals, among whom Belisarius was the most distinguished, obtained considerable successes, a truce was negotiated in September 531. Two emperors, Justinian and Khosrow I, finally came to terms, and the Treaty of Eternal Peace was ratified in 532. The treaty was on the whole favorable to the Romeians, who lost no territory and whose suzerainty over the key district of Lazica (i.e. Colchis, in Asia Minor) was recognized by Persia. However, Justinian had to pay the Persians a subsidy of 11,000 pounds of gold, and in return Khosrow gave up any claim to a subvention for the defense of the Caucasus. This gave to Justinian a space and time to turn westward.
The chief importance of these Persian wars, in their bearing on European history, was that they drained away the military and financial resources of the Romeian Empire, and were among the causes that necessitated the heavy burden of taxation that Justinian laid upon his subjects.

Above: stone-incised Labarum, Romeian exclusive imperial standard with symbolic christian imagery
Conquest of Africa - End of the Vandal Kingdom (AD 534)

Justinian I the Great appeared in Africa as the defender of the orthodox faith against the Vandal usurper Gelimer and the heretic Arian credo that he grasped. He launched his attack on North Africa in June 533. A small army of not more than 10,000 infantry and 5000 horsemen, commanded however by a brilliant general, Belisarius, had but to appear to overthrow Gaiseric's work. An unopposed landing was made in August, and by the following March (AD 534) Belisarius had mastered the kingdom and received the submission of the Vandals. Gelimer, beaten near Tricameron, not far from Carthage, was surrounded in his retreat on Mount Pappua and forced to surrender. Belisarius carried him prisoner to Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, where Justinian I awarded a triumph to his general, an honour which had been reserved and exclusive right for emperors alone as from the time of Alexander the Great.
Among the precious objects which passed in review in front of the Romeian crowd was the treasure from the temple of Jerusalem, which Titus had brought to Rome and Gaiseric had removed to Carthage. Justinian I returned it to Jerusalem. He crowned Belisarius's glory by naming him sole consul for the following year.

But, despite the rapid Vandal collapse, the unruly Berber tribes of the hills tied imperial forces down for decades. In both sectors, the expected rapid re-annexation turned into interminable provincial war, which continuously drained the empire's manpower and finances.
Conquest of Italy, end of the Ostrogothic (‘Eastern Goths’) kingdom (535-555)

Barbarian invasions succeeded in waves on the spoils of once formidable western empire of Rome. The Goths’ turn came after the Vandals. Since 493, Italy, the home of the old Roman Empire, had been actually controlled and ravaged by Theoderic’s Goths. After the death of Theoderic’s grandson Athalaric, who died from excesses in 534, the imprisonment and murder of his daughter Amalasuntha, Romeian ally and admirer, gave Justinian a justification to invade the Apennine peninsula, under the pretext of avenging morals and religion.

But he found a less easy task in Italy than in Africa. The invasion started in 535, when Mundus was sent against Salona, and the still-young Belisarius was sent with an army to Sicily, then after landing in Italy mainland in 536. Although the Romeian Army was accounted as formidable military force of some 150,000 units (Agathias 5.13.7), it required not less than 19 military campaigns to defeat the Eastern Goths (Ostrogoths) in Italy. Under the new king Witigades the Goths assembled all the forces of the nation, and newly inspired by his courage toke for an instant the offensive, and shut down Belisarius in Rome. But Witigades could not capture him there, and was obliged to fly to Ravenna, where he was equally defeated.

But the Goths regrouped again and found new able leader in Totila, who in 542 took the contra-offensive in southern Italy and in 543 captured Naples. In 544 Belisarius was sent against him, but
with inadequate forces. Valorous Romeian general couldn’t make much against him without reinforcements, and in 549 he was recalled back to Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma.

In 552 Justinian against Totila sent again a powerful army under the eunuch commander Narses. He was finally defeated by superior numbers and strategy, and was mortally wounded at the battle of *Busta Gallorum*. Victorious Narses entered Rome and soon afterward defeated Ostrogoth resistance at Mt. Lactarius, south of Vesuvius. Belisarius with his army came from the south. At first he failed in undertaking Parses, victor at Taginge at the foot of the Apennines (between Perugia and Ancona), but he followed the last Gothic king, Tadeias, to Vesuvius, killed him and destroyed his army in 554.
In the meanwhile Narses's success was threatened from north by a Frankish invasion led by two of Theodebald's lieutenants. Franks during this period made several efforts to occupy north Italy, most seriously when an army under Butilinus and Leutharis invaded the Po Valley in 553. But, their ill fate was to be destroyed too, by the unfavorable climate conditions and the swords of Romeian soldiers. At the end of 555 Narses remained unquestioned master of the Apennine Peninsula, and until 562 the Romeians were in control of the whole of the country.

Thus ended the Gothic dominion. They remained in the common memory as the people without laws and without taste, mere barbarians. The grotesque architecture and the writings of the Middle Ages were condemned after them in one word - *Gothic*. To them was imputed the destruction of the glorious antique monuments of Rome, which were lost forever and left as prey for the builders of churches and fortresses. But, the Romeian re-conquest of the western parts of ex-Roman empire was as harmful to Italy as the previous Gothic domination. Narses, given the most comprehensive powers as able and entrusted chamberlain of Justinian, attempted to revive the old administration. Thus behind him reappeared the Romeian tax extortionists. After twenty years of furious wars the country was drained to fill the coffers of the fiscal agents, or to satisfy the general's and ecclesiastic greed.
Romeians seize a part of Spain from the Visigoth (‘Western Goths’) kingdom (554)

The troops, left free after the termination of wars in Italy, were mostly sent into Spain. There also, barbaric anarchy invited and favored Romeian intervention. After the family of the Badaltiad had died out with Amalaric (531), the Visigoths had no kings of one strong dynasty. They generally usurped the throne for short periods, and many were assassinated. The crown hardly remained more than two or three generations in the same family. Moreover, this insecure royalty had a formidable enemy in Christianity. Subdued and persecuted by the Arian Goths, the Christians hated their masters. They supported the uprising of a noble, Athanagild, who demanded the support of the Romeians in order to dethrone Agila. The patrician Liberius, who was immediately sent by Justinian I, helped the usurper to seize the power, but took possession of the principal fortresses of the southern coast for the benefit of the Romeian Empire. As master of Ceuta and the lower valley of the Guadalquivir, Liberius held the pillars of Hercules. Justinian I might then boasted with some truth that the Mediterranean, ‘Mare nostrum,’ belonged to him.

In Spain, Italy, and Africa Justinian I had profited by the pretext of his enemies' faults in religious and political matters. In the East and North he was less fortunate, because circumstances were less favorable.
The Romeians held in check on the Eastern Frontier

The eastern frontier of the Empire, from Trebizond on the Black Sea to Circesium on the Euphrates, was constantly menaced by the Persians. To hold them in check Theodosius and his successors had erected fortresses and acquired the good-will of small tribes, more or less independent, which were settled between the two empires: the Christian Lazica, dwelling in ancient Colchis in the basin of the Phasis. They commanded the principal defile of the Caucasus, with the tribe of the Ghassanides, of Arabian race, masters of the extensive oases scattered through the desert between Syria and the Euphrates; and the Bedouin tribes of Arabia Petraea. The Persian Sassanides coveted Syria, so as to have an outlet to the Mediterranean he treated with the Lazica to obtain an opening to the Black Sea, the highway to Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma.

Justinian I fought two wars against the Persian Empire ruled by the Sassanids. These wars took place in several different theaters; the Caucasus (mostly involving the Lazica), central Anatolia (also known as Armenia), and Mesopotamia (mainly direct conflict between Romeians and Persia).

In Mesopotamia and Syria, the Romeians had semi-permanent alliances with a number of Arab dynasties, perhaps most useful in ensuring that these peoples did not instead ally with the Persians. First, there were the final stages of the 502–532 war, closed by the ‘Endless Peace’. Hostilities restarted in 540, and the war dragged on under other generals, but was to some extent hindered by the Bubonic Plague. A five-years’ truce was made in 545 and renewed in 551, but still did not extended to Lazica, which the Persians obstinately refused to renounce, and a fierce struggle continued intermittently in this mountainous region. But the struggle was confined to Lazica where it lasted until 557. Nevertheless, Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma agreed to pay an annual tribute of
30,000 solidi (gold coins), and the Persians renounced all claims to the small Christian kingdom of Lazica, an important bulwark against northern invaders. Thus, the Fifty Years Peace was finally negotiated in 561.

The campaigns in Mesopotamia involved large armies that moved on predictable routes. Sieges and field battles attempting to relieve besieged cities thus dominated campaigns. In Lazica and Syria, there were also widespread skirmishes. The faithful Christians and the Zoroastrian fire-worshippers kept each other at bay, alternating in successes and reverses. Justinian I the Great, absorbed in his Mediterranean wars, had to pay twice a tribute to Khosroes Nushirvan. A treaty was concluded with the Christian negus of Abyssinia in hopes of stirring up an unexpected enemy, but nothing came of it. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, by war or bribe, Justinian maintained his eastern provinces virtually intact, so his policy on the eastern front resulted in a draw.
Justinian I the Great vs Khosroes the Great

In Khosroes Justinian I had a formidable rival. He was one of the greatest sovereigns Persia ever had. An unscrupulous politician, he made sure of his power through the assassination of two of his brothers. This crime, readily condoned by orientals, did not affect his title of ‘Just’ and he affected justice, leniency and humanity. He shed tears over the sacking of Antioch, which was done by his orders. As a literary prince he founded an academy near his capital Ktesiphon, he had translated into Persian the works of Aristotle and the Hindu fables of Bidpai, imitated by Phsedrns and La Fontaine. He is supposed to have borrowed from the Hindus the game of chess, invented “to warn the kings that their strength lies in the strength of their subjects.”

Although fighting the Romeian Empire, Khosroes imitated its cultural achievements. After the surrender of Antioch he took pleasure in the games of the circus, and learning that Justinian I favored the Blue fraction, he espoused the opposition party of the Greens. He was an able commander, and measured himself several times, and to his own credit, with Justinian's best general Belisarius.
Romeian frontier of Danube - “Slavic” and Hun tribes (Bulgars and Avars)

In the Macedonian peninsula the Romeians faced a complex array of problems too. The departure of Theodoric with the Goths for Italy, as well as the bulk of the Romeian Army that was sent to confront them, had left a vacant place on the Danube border and opened one of the back doors of Romeian Empire. Various other tribes from central Euroasian plains followed the suit as invaders.
The “Slavic” tribes passed through first. Most of the threats were from the “Slavic” tribes of Anti (Latin: Antae). In the reality they were actually the same Macedonian people that were once pushed northward by the Roman invasion in 2nd century BCE. The common Macedonian language is the very obvious and undeniable hard evidence of their origin. Now they were pushed back toward the Macedonian peninsula by Mongolian invasions from the northeast. The erroneous term “Slavic” is misleading and does not have ‘ethnical’ meaning at all. Latin “Sclavinias” actually mean 'regions, areas,' and are mentioned east of the Rhine and in north Germany and Hungary, as they are also mentioned in Spain, Asia Minor or North Africa. This multi purpose Latin-coined administrative term was not used for people, but for particular area or group of areas: “Ecclesia Sclavoniae” included Bosnia and Dalmatia, “S(cl)avonia” in today's Croatia, “Sklavinska” (today renamed Dublinska) in Poland, “Macedonian Sclavinia,” etc. Even the so-called Germania, until, and long after the foundation of the Holy Empire by Franks and Charlemagne around 800 on the maps was “Sclavania” (see the map on the previous page). Otto von Bismarck himself pointed out that his grandmother “…didn’t knew a word in German, but spoke only Sorabian”. Also from Romeian sources in Latin we read: "...de Asiae et Europe patribus, Thraciae, Macedonie,...".11

11 The Roman geopolitical term "Sclavinias" (lat. Sclaviniae - “area”) by which the Romeians denoted different provinces and areas throughout Europe, and the old Western name for "Veneti" (i.e. "Slo-veneti").

12 Vatroslav Jagich (1838-1923), Croatian language researcher and the most famous expert in the area of “Slavic” languages (Slavistics) from the second half of the 19th century, was very interested in the language of the old Slavs (staroslavenski jezik, Old Church Slavonic), concluded and proved that it did not originate in the central plains of Pannonia as most experts claimed, but in southern (Aegean) Macedonia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatroslav_Jagi%C4%87

13 "Old Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of the Eastern Orthodox Church, is based on Old Macedoniab," - ‘Encyclopedia of Indo-European culture’, J. P. Mallory, Douglas Q. Adams, (p.301)

14 Cambridge Medieval Encyclopædia, Volume II.

15 Historian Adam from Bremen in the 11th century gave us a precise description of “Germania” from that time: “Sclavania is 10 times bigger than our Saxony, (...) inhabited by Vinuli, which are sometimes called Vandals. (...) If we add the Czechs and Poles, Sklavania really exceeds Saxony (...) Those most-western are Vagrians. Their town that lies near the sea is called Stargrad (i.e. ‘Old city’).”

16 Sorbs, Sorabians - Lužecian Serbs (Lužički Srbi), a Macedonian people living in parts of southeastern Brandenburg and eastern Saxony; also known as Wends/Wendi.

17 “Latin always was and still is a dead language. Nowhere and never in the world there were a Latin-speaking people to be found. It was artificially created with the specific purpose, yet to be fully understood and clarified. The crowning proof of this is the following: there is very little (or non!) variation of the Latin language in time and space (introduced were only some terms and some changes, but it’s a very small number of words, and it’s practically unchanged to this day). The Latin records are all the same wherever we find them, in
From here we can clearly denote the exact meaning of the Latin administrative term “Sclaviæ” with significance of ‘area’ or ‘region’. The same Latin word, slightly altered, is still used even today: “Enclaves” - by definition are certain areas or territories, whose residents belong to the same ethnic group. The Latin-derived term “Sclaviæ” was actually used for the settlements (territories) which were initially out of the Romeian empire control and independent from Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. The term can be interpreted as “enclaves on the Eastern Roman empire periphery.”

In the V and VI century these Macedonic people were forced to turn back and settled all over the Macedonian peninsula, Stretching even as far south as the Peloponnese and as far east as Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, and they had begun to cultivate wheat and herd domestic animals. As pagans, they still adored the forces of nature, chiefly Perun, the god of thunder and lightning. From the hill at Kiev and at Novgorod near a river, until the river of Vistula they raised wooden statues to him, with silver heads and golden beards. They were bold and impetuous in battle, humane to their prisoners of war, and hospitable in times of peace. In 551 at Adrianople, a Romeian army was defeated by these Macedonic tribes and they plundered as far as the Long Walls near Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma.

Later followed the Kuthrigur Bulgars, of Hunno-Mongolian origin, who crossed the Danube on the ice, in the beginning of the VII century. They found the passes in the Balkan mountains unkept and the wall of Anastasius, which shut off the Macedonian peninsula of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma from north, overthrown by an earthquake. They even approached the walls of the Romeian capital. Belisarius stopped them and saved the situation by mustering the population, after which Justinian I opposed to them the Avars, who were both off with a subsidy.

The districts ascribed to the old Quaestura Exercitus established by Justinian didn’t survive the “Slavic” and Avar invasions of the Macedonian provinces (although isolated fortresses on the Danube delta and along the coast of the Black Sea were maintained and supplied by sea). But its Aegean regions remained, as before, the source of men, ships and resources for a maritime corps known in the next VII century as the “ship troops”, or Korabianoi.

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Dalmatia, Libya, Macedonia, Syria, Anatolia, Iberia, UK, etc. From this we could conclude that the whole Roman empire spoke a single language that had no dialects (?) and didn’t change for a thousand years… This is not possible of course, because even today, regardless of mass education, linguistic standardization and mass media – there are still countless dialects. Language is therefore a living phenomenon and is constantly changing all the time. What the Roman Empire actually intent with introducing the Latin script was to forcibly prohibit and eradicate any other literacy (Old Macedonian Syllabic, Egyptian Hieroglyphic, Phoenician, Vincha script, Etruscan, Cuneiform, etc.), and tried and largely failed to suppress autochthonous languages, mostly Macedonian.

Since the writing capacititates knowledge, restricting the literacy had a very important role in ensuring the Roman rule and preservation of the overall control on uneducated masses. The same is true for the Septuagint Uncial script (or so-called „Greek“) imposed by later Eastern-Roman empire, which was also strictly cleric-technical language.“ Domagoj Nikolić, “O Vlajima i Vlasima” (About Flaviuses and Vlachs)


18 ‘Byzantine Chronicles’, 836-837
19 Again a Macedonic-coined term, from “Korab” - ‘ship’ in plain Macedonian.
Religious Character of the Imperial Despotism, Political Unity

Romeian Empire by its citizens was thought of as the terrestrial counterpart of the heavenly kingdom. In regard to this question it must be mentioned that the medieval East-Romeian empire wasn’t an ethnically based state, and the Romeian emperors likewise weren't properly Roman. Justinian I, as a Macedonian, maintained to the highest degree the loftiness of his rank. He regarded himself as the second only to Christ, and the Romeian Empire knew no such clear-cut distinction between church and state as developed in western christendom. All which emanated from the emperor was divine, the laws were his “divine oracles,” the subjects invoked his unquestioned celestial eternity. The Port of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, the imperial palace, the diadem, the letter ‘I’, more than twelve majestracies, his books of law, all were called ‘Iustinian’s’. He brooked no other authority in the state than his own. Under pretext of economy he suppressed in 541 the consulate in the east; that in the West had not existed since Belisarius's time, in 535; he conferred on the bishops weighty administrative and judicial privileges, but he did not relax his hold upon them; the Roman pope, like all the other subjects, before entering on his functions had to await the consent of the emperor or of the governor of Ravenna.

What Justinian I the Great was and what he did contain important elements of how the medieval world was becoming different from the ancient, and how the later Eastern-Romeian empire was thoroughly different from the old Western-Roman empire. Justinian’s “Caesaropapal” deeds also contain conclusive elements of how and when the Western Roman church separated from the once united Christian religion, and how and when the Romeians and other ethnicities finally emerged from the original Macedonian background. Namely, it is well known that the emperor Justinian I the Great in 535 raised the Episcopacy of his birthplace, Tauresium (today village of Taor in vicinity of today capital of Macedonia, Skopje) to the Archbishopric rank with the name Justiniana Prima. What is not so well known is the fact that the Archbishopric of Justiniana Prima was the first place where a Latin form of Christianity (later renamed into “Catholicism”) was intentionally introduced.

Why Justinian I actually did this? He did it in order to project his supreme power and influence from Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma through Skopje episcopacy and Justiniana Prima toward west, i.e. the heavily Romanized western parts of Macedonian peninsula, and the very Apenninic peninsula with old Rome, which he just reconquisted from the barbarians. Thus, with the elevation of this powerful center in Upper Macedonia (ex Roman province of Macedonia Secunda) into a Holy See, he intended to diminish the growing influence of the remote papal church in Rome, and in the end to submit it under his rule and jurisdiction of the ultimate Holy See in Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma.

Under the jurisdiction of Apostolic Macedonian Church of Justiniana Prima he inserted the following provinces and regions: Dacia Meditarranea, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Secunda, Dardania, Praevalitana, Macedonia Secunda, and a part of Pannonia Secunda. All these regions until then were under direct church jurisdiction of Rome’s papacy. With the old Macedonic stratagem

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20 This VI century imperial decree, beside despoiling the larger part of Macedonian peninsula from the Rome’s sphere of (ecclesiastical) influence, generated profound rupture and millennial animosity of the Roman Holy See toward everything Macedonian and Orthodox. Rome practically lost forever the previously conquered Macedonian territories. On top of that this enormous destitution was executed by the hand of an emperor who was Macedonian by origin. Nonetheless, this frozen ecclesiastic Roman-Macedonic conflict lasts until today.
already mentioned above, through this new Latin-preached form of Christianity, Justinian was now aiming at the linguistic-religious assimilation of the Italic-speaking and Latinized populations in western parts of his empire, but, this time not from Rome but from Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. In line with his policy he built many important orthodox religious centers on the eastern and western coast of the Adriatic Sea - Diokleia, Ravena, Salona, Sirmium, but also in Tharros on Sardinia, and even as far as St Columba in Scotland.

But, medieval Rome remained distant as ever from Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, and the means of communication and transportation in those times represented insurmountable obstacle even for the powerful emperor as Justinian I. His presumptuous project of one uniform religion across his empire didn’t turn out to bring the desired results and political unity. This is probably because it lacked the most persuasive means of conversion, i.e. the practice of sword and fire, which were implied so methodically during the Roman times and Romeian conquest in North Africa against other schismatic churches. Under incessant pressures from Rome, ten years after the Justiniana Prima foundation, the emperor Justinian in 545 published a new novel, known as 131, in which by some extent he reduced the reach of the independent church administration of the new Archiepiscopacy in favor of the Roman Pope.

Nevertheless, Justiniana Prima exercised decisive influence on the life of the Romanized Latin-speaking portions of Macedonian population in the 6th century Macedonian peninsula. The Archbishopry of Justiniana Prima elevated status and privileges where definitely confirmed on the Fifth Universal Synod of the Church. Then, in 553, the instauration of the Holy See of Justiniana Prima in Episcopal city of Skopje was institutionally proclaimed and affirmed by the highest church instances. This gave the new impetus to Latinized portions of indigenous Macedonic people, and
further to other Romanized populations across Europe. These corrupted-latin speakers in, lets say Macedonia, would much later became known as “Vlach” people, whose language would eventually evolve into Romance language called “Vlachian” (north of Danube) or “Aromanian” (south of Danube), and much later in 19th century into “Romanian” (north of Danube in ex Wallachia). Accordingly, in Spain the Latinized people (ex Vandals and Iberians) would become “Spanyards”; in Gaul - “French”; in Cisalpine Gaul - “Romansh”; much later in Epirus and Matia - “Albanian”; etc. In short, Justinian I the Great and all these Latinized groups of people across the Macedonian peninsula by origin were and still are ethnic Macedonians (and/or Pannonians, Tribalians, Veneti, etc.), whether in modern or ancient sense, regardless of the fact that they learned the imposed administrative Latin idiom and became subjects of Western Roman or Eastern Romeian church. This was his great mistake - of imposing the administrative Latin of the moribund Rome as medium for christianization throughout Macedonian peninsula, where people were opposing the Roman occupation for centuries, and where Romans never managed to fully enforce the acceptance of their rule. Thus, the christianization tool of “Latin as Esperanto” in western parts of Macedonian peninsula instead of bringing closer the distant regions in Justinian’s empire in long term provoked the opposite effect. This was also due to the decline of power in Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, which in following centuries was confronting more and more new invaders from east. While Romeian power could’ve still be well projected to Italy in 663 and Pope Martin I (649-654) could still be arrested, brought to Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma and exiled to the Crimea, none of this could be done any longer as the VIII century progressed. The church schisms provoked alienation and deviation from the original Christian credo adopted by Constantine. Church became a lucrative institution that cared only for the self-fulfillment and possession interests, people were meant just as a stock for financial and political exploitation and warring purposes. The feud that broke between the two churches (of Rome and Constantinople) reflected on the Macedonic population too. People were so disappointed and tormented by this endless religious conflict that in the X century in Macedonia even appeared a new, alternative Christian movement, the Bogomilism - an early precursor of the Protestantism.

Following the Bulgar-Mongolic invasions from north the privileged status of Justiniana Prima was about to change too. The vulgar impact of these last invaders on this important Archbishopric was disastrous, and gradually the Roman-Rite swept away, with Latin-preaching church ceasing without a mark. In 602 the holy see of Justiniana Prima retreated from Skopje to Ohrid, where it became known as Ohrid Archiepiscopacy. Its Archbishopric's role in Skopje was reinstalled again by an orthodox Metropolite, subaltern of the Patriarch who was residing in Ohrid. In VII-VIII century the Latin was finally replaced with Septuagint Koine and later in IX century by Church Macedonic liturgical language (much later renamed by the conventional politically-biased modern historiography into “Old Church Slavonic.”) 21 As Ohrid Archiepiscopacy it finally regained its former privileges and positions during the Tsar Samoil’s reign in X century.

With the segregation of Romeian Empire the Macedonic peoples were utterly divided by the Justinian’s Latin rite, which was not accepted by the majority of the Macedonians. That’s also one of the reasons why different communities across the Macedonian peninsula resisted so long the official Christianization. Further, the Ecclesiastical division between the Macedonic population formed subaltern groups of Latin rite on one side: Croats, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenians and Polacks;

21 “Old Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of the Eastern Orthodox Church, is based on Old Macedonian” - from “Encyclopedia of Indo-European culture” by J. P. Mallory and Douglas Q. ams, p. 301.
and Orthodox rite groups on the other side: Macedonians, Serbs, Bulgars, Moldavians, Romanians, Russians, Belorussians, etc. This more political than religious segregation finally became a real physical frontier with the great church schism in 1054, and is clearly observable even today.
Religious Unity, dissenters are punished

As philosopher and theologian Justinian took part in the religious quarrels which divided men's minds. The Romeians always liked to dispute on the idea of god, the origin of the world, and the nature of man. They also discussed the recent doctrine of the Trinity. There was always an excessive number of unresolved old and new religious issues…

A priest of Alexandria, Arius (280-336), maintained that the son of God was neither eternal nor equal to the Father. The Nicene council, the first one of the ecumenical councils (325), decreed the contrary, that the son was of the same substance (thus *homoiousious*) as the Father. Thus the Arianism was persecuted throughout the empire, from Theodosius the Great on, the more so since it was opted by the barbarian Vandals.

A bishop of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, Nestorius, taught that the divine person in Jesus Christ should be separated from the human person; the council of Ephesus (431) decided that Christ was both man and god. What followed was that Nestorius was exiled. His partisans, driven out by Theodosius II, took refuge in Persia, where the sect has persisted down to our days.

Eutyches, abbot of a convent in Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, went to the other extreme and preached the doctrine of the pure divine nature in Christ. The Monophysites, who accepted this doctrine, were again condemned in 451. Thus, the main conflict ensued between the orthodox view that the divine and human natures coexist in Christ, and the Monophysite teaching that emphasized his exclusively divine nature. They then separated from the official church and formed a body which spread throughout Egypt, Armenia, Syria, and Mesopotamia. This was an important historical move, which prepared the way for the political separation of these peoples at the time of the Arabian invasion. Justinian’s main doctrinal problem was of more practical and personal concern - The Monophysites, centered in Egypt, controlled the grain exporting regions of the empire. And then there was Justinian's beloved Theodora - a Monophysite.

Shortly after his proclamation as emperor, Justin had summoned a council of bishops at Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. The council reversed the policies of previous emperor Anastasius and accepted the Christological formula of Chalcedon. Justinian had personally participated in the ensuing discussions, which restored communion between all the churches, save Egypt.

Justinian did not wish to lose the rich eastern provinces, and was a strong supporter of the Monophysites. But on the other side, he knew that any concessions to them would almost certainly
alienate the opposite side and the western provinces. Justinian thus tried to compel the orthodox western bishops to arrive at a compromise with the Monophysites, and he even went so far as to hold Pope Vigilius against his will in Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, and forced him to condemn some writings by important church figures in Antioch in an effort to achieve his aim. In 544 Justinian even published a tract, known as "The Three Chapters," in which he tried to find a compromise, but this satisfied nobody. Even after forcing his views through the Second Council of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma (553), the issues were left unresolved. Nevertheless, the second Council of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma finally reaffirmed the Chalcedonian position and condemned the Antioch suspect writings. Justinian achieved nothing with this episode, however; he did not conciliate the Monophysites, he enraged Antioch by the attack on its teachers, and he aroused Rome particularly by his handling of Pope Vigilius and his attempt to determine doctrinal matters. The decrees of the council were not accepted by Vigilius' successors, and a schism thus occurred between Rome and Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma that lasted until 610.

For the rest, Justinian regulated the size of churches and monasteries, forbad them to profit from the sale of property, and complained of those priests and bishops who were unlearned in the forms of the liturgy.

Justinian I is accused of having persecuted all those heretics. Was he wrong to try to silence quarrels so inimical to the unity of the Empire? Heraclius did the same; but wishing to conciliate all, he declared that if there were two natures in Jesus, there could be but one will; and gave rise thus to the heresy of the Monotheites, who were condemned by the council of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma in 680. The Maronites on Mt. Lebanon professed their belief until their union with the Roman Church in the XII century.
Pagan Philosophy Interdicted

Compared with these furious disputes, the antique pagan philosophy was henceforth treated with indifference. It was still publicly taught, especially at Athens; but the later official professors of paganism, Proclus among other, who was the most illustrious, had almost no followers. After Theodosius II they were not paid; Justinian forbade them to teach. The term “Hellenic” had vulgar connotation, and was a common synonym for pagan and non-christian, comparable only to ‘heretic’. The last of the classic philosophers sought refuge in Persia, but finally they were allowed to return to their fatherland, where they died in obscurity, leaving no successors or followers. Thus the same sovereign who officially suppressed the Roman consulate stamped out Romeian philosophy. Under the strong oppression of church institutions the ancient Macedonic pantheon and archaic traditions were giving place to the Romeian.

Other widespread pagan practice was the popular religious cult of the heavenly light - Mithraism. As an admixture of Oriental Zoroastrianism and Macedonic Sun-God worship it was a widely accepted vulgar religion, a fusion of many ancient popular beliefs and primordial chthonic traditions. In the Romeian empire Mithraism was practiced everywhere, but with the event of Christianity, like all the other heresies, it was equally prohibited and severely suppressed with extreme cruelty by the church institutions.

Justinian I obtained religious unity with difficulty, and it was but temporary. To offset this he realized unity of legislation, and this is his greatest glory. At the end of 564, he even lapsed into heresy when an edict was issued by him, stating that the human body of Christ was incorruptible and only seemed to suffer (the doctrine called Aphthartodocetism). This roused immediate protest, and many ecclesiastics refused to subscribe to it, but the matter was dropped with the emperor’s death.
Legislative Unity - The ‘Corpus Juris Civilis’ (529-565)

Justinian is best known as a legislator. Of all the works of Justinian, that which exercised the greatest influence on after-times was his Law codification of Romeian Law. After the establishment of the empire, the Imperial Constitutions, issued by the authority of the emperor, took the place of the leges passed in the comitia. Four works compiled under his aegis, between 529 and 565, are called the ‘Body of Civil Law’ (Latin: Corpus Juris Civilis), commonly known as the ‘Code of Justinian’.

Down to the VI century the sources of Roman law were scattered. They comprised the laws me in the public assemblies of ancient Rome, the decrees of the Senate, the edicts of the pnetors, the books of the great jurisconsults of the Empire, and the private collections of imperial rescripts which Gregory and Hermogenes compiled in the IV century. Theodosius II already tried to bring order into this chaotic mass - the Theodosian Code, promulgated in 438, is me up of the Constitutions of the Christian emperors. Justinian I enlarged the idea:

1. He directed ten jurisconsults, among whom were the patrician, John of Cappocia, Tribonian, questor of the palace, and Theophilus, professor of law at Konstantinbopolitana Nova Roma (Constantinople), to unite in one code the laws enacted by his predecessors. In 528 he organized a commission for publishing a new code of imperial enactments or constitutions – ‘Codex Constitutionum Justinianeus’, which was issued in 529. There he successively ded fifty new constitutions. Then he h a new edition me, the only one which we possess, named the Codex Repetitce Preelectionis, which was completed in 534. The edicts rendered by Justinian I in the second part of his reign were ded to the Code under the division Novellae, and were considered “authentic ditions” (Authenticce).

2. A second commission of sixteen scholars, presided over by Tribonian, undertook the ‘Digest’ (Latin: Digesta), or Pandects, a collection of decisions or opinions taken from the books of the forty principal Roman jurisconsults who h been “patented,” that is to say, authorized by the emperors to give opinions which should have the force of law in the tribunals.

3. As the Code and the Pandects presented many difficulties to students, Tribonian, with two auxiliaries, drew up a manual of jurisprudence in four books, composed on the plan of the Institutes of Gaius. It was the celebrated treatise, the ‘Institutes’, which is studied today in all the law schools of the Christian world. Justinian attributed the accomplishment of this work “to the aid and grace of God,” wished it to be considered sacred, as an “eternal oracle,” and forbe the dition to it of any commentary.

4. The fourth book, commonly called the ‘Novels’ (Latin: Novellae Constitutiones Post Codicem), consists of collections of Justinian’s edicts promulgated between 534 and 565. In the prefaces to his edicts, Justinian boasted of his reconstituted authority in North Africa, hinted at greater conquests to come, and, in return for the benefits his decrees were to provide-urged his subjects to pay their taxes promptly so that there might be “one harmony between ruler and ruled.”
Importance of Justinian's Legislation

These four collections, the Code, the Digest, the Institutes, and the Novels form the Corpus Juris Civilis, which transmitted to the societies sprung from the ruins of the Macedonian empire and Roman republic the principles of Romeian Jurisprudence, that is to say, the idea that the free man is a part of a society founded on respect for law; that the defense of persons and property rests with the state, and not with the individual; that the state is a trained hierarchy of functionaries obeying one chief, absolute and uncontrolled. These fundamental principles endured in the east as long as the empire. Revised under Basil the Macedonian and his son Leo the Philosopher, Justinian legislation was still in force when the Turks seized Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma in 1453. But its influence was not confined to the east only. Justinian established the authority of these books as law for Italy by a “pragmatic” edict of the year 559.

The revolutions which convulsed the peninsula after the emperor's death didn’t destroyed his work. The study of Romeian Jurisprudence, carried on feebly during the first centuries of the Middle Ages, revived in the XI century with amazing vigor, and revealed to the barbarian nations the modern idea of the state founded on law. Justinian's will and the science of Tribonian thus accomplished one of the most fruitful legislative works for the benefit of mankind.
Public Works ordered by Justinian I the Great

Justinian was a great builder as well as legislator. Throughout his 38-year reign, he erected magnificent buildings around the empire. The official historian of his reign, Procopius, described in eight books with a superabundance of detail, the edifices, civil, religious, and military, which this tireless Macedonian builder raised throughout his Roman Empire. Only in Constantinopolitana Nova Roma and its suburbs not less than twenty-five churches and basilicas were built and dedicated to the Holy Virgin and the saints. The most celebrated among these triumphs of architecture are the Saint Sophia, built on the site of Constantine's Church of the Divine Wisdom, which has been twice destroyed by fire. This architectural marvel situated near the Golden Horn, still rears aloft its bold and massive towers. The second is the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (called 'Little Hagia Sophia'). After 1500 years they both still stand proud in Constantinopolitana Nova Roma (today Istanbul).

Above: the intersection of St. Sophia cathedral

The pagan temples were despoiled to ornament this marvel of Roman art, by the architects Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletas. Justinian boasted of having surpassed Solomon's temple. Saint Vitalis at Ravenna was begun in 547 by the archbishop Ecclesius on the model of Saint Sophia. Marbles, precious metals, and all the resources of mosaics were expended on these buildings, which are monuments of the emperor's ostentatious piety. Travellers, pilgrims and mendicants appreciated more perhaps the inns and hospitals built for them, the convents which received them and sent them forward on their way. The emperor rebuilt, his palace, in part destroyed by the Nika insurrection. The riches heaped up within it were surpassed by Theodora Augusta, in the superb palace, the Heraion, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. Justinian multiplied fortifications for the defense of the Empire, as had been done before him in Dacia, beyond the Rhine, and in Brittany. From Belgr (Latin: Sirmium) to the Black Sea, all along the Danube, extended a chain of more than 80 strongholds; 600 others were repaired or built in Dacia, Epirus, Thessalia, Macedonia, and Thrakia; the pass of Thermopylae, the Isthmus of Corinth, the Chersonesus of Thrakia, were enclosed by entrenchments, and the wall of Anastasius completed. Justinian I is also credited by Procopius with
repairing or building several bridges across the Sangarios and Drakon rivers in Bithynia, or the Siberis in Galatia. In Asia the passes of the Caucasus were guarded, the highways kept in repair, the bridges thrown over the rivers, cities rebuilt…

Provinces were better protected and paid their taxes more easily, and this favored commerce. Silk, introduced into the empire, was a new source of wealth, although the monopoly of which Justinian reserved for himself.
Calamities of the Empire

Beside the perpetual wars on three continents, one of the major disasters that stroke Justinian’s empire was the Bubonic Plague of 541–543. It was first noted in Egypt, and from there it passed through Syria and Asia Minor to Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma. To judge from Procopius’s description of its symptoms in 542, the disease appeared in its more-virulent pneumonic form. The appearance of the Plague was particularly horrifying, because it may be transmitted directly from person to person, spreading the infection rapidly and producing exceptionally high rates of mortality, especially in the cities. Comparative studies, based upon statistics derived from incidence of the same disease in late-medieval Europe, suggest that between 1/3 and 1/2 of the population of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma may well have died.

The rebuilding of whole cities devastated by earthquakes (a recurring and expensive item throughout the reign) was also noted in Procopius’ book ‘On Buildings’ (De Aedificiis). Justinian's last years of reign were disturbed by uprisings and a conspiracy against his life. The former were quelled and the latter was forestalled. Belisarius was suspected of being in a plot, and the illustrious general was arrested and his property confiscated. Doubtless he was innocent, for later he was set at liberty. He was reinstated in his dignities and a part of his property, but his enjoyment of them was short-lived; he died in 561. Justinian soon followed him, he died in 565, aged eighty-four.
Justinian fully-deserved surname ‘Great’

Justinian was an extraordinary man of large views and exceptional activity of mind, of great ambitions, tireless energy and an unusual grasp for details. He was also adept at theology, a mighty builder of churches, and a sponsor of the codification of Roman law. The sum of qualities that historians have praised in him - “his noble bearing, affable speech, purity and abstemiousness of habits, zeal for work, taste for architecture and music, poetry and philosophy, theology and law, love of order and discipline” reveal a gifted nature, capable of accomplishing great works, with good auxiliaries. With ministers like John of Cappocia and Tribonian, generals like Belisarius and Narses, he revived the glory of his Macedonian ancestors of the IV and III centuries BCE, and trition of the emperors of the II and IV centuries. Justinian’s success was remarkable, given that the strategic commitments of Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma were little different than they had been for the Alexander’s “Successors” in IV and III centuries BCE and Roman emperors in the IV or V centuries. Justinian I renewed the Roman Christian rule created by Constantine, and reininserted Macedonically-styled influence in Asia Minor and parts of Italy and Africa for several centuries. Had Justinian, instead of turning his ambitions westward concentrated his attention to developing the defenses of the eastern frontiers of the empire, the crescent-flag of the Prophet might never have waved over Jerusalem or Antioch, and the course of human history might have been different to a degree almost impossible to imagine. Nevertheless, when Justinian died, the Mediterranean was once again a Macedonian imperial lake.

The enemies of the Romean Empire multiplied exponentially too, and it couldn’t remain long at the point to which he raised it. He tried to bring back its ancient splendor, but only succeeded in casting a last ray of glory over its lengthy downfall. Even before his death there were ominous indications that the resources of the empire had been overtaxed, and almost immediately after his death the
collapse of his system showed on how unsubstantial foundation it rested. It began to dismantle within two years…

Romeian Empire was a society organized and prepared for war, yet it was not, in its general aspect, a warlike society, at least not in any traditional sense. Frontier wars gave occupation to the army without seriously affecting the prosperity of the people, while an efficient body of officials conducted the ministration. It was a society in which the language and vocabulary of warfare permeated both secular and religious literature as well as oral culture in various ways, yet in which warfare was universally seen as evil, even by the soldiers most actively involved. It was also a society which knew what it was defending, and why. And herein, perhaps, is to be found the psychological aspect of its millennial success. The strength of the inherited imperial ideology, in the various forms through which it was effective in society as a whole, was crucial. The certainties which this system of beliefs and values presented to the literate cultural and political elite, the close relationship between the church, as the formal representative of Orthodox Christianity - firmly rooted in the hearts and minds of the ordinary population, and the emperors, and the ideological motivation thus generated to maintain the state in existence, certainly bear some of the credit for the enduring survival of the Romeian Empire. Together with the factors already outlined, this made the Romeian state, with its armies, its military administration and its methods of waging and avoiding warfare, such a significant actor on the medieval historical stage for so long.
The Romeian Empire after Justinian, contraction of its frontiers

Ironically, Justinian's benevolent administrative policies ensured the empire's loss of the lands most recently conquered. The Romeian Empire was vast and stretching between three continents. Its territory was comprised of provinces that by default were incredibly difficult to hold together, and were even more demanding in order to keep their frontiers intact. Between the deaths of Justinian I the Great and Heraclius (565-641) the frontiers were repeatedly contracted. Heraclius stopped the advance of the Persians and forced them to accept a burdensome treaty, but he was in turn vanquished by the Mussulmans, who seized the fairest Oriental provinces only a decade later.

One century after Justinian the Danube ceased to be the northern boundary of the Empire. Northern Avar auxiliaries rebelled and besieged Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma, bringing with them a horde of Hunno-Finish Bulgars. They were repulsed, but the Bulgar horde returned to the charge and established themselves definitely in 679 in the eastern parts of Macedonian peninsula, where they have remained to this day.

In the west the retreat of the Romeians was even more rapid. The Visigoths, in Spain, rescued from anarchy by Leovigild (568-586), reassumed the offensive. In 582 Seville was taken by assault and Cordoba capitulated. Radeaccar (586-601) took a decisive step when he embraced catholicism; the orthodox Spaniards had henceforth no need of the Monophysite Romeians. Swinthila seized their last possessions (628), and, as first of the Gothic kings, he reigned alone in the Iberian peninsula. And finally, Italy was invaded by the Longobards not long after Justinian's death. The things for the Romeian empire began to degrade rapidly, and the tide of decline ensued. The period between the reigns of Justinian I and Leo III (716) brought the Romeian Empire to the state of depopulation and weakness that had delivered especially the Western part a prey to wave after wave of small tribes of invaders.
Eastern Romeian government in Italy after Justinian I - the Imperial Exarchate of Ravenna

Ravenna remained stronghold of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the west long after the VI century. On the other hand, what was the condition of this city near the Adriatic coast in the northeast-central part of Italy which was not subdued by the Longobards? Ravenna was still under the authority of the Praetorian Prefect and Romeian military commandant, who wielded supreme power with the title of exarch, which had been already borne by the governor of Africa. He firmly held this imperial stronghold in front of the new invaders. Romanus, the exarch of the Ravenna never conceded the rule of law in the hands of Longobards. In the provinces were judges, under the supervision of orthodox bishops and military chiefs called Dukes, or “masters of the militia”; in the large cities, tribunes; in the smaller places their deputies. Venetia, Rome, Sicily and Apulia remained under its authority until VIII century.

By the year 700 North Africa had been lost to Islam, and the situation in Italy was steadily deteriorating, so that the empire, in spite of the existence of an important fleet, was increasingly confined to the eastern Mediterranean basin. Roman papacy was intensively searching to overthrow its authority by developing relations with the new power in the northwest - the Frankish kingdom. However, the Romeian imperial army of Italy survived, on a largely fragmented, regionalized and
localized basis, until the demise of the Exarchate of Ravenna in the middle of the VIII century. Konstantinopolitana Nova Roma first lost Ravenna in 733, than it was recaptured, and finally was lost forever in 751. That was the end of Ravenna as a stronghold of Romeian imperial power and culture.
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