

Sassanian buildings are often preserved to a considerable height. Their massive walls were constructed of stones set in gypsum mortar, their surfaces subsequently plastered. Both Ardashir's fortress, Qalch-i Dukhtar, constructed on a dramatic spur commanding the road from Shiraz to Firuzabad, and his palace set in gardens in the plain illustrate the typical design of a Sassanian structure, with an arched iwan leading into a domed room, the dome carried on squinches. Another well-preserved "palace" is located at Sarvistan, although there is some doubt as to whether it is late Sassanian or early Islamic in date. In addition to monumental structures, there are many fire temples, or *chahar taq*, in Fars, of which a well-preserved example was found near the village of Kunar Siah. It originally consisted of a pair of domed buildings, a sanctuary and a fire temple.

The early Sassanian kings followed a late Parthian fashion of carving pictures on cliffs or boulders, and they raised this art form to new heights. The majority of their reliefs were carved in Fars, mostly near Sassanian cities. Because of the paucity of internal written records and provenanced artifacts, the reliefs are important for the light they shed on the state art of the time and the preoccupations of the kings. Ardashir I and Shapur I, for instance, were concerned with legitimizing their seizure of power, and they recorded their investiture by the god Ahuramazda several times. Other images recorded their victories, showing either the crucial point of a battle, as in the vivid jousting scene at Firuzabad, or the defeated rulers dead at their feet or pleading for mercy, as in Shapur's series commemorating his remarkable victories over Rome.

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### Fayum

Fayum is the Arabic name (derived from the Coptic Phiom, meaning "lake") for the fertile, low-lying area to the west of the Nile Valley about 80 km southwest of Cairo. Although often referred to as an oasis, it is (unlike the other Egyptian oases) watered by a branch canal from the Nile, the Bahr Yussuf. Part of it, including the modern lake (Birket Qarun) lies below sea level. The lake (Lake Moeris in ancient sources) was in pharaonic times much larger than at present; the Ptolemies reduced its level considerably by controlling the inflow of water from the Bahr Yussuf, which flows through an extensive canal and drainage system into the lake. Much of the land reclaimed by this process was assigned to Ptolemaic military settlers (Ptolemy II renamed the area the Arsinoite nome after his sister-wife Arsinoe), but the new villages were also populated by Egyptians brought in from other parts of the country.

Because the Fayum was irrigated by a canal net-

work, unlike the flood basins of the Nile Valley, the maintenance of these canals (which flow at very gentle gradients for much of their course) was central to the usability of most of the land. Perennial irrigation also made it a logical zone for extensive planting of vineyards, orchards, and gardens. Failure to maintain the canals led to the desertification of arable land, however, and some villages went through periods of abandonment when their water supply failed. These periods are in considerable measure the reason for the survival of large numbers of papyri from the Fayum.

The capital of the Fayum was variously called Crocodilopolis, Arsinoe, and Ptolemais Euergetis; most of its once-extensive remains have disappeared in the spread of the modern capital, Medinet el-Fayum. Many of the ancient villages located around the periphery of the canal system have been excavated or surveyed, the best known being Karanis, Philadelphia, Soknopaiou Nesos, Tebtunis, and Theadelphia, all of which have yielded abundant papyri. Karanis (with the archive of Aurelius Isidoros) and Theadelphia (with the archive of Aurelius Sakaon) have contributed greatly to knowledge of village administration, taxation, and economy in the 4th century. For later centuries the villages have yielded little, but 19th century plundering of the mounds of Arsinoe produced a considerable number of documents and literary papyri.

The nome was apparently subdivided in the 6th century to create a new Theodosiopolite nome; it has been argued that its capital was at Tebtunis.

Fayum (or al-Fayyum) became an important and agriculturally wealthy district of early Islamic times; its decline had taken place by the 13th century. It was populated mostly by Christians and was associated in Muslim legend with the presence of Joseph, who would have drained the marshes around the oasis.

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### Festivals

The modern understanding of *festival*, as an occasion for celebration, especially on a day or at a time of religious significance that recurs at regular intervals, comes close to the Latin term *dies festi*. However, the Romans, as the Greeks, stipulated that all festival days were proclaimed for the gods. Thus an ancient festival is defined as essentially sacral in character. The great public games (*ludi*) and banquets (*epulae*) were occasions for festivals, as were certain holidays (*dies feriae*). But to the Romans there was a significant difference between festivals and holidays, for another essential feature of *dies festi*, or festivals, was the element of pleasure, whereas *dies feriae* were essentially days of rest when, as legally defined, certain rites had to be

performed to honor the gods and the law courts were officially closed. This distinction is apparent in Macrobius's *Saturnalia* (1.16.2-4), where he lists *ludi* separately from *feriae*; Varro, too, made a careful distinction between holidays (*feriae*) and public games (*ludi*) that fell on the same day (*Ling.* 6.20). In the Greek world, this distinction does not appear relevant; the term *hēortē* appears to cover the Roman concepts of festival and holiday. Here, festivals will be defined as including both the Latin *dies festi* and *dies feriae*.

The public holidays celebrated in late antiquity honored the traditional deities of the Graeco-Roman pantheon: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and so on. But as the *Codex-Calendar of 354* indicates, those deities associated with certain mystery cults—Isis, Attis, and Cybele, or the Magna Mater, as the Romans called her—had also won public recognition. Each city had its own listing of holidays; in mid-4th century Rome, there were some 56 holidays celebrated without public games, scattered throughout the year. Although this may seem like a large number, it is significantly less than the 104 weekend holidays in the modern calendar year.

The public holidays recorded in the official calendar were considered to be of benefit for the people, either as a whole or for some subgroup. Consequently they were funded by the state and magistrates were involved, either overseeing or participating in the celebration. Priests were required to carry out prescribed rites, but the public at large was not obliged to perform specific rituals of worship. It is clear, however, that many of the rites connected with the holidays were widely practiced; so, for example, at the *Saturnalia* (which honored Saturn), the exchange of gifts and the reversal of slave-master roles is generally attested. The popularity of such rites led some scholars to dismiss these holidays as mere popular entertainments, not religious observances. The merriment accompanying the *Lupercalia*, for example, when naked young men would race through Rome striking women with strips of goatskin to ensure their fertility, does not coincide with modern ideas of solemnity. Nevertheless, this should not obscure the religious nature of such ritual activity.

Most often, the holiday veneration of a deity took the form of a blood sacrifice that was performed in front of a temple by the priests of the cult. A large public banquet frequently followed, as it did to honor Jupiter in November during the Plebeian Games. At times a *supplicatio*, or day of public prayer, took the place of a blood sacrifice; the 3rd century military calendar from Dura-Europus records a *supplicatio* to Vesta on 9 June while the records of the Arval Brethren indicate a blood sacrifice on this day in Rome. Certain holidays required specific rites, such as the ritual opening and cleansing of the Temple of Vesta by women and vestals on the seventh and fifteenth of June in mid-4th century Rome. The commemoration of the

dedication of a new temple often coincided with a public holiday to honor that god, as it did in 4th century Rome on 28 August to honor Sol and Luna; a large public banquet would have followed the ritual sacrifice and commemoration.

Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.16.4-6) divides the Roman public holidays into four categories: the fixed, annual public celebrations (*feriae stativae*) that were noted in the calendar and that had specific observances, like the *Lupercalia*; the annual but movable celebrations (*feriae conceptivae*), such as the *Compitalia*, whose dates were set yearly by magistrates or priests, like our modern holiday of Easter; the holidays proclaimed for special reasons (*feriae imperativae*) by consuls or praetors, such as those to commemorate a triumph or a ritual of purification; and, finally, the *feriae nundinae*, or the *nundinals*, the market days recurring every eight days that were "days off" for the rural, farm populations to come together for business or private affairs. (This last group is not included in the 56 holidays cited above, for these "rest days" are not named holidays.) All but the *feriae conceptivae* were also observed in the Greek world, and it seems that this category was disappearing from late Roman calendars too.

In addition to the public holidays, Romans recognized certain private ones. These were also categorized by Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.16.7-10). First were those holidays that belonged to certain families, such as for the Julian or Cornelian families, and those that were associated with a particular family and its domestic life; here Macrobius is probably thinking of the family cult, with its worship of its particular ancestors. In addition, there are those that were for individual private concerns, such as to commemorate a birthday, the striking of (and survival from) a lightning bolt, a funeral—accompanied by a ten-day period of ritual purification of the family of the deceased—or, interestingly, those for making an atonement or expiation. This last reveals a type of personal connection to the divine that arguably comes close to the modern concept of guilt.

Public games were celebrated as festivals, but they were not, strictly speaking, holidays (*feriae*). The law courts were open and people could go about their business if they chose to do so, much like in the limited celebration of Roman Catholic saints' days in modern Italy. However, the public games were a great attraction to Romans and Greeks, so much so that Augustine's Christian friend Alypius, for example, could not resist attending them in Rome despite his religious scruples (*Confessions* 6.8).

The entertainments at the games varied: theatrical games or spectacles (*ludi scaenici*) where mimes or pantomimes performed or wild animals were hunted, chariot races (*ludi circenses*), or gladiatorial combats were offered, depending on the festival. Since all games were held on behalf of the people, they were funded with public monies and administered by state magistrates, who also often contributed funds. For example,

widely admired. Popes saw themselves as defenders of the traditional faith, not as original theologians. Their most impressive achievements came in the area of local administration.

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### Papyrus

Papyrus was the most important writing material of the ancient Mediterranean world. It was produced in Egypt from the fibers of a reedlike plant and sold in rolls of varying height. Until the 4th century, most books and all official records used the roll format, but the codex gained ground steadily from then on. Even in Egypt papyrus coexisted with other writing materials, including parchment, potsherds (ostraca), and wooden tablets, and in some regions papyrus was much less dominant. Finds of papyrus from Greece, Italy, Palestine, Arabia, and Syria, however, show that its use there was both widespread and similar to that in Egypt.

Numerous documentary papyri survive from the late antique east. Among the most prominent sources for this period are Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis, Panopolis, Syene, Aphrodito, and the Arsinoite nome (Fayum) in Egypt, and recently Petra in Arabia. Papyri have also turned up along the Euphrates at an unidentified site in Syria or Mesopotamia. The 4th and 6th centuries are particularly heavily documented, with several thousand papyri known and published so far. These texts, although often fragmentary and difficult to interpret, provide abundant evidence for matters of provincial and local administration, the economy, taxation, social structure, religion, language, literacy, culture, and private life. Most of the published papyri are written in Greek, but many in Coptic and Arabic (most still unpublished) also survive, along with smaller numbers in Persian (mostly from the Persian rule in Egypt, 619-629). Although more than nine-tenths of all papyri are documentary, the literary finds have had a dramatic impact particularly on the study of religion, with the Oxyrhynchus papyri, the Nag Hammadi library, the Tura finds, and the ancient collection now mainly in the Chester Beatty and Bodmer libraries only the most prominent examples.

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### Paradise

Paradise was, for people in late antiquity, an idyllic abode of joy, bountifulness, and tranquility. It had three basic manifestations in religious beliefs: as a primordial region of perfection, as an intermediate locale where virtuous souls awaited resurrection, and as heaven, or the final dwelling place of the righteous. In many respects, and not accidentally, paradise came to be envisioned as a beautiful garden. The term originated in Old Iranian languages, e.g., Avestan *pairi-daeza* (from *pairi*, round, plus *diz*, form), in which it designated a park surrounded by a wall. This Iranian word entered Greek as *paradeisos* (park, pleasure grounds), then became the Latin *paradis(us)*, and the Old and Middle English *paradis*, or paradise.

In Iran, Zoroastrians referred to the abode of righteous souls by two other terms—"house of song" (Avestan *garodemana*, Pahlavi *garodman*) and the "best place" (Pahlavi *wahisht*). According to the Avestan *Hadhokht Nask* and especially the Pahlavi *Arda Wiraz Namag*, each soul faced judgment after death based on its deeds while alive, then crossed a bridge to enjoy heaven, fell into a cold hell for punishment, or lay motionless in limbo until the final renovation of the universe, at which time all souls would be purified and given a renovated earth on which to dwell for eternity. Heaven and the final earth were certainly described as pleasant and serene locations, but not as verdant gardens. Even the primordial earth was simply a series of flat lands surrounded by water and enclosed by the sky.

Gardens may have first been associated with heavenly places in Sumerian thought, according to which a lush island called Dilmun was supposedly frequented by deities. The biblical notion of the garden of Eden "delight" could have been influenced by this Mesopotamian precursor. Eden, according to Genesis 2-3, was watered by a river and inhabited by Adam, plants, animals, birds, and, finally, Eve. When Judaism developed beliefs in afterlife, messianism, and resurrection (Is. 11:6-8, Ez. 47:1-12), perhaps under Zoroastrian influence around the 6th to 3rd century B.C.E., souls of the righteous were said to enjoy a blissful existence until the end of time, when they would enter the garden of Eden. In contrast to this spiritual paradise there emerged a fiery realm, Gehenna (Hebrew *gehinnom*), where wicked human souls received punishment. Paradise, although occasionally regarded as earthly, was often thought of as located in the heavens; hell reputedly lay in the netherworld. When the Septuagint was prepared, the concept of Eden as a garden was conveyed through the Greek word *paradeisos*—thus linking paradise to the garden created by God. With the advent of Christianity, Eden came to be associated not only with exile but also with a spiritual consequence of the Fall—original sin. Paradise for the dead was assigned to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-3), where virtuous souls resided in joy (Luke 23:43). The eschatologi-

## PARCHMENT

cal paradise, again linked to a rejuvenated garden of Eden, was said to await believers, together with a new heaven, earth, and Jerusalem (Rev. 2:7, 21:1-3). It was in the Qurʾān (2:25, 25:15, 47:15, 56:36-37) that heaven saw its fullest development as a garden of paradise (Arabic *jannāt al-firdaws*) and a garden of eternity (Arabic *jannāt al-khuld*). The souls of righteous Muslim men were promised a paradise filled with rivers of cool water, milk, wine, and honey; fruit-bearing trees; and immortal virgins, or *ḥūrīs*. Later Islamic theologians suggested that Eden was just one part of this heavenly garden. For the damned there awaited, under the cosmic bridge, the scorching torments of hell (Arabic *jahannam*). Muslims in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages expressed their desire for the fecundity of paradise through numerous gardens laid out for Iranian nobles.

In the 4th century Ephrem (ca. 306-373) wrote a series of hymns in Syriac on paradise. These hymns described paradise as a holy mountain. The Tree of Life was located at the mountain's summit, but the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil obscured Adam and Eve's view of it. It was only after they had eaten the forbidden fruit that they saw the Tree of Life at the summit that had been prepared for them as a reward for obedience. The zones of paradise corresponded with the divisions in the Temple: the summit represented the divine presence, the Tree of Life the Holy of Holies, and the Tree of Knowledge the Sanctuary Veil.

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## Parchment

Parchment is the term generally used for writing material made from the skins of animals, through a process of drying the pelt (wet, un-haired, and limed skin) under tension. The hair and flesh sides can be distinguished. Parchment was already in use in the second millennium B.C. but few early examples are preserved, because in Egypt it could not compete with papyrus and elsewhere the preservation of organic material is less common. The finds from Dura-Europus, Bactria, and elsewhere show that it was a standard material for legal documents in much of the Hellenistic world, being replaced by papyrus only when the Romans took control (at Dura, in the 3rd century C.E.), and it may have retained a similar role in many areas of the Near East outside the Roman orbit. Parchment sheets could be stitched together, in a manner similar to the gluing together of papyrus sheets, to form products like the composite rolls used for official archives.

It is in the codex and in late antiquity that parchment came into its own. Parchment is generally consid-

ered superior to papyrus for durability in codex form, but there are far fewer parchment codices than papyrus before the 4th century, and there is no clear evidence for parchment's priority in the history of the codex. Parchment became a popular luxury medium for book production in late antiquity; the codices usually had a squarer shape than their papyrus counterparts and more readily allowed larger formats (with multiple columns on a page). The greatest of surviving late antique Bibles (Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus) were written on parchment. Although papyrus remained in use in the west until the 11th century or even later, it was largely displaced by parchment (as it was in the east by paper) in the early medieval period.

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## Paris

Although Paris in late antiquity was the site of the elevation of Julian to the position of Augustus, the tradition that it boasted a palace seems to be a later invention. In fact Paris was of little importance under the Roman empire, as it was subordinate to Sens within the province of Lugdunensis Senonia, despite having been the center of the tribe of the Parisii.

The importance of Paris changed dramatically in the course of the 5th century. First, the role of the virgin Geneviève (Genovefa) under Childeric I in defending the city against the Franks gave Paris a saint of considerable renown, who was honored by a church built in the early 6th century by Childeric's son Clovis I. Further, Geneviève herself helped to develop the cult of the martyr Denis, which was subsequently to be promoted by the Merovingian kings, notably by Dagobert I. By the reign of Dagobert a major trading fair was also associated with the community of St. Denis. Other significant cults developed in the 6th century, notably those of Marcellus, who may have been bishop of the city in the 4th century, and the Spanish saint Vincent of Saragossa.

Apart from building the Church of St. Geneviève, Clovis also decided ca. 508 to treat Paris as his capital. After the division of the Frankish kingdom in 511, the city served as capital for one of Clovis's sons, Childebert I. He must have built the massive new cathedral, whose scale is known from excavation. Subsequently the city, which was surrounded by royal *villae*, was treated as a capital of the Frankish kingdom regardless of whether any king resided there. Its importance can be seen in the numerous royal burials in the city itself, at St. Denis and other monasteries of the hinterland.

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his bedroom. Imperial legislation may have continued to repeat the traditional restrictions on tampering with tombs, but increasing demand simply disarmed any misgivings, even about the dismemberment of saints' bodies.

The most intimate relics that pilgrims took away were the stories of their own experiences. Many of the huge collections of miracle stories from late antiquity consist of tales that the authors had heard from others. In their own stories people were no longer mere observers but participants, the direct beneficiaries of the saints' miracles. Listening to the reading of a saint's life, admiring an icon at home or the frescoes in a church, or fingering a sacred memento were all means of expressing devotion to a saint, but retelling the story of one's own healing conjured up, over and over, the warm emotions of a deeply personal encounter.

Relics certainly did not exist in the early Islamic world with the complexity of meanings present in Christianity or Buddhism. But actions were accomplished around objects which could, and sometimes did, lead to a certain kind of veneration. Such objects are the Black Stone on the Ka'ba in Mecca, the marble and staff of the Prophet, the pages of the Qur'an with the blood of the caliph 'Uthmān on them, and remains from the martyred Shi'ite imāms 'Alī and Ḥusain.

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### Rent

Rent is the amount paid, whether in money or in produce, by the tenant of a property to its owner or possessor, in return for its use for a period of time. In the late antique economy, rent meant, above all, payments to an owner of agricultural land who had leased it to a tenant farmer, and as such was central both to the flexibility of agriculture and to the maintenance of elite individuals and institutions. But there was also a lively rental market in residential quarters and commercial space, particularly in the cities.

Agricultural tenancy occurred at every level of the Roman world. Apart from smallholders' direct farming of their own land, leasing was the principal means of exploiting land. Those who could not farm their land themselves, including those who owned large amounts, usually preferred leasing it to hiring or owning large numbers of workers. Leasing provided a steadier, more reliable income with less bother and minimal managerial staff. In some settings it may also have been more profitable than direct operation, and

tenants sometimes brought equipment or other capital into the relationship. Rents on such leases were commonly paid in produce (especially cereal grains), but rents on properties that produced cash crops such as oil or wine were often due in cash. Both fixed rents and rents proportional to the harvest are attested.

Leasing and rents were the main foundation of large private incomes among the elites of Rome, Constantinople, and virtually all provincial cities of any size. Although some wealthy landowners spent considerable time on their estates, many preferred rent to revenues from direct exploitation precisely because renting enabled their absence from the land. Late antiquity shows little difference from the earlier Roman imperial period in this respect, except to the degree that the increased concentration of wealth made absentee rent collection all the more attractive. The rental system also made it feasible to give lands as endowments to pious foundations, especially enabling the church and its related institutions to draw sizable incomes without direct involvement in agriculture.

How burdensome rents were for the tenants is difficult to say and must have varied considerably; hardly ever is the total productivity of a parcel of land known. On very poor land rent might have been only a tenth of the meager produce; on the best land (particularly in the most productive parts of Egypt), perhaps as much as half. Most surviving Egyptian leases specify that the landlord pays the taxes; net after-tax rents to the landlord were thus much lower than gross rents.

A substantial portion of the urban population of almost all classes rented living space, ranging from well-to-do tenants of spacious apartments in Rome to lodgers occupying a room or two in someone's house in a provincial city. The rental market made spatial mobility possible and accommodated the substantial number of unattached people living in the cities. There is also considerable evidence for the rental of shops and workshops; both renters and proprietors often lived and worked in the same space.

Modern observers have sometimes looked on the widespread pattern of rental relationships in ancient and late antique society as a sign of economic and social distress. Many tenants were certainly among the poorest members of this society, but others were not; and even for the poor the rental market made possible a flexibility in place of residence and work that may have been better than inflexibility. Reliable farm tenants were a desirable item in short supply in many times and places, and the terms they secured were by no means always to their disadvantage. Rent was not only the way in which the late antique social and institutional world was supported, but it was a major contributor to the dynamism of the economy.

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## Rhetoric

In the matter of rhetorical technique, late antiquity was an age of compilation and interpretation. In the Greek east, the treatises of Hermogenes (2nd to 3rd century) and Aphthonios (4th century) were collected into a canonical corpus, probably at the turn of the 6th century, and were the object of unflagging commentaries. Once again, rhetoric encountered philosophy, in this case Neoplatonism as represented by Syrianus. Head of the Platonic Academy of Athens, Syrianus was also a commentator on Plato, Aristotle, and Hermogenes, and the master of Proclus. At the same time in the Latin world, *artes* and *compendia* proliferated. Because of the linguistic rift between the east and the west, Greek manuals were increasingly replaced by Latin ones. Commentaries on Cicero were produced by Marius Victorinus (4th century) and Boethius (6th century); Boethius's commentary on the *Topica* was a turning point in the relation between dialectic and rhetoric. The encyclopedists of the 5th to 7th centuries—Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus, and Isidore of Seville—all grant a place to rhetoric. Although these theoretical writings of late antiquity were often lacking in inventiveness, they looked toward the future, since they were destined to exert a major influence on medieval rhetoric. They selected and consecrated doctrines—Aphthonian and Hermogenian in Byzantium, Ciceronian and pseudo-Ciceronian in the Latin west—that would become dominant.

A rich oratorical practice developed in concert with the theoretical work. The tradition of the second sophistic, which went back to the high empire, was perpetuated in the exemplary figure of Libanius, who lived in Antioch, Syria, in the 4th century. He was at once a scholar, a professor of rhetoric, a popular lecturer, an orator involved in municipal and provincial policy, and an interlocutor of governors and emperors. The same sophistic tradition can be observed in the 4th century, with Themistius and Himerius, and in the 6th, with the representatives of the school of Gaza (Procopius of Gaza and Choricus). The west provided a rich collection, the *Latin Panegyrics*, composed in Gaul in the late 3rd to 4th century. Those wide-ranging oratorical texts, which have recently attracted new scholarly interest, followed an evolution that had begun in the previous centuries by highlighting the "epideictic" genre (ceremonial eloquence based on the panegyric); harangues and appeals were assigned a less important role. One characteristic was the insistent use of the empire and the emperor as subject matter in speeches (in addition to the names already cited, see the panegyrics of Constantius and Eusebius by the future emperor Julian, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine*, and Ennodius's panegyric of Theoderic). The royal or im-

perial panegyric is probably the most representative oratorical form of late antiquity, because its eloquence is always linked to politics. That period, more than any other, required a reflection on monarchic power, given the transformations under way with the partition, fall, and recomposition of empires. Late antiquity exploited all the tools of rhetoric and applied them to contemporary questions.

The primary question raised in this period was the relation between rhetoric and Christianity. In the eyes of Christians, Graeco-Roman rhetoric was suspect, as was the entire tradition of pagan culture to which it belonged. The very idea of rhetorical technique was questionable for believers, whose aim was to express the word of God in its truth and in the plainest manner possible. In any case, there was a need for a new, sui generis rhetoric to express the most difficult aspects of the divine message, its paradox, mystery, and revelation. And yet, pagan rhetoric had proven itself as a method of education, as a technique of persuasion, and as an art of culture and beauty. The result was a complex problematic: some wished to repudiate the Graeco-Roman heritage or tried to circumvent it, while the majority set out to recuperate, rework, and transform it. The most significant theoretical text to delineate a Christian eloquence, distinguished from pagan traditions but not severed from them, is book four of St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. The works of Ambrose of Milan and the Greek writings of the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus) and of John Chrysostom illustrate the implementation of that eloquence. Their speeches date from the 4th century, which was decidedly one of the most brilliant moments in the entire history of classical rhetoric. Christian eloquence continued to develop, particularly in preaching (sermons, homilies) and within ecclesiastical institutions.

The world of late antiquity was splintered and pluralistic. No one city—Athens or Rome, for example—set the tone as in the past; no one structure guaranteed cohesion in the provinces. Rhetoric was everywhere and nowhere, from Gaul to the Middle East, from the Black Sea to Egypt. The borderlands or margins had great importance. As significant examples of the cultural and disciplinary mix of the era, one should note: in the 5th century, a version of Theon's *Progymnasmata* (more complete than the text of the Greek tradition); at the turn of the 6th century, the figure of Priscianus, a grammarian born in Mauritania, teacher of Latin in Byzantium with many contacts in Rome, who translated Hermogenes into Latin; in 529, the Persian teachers' exile from the Neoplatonic Academy of Athens—seven philosophers who also taught rhetoric; and in the 6th century, the library of Dioscorus of Aphrodito in Egypt, recovered with the aid of papyrology, which combined the Coptic and the Greek works, notarized acts, and a poetry steeped in rhetoric.

It is unlikely that the early Islamic period had al-