

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MA EXAMINATION

for Internal Students

LATE ANTIQUE AND BYZANTINE STUDIES

MB06 Constantinople and its Descriptions
Sources Paper

3 hours

Comment on the context of, and points of interest in, any **FOUR** of the following extracts

All answers bear equal marks

Candidates should avoid inappropriate repetition of material in different questions

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TURN OVER WHEN INSTRUCTED

1.
Κωνσταντινούπολιν κέκληκε . . . ἐπιτέλεσας ἵππικὸν ἀγῶνα
πρῶτος, φορέσας πρῶτοις διάδημα διὰ μαργαριτῶν καὶ
ἐτέρων τιμίων λίθων, καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐπρτὴν μεγάλην, κελεύσας
διὰ θείου αὐτοῦ τύπου τῆ αὐτῆ ἡμέρα ἐπιτελεῖσθαι τὸ
γενέθλιον τῆς πόλεως αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνοίγειν τῆ 11' τοῦ αὐτοῦ
'Αρτεμισίου μηνὸς τὸ δημόσιον λουτρὸν Ζεύξιππον, πλήσιον
ὄντα τοῦ Ἴππικοῦ καὶ τῆς Ῥηγίας τοῦ παλατίου.

(Constantine) called (the city) Constantinople; he conducted the first circus games and was the first to wear a diadem decorated with pearls and precious stones. He celebrated a big feast and ordered by his sacred decree that on this day, the 11th of Artemisios, be observed the birthday of his city, and that the public bath of Zeuxippus (which is close to the Hippodrome and the Regia and the place) should be opened.

Chronicon Paschale I.530

2.
Μηχαναῖς δὲ πολλαῖς βασιλεῦς τε Ἰουστινιανὸς καὶ Ἀνθέμιος
ὁ μηχανοποιὸς σὺν τῷ Ἰσιδώρῳ οὕτω δὴ μετεωριζομένην
τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐν τῷ ἀσφαλεῖ διεπράξαντο εἶναι· ὥνπερ τὰς
μὲν ἄλλας ἀπάσας ἐμοὶ εἰδέναι τε ἄπορον καὶ λόγῳ φράσαι
ἀμήχανον, μία δέ μοι μόνον ἐν γε τῷ παρόντι γεγράφεται ἣ
δύναιτ' ἂν τις σύμπασαν τοῦ ἔργου τεκμηριῶσαι τὴν δύναμιν

It was by many skilful devices that the Emperor Justinian and the master-builder Anthemius and Isidore secured the stability of the church, hanging, as it does, in mid-air. Some of these it is both hopeless for me to understand in their entirety and impossible to explain in words; I shall record only one of them for the present, from which it should be possible to gain an impression of the strength of the whole work.

Procopius, Buildings I.i.50

TURN OVER

3.

ήνικά τοίνυν οί λιθοδόμοι διώρυσσον οὔπερ έπεμνήσθην άρτίως, κιβώτιον εὔρον γράμμασι σημαίνον ώς λείψανα έχοι τούτων δή τών άνδρών. όπερ έξήνεγκε λεληθός τέως έξεπίτηδες ό θεός, άμα μέν πιστούμενος άπαντας ώς τά βασιλέως άσμενέστατα ένδέδεκται δώρα, άμα δέ και τοῦ άνδρός τήν άγαθοεργίαν άμείψασθαι διατεινόμενος χάριτι μείζονι.

So when the masons were excavating in the place which I have just mentioned, they found a chest showing by an inscription that it contained the remains of these very men. And God brought to light this chest, which thus far had been forgotten, with an express purpose, partly to assure all men that He had accepted the Emperor's gifts most gladly, and partly because He was eager to repay this great man's beneficence with a greater favour.

Procopius, *Buildings* I.vii.4

4

“Ότι τά λεγόμενα Κοντάρια βίγλαν είχον έως έτη ζ΄. και έν αύτῷ τῷ τόπῳ πόλεμος έως έτη β΄ και ναός ειδώλων μικρός πάνυ, όν έλεγον Γαληνοῦ είναι. όν καθελών Κωνταντίνος τής Θεοτόκου οίκον ένήγειρε και έαυτόν έγχαράξας και τήν μητέρα και Ίησοῦν και τήν Παρθένον πανηγυρικās έορτάς έπετέλει είς ήμέρας ιβ΄.

That the so-called Kontaria had a guard for seven years; and in the same place there was a war for two years, and a very small temple of idols (*eidola*) which they said was of Galen. Constantine pulled it down and built a church of the Theotokos, and portraying himself and his mother and Jesus and the Virgin he held a festival for twelve days.

Parastaseis Suntomai Chronikai 53

5.

Έν οίς έλέφας ίσταται παμμεγέθης. ώς οί θηριοδεικται ήμίν έβεβαίωσαν, μη γίνεσθαι άπάνω αύτοῦ τὸ μέγεθος τών έλεφάντων, τών δέ μεγάλων έως οὔτως. οὔτος ό έλέφας ύπό Σευήρου τοῦ Κάρου Έλληνος έτυπώθη θέαμά τι κατά τήν παράδοσιν.

With these stands a huge elephant; as the exhibitors of animals have assured us, elephants do not come greater in size than this, the big ones being as big as this. This elephant was set up by Severus the son of Carus the pagan as a spectacle (*theama*), according to tradition.

Parastaseis Suntomai Chronikai 37

6

ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ γε τῷ προτεμενίσματι καλοῦ θεάματος ὁ προσιών ἐμπιπλάμενος καὶ τοῖς ὀρωμένοις ἐρείδων τὰ ὄμματα, ὡσπερ τις ἐρριζωμένος τῷ θαύματι ἔστηκεν. Ὀρφεῖ μὲν οἱ μῦθοι τῷ Θρακί κιθάραν ποιοῦσι, κινουῦσαν τοῖς φθόγγοις τὰ ἄψυχα· εἰ δὲ καὶ ἡμῖν ἐξῆν εἰς μύθους ἐπαίρειν καὶ φοβερὰν ποιεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, εἶπεν ἂν τις τοὺς προσιόντας τῷ προτεμενίσματι εἰς φυτῶν ἀποδενδρουμένους φύσιν τῷ θαύματι μεταβάλλεσθαι· οὕτως ἅπαξ τις ἰδὼν δυσάποσπαστως κατέχεται.

Taking his fill of the fair spectacle in the very atrium and fixing his eyes on the sight before him, the visitor stands as if rooted to the ground with wonder. Legends proclaim the lyre of Thracian Orpheus stirred inanimate things. If it were our privilege also to erect truth into legends and make it awe-inspiring, one might say that visitors to the atrium were turned with wonder into the form of trees: so firmly is one held having but seen it once.

Photius, *Homily X*, 4,

7.

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ταῖς γυναῖξιν ὁ ἄγγελος προσεφώνησεν. ὁ δὲ ἡμετερος λόγος περιεργότερον ὧδε κάκεισε περισκοπῶν καὶ περιβλεπόμενος καὶ αὐτὸν ὡς ἔστιν ἰδεῖν τὸν ταῦτα χειρὶ τῆ ἑαυτοῦ ζωγραφήσοντα, περὶ τὸν δεσποτικὸν ὄρθιον παριστάμενον τάφον ὡς ἄγρυπνὸν τινα φύλακα κατενόησε στολὴν ἐκείνην καὶ τὴν πᾶσαν ἄλλην ἡμφιεσμένον ἀναβολὴν, ἦν καὶ ζῶν . . . τὸν ἐκτὸς κατεσεμνύνετο ἄνθρωπον. καὶ τάχ' ἂν τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ἐγκωμίοις ὁ λόγος ἐχρονοτρίβησε καὶ πάνυ τι δικαιοτάτα, εἰ μὴ ταῖς γυναῖξι ταύταις πρὸς ἀνάγκης ἦν αὐτῷ συμπαρομαρτεῖν, σπεύδοντι σὺν σπευδούσαις παρὰ τοῦς μαθητὰς ἀπελθεῖν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐπιταγὴν.

Thus did the angel speak to the women. But our discourse, in looking and gazing around hither and thither, has recognised the man who with his own hand has depicted these things, as he may be seen standing upright by the Lord's tomb like a watchful guard, dressed in the same robe and other garments which he wore to adorn his outer appearance when he was living . . . And our discourse might well have spent more time in praising this man and this with good reason, were it not obliged to accompany the women, hastening with them as they hasten to the disciples in accordance with the angel's command.

Nicholas Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles* 28.23-24

TURN OVER

8.

Τί δὲ ἡ λευκώλενος Ἑλένη καλλίσφυρός τε καὶ δολιχόδαιρος, ἡ τὸ Πανελλήνιον ἐς Τροίαν ἀθροίσασα καὶ καθελοῦσα Τροίαν, ἐκ δὲ ταύτης προσοκείλασα Νείλῳ κάκεϊθεν αὔθις ἐς ἦθη τὰ Λακῶνων ἐπαναλύσασα χρόνιος; ἄρ' ἐμίλιξε τοὺς δυσμελίκτους; ἄρ' ἐμάλθαξε τοὺς σιδηρόφρονας;

What about the white-armed Helen, both beautiful-ankled and long-necked who gathered the all-Greek army at Troy and destroyed Troy and who after this ran ashore on the Nile and finally again returned from there back to the customs of the Laconians? Did she charm the hard to charm? Did she soften their iron hearts?

Nicetas Choniates, *Historia* 652

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