29 Μαΐου 2009

The Early Centuries of the Greek Roman East (2)

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English



A page of a byzantine illuminated manuscript of the 12th century, depicting the Ascension of Christ and two prophets. Φύλλο από βυζαντινό εικονογραφημένο χειρόγραφο του 12ου αιώνος, που απεικονίζει την Ανάληψη του Χριστού και δύο προφήτες.

Continuation from (1)

The Advancement of Architecture

The ruler as builder was one of the oldest ideals of a sovereign. Public buildings and other structures were, in principle, gifts to be used by the ruler's subjects, but also monuments of the greatness of the ruler. Justinian strove hard to realize this ideal. The greatest buildings he erected or rebuilt were in Constantinople, the city which was now the embodiment of the civilization of the Eastern Roman Empire. Numerous magnificent and artistically beautiful structures were constructed or rebuilt during his reign. They included statues, churches and various other

monuments. His crowning achievement was the building of St. Sophia, the Church of Holy Wisdom. This building was considered by many an architectural wonder of the middle ages, and is still standing strong today. Its design, size, artwork, name and its significance made it a building that symbolized the religious and philosophical epicenter of Constantinople and Byzantine civilization.

Even before he came to power, during his uncle's reign, Justinian had already set about to rehabilitate and rebuild many churches in Constantinople and its suburbs. This work began mostly in a private capacity and reflected the piety which was to show itself further when Justinian became emperor. The chief church in this category was St. Accius, a Cappadocian soldier who had been executed at Byzantium in the early 300's and was venerated as one of the leading martyrs who had suffered on the site of the future Constantinople. Six other churches were similarly rebuilt. One was St. Mocius. This was one of the most famous shrines in Constantinople. It was said to have been originally a temple of Zeus, which Constantine then converted into a church. Other churches included St. Plato, martyred at Ancyra, and St. Thyrsus, executed in Nicomedia in the same persecution. In the suburbs of Constantinople he rebuilt a church of the famous woman martyr, St. Thecla, who suffered in the first Christian century. (περισσότερα...)